Student and Instructor Satisfaction with E-Learning Tools in Online Learning Environments

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ABSTRACT

This study utilized Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine satisfaction of students and instructors toward online learning tools and resources in online learning environments. The study findings indicate that student expectation was the most important factor that helped the instructors to design and provide appropriate and efficient technology tools and resources to enhance student learning. Further, the instructors were satisfied with the technology tools and resources that were provided, as these helped them to achieve their instructional expectations. These findings could help to stimulate reflections on ways to improve and design useful e-learning tools and resources that could enhance effective teaching and learning in online environments.

Keywords: E-Learning Tools, Instructors, Online Learning, Satisfactions, Student, Technology

INTRODUCTION

Rapid developments in technology in the past decade have had considerable influence on the distribution of content and learning tasks within both traditional and distance education (Howland & Moore, 2002). Even so, computers are the most significant tools that have had considerable influence on enhancing educational environments (Waterhouse, 2004). Computer technology embraces E-learning – defined as a computer technology tool that is used for enhancing teaching and learning. E-learning also refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver information or solutions that enhance knowledge and performance (Rosenberg, 2001).

In terms of learner, Sun et al. (2008) argue that satisfaction of learners is the most significant factor for developing online course. Their research study demonstrates a framework of six dimensions that influence satisfactions of online learners. Among them, learners and technology are two dimensions that obviously relate to the development of e-learning tools and resources.

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These two dimensions contain several factors that are characterized by three significant features: usability, quality, and flexibility. All of these features are of acute importance due to their affect on satisfaction of learners within online learning environments (Sun et al., 2008).

Satisfaction of instructors toward e-learning technology is also important for determining success of e-learning tools (Sobero & Sobero, 2009). Further, their research study indicates that confirmation of expectations and perceived usefulness of instructors are significant for explaining their satisfactions with e-learning tools. This theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Related Theories and Models of Satisfactions**

*Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT)*

Previous research studies show that usability, quality, and flexibility of e-learning tools and resources are significant features that influence satisfactions of online learners. Expectancy Confirmation Theory (ECT) is a theory used for measuring and predicting factors that influence satisfactions of users toward products. Bhattacharjee (2001) applied this theory in a study to examine user’s satisfactions towards continually using information system (IS). The study demonstrates the success of applying ECT to examine satisfactions toward usage of IS. Additionally, Chui at el. (2005) also used ECT in their study to examine usability and quality of online technological materials within online education – factors affecting satisfaction of online users. Therefore, ECT was also used in this to examine satisfactions of learners and instructor toward e-learning tools and resources within online courses, which is the primary purpose of the study. Bhattacharjee (2001) provides a framework and descriptions of five processes of ECT that include expectation, performance, confirmation, satisfaction, intention. This framework is illustrated in Figure 2.
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