Chapter 18

Role of IT Culture in Learners’ Acceptance of E-Learning

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ABSTRACT
This chapter sought to explore factors that influence e-learning adoption and use among students in higher education in Kenya. Based on UTAUT model, the study proposes that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions will influence intention to use e-learning. Additionally, the role of IT culture is explored. Performance expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, and IT culture were significant in predicting intention to use e-learning. Intention to use significantly predicted usage. Implications for higher education are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
The continued advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT) is transforming human experiences in various sectors including education through e-learning, a mode of education delivery that does not require physical classrooms. Two modes of e-learning exist in form of, asynchronous e-learning, where students log into e-learning platforms at their own convenience to access educational materials or participate in discussion boards, and synchronous e-learning that entails students using real-time technology such as video-conferencing to participate in classroom activities (Hrastinski, 2008). Both forms of e-learning provide several advantages to learners including; convenient access to education, efficient content delivery, and meeting the growing demand for education (Bhuasiri, Xaymoungkhoun, Zo, Rho, & Ciganek, 2012; Guan, Ding, & Ho, 2015). Therefore, e-learning provides the advantage of

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education access to every citizen, a goal of almost all countries in the world. It is therefore important for both researchers and practitioners to determine ways of improving e-learning technologies for successful education delivery to learners.

Findings from e-learning studies attribute e-learning success to several factors including information technology (IT) infrastructure (Hameed, Shaikh, Hameed, & Shamim, 2016), and the extent to which an e-learning system addresses the educational needs of learners (Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2009). Technology adoption studies emphasize on the importance of user perceptions in comfort and ease of use as factors that influence for successful technology utilization (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). Therefore, user acceptance of e-learning stands as a major factor in determining the success of e-learning to users. However, literature is scarce on e-learning primary users’ perceptions on their interaction with e-learning technologies, especially in the developing world context. Much attention is focused on the state of IT infrastructure in supporting e-learning activities. However findings from United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) show that countries are increasingly investing in technological infrastructure for sustainable development (Dugarova & Gülasan, 2017), hence infrastructure is becoming less of an inhibiting factor towards e-learning use in developing countries. Technology adoption studies have explicated other factors that influence technology use, primarily culture. According to Leidner & Kayworth, (2006), culture is a complex term that involves multiple definitions and contexts, and hence needs to be carefully investigated on its role in technology use and acceptance. Findings on the role of culture in e-learning acceptance are, however, not conclusive given the varying cultural practices in different countries. Moreover, the influence of culture on e-learning has been extensively studied in the context of natural culture based on Hofstede, (1984) cultural dimensions. As submitted by Leidner & Kayworth, (2006), culture is a diverse term that needs further exploration.

Culture can be conceptualized as a way of living. It is implied that technology influences culture by shaping how people undertake daily activities, for example; online shopping as opposed to visiting a store, or visiting places based on internet recommendations (Gilkey, 2015). Therefore, it is arguable that the practice of utilizing technology in daily activities turns to habits that are embedded in individuals’ culture. Using this conceptualization, we define IT culture as the extent to which individuals are accustomed to routine technology use in everyday activities such as banking, bill payments, and communication.

There are studies that explore how IT culture is transforming individual experiences in shopping, or tourism, but little is known about how IT culture shapes individuals’ e-learning experiences. It is plausible that technology experience is important for acceptance and use of technologies (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The objective of this study is to investigate the role of IT culture in e-learning acceptance and use.

This study is focused on investigating the factors that influence use of e-learning in a Kenyan higher education setting. Kenya is increasingly characterized as a country with vibrant technology infrastructure and high internet penetration. According to Internet World Stats Website, (2019), Kenya ranks highest (85%) in internet penetration in Africa as of the year 2018. Also, Kenya stands as a ready market for e-learning technologies given the growing demand for university education. As of the year 2016, there has been over 100% increase in university enrolment in Kenya (Mukhwana, 2016). However, studies on e-learning in Kenya have focused more on policy makers and IT infrastructure development. This study seeks to understand acceptance and use from the perspective of learners.