

Expectation & Experience of ICT in University: A Comparative Study

M. Norazizi Sham MOHD SAYUTI, Azreena ABU BAKAR

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Malaysia

azizi@usim.edu.my

azreena@usim.edu.my

Abstract: Nowadays most of the students in the universities have been exposed to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at school or home. At certain extent, they are good at exploring and evaluating any new technology options presented to them. They might expect more when coming to university or no less than what they have experienced previously. What expectations they have on IT provision in university? How ICT influences their learning experiences at university? Does it measure up to the expectations? Does the university's IT provision is adequate to support new teaching and learning methods in collaborative learning environment? These are some of the questions we hope to explore. Finding from this research will help determine what kind of improvement through ICT that is relevant to improve learning and teaching methods that will enhance learning experiences of the students.

Keywords: ICT, Internet, Communication, Collaborative Learning.

Introduction

As the result of development in ICT at school, nowadays we can see most of the university students, if not well-versed are adept to mastering the technology. When coming to university, there is possibility that they might expect more or equal to what they have experienced previously. Thus, it is important to understand how ICT affects their experience in learning or personal use, so that we could direct the use of it in a direction that introduces different and effective way of learning. In this way of learning, they will be involved more in collaborative learning process. At the same time the technological options that can complement and assist their studies in unexpected yet affective, but not by the way which they think will complicate them, may encouraged them to focus on study. Nevertheless, guidance from the teacher is still necessary to give them idea on how technologies can be applied during learning process.

1. Research Objectives

This research project is undertaken among first year university students in order to understand the following issue:

- To measure the expectations of the students on IT provision at university.
- To understand how ICT affects on student experiences in teaching, learning and personal use.
- To understand if what they experienced in university is measure up with the expectations.

2. Research Methodology

In order to explore the research objectives, a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative study are undertaken. The target audience is the first year undergraduate students who are just started their first semester in university. They are selected randomly from all faculties in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). This study is expected to compare student's expectations and experiences on ICT at university, and explore the findings in more detail in qualitative interviews. The items measured in this study including the frequency of use of internet applications, the amount of ICT use in learning and so forth. Overview of the research design is depicted as in Figure 1.

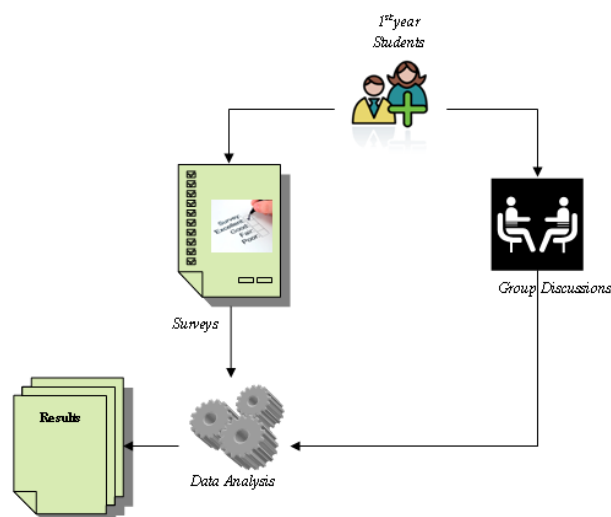


Figure 1: Overview of the research design

The research project comprises two stages. The first stage of this research comprises an online survey and personal interviews. The online survey is conducted during the start of the first semester. In the interviews, several respondents are selected from the target audience on a voluntarily basis to discuss in depth their expectation of ICT at university. Personal interviews are not meant to cover the whole student population. It is used to understand how ICT at home and school affects their use of technologies in personal life and their point of view on the ICT provision at university.

The second stage uses online survey and personal interviews too except it is conducted at the end of the first semester. The same target audience is invited again to take part in the second stage. They are among first year students who are selected at random from all faculties. A follow-up to previous interview with the same group of respondents in the first stage is conducted to further discuss their experiences of ICT in order to understand in depth how ICT affects their personal use and learning at university. After the end of the second stage, the results of both quantitative and qualitative study are analyzed to meet the objective of the research project.

3. Literature Review

Study by D. Galanouli and V. McNair [3] has provided evidence that students perceive three main barriers to their use of ICT during school practice: teachers' attitudes, lack of resources and time. Among of these, teachers' attitudes play the most crucial role compared to other factors. Teachers can put an effort by making use of technologies such as online

videos, blogs, Wikis, and social networking websites as part of teaching and learning activities. Students may become more proactive in constructive learning environment if teachers are willing to guide the students in a way that help them perceive technologies as instruments that are not limited for personal use but also useful for effective learning.

In collaborative learning, students are actively constructing their concept of idea and share it among others. Breeding [2] describes environment that not only delivers content to users but also seeks content from users fosters engagement, participation and collaboration. ICT promotes many different ways of handling problems, acquiring, constructing and presenting information to users. As Schulz, Büchter and Dalmer [5] in their study argue that learning culture that allows cooperation and embedded with ICT may stimulate essential changes in schools thus preparing the students to meet the demands of the knowledge society.

However, study by Mayes [4] has shown that the use of this technology in itself does not lead to effective learning despite its ability in efficient delivery of information. Results of study by Anstey [1] verified that teachers still use the web in passive and instructive forms of teaching and learning. The academic staffs must have clear understanding that the technology must be used in a way that will introduce students to new learning experiences, not just for the sake of it. Improvement in ICT and implementation of any value added services might benefit the students, especially in improving their learning process. Furthermore, IT provision in the university must be adequate to support new learning and teaching methods in a collaborative learning environment.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays, we can see communication and internet technologies have become part of student's life. They are adept to mastering any technological options provided to them or at least aware of their existence. Thus, we propose a research in this area that will contribute towards further understanding of student's expectation as well as their experiences of ICT in the university. At the same time, this could determine whether IT provision in the university is adequate to support new learning and teaching methods and facilitate collaborative learning environment in university. Furthermore, the findings from the study will help university to determine any improvement and value added services that are relevant in providing better learning experiences to the students.

References

- [1] P. Anstey (2000). Jcalt report on developing staff C&IT capability in higher education. Technical report.
- [2] M. Breeding (2007). We need to go beyond web 2.0. *Computers in Libraries*, 27(5):22–25.
- [3] D. Galanouli and V. McNair (2001). Students' perceptions of ICT-related support in teaching placements. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 17(4):396–408.
- [4] J. Mayes (1993). Impact of cognitive theory on the practice of courseware authoring. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 9(4):222–228.
- [5] R. Schulz-Zander, A. Bchter, and R. Dalmer (2002). The role of ICT as a promoter of students' cooperation. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 18(4):438–448.