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Understanding e-book acceptance from a resource-based view perspective: an analysis among students at UiTM Melaka

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a shift in the Malaysian education system from traditional face-to-face teaching to online and open distance learning (ODL). This transition has impacted students, lecturers, and universities. E-books are one technology that supports online learning at the university level. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing e-book acceptance among students. Using quantitative research, a questionnaire was administered to 171 students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Melaka Campus, who are enrolled in strategic management course. The findings reveal a significant impact of course content, instructors, and university support on e-book acceptance. However, there was no significant effect observed for access ability, computer competency and infrastructure. These insights are crucial for universities to plan and implement e-books effectively for their students. As the study is specific to UiTM Melaka Campus, it is recommended that future research encompasses both public and private universities for a more comprehensive understanding.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced Malaysia's educational landscape, prompting universities to enhance access to technology and quality education through effective monitoring and decision-making processes [1]. With the onset of the pandemic, many higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia shifted to online distance learning, utilizing platforms such as Cisco Webex, Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams [2]. In recent years, educational institutions have increasingly adopted management information systems, which enhance administration, teaching, and learning processes. The influence of digital media has made electronic resources, particularly e-books, vital for students, facilitating a shift from traditional teaching methods [1]. Major technology companies have played an essential role in advancing e-book devices, as academic libraries transition toward electronic resources, reflecting technological advancements in education [3]. By applying the resource-based view (RBV) theory, institutions can leverage their unique resources, such as technology and digital content, to gain a competitive advantage in delivering effective education [4]–[6].

Aligning the RBV towards e-book acceptance involves leveraging a university's distinctive resources and capabilities to gain a competitive edge. Essential resources include innovative course design, advanced technological infrastructure, and comprehensive university support. High-quality course design is rare and challenging to replicate, significantly enhancing e-book integration and student engagement [7].

Strong university support, encompassing technical and administrative assistance, ensures the effective utilization of resources and alignment with institutional goals [8]. By strategically managing these resources, universities can foster a conducive environment for e-book acceptance, sustaining their competitive position in the digital learning landscape.

To achieve this goal, the study will address six research objectives, focusing on different factors influencing e-book acceptance in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Melaka. These factors include the role of instructors, computer competency, course design and content, accessibility, infrastructure, and university support. Understanding these elements is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of online learning and encouraging the adoption of e-books among students, as they align with the RBV theory's emphasis on utilizing valuable resources to improve educational outcomes [9]–[13].

Overall, acceptance of e-books in university settings is vital for successfully integrating technology into education. As educators adapt to the digital era, their role in motivating and engaging students through e-books and other technologies becomes increasingly important, reinforcing the application of the RBV theory to maximize educational resources for improved student experiences [14], [15]. Technology development has changed textbooks from hardcopy to digital or e-books, making it essential for students to be proficient in using this platform. Basic computer abilities and instrumental skills are necessary to access and utilize teaching materials and online resources effectively. However, pedagogical skills are also required to use these platforms in a teacher's various teaching roles, including the mediator, counselor, advisor, tutor, prescriber of learning resources, information source, learning organizer, model of behavior to emulate, apprentice trainer, and motivator [16].

The rapid evolution of technology is significantly impacting education, influencing teaching methods and administrative systems [17]. Traditional approaches to enhancing educators' digital capabilities have focused on promoting students' "digital literacy" [17]. However, the continuous emergence of new technologies driven by the widespread use of personal mobile devices and increased internet accessibility has posed challenges to this concept [14]. The global expansion of technology networks and events like the COVID-19 pandemic have compelled changes in the education industry involving university management, faculty, students, and administrators. All stakeholders, including management, students, faculty, and administrators, must possess advanced digital competencies to effectively integrate new technologies into education. The interpretation of digital skills in academic and official literature varies, leading to diverse meanings and terminologies [18]. Thus, the outcome of this study will shed some light on understanding e-book acceptance among students at UiTM Melaka, City Campus.

2. METHOD

A quantitative cross-sectional survey was undertaken involving 171 students selected from diverse programs of study at the Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM City Campus, Melaka, Malaysia. The study specifically targeted students enrolled in a strategic management course utilizing an e-book. Notably, this study's anticipated sample size derived from GPower is 109. Accordingly, sample sizes between 100 to 200 are sufficient for PLS analysis [19], [20]. Thus, a sample of 171 in this study is adequate for further analysis. Statistical analyses were conducted using smart partial least square (Smart-PLS) and the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The questionnaire was adjusted to align with the academic setting at UiTM City Campus Melaka, employing a five-point Likert scale adapted from scholarly sources and tailored to the campus environment. As Fornell and Larcker [21] recommended, discriminant validity was evaluated by ensuring that the correlations among the constructs were less than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Convergent validity

Table 1 highlights the standardized loading of all constructs. As indicated, all constructs analyzed in this study exhibited standardized loadings exceeding 0.50, indicating compliance with the established loading threshold. Furthermore, the table presents AVE values surpassing 0.50 for all constructs, signifying their satisfaction with the requisite AVE criteria [22].

3.2. Discriminants analysis

Table 2 depicts the loadings of items on their respective constructs are depicted. All items display strong loadings on their constructs, indicating the indicator loadings surpass the cross-loadings. Moreover, each construct's square root of AVE on the diagonal exceeds the squared correlations with other constructs on the off-diagonal. These findings affirm that all constructs satisfy the standards for discriminant validity, implying that both exogenous and endogenous variables demonstrate acceptable discriminant validity.

Table 1. Assessment of measurement model

Construct	Loading	AVE
DV: Acceptance	0.769–0.917	0.74
IV1: Acc	0.690–0.875	0.63
IV2: Com	0.571–0.904	0.68
IV3: Cont & Des	0.739–0.888	0.68
IV4: Inf	0.638–0.906	0.71
IV5: Lect	0.558–0.863	0.63
IV6: Unisupp	0.820–0.913	0.75

Table 2. Discriminant analysis

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IV1: Acc	0.80						
IV2: Com	0.65	0.83					
IV3: Cont & Des	0.74	0.74	0.83				
IV4: Inf	0.79	0.56	0.59	0.84			
IV5: Lect	0.50	0.61	0.69	0.39	0.79		
IV6: Unisupp	0.72	0.68	0.78	0.54	0.67	0.86	
D: Acceptance	0.66	0.64	0.75	0.52	0.62	0.71	0.86

3.3. Reliability analysis

Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were utilized to measure the reliability of the measurement. The composite reliability of all constructs is over 0.80, indicating that the measurement scale used in this investigation had strong internal consistency, as shown in Table 3. Similarly, Cronbach's alpha values suggest that all structures have high internal consistency [22].

Table 3. Reliability analysis

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	No. of item
IV1: Acc	0.88	0.91	6
IV2: Com	0.88	0.91	5
IV3: Cont & Des	0.91	0.93	6
IV4: Inf	0.86	0.91	4
IV5: Lect	0.90	0.92	7
IV6: Unisupp	0.89	0.92	4
E-book acceptance	0.82	0.90	3

3.4. Assessment of structural model

In Table 4, the results of the bootstrapping analysis indicate that several factors have a significant effect on e-book acceptance. It has been found that only the content and design of the course (t-value=3.293, $p<0.05$), instructor/lecturer (t-value=2.159, $p<0.05$), and university support (t-value=2.211, $p<0.05$) have a significant effect towards e-book acceptance. However, the analysis shows that access ability, computer competency, and infrastructure do not significantly affect e-book acceptance.

Table 4. Bootstrapping analysis

Relationship	T-value	P-values
Acc. Abi. X Accept	1.765	0.078
Com X Accept	1.176	0.24
Content X Accept	3.293*	0.001
Infr X Accept	0.046	0.964
Lect X Accept	2.159*	0.031
Unisupp X Accept	2.211*	0.027

4. DISCUSSION

This study examines the factors that influence the acceptance of e-books among students at UiTM City Campus Melaka. Using the RBV theory as a framework, the study explores the resources that impact student acceptance of e-books, with a focus on the content and design of the course, university support, and instructor influence. The most influential factor affecting e-book acceptance is the content and design of the course, as the results show a significant relationship between the two. These findings are consistent with a

previous study [23], that found students were more interested in a visually engaging syllabus than a text-heavy one. Hence, high-quality course design is rare and challenging to replicate, significantly enhancing e-book integration and student engagement [7]. Also, understanding the type of content publishers should produce to engage students and encourage e-book usage is important. Substantial information combined with a user-friendly e-book interface can capture students' attention and foster acceptance of e-books. In the different perspective of the study, Zhang *et al*. [24] mentioned that teachers' intention to continue using this e-book is significantly influenced by their perceived usefulness and attitude towards this e-book.

In addition, university support is identified as a critical factor in ensuring the success of e-book acceptance. The analysis reveals a significant correlation between university support and e-book acceptance. This finding is supported by another study [25] that suggests universities should provide training and support for lecturers, staff, and students rather than simply mandating the use of e-books or online classes. By offering comprehensive support services, universities can create an environment that promotes student success and well-being. According to Ngafeeson and Sun [26], the effects of technology and system exposure on students' acceptance of e-books. This means that support in terms of technology plays an essential role in increasing the adoption level of students' e-book usage. They found that students' exposure to new technology positively affects the acceptance of e-books.

The study also highlights the significant role instructors play in e-book acceptance. This finding is consistent with previous research [27], [28] emphasizing the positive impact of instructors' readiness to learn and implement technology on the learning process. Therefore, instructors must take the lead in embracing and encouraging students to adopt new technologies such as e-books. These three elements are essential resources for effective online teaching and learning. From a different point of view, teachers should know more about what students need and better understand how to use appropriate methods and media to attract students' interest and motivation so that they are more active. Learning becomes more efficacious [29]. Hence, the role of the lecturer is essential. This is because it will be effective depending on the teacher's ability to manage the class. A teacher who has not mastered the concepts cannot teach well [28], [29].

However, the analysis did not establish a significant effect of accessibility, computer competency, and infrastructure on e-book acceptance. This finding is supported by Okan [30] that suggests computers are primarily used for internet browsing or gaming, and the suitability of computer applications to the curriculum needs to be considered. Furthermore, e-books do not require specific software skills, as students can access them using commonly available applications like Google Chrome. By ensuring that students have the necessary digital skills and access to relevant software and hardware, universities can enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and research in the digital age. Hence, to encourage the student's engagement in e-learning, the platform needs to be student- and teacher-friendly [31].

5. CONCLUSION

In today's technological era, embracing new technology is essential across various industries, including education. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed Malaysia's education system. This transformation has impacted the management of universities, administration, lecturers, and students. These changes have led to adopting new technologies, such as e-books, Google Meet, and Webex, for teaching and learning processes in higher education.

Based on the study's findings, several key factors must be emphasized to ensure successful teaching and learning processes. Lecturers should embrace e-books and prepare engaging content for the syllabus while also receiving support from the university. It is also essential to ensure that lecturers and students have good access to information. The acceptance and implementation of e-books are expected to impact the education system positively.

However, this study still has some limitations that suggest the need for cautious interpretation. Initially, only undergraduate students between 18 and 25 were included, which is a somewhat limited sample. Previous research has shown that gender and age differences influence people's willingness to adopt technology and their decision-making processes. Nevertheless, considering that undergraduate students primarily use e-books, this study can provide valuable insights into the level of acceptance of e-books among the student population at UiTM City Campus Melaka. As a recommendation for future research, it would be beneficial to expand the sample to include other campuses or universities to improve the generalizability of the findings. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the level of acceptance of e-books among students.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

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C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Derived data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author [AFA] on request.

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