MQA INFO APPLICATION: THE USAGE AMONG STUDENTS OF DIPLOMA IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (PROGRAMMING) AT POLITEKNIK SULTAN ABDUL HALIM MU'ADZAM SHAH (POLIMAS)

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Abstract

MQA Info Application is an android application that takes the name from Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) Information Application. The main purpose of MQA is to carry out Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) as a basis for quality assurance of higher education and point of reference criteria and standards for national qualifications. MQA act as a single body to supervise and coordinate quality assurance and accreditation of higher education. Therefore, this android application developed to meet the requirements of accreditation by the MQA and thus ensure that the program Diploma in Information Technology (Programming) in POLIMAS recognized by this agency. This application is specially developed for students and lecturers in the Information and Communication Technology Department (ICTD) POLIMAS to help convey important information related programme Diploma in Information Technology (Programming) such as Programme Synopsis, Programme Structure, Programme Aims, Course Information and Job Prospect. The application was introduced on students and lecturers in March 2015 and has been used extensively in ICTD. This paper will provide a result of the usage of this application among the POLIMAS students. This result suggested that this MQA Info Application is effective and the level of usage is high considering the STRONG relationship between constructs which this has led to assist and help students in obtaining information they needed.

Keywords: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), MQA Info Application, Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (POLIMAS), Usage of application

1. Introduction

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is a statutory body in Malaysia set up under the Malaysian Qualifications Act 2007 to accredit academic programs provided by educational institutions providing post-secondary or higher education and facilitate the accreditation and articulation of qualifications. Institutions whose programs have been accredited can use MQA recognition in their advertisements or any other statement. These programs can be considered for recognition by the government for the purpose of employment in the public sector. Accreditation is a status or achievement as a result of quality assessment by MQA. It is a commitment by MQA to all stakeholders in higher education by which for instance; students, parents, employer that the program accredited by MQA is quality-assured. It consider as a basis for other parties to recognize the programs for a variety of reasons. Accreditation status by MQA has many advantages. Besides being a benchmark for quality program, it also has other advantages such as students are eligible to apply for loan from funding agencies such as National Higher Fund (PTPTN), students are eligible to continue their studies in higher education institutions, and students can be considered for employment in the public sector (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004).

MQA Info Application is an application which provides information about Diploma in Information Technology (Programming) that lead to Diploma study. This application is specific for students and lecturer under Information and Communication Technology Department (ICTD). It also provides programme descriptions, the requirements needed to obtain a Diploma, and a clear outline of the procedural steps that students need to follow. This application will replace the existing *Programme Handbook Diploma in Information Technology (Programming)* that provided to the student and lecturer. This application contains not only static information but also providing various features and functions for students and lecturers.

This research has been conducted in *Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah* (POLIMAS) which located in Bandar Darulaman, Jitra, about 25 kilometres from Alor Setar, the capital of Kedah. POLIMAS was inaugurated in February 1984. POLIMAS is a comprehensive, learner centered higher education institution that serves its local and regional learners and their communities through high-quality and flexible education and training. It is aimed to develop student's employability skills to meet the needs of a more dynamic economy, which values innovation and productivity. Programmes include a global perspective that will enable graduates to make a valuable contribution to the wider society as it changes in response to regional and international competition and demand.

1.1 Purpose of study

This research has been conducted in *Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah* (POLIMAS), Kedah. It will determine the usage of MQA Info Application towards students of Diploma in Information Technology (Programming) at POLIMAS. Furthermore, the result will show the level usage of using the application in order to help students gain more information about their programme.

2. Literature Review

Research on application

The World-Wide-Web and Internet has tremendously made it possible as a platform to distribute prototypes to large number of users constantly at low price. Literally, in principle, the internet could become a large-scale-test-bed for gathering data about application use with actual users of the systems being tested (Hilbert & Redmiles, 1998). The year 2007 was an evolutional era where the touch screen mobile phone had been launched. This had evolved the rapid growth of applications and services offered on mobile platforms. Moreover, this had led the communication, cultural, media and entertainment practices transformation which attracts the rising interest by content providers, governments and audience measurement companies to analyze the application usage (Rivron, Khan, Charneau, & Chrisment, 2016). Due to this growth of applications, usability and services of application has been the subject of intensive research (Manitiu & Marcu, 2016). Understanding the user's context and even culture is necessary for assessment of a mobile phone, and presents their experience with several methods of obtaining usage information in real-life context (Choi, Song, Lee, & Bae, 2013). Moreover, there have been several researches on application usage which they consider some common metrics of smartphone usage, such as usage duration, frequency, temporal and diurnal patterns. Some of these studies relate smartphone usage with contextual factors such as usage location and social surrounding, geography and etc (Rivron, Khan, Charneau, & Chrisment, 2016).

3. Methodology

This quantitative research is based on a survey conducted by using a questionnaire to identify the acquisition of information for personal interest, the usability, the accessibility, the content presentation, the content quality, navigation, security, satisfaction and uniqueness and originality. Research design includes the entire process and phases in the study based on the purpose of study. The research design is more focused on the level of usage of *MQA Info Application* towards students of Diploma in Information Technology (Programming) at POLIMAS.

3.1 Instruments and procedures

This survey is done over 70 respondents of POLIMAS students from semester 3 until semester 6 from batch June 2016. 70 of these respondents are purposely selected and only 50 random respondents participated. All respondents aged between 18 years old and 30 years old which have used this application. According to Naresh (1999), the use of questionnaires is to ensure data comparison and to improve the speed and accuracy of the findings and facilitate data processing.

The results of questionnaire were collected from 70 respondents of POLIMAS students from semester 3 until semester 6 from batch June 2016. Questionnaires were distributed to 70 POLIMAS respondents through questionnaire form. Their feedbacks were collected and analyzed. Data collected will be analyzed using correlation analysis where the variables have been measured to describe the strength and direction of relationship between two variables. Data or information obtained was analyzed by using the SPSS version 21.

4. Data analysis

This research was using correlation analysis in determining the level of usage of *MQA Info Application* towards students. Reliability analysis, which assesses the internal consistency among sets of survey items was employed to measure the reliability of section B of the survey which concerning the factors of *MQA Info Application* and Acquisition of information for personal Interest. Cronbach's alpha value, usually ranging from 0 to 1, was used to report the reliability.

4.1 Result

The research question investigated the relationship between *MQA Info Application* and Acquisition of information for personal Interest. The constructs involve are Usability, Accessibility, Content Presentation, Content Quality, Navigation, The Security, Satisfaction, and Uniqueness and Originality which correlate with Acquisition of info.

Table 1: Correlations between Variables and Acquisition of info

Variable	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info	Acquisition of info
Usability	**.701****							
	-.056							
Accessibility		.248**						
		.167						
Content			**.000***					
Presentation			**.788**					
Content				.000*				
Quality				.733				
Navigation					**.000***			
					.729			
The Security						.001*		
						.438		
Satisfaction							**.000***	
							.763	
Uniqueness								.000*
originality								.668

*p<0.05; **p>0.05

The Cronbach's alpha value, which usually ranging from 0 to 1, was used to report the reliability. From the correlation analysis, the value of the relationship between Content Presentation, Content Quality, Navigation, Satisfaction and Acquisition of info are STRONG. Whilst the value

of the relationship between Uniqueness and Originality and Acquisition of Info is AVERAGE and the value of the relationship between Usability, Accessibility and Acquisition of info are WEAK. This result suggested that this MQA Info Application is effective and the level of usage is high considering the STRONG relationship between constructs which this has led to assist and help students in obtaining information they needed. Based on significant value 0.05, only two of the constructs have the value of $p>0.05$.

4.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research has some limitations whereby it needed further consideration in a few aspects in order to make the result more acceptable. The limitation is considering the coverage of the research whereby it focuses on one unit analysis. *Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah* (POLIMAS) was selected to be the institution in turn to study whether the *MQA Info Application* is effective in helping them in obtaining information that they needed. Given that the results of this research were based on one sample of institution, thus, attempts to generalize these results must be done with caution. Therefore, in turn to gain more fair and accurate findings, it is recommended that the future research should include more IHL particularly in the Malaysian context.

5. Conclusion

As for conclusion, based from the results, there are few of the constructs had generated a 'strong' relationships which this bring the means that this *MQA Info Application* do have its effectiveness in providing information to POLIMAS student. In a nutshell, this application had achieved its purposes. This is due to the fact that there are no 'very weak' relationships among constructs based on Cronbach's alpha value, which usually range from 0 to 1.

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