Sustaining Job Performance through Technology Acceptance with Usage of Whatsapp Mobile Application

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ABSTRACT

Companies are now recognizing that their employees require a spectrum of mobile applications in order to achieve maximum efficiency at the workplace. Mobile applications such as WeChat, Twitter and WhatsApp via smartphones have become influential tools and extensively used by employees at the workplace. This state-of-the-art technology in communication has penetrated various fields, including routine administrative jobs at the workplace. The objective of this research is to investigate the acceptance of the WhatsApp mobile application for formal use among support staff at The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (DBKU). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention of the users in using WhatsApp are the variables measured for job performance. The researchers utilized convenience sampling, whereby a total of 105 employees from two departments participated in the investigation. Data was collected using a set of self-administered questionnaires which was adapted from Davis. The findings revealed that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of WhatsApp as a means of communication were significant for job performance at DBKU. The employees felt more competent during their formal interaction

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at the workplace as less effort was needed while using WhatsApp. The existence of features which were user-friendly and easy operational functions helped to create positive attitudes when utilizing the application. Faster feedback, ease of use, and convenience were some of the reasons for the employees' willingness to use WhatsApp for communication at the workplace.

Keywords: *WhatsApp; Behavioral intention; Job performance; Public sector*

INTRODUCTION

Companies are now recognizing that their employees require a spectrum of mobile applications in order to achieve maximum efficiency at the workplace. In the working environment, communication is crucial to ensure employees can achieve the company's goals when dealing with their routine tasks. By incorporating technology in communication, employees can improve their knowledge, performance and achieve the organization's goals. With so many different types of communication channels and mobile access at their disposal, employees find various ways to complete the tasks given and achieve their target. Undeniably, the impact of mobile technologies at the workplace has driven tremendous changes in workplace communication. Thus, mobile applications are increasingly being utilized at the workplace, making the role and task of an employee more modern. These have also led to employees becoming more independent and more flexible (Scornavacca & Barnes, 2008).

In this research, communication is defined as a process in which the transfer of information occurs from one person to another, and common understanding exists through interaction (Lunenburg, 2010). If communication is ineffective, then the coordination of work is impossible to be performed, and it will affect the employees' performance (Buelah, 2016). For effective communication or interaction to occur, employees must be able to communicate well and can invite other people to participate in the interaction. Thus, the employees can share their opinion on accomplishing tasks given and can work as a team. The efficiency of a task is improved by good communication, and this paper presents the impact of WhatsApp as a mobile application to support formal

communication at the workplace. However, the degree of the acceptance of technology differs between the private and public sectors. According to Peres and Mesquita (2014), the private sectors see technology as an important enabler for enhancing their competitive advantage, which may not be as critical for the government sector. The public sector operates in an environment with little or no competition as compared to the private sector Therefore, the impact of technology acceptance among staff in the private sector differs from the public sector.

Today in Malaysia, as wireless technologies evolve, mobile revolution brings dramatic and fundamental changes at the workplace. It continues to create numerous impacts in various facets of our lives, including at the workplace, whether in big cities or small towns. State-of-the-art technology mobile applications which act as a messaging application are widely used in many organizations in Malaysia which help the employees to communicate easily. According to O'Leary, O'Leary and O'Leary (2015), mobile applications, or mobile apps, are the add-on programs for mobile devices, including smartphones or tablets. In addition, Twitter, LINE, WeChat and Instagram are some common types of messaging applications used in the corporate world where the employees can communicate or interact more conveniently with their bosses, subordinates, colleagues, clients, friends or even their family members. Since the introduction of smartphones, tablets, and wireless connections to the Internet, now many types of mobile messaging applications are available, especially WhatsApp. WhatsApp has gained popularity over other mobile messaging applications. Trends in WhatsApp's user numbers continued to grow steadily with 2 billion active users around the world in March 2020, as reported by Clement (2020). In Malaysia, 91% from 26 million social media users favored WhatsApp compared to other messaging applications such as Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WeChat and LINE (Kemp, 2020a). There are clear consequences for choosing this application in communicating certain content to people. The features of WhatsApp which allow users to send and receive a real-time text message at no cost to individuals or groups make more people use this application as a medium for communication (Anshari & Alas, 2015; Wong, Dastane, Nurhamizan & Muhamad, 2019).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Evaluating technology acceptance factors toward mobile application, especially using WhatsApp as the means of communication in affecting job performance of employees is still at its infancy in Sarawak. As the movement from social media toward messaging applications has increased tremendously (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulus, Levy, & Nielson, 2018), it is time that such an investigation be conducted in Sarawak, too. Thus, the objective of this research is to explore which of the predictors in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) is the most dominant factor that has an impact on job performance among the support staff at The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (DBKU). This is significant because the actual application of a particular mobile application determines the relevance of such a technology at DBKU which can lead to the organization deciding on the type of technology to be used, to form a Behavioral Intention. This will lead to the support staff utilizing that particular mobile application at the workplace to ease their work and increase performance. Henceforth, such an application of technology may help to overcome existing workplace communication problems at The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (DBKU). Previous communication problems that existed using the traditional modes of communication, causing a delay in office management, could be overcome. Nevertheless, perceptions of using mobile applications at DBKU also varies, depending on the experience, age and gender of the employees and not merely due to technology changes such as mobile applications or tablet applications.

The connected employee is set to become a reality, and many employees in Sarawak are unprepared for it. The rise in technology-enabled devices, such as mobile applications equip employees with the tools to perform better, but many have yet to perceive its usefulness and are concerned about the ease of use of such technology to enhance job performance. The objective of this research is also to investigate the acceptance of the WhatsApp mobile application for formal use among support staff at The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (henceforth DBKU). The hypothesis is that the relationship between WhatsApp usage and employee engagement in using it in a formal context in the organization is assumed to be favorable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as Theoretical Framework

The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use technology. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis has been widely used in determining the level of acceptance of individuals when dealing with technology especially in the field of information system (IS) (Alharbi & Drew, 2014; Mojtahed, Nunes, & Peng, 2011), education sector (Alharbi et al., 2014) and mobile commerce (Lee, Tao, & Chang, 2015) but is still quite limited in human resource. TAM is based on the social psychology theory, in particular, Theory of Reason Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) where technology acceptance is determined by users' reflection and reasoning which will affect their behavior, action, intention and their internal belief. TAM is made up of three factors: perceived usefulness, ease of use and behavioral intention. They are used to measure the level of acceptance of users in dealing with technology. Perceived usefulness refers to a person's belief that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance whereas perceived ease of use is when a person believes that using a particular system, would be free of effort. Meanwhile, behavioral intention is defined as the actual use of a particular IT system which therefore determines the technology acceptance (Alharbi et al., 2014). Hence, this model is very useful in determining the level of technology acceptance among support staff at The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (see Figure 1).
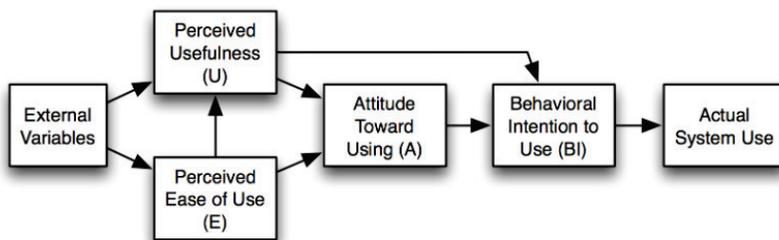

Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model version 1 (Davis, Boggozi and Warshaw, 1989)

Another reason the TAM model (1989) was used in this investigation is it is a well-regarded theory of technology acceptance and has been widely researched. Designers, purchasers, and others involved with IT projects are routinely advised to use the TAM to aid the design or purchasing process, training and informational sessions, implementation, and other activities. The extent that the factors predicting acceptance are controllable can be strong levers for acceptance and use. TAM has a strong track record in numerous industries which was a useful theoretical tool in this study. The recent increase in the use of TAM appears justified, with many of the relationships specified by TAM repeatedly validated in workplace settings. To arrive at the model, its originators adopted the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a general social-psychological/behavioral theory that had been proven useful for understanding a variety of behaviors.

Perceived Usefulness

According to Davis (1989), perceived usefulness is the degree which affects the users' attitude in using technology. If he or she perceived the technology or system as beneficial for his or her usage, then the level of acceptance of that particular technology or system would be very high. If not, he or she would resist using the system or technology or would face techno-stress (Joo, Lim, & Kim, 2016; Yao & Cao, 2017). A study done by Lee et al. (2015) has proven that perceived usefulness positively affected the customers' satisfaction in using the life insurer's App services. When the customers felt that the benefits of using the Apps were valuable for them, then the resistance to using them would decrease. Thus, this factor influenced the customers' attitude to keep on using the Apps freely. On the other hand, if the perceived usefulness was negative, the customers would stop using the Apps and would turn or try to find other more user-friendly apps to use. As a result, the insurance company would lose their customers. The result of Lee's research is consistent with previous research done by Mac Callum, Jeffrey and Kinshuk (2014). When people perceived the benefits of new technology, they would likely adopt the technology to fit into their environmental setting. For instance, the usage of messaging application in customer service allows employees to entertain multiple clients simultaneously without having to put them on hold for an extended period which affects their emotional state. The

customers too, do not have to deal with inconveniences such as waiting in line or on opening times to perform their business.

Perceived Ease of Use

As defined by Davis (1989), perceived ease of use is when the users face difficulties in using the technology due to the complicated features or too many steps involved which result in resistance to the system. Research done by Salman, Mohd Azul, Mohd Yusof, Normah, Abdul Latiff, Chang and Suhana (2014) found that ease of use could influence the attitude of support staff either directly or indirectly toward the usage of technology. In other words, ease of use determines the expectations of an employee toward technology. A study by Bugembe (2010), showed that the Technology Acceptance Model could identify reasons users accept or reject information technology and demonstrated how the system influenced the users' acceptance. Employees expect technology to be user-friendly in order to assist them to perform their work better. Aldholay, Isaac, Abdullah, Abdulsalam and Al-Shibami (2018) revealed that the system's quality such as easy to use, flexibility and user-friendliness influenced technology usage, which encouraged people to adopt the technology. If employees feel satisfied with the technology, they will continue using it in performing a task, and subsequently, it will impact their efficiency and productivity. By failing to understand how customers perceive the quality of service is to overlook the importance customer satisfaction has on driving customer loyalty and repeat business.

Behavioral Intention

Behavioral intention is a factor that causes people to use technology. The behavioral intention (BI) is influenced by the attitude (A) which is the general impression of the technology. According to TAM (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989), behavioral intention is the actual act of using the technology which shows that an individual accepts it. It means that when individuals feel that the technology displays the benefits and the features which are user-friendly, the feelings of willingness to use the technology or system will be very high. For instance, a study conducted by Alharbi et al. (2014) confirmed that behavioral intention was positively associated with the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) among

faculty staff at Saqra University in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this research are similar to those from Bugembe's (2010) whereby if the employees had a positive attitude toward using the technology, the actual usage of the technology would become easy for them. The technology should display features that would encourage favorable behavioral intention from employees and enhance their positive behavior. This would be demonstrated in their readiness to embrace the technology. In contrast, the negative behavioral intention would restrict employees from using it.

TAM and Employees' Performance

Nowadays, mobile applications are used extensively in the business world in promoting productivity and improving employees' job performance. With the existence of technology incorporated into mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, workers are willing to use the technology which can assist them to perform their tasks better. According to Newman et al. (2018), about 54% of Malaysians used WhatsApp when reading news and for communication purposes as compared to 12% who used Facebook for the same purpose. Besides the user-friendly features of WhatsApp, employees feel WhatsApp helps them to perform their work much faster in terms of getting feedback and responses from their colleagues, top management or even their clients. For instance, several studies have been conducted on the impact of technology on task performance. Studies conducted by Chung, Lee and Choi (2015) and Di Pietro, Pantano and Di Virgilio (2014) recognized that TAM enhanced service efficiency, improved productivity and increased the firms' performance which had a direct impact on the employees' performance.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp was founded by Jan Koum and Brian Acton, who have worked for twenty years at Yahoo. In 2014, WhatsApp joined Facebook but continued to operate as a mobile application with the purpose of building a messaging service that works reliably anywhere in the world (WhatsApp.com, 2019). The name WhatsApp was inspired from a pun on the phrase What's Up which means "What's happening" or "What's the matter"- a phrase generally used to ask about the general status of friends, family and colleagues. WhatsApp started as an alternative to SMS. Now it supports sending and receiving a variety of media: text, photos, videos,

documents, and location, voice calls, video calls and conference calls. WhatsApp messages and calls are secured with end-to-end encryption, meaning that no third party, including WhatsApp, can read or listen to them (WhatsApp.com, 2019). WhatsApp undoubtedly is now the world's most common instant messaging application, used by billions of people around the world (Wood, 2017). Because of its secured communication system, in the recent past, WhatsApp has made its presence available everywhere, from the classrooms (Bukaliya, Rupande & Region, 2013) to lending money in Durban, from professional cooks to monitoring election-fairness in South Africa and even for issuing court summons in India (Rong, 2016). This app has a very cost-efficient and effective way of communication within and outside organizations, institutions and businesses (O'Hara, Massimi, Harper, Rubens & Morris, 2014).

Convenience and other benefits such as time-saving, fast, inexpensive are some of the reasons people are willing to use WhatsApp application as the replacement medium for communication (Anshari et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2019). As long as the mobile application can fulfil the needs of the users, the tendency to use it is very high. In the corporate or business world, the use of WhatsApp has taken over electronic mail as the means of communication due to the efficiency which will indirectly affect the job performance of the employees (Richter, 2014). WhatsApp can be useful for a small or large-scale company to create and implement active business activities and social engagement with the public (Moreno-Munoz, Bellido-Outeirino, Siano & Gomez-Nieto, 2016; Modak & Mupepi, 2017). The organization can utilize WhatsApp to effectively improve client engagement as employees could respond to the client's enquiries in real time. In the public sector, this mobile messaging application can be a vital aspect of public engagement due to the nature of this mobile application which enables the authorities to interact with the public. WhatsApp started as an alternative to SMS, and now it has overtaken the platform for conversation and information sharing among many smartphone users. WhatsApp application has features which allow the one-to-many form of communication and group-based interaction. WhatsApp is an application that allows users to exchange messages in real time to an individual or group through mobile devices. What has driven WhatsApp to be widely accepted is the application can be in multiple platforms, in addition to decreasing costs and the convenience of mobile data plan (Anshari et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2019). Besides exchanging text messages, WhatsApp

also allows users to share pictures, documents, location, videos, contact and audio in real time (Church & Oliveira, 2013).

Messages sent via WhatsApp can be received instantly. By having information instantly, it enables employees, especially in a different department, to move forward and ahead with their routine tasks (Huang & Yen; 2003). Zaifunizam and Siti Zobidah (2018) investigated the usage of WhatsApp in relation to employee engagement in a telecommunication company in Malaysia. Their findings showed that there was a connection between the use of Whatsapp and employee engagement within the organization's two departments comprising 200 people where almost everyone used the application either for personal or work purposes but more for the latter at the workplace. Similarly, a survey-based study of 200 respondents conducted by Ainaa Idayu Ahmad Fadhly and Najiah (2017) in one of the public sectors in Malaysia discovered that instant messaging application had a positive impact on work performance. Employees could request help from their co-workers as well as share information to complete their task. Therefore, communication in an organization could be enhanced, thus contributing to better performance at the workplace. Milfadzhilah, Nashrah, Noor Haty, Nornabila, Mohd Azmil and Nur Elimtiaz (2018) proposed the use of WhatsApp in organizations such as hospitals where employees can share information easily, fast and in real time. The result has shown that organization can improve the performance of employees because it is a quick information-sharing method and can reach people easily.

Nowadays, Telegram and other chats are similar applications used to communicate by professionals. However, Telegram is not widely available yet. Digital Trend 2020 reported more than 1.6 billion WhatsApp users in January 2020 despite the growing number of users in other messaging platforms (Kemp, 2020b). For instance, in Malaysia, 91% of 26 million social media users use WhatsApp compared to other messaging applications such as Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WeChat, Skype, Line and Telegram (Kemp, 2020a). This is because not every employee uses Telegram and other instant messaging applications as much as WhatsApp. The number of stickers, emojis in the WhatsApp store is much higher compared to other applications. Video calling is available, too. Organizations can manage, maximize and turn human resources into valuable client services. According to Rice, Evans, Pearce, Sivunen, Vitak

and Treem (2017), WhatsApp Business API allows enterprises or organizations to communicate with their audience on a chat app they are already enjoying. This communication is conducted in an efficient and convenient way, making it possible for enterprises to scale their communications, grow brand loyalty and fuel engagement, which are vital in today's business world. Besides, the user-friendly features that exist in WhatsApp make employees feel confident to use it when communicating with their subordinates as well as with the top management (Pekkanen, 2012). The Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak (DBKU) has been selected to measure the acceptance and adoption of WhatsApp among employees because one of the researchers' parents is an employee at DBKU and has direct communication with the staff and initial investigation showed that the usage of WhatsApp could be an important means of formal communication among the staff at DBKU.

The Digital New Report by Newman et al. (2018) highlighted that individuals aged less than 35 years old were the heaviest users of messenger applications such as Facebook Messenger, Viber, Telegrams, Twitter or WhatsApp. Privacy is the main issue where the growth in using the messaging application has increased compared to social media such as Facebook. As a result, people turn their interest from social media platforms such as Facebook to the messaging application. In addition people prefer to use WhatsApp for a private discussion about news or take part in a group discussion (Zaifunizam et al., 2018). In the corporate world, mobile applications have taken over the traditional way in communication such as electronic mail or fixed-line telephone when handling their work-related as well as their personal matters. With the straightforward functions in the mobile application which enable the users to utilize them at anytime and anywhere, users' intention have shifted to the mobile application from the traditional way (Mojtahed et al., 2011).

Based on the literature review above, the conceptual framework as displayed in Figure 2 below was developed for this research. The framework was adapted from Davis' (1989) Model of Technology Acceptance by highlighting the three factors: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention toward job performance of support staff at DBKU.
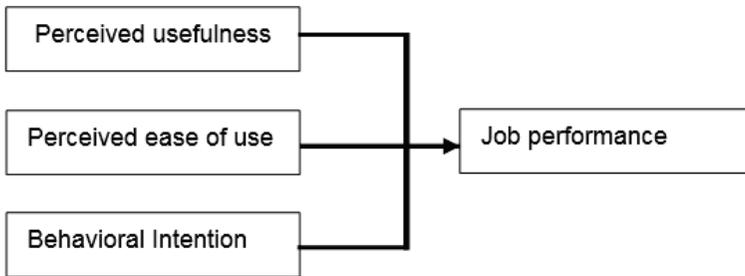
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Sustaining Job Performance through Technology Acceptance with WhatsApp Mobile Application

METHODOLOGY

Since the objective of this research was to examine the most dominant predictors in the model that has an impact on the employees' job performance, multiple regression was the best technique to use for data analysis (Pallant, 2002) as it could confirm which one of the predictors in TAM contributed the most toward the job performance of employees at DBKU. The respondents involved in this research were support staff working in two different departments: Human Resource and Administrative Departments. This place was selected to test the model because the findings would further highlight the level of WhatsApp usage among DBKU staff to assimilate into the digital world and reinvent DBKU management through the use of technology.

Since the total number of staff for these two departments was 140 employees, the study utilized the suggested sample size as recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and the number selected was 103 respondents. A name list taken from the Department of Human Resource was used as the sampling frame for this research. In accordance with the organization's policy, permission to distribute the questionnaire was limited to two departments. However, the researcher managed to collect 105 answered and usable questionnaires out of 110 sets of questionnaires distributed where the response rate was 95.45%. The convenience sampling method was chosen even though the research was conducted at a specific identified place for data collection because the relative cost and time required to carry out a convenience sample was small in comparison

to probability sampling techniques. Since the researchers were given only three months to conduct this study, such a method was deemed as appropriate.

The instrument used for this research was adapted from TAM Model (Davis, 1989). The questionnaire was divided into four sections, namely sections A, B, C and D. For section A, nominal and ordinal techniques were used for demographic background such as gender, age, race, marital status and educational background of the respondents. Interval technique was used for both sections B and C. Section B was divided into three parts according to the variables in the model: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention. Both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of used had six items each, whereas behavioral intention had three items. Section D, which was for employees' performance, consisted of five items. The Five-Point Likert Scale measuring the degree of agreement was used as the response choice throughout this questionnaire. This instrument was selected because it was easy for the respondents to understand the questions. Working with quantitative data, it was also easy for the researchers to draw conclusions from the responses. Furthermore, because Likert Scale questions use a scale, the respondents were not forced to express an either-or opinion, rather allowing them to be neutral. Once all responses had been received, it was very easy to analyze them. Data was analyzed through the following procedures, namely using descriptive statistics, normality test, reliability analysis, univariate analysis and multivariate analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic Data

Table 1 below summarizes the descriptive statistics of respondents' demographics. Majority of the respondents in this research were male participants, which accounted for 61% while 39% of them were female. A total of 31.4% of the respondents were between 36 to 45 years of age, comprising the highest number of respondents in this research, whereas only 14.3% of the total number of respondents were below 25 years old. As for the respondents' ethnicity, 75.2% of them were Malays, while the Ibans and Chinese made up 15.2% and 9.5%, respectively.

Married respondents also comprised the highest number of respondents in this study, at 70.5% as compared to those who were single at only 29.5%. In terms of educational background, more than half of the respondents obtained at least *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) while those who obtained a certificate represented 53.3% of the respondents.

Table I Descriptive Analysis of the Samples

| Variables | Respondents' Demographic | | |
	Label	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Gender	Male	64	61
	Female	41	39
Age	Below 25	15	14.3
	25-35	27	25.7
	36-45	30	28.6
	Above 45	30	28.6
Race	Malay	79	75.2
	Chinese	10	9.5
	Iban	16	15.2
Marital Status	Single	31	29.5
	Married	74	70.5
Educational Background	SPM/Certificate	56	53.3
	Diploma/STPM	26	24.8
	Degree	23	21.9

Normality Test

In statistics, normality test is used to determine whether a random variable is normally distributed or not. This is vital as parametric statistical tests require the normality assumption (Salkind, 2014). To check for normality, the skewness value was observed. Normality distributed variable will generate skewness value around zero, and acceptable values are between ± 1.0 and the skewness for all the three predictors were between ± 1.0. Further investigation was conducted using a graphical method to check the normality of the data. Graphical approaches that

assess Univariate normality was conducted using a normal Q-Q plot. Normality is assumed if the data values fall near the diagonal line. Since a normal distribution is indicated if the data points fall on or are near to the diagonal line as it appears in this case, it can be concluded that the data for this research is normal.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to determine the internal consistency of measuring item under each component or variable, which were perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, behavioral intention and job performance. The values of Cronbach's Alpha in this research are 0.887, 0.903 and 0.922, respectively, for the variables of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention as predictors for job performance. For job performance, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is also high with 0.935. It is important to note here that all reliability measures have exceeded the minimum value of 0.6, as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Hence, it is proven that the items used to measure the influence of job performance in this research are reliable.

Univariate Analysis

Further analysis was done using One-Way ANOVA to examine whether differences exist in job performance among the age groups of

Table II: Results of Multiple Comparison Test

Age	Multiple Comparison Test	
	Age	*p-value*
Below 25	25-35	0.116
	36-45	0.035*
	Above 45	0.898
25-35	Below 25	0.116
	36-45	0.557
	Above 45	0.079
36-45	Below 25	0.035*
	25-35	0.557
	Above 45	0.015*
Above 45	Below 25	0.898
	25-35	0.079
	36-45	0.015*

respondents. Results from One-Way ANOVA show there is a significant difference in job performance among age groups. Hence, further analysis of multiple comparison test (post-hoc test) using Least Significant Different (LSD) method was done to inspect which group of respondents shows a difference in their job performance. This result confirmed the report made by Newman et al. (2018) in his Reuters Institute Digital News Report where he highlighted that people in the age category of 35 years and above are more likely to use mobile apps as compared to other age groups. Table II shows the details of the result.

Multivariate Analysis

Several assumptions need to be fulfilled before testing the predictors using multiple regression (Nunnally, 1978).   All the assumptions on the normality, homoscedasticity, tolerance, VIF value and Durbin-Watson were conducted, which confirmed that the data fulfilled the assumptions. Multiple regression was selected to answer the objective of this research, and the results show that among the three predictors, only perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the mobile application are significant in predicting job performance (p-value < 0.05). However, the behavioral intention of using mobile application is insignificant in predicting job performance (p-value > 0.05). R-square (R^2) value as presented in Table III indicates that 61.1% of the total variation in job performance can be explained using the three predictors, usefulness, ease of use and intention of use of the mobile application using the regression model. The implication of these results is that at the employees' level, some may find that using WhatsApp at the workplace makes their jobs more complex and satisfying, while others may find themselves bewildered and suddenly incompetent.

Based on the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention, the level of acceptance is therefore high. Thus, the implication is that the use of WhatsApp can greatly contribute to the fulfilment of administrative matters in DBKU. It can have a huge impact on the Human Resource and Administrative departments at DBKU. It would allow DBKU to improve its internal processes and administrative competencies as a whole.

Table III: Results of Multiple Regressions

Variables	Result of Multiple Regression				
	Coefficient	*t*	*p-value*	*R^2*	*F Test*
Constant	-0.136	-0.437	0.663		
Perceived usefulness	0.414	3.949	0.000*		
Perceived ease of use	0.474	3.785	0.000*	0.611	55.415 (0.000)*
Behavioral Intention	0.124	1.274	0.206		

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the acceptance of WhatsApp application toward job performance among employees at the Commission of the City of Kuching North, Sarawak. Three predictors which were perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and behavioral intention were used to measure the acceptance factors contributing to mobile application usage in improving performance at the workplace. The empirical result of this research revealed significant and positive relationships between employees' job performance and usage of WhatsApp on two different predictors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These two predictors were important factors in evaluating technology usage, as proposed by Davis (1989).

The results revealed that employees were able to improve efficiency in performing daily tasks due to technology adoption. The employees had positive acceptance toward using WhatsApp as a means of communication which could assist them to perform their work efficiently. Thus, these findings are in line with those of Milfadzhilah et al. (2018) and Ainaa Idayu et al. (2017) which revealed that employees' performance in the public sector improved through communication in WhatsApp. The features offered in the mobile application not only enabled personal and group interactions between employees but also the sharing of documents instantly (Huang et al.; 2003). Besides, that formal and informal communications are crucial, especially when conducting important tasks,

including problem-solving and knowledge sharing at the workplace (Berjón, Beato & Mateos, 2015). The findings of this study revealed that WhatsApp approach allowed formal communication among employees which affected their performance effectively at the workplace. Therefore, WhatsApp is an effective tool for communication, replacing the traditional means of communication, such as email at the workplace, which is deemed to be ineffective (Ainaa Idayu et al., 2017).

The analysis also discovered perceived ease of use of WhatsApp showed a positive relationship toward job performance. The results showed that employees' attitude toward technology was influenced by the user-friendly and easy operational functions offered by WhatsApp. The respondents at DBKU anticipated less effort required in learning technology which contributed to the higher technology acceptance at the Human Resource and Administrative Department. A user-friendly mobile application motivates the employees to use it, therefore, improving their performance due to minimum time and effort required to learn the application (Davis, 1989; Kabra, Ramesh, Akhtar & Dash, 2017; Milfadzhilah et al.,2018). From the employees' perspective at DBKU, they felt more attached to the technology when only minimum learning effort was required as confirmed by Mac Callum et al. (2014). It could offer values to the employees at the Human Resource and Administrative Departments in DBKU. Failing to understand how the employees at Human Resource and Administrative Departments perceive the technology is akin to overlooking their acceptance toward it.

Previous studies demonstrated a similar result to this study. Lee et al. (2015) revealed that there was a positive relationship between people's attitude toward using mobile services in the life insurance industry. He suggested perceived usefulness, ease of use, and behavioral intention positively influenced customer satisfaction in the industry. This finding is also consistent with research done by Alqahtani and Mohammad (2015), despite having a different environmental setting.

While this study attempts to understand the factors affecting user acceptance toward the adoption of WhatsApp to improve job performance, this research also has some limitations. Firstly, the research was limited to only one organization. Thus, by extending future research to several organizations in a different environment setting and sector would

potentially offer a better generalization of employees' attitude toward technology. Secondly, employees' involvement in this research had to adhere to the organization's policy which restricts participation to two departments (Human Resource and Administrative Department) . Thus, future research should take into consideration an organization's policy to enable employees from different management levels to participate in such research. While WhatsApp is popular among employees in communication, top management may find interacting using a mobile application at the workplace unsuitable for conducting important tasks. Furthermore, future research should provide a further in-depth understanding of mobile messaging application usage using different evaluation models such as Task-Technology Fit (TTF). Nevertheless, the staff of DBKU should be commended for their efforts in wanting to utilize technology for official communication. The usage of technology will bring the city council closer to the people besides providing more effective services through feedback from the people.

CONCLUSION

Given the rapid advances and the increased dependence on technology, the question of how it is changing work and employment is highly salient for the management of organizations. It is also important to realize the need for such organizational behavior (using WhatsApp while conducting task) at the workplace to achieve greater efficiency. The evolution of technology at the workplace adds more value to the efficiency level of the employees' tasks and should not be considered as merely disruptive effects of the emerging information and communication technologies. Above all, the mobile application acts as a communication channel for employees in exchanging information in real time and engaging in conversation either with an individual or in a group. The outcomes of this study indicate that the application of WhatsApp brings many benefits at the workplace as it now plays a significant role at the workplace to improve performance. By allowing such technology, it may support well-timed decisions and improve the workplace environment. Thus, organizations need to allow mobile communication, such as WhatsApp at the workplace to ensure all employees are able to share work-related information in quick time.

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