

An Evaluation of Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang Website Regarding to its Acceptance Among Staff

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ABSTRACT

Website is a one stop terminal to a large volume of information and organizations websites have long been one of the important communication medium for relaying and providing information and interaction tool between staff, stakeholders and the organization. As such, this study is undertaken to evaluate Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Pahang website and its acceptance among staff based on the following four basic attributes namely: user friendliness; informativeness; suitability, and attractiveness. The research was conducted to evaluate the staff acceptance on the criteria of good website and to recommend actions to be taken to improve the website. An unsupervised questionnaire survey using 5 likert scale were distributed to all staff in UiTM Pahang. The questionnaires compose of part A with demographic profile and part B relates to acceptance towards campus website. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings show that user friendliness, informativeness and attractiveness falls within a good range whereas suitability is found to be satisfactory. Only 72% of the UiTM Pahang staff inclined to recommend the websites to their friends. Actions need to be taken to improve the website by incorporating more online services, creating more attractive design and making available latest information among others.

Keywords: *attractiveness, user friendliness, informativeness, suitability, acceptance*

Introduction

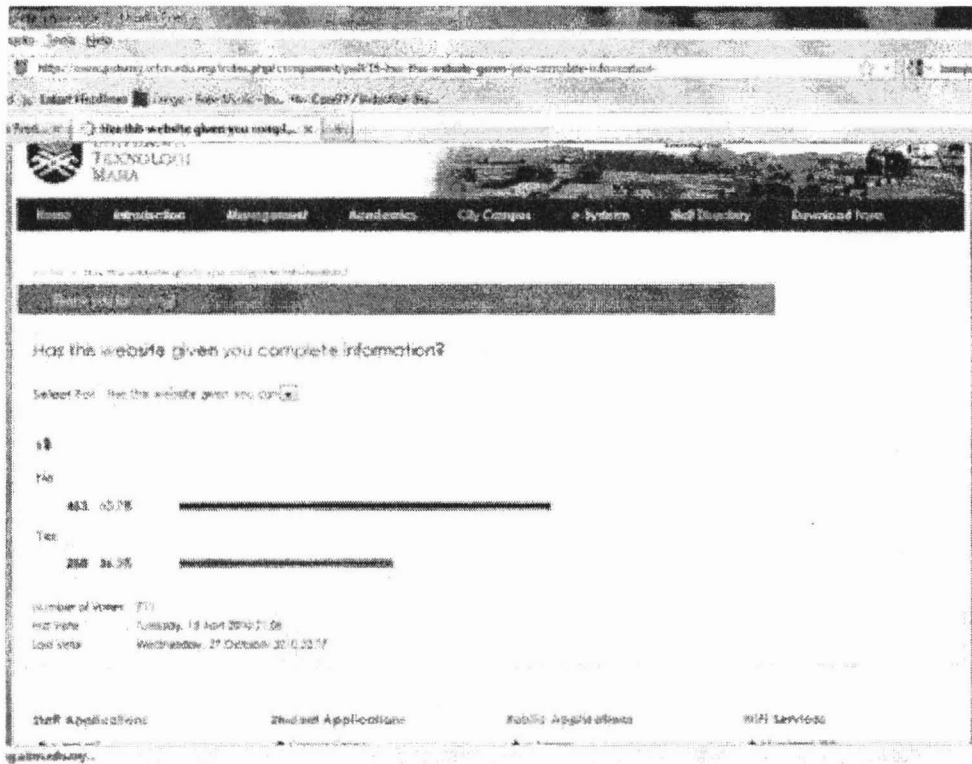
Website is a one stop terminal to a large volume of information content through internet. Its introduction has changed the way people search for information. Abanumy, Al-Badi and Mayhew (2005) stressed the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the delivery of information and services to citizens and business. The Web phenomenon has changed the way that people work and communicate.

In using website, the users sometimes had difficulty to find the right information as website does not have the capabilities to identify all human needs. Law and Chung (2003) made a similar claim, indicating the importance and difficulty of developing a set of detailed Website features that is useful to customers. The web developer in developing a website does not have specific criteria to guide them as most of the website have different features. Kasavana (2002), argued that it is difficult to develop such a set of specific criteria and that the industry should outline a set of popular Web-based features. Moreover Abanumy et al. (2005) found that website development requires different IT expertise in terms of accessibility, usability, security and user interface design.

Organizations websites have long been one of the important communication mediums for relaying and providing information and being an interaction tool between staff, stakeholders and the organization. This holds for with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) that established its own website. (UiTM) had been established as a unique university in Malaysia where several campuses are built around Malaysia with the main purpose of providing tertiary education to Bumiputras by offering various programmes especially at the diploma and first degree level. One of the campuses that stand in the east coast of Malaysia is UiTM Pahang. UiTM Pahang has more than 800 staff and more than 8000 students. As a university aspiring to be a world class university, a quality website is sorely needed. All UiTM state campuses developed their own websites without any standard as a reference in terms of contents, design and other essentials usually related to a website. As such, this study is undertaken to evaluate and gauge staff acceptance as to the user friendliness, informativeness, suitability, and attractiveness of the UiTM Pahang website. The attributes of user friendliness, informativeness, suitability, and attractiveness were adopted based on a previous study by Embi (2004). It is hoped that the findings of this study will help UiTM Pahang in improving its current website.

Evaluation of a website is an important process in determining the staff satisfaction and acceptance in using the website. The evaluation would give an indication on the overall perspective of the website information and appearance. The result of a preliminary survey that was posted on UiTM Pahang website on the completeness of information provided for UiTM Pahang users showed 63.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement (refer to Figure 1). Consequently the result of the preliminary survey provides a venue for evaluating the staff acceptance of the UiTM Pahang website.

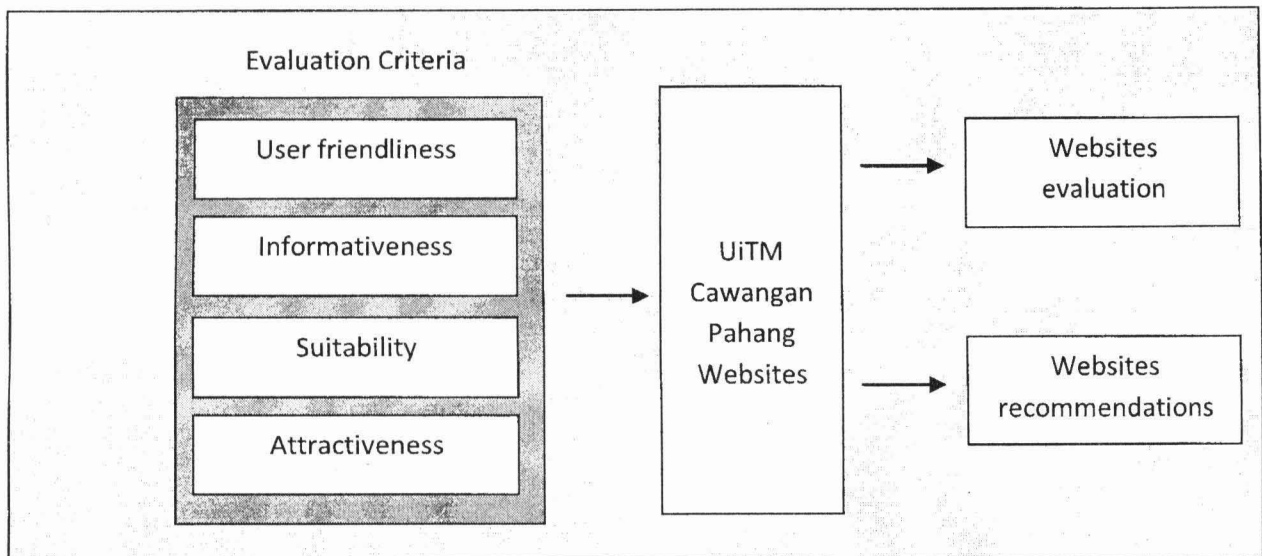
Figure 1: UiTM Pahang online survey



Website evaluation

There have been a number of significant researches on the factors that contribute to good design and successful websites. It is of primary importance that suitable attributes must be chosen to evaluate the website. Liu and Arnett (2000) had focused on the key of the websites success and identified the aspects related to the information provided by the websites in order to enhance customer satisfaction. They concluded that the success of websites depends on four factors: quality of the information and the service provided in the websites, ease of use of the websites, the pleasure in the use of website and the quality of the design of the websites. Moreover, it seems remarkable the study carried out by Ongus et al.(2006) who adopted downloading speed, homepage design, ease of navigation, manner of presentation and use of multimedia to evaluate the quality of website's design and content coverage for several selected university web sites. Haliza et al. (2006) outlined certain attributes for websites ESL classroom teaching and learning evaluation that are reliability, user friendliness, usefulness, suitability, attractiveness and interactivity. Huizingh (2000) analysed and categorized the capabilities of web sites by distinguishing content from design. The content refers to the information and the services provided while design refers to the way the content presented in the websites. Helm and Chaparro (2007) presented a Balanced Usability Checklist (BUC) approach to evaluate Palestinian hotel websites like technical aspect, user friendliness, attractiveness and marketing effectiveness. This study has numerous implications to improve the delivery of hotel services on the internet.

Figure 2: Framework of UiTM Cawangan Pahang Website Evaluation



Taking into account all of the above, the available evaluation criteria that have strong theoretical foundations to evaluate website of UiTM Pahang are outlined as shown in Figure 2. Four attributes relevant to this study have been employed to evaluate the web site of UiTM Pahang as determinants of the website's success. There are user friendliness, informativeness, suitability and attractiveness.

Methodology

This study utilizes a website evaluation model based on four attributes: user friendliness, informativeness, suitability and attractiveness adopted from a previous study by Haliza et al. (2006). Primary data were collected using survey questionnaires comprising two parts on five pages. The survey consisted mainly of close ended items requiring respondents to check the relevant boxes more to the respondent's background and website's usage. It also included 20 items measured on website's attributes using 5-point Likert scale.

The traditional method of data collection was employed where hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to 80 UiTM Pahang staff. This is to minimize problems in respondents' participation in the survey as opposed to using online survey where technical problem may occur to limit access. Descriptive analysis using SPSS version 18.0 was performed to evaluate the level of UiTM Pahang website acceptance on the criteria chosen.

Results and Discussion

62.5% response rate was obtained with 68.0% females. The average age of the respondents was 30 years. Majority of them holds a master's degree and had served an average of 3.5 years at UiTM Pahang. 88.0% of the respondents surfed the UiTM Pahang website with the main purpose of accessing on line service followed by downloading forms (75.5%), using the link provided (72.0%) and obtaining latest information (68.0%). The average monthly usage of the website is 14 times per staff with an average duration of 52.8 minutes per visit while the average time to display the website using their computer is 12.1 seconds. The results showed that 54.0% of the respondents agreed that the UiTM Pahang website is useful and 72.0% of them would recommend the website to their friends from other UiTM branches.

With reference to the four attributes, the analysis is discussed on positive effects only using four score levels: excellent (90-100%), good (80-89%), average (70-79%) and weak (below 69%).

Table 1: Evaluation on User Friendliness

Item	Percent Positive
navigate the website easily	100.0
the links help me to look for information easily	100.0
the web design enables me to look for information easily	94.0
the option (menu) available helps me to navigate the website easily	96.0
the neatly arranged content enables me to look for information easily	96.0
the complete display of the web sites enables me to view the content easily	90.0
the short time to display the website enables me to start using the content in the web site quickly	92.0

For evaluation on user friendliness as shown in Table 1, all items were in excellent score level.

Table 2: Evaluation on Informativeness

Item	Percent Positive
the information presented in the web site is useful	96.0
most of the links provided are useful	100.0
the information presented in the web site is not available on other sources	96.0

Table 2 presented the summary of findings of evaluation on usefulness. The scores obtained were also excellent.

Table 3: Evaluation on Suitability

Item	Percent Positive
the language and words are easy to understand	98.0
the instructions in the web site are easy to understand	98.0
the graphics and photo used in the web site could cause controversy to any individual or group	78.0
the information in the websites could be sensitive to any individual or group	60.0

However, evaluation on suitability as in Table 3 showed the opposite. The items regarding the graphics displayed were in average score while the sensitivity of information is categorized as weak.

Table 4: Evaluation on Attractiveness

Item	Percent Positive
the colours used make the website attractive	88.0
the graphics used make the website attractive	90.0
the background used makes the web site attractive	88.0
the font size used makes the web site attractive	100.0
the animation used make the web site attractive	84.0
the consistent design/style make the website attractive	96.0

Responses on the three items related to the attractiveness of the website were each in the category of excellent and good as tabulated in Table 4.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The UiTM Pahang website in general is well accepted by the staff. The website was found to be user friendly, useful and attractive although only 72.0% of the respondents had the intention of recommending the website to their friends in other campuses. Action has to be taken to improve on the graphic display and the sensitivity of information.

From this study, it is recommended that the UiTM Pahang website should incorporate more online services, create more attractive designs, and make available latest information and be more user friendly website. As a result of this study, it is also recommended that the departmental webmasters should be given the authority and access to update the content of the website. Besides that, further training should be provided to the departmental webmasters so that the performance of this website could be improved.

Through observation of the UiTM Pahang website, the language used is not standardized. Therefore, the management has to decide on the preferred language so as to ensure that the content in the website is informative and user friendly.

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