

Digital Divide in Hong Kong, China –
The Effects of Self-Efficacy on Elderly's Internet Usage
Intention and Capabilities

香港長者學習使用電腦及互聯網情況之研究

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DEDICATIONS

In loving memories of my mom Catherine Lam, and my grandfather Yuet Wo Lam. They showed me true love and respect, and most of all; they taught me the value of life, family and religion. I owe them all that I am. Till the day we meet again, I'll be missing you.....

ABSTRACT

Experts in areas such as public policy, communications, philosophy, business management and economics have addressed the phenomenon of the digital divide since the 1990s. Recent research within the academia indicates that the digital divide can be identified at three levels – national, organizational and individual.

At the individual level, we are talking about those who are technologically, sociologically, or economically disadvantaged and they may lack or give up access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). By doing so, they have created a gap between themselves and those who choose to make ICTs an integral part of their daily life. As a matter of fact, considerable variation in access to technology might be geographically and/or culturally bounded.

Understanding the existence of the digital divide is important to the management and policy communities, since the digital divide has profound impact on how businesses should compete globally, the creation of a knowledge-based organization, the diffusion of electronic commerce, and strategies for offering online services and products, and policies for promoting access to ICTs. The study of the digital divide is also valuable to the researchers in the areas of information systems and marketing, as well as economics and public policy. For instance, research can be conducted in relating to the adoption and dissemination of ICTs, the pricing and diffusion of online services and products, the creation of knowledge workers, the impacts on organizations' IT strategies, and the formulation of policies in promoting access to ICTs.

In this thesis, the researcher developed a theoretical model based on previous validated studies in examining the influence of computer and Internet self-efficacies and

outcome expectations on usage intention and perceived user competence. Participants of this study were elderly who resided in Hong Kong, China. Elderly is categorized as one of the technologically and sociologically disadvantaged groups within the context of the digital divide. The researcher performed three studies (repeated measures) where the proposed model was tested and reached a set of conclusions and guidelines for better understanding of the elderly's confidence and competency levels regarding to using the computer and the Internet.

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