



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY FACTORS,
SATISFACTION, ACTUAL USE AND BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL
PROGRAMS FOR UAE YOUTH**



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2023



Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

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UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

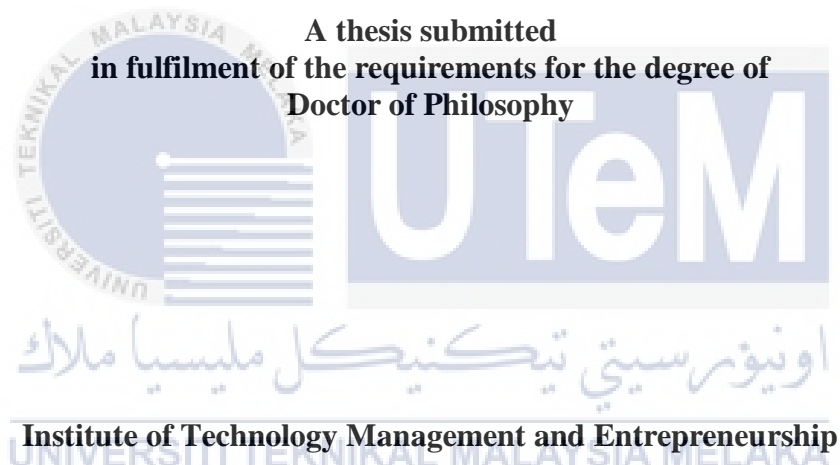
KHULOOD ABDULBASET ALHAMMADI

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KHULOOD ABDULBASET ALHAMMADI



UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

2023

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “The Relationship between Quality Factors, Satisfaction, Actual Use and Benefits of Virtual Youth Programs for UAE Youth” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature

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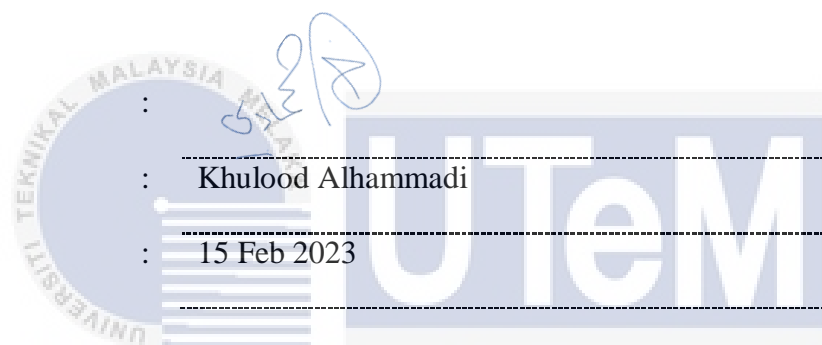
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APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have checked this thesis and in my opinion, this thesis is adequate in terms of scope and quality for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and to the inspiring Naser Al Zaabi for encouraging me to complete my higher education.



ABSTRACT

Recognizing the importance of positive development among youth for the future economic growth and wellbeing of a nation, governments all over the world have made efforts to provide a variety of youth programs so that the youth can contribute positively and become the assets of the country. Although there have been extensive studies on the quality of youth development programs, the majority of these studies have focused on evaluating the effectiveness of developing youth's positive growth. A study that investigates factors for the sustainability of the program is still lacking. Further, these studies focus on evaluating the youth programs in the developed rather than the developing countries. In addition, the newly transition on the mode of delivery from face-to-face to virtual youth programs has resulting in the need to examine the quality of the virtual youth programs. Although virtual learning (e-learning) has been extensively studied in the domain of formal education, studies of the quality of virtual learning adopted in the youth development programs organized by the government are still very limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the quality factors that influence satisfaction, actual use and benefits of virtual youth programs. This study investigated the virtual youth programs organised by the UAE government for their youth. It is motivated by the recent move of the UAE government to convert the face-to-face onsite youth programs to virtual youth programs due to people's mobility restrictions of the pandemic COVID-19. Hence, it is crucial to examine the quality of these programs to ensure their sustainability. 19 hypotheses, consisting of 13 hypotheses that tested the direct relationship and six hypotheses that tested the mediating role of satisfaction and actual use have been developed. This study adopted a questionnaire survey, and 394 data collected from participants of virtual youth development programs in the UAE were analysed using a two-stage structural equation modelling methodology. It was found that the three quality factors have significant positive relationship on satisfaction and two quality factors have significant positive relationship on actual use. The study also found that satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between information quality, user efficacy and actual use, while partially mediates the relationship between instructor quality and actual use. Meanwhile, the actual use partially mediates the relationship between satisfaction and benefits. As a conclusion, the quality factors that have impact on satisfaction may not necessarily have impact on actual use. Additionally, satisfaction has partial mediation effects on quality factors and actual use, while actual use has partial mediation effect on benefits. This study contributes to the knowledge of quality factors that influence satisfaction, actual use and benefits for sustainable implementation of virtual youth programs in the UAE, specifically and the Middle Eastern countries in general. It also provides valuable insights, specifically for the Ministry of Youth to plan strategically and design sustainable virtual youth programs with the aim of achieving the UAE Centennial 2071.

HUBUNGAN ANTARA FAKTOR KUALITI, KEPUASAN, PENGGUNAAN SEBENAR DAN FAEDAH PROGRAM MAYA BAGI BELIA UAE

ABSTRAK

Menyedari kepentingan pembangunan positif dalam kalangan belia untuk pertumbuhan ekonomi dan kesejahteraan masa depan sesebuah negara, kerajaan di seluruh dunia telah berusaha untuk menyediakan pelbagai program belia agar belia dapat menyumbang secara positif dan menjadi aset negara. Walaupun terdapat banyak kajian tentang kualiti program pembangunan belia, kebanyakan kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada keberkesanan pembangunan positif belia. Kajian yang mengkaji faktor kelestarian program masih berkurangan. Selanjutnya, kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada menilai program belia di negara maju dan bukannya negara membangun. Di samping itu, peralihan baru dalam cara penyampaian daripada program bersemuka kepada belia maya menyebabkan keperluan untuk mengkaji kualiti program belia maya. Walaupun pembelajaran maya (e-pembelajaran) telah dikaji secara meluas dalam domain pendidikan formal, kajian tentang kualiti pembelajaran maya yang diguna pakai dalam program pembangunan belia anjuran kerajaan masih sangat terhad. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji faktor kualiti yang mempengaruhi kepuasan, penggunaan sebenar dan faedah program belia maya. Kajian ini tertumpu kepada program belia maya yang dianjurkan oleh kerajaan UAE untuk belia mereka. Ia didorong oleh langkah kerajaan UAE baru-baru ini untuk menukar program belia secara bersemuka kepada program belia maya disebabkan sekatan mobiliti akibat wabak COVID-19. Oleh itu, adalah penting untuk mengkaji kualiti program ini untuk memastikan kemampuannya. 19 hipotesis, terdiri daripada 13 hipotesis yang menguji hubungan langsung dan enam hipotesis yang menguji peranan kepuasan dan penggunaan sebenar sebagai pengantara dibangunkan. Kajian ini menggunakan tinjauan soal selidik, dan 394 data yang dikumpul daripada peserta program pembangunan belia maya di UAE telah dianalisis menggunakan metodologi pemodelan persamaan struktur dua peringkat. Didapati bahawa tiga faktor kualiti mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan terhadap kepuasan dan dua faktor kualiti mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan terhadap penggunaan sebenar. Kepuasan menjadi pengantara sepenuhnya di antara kualiti maklumat, keberkesanan pengguna dan penggunaan sebenar, manakala separa pengantara di antara kualiti pengajar dan penggunaan sebenar. Penggunaan sebenar berperanan sebagai separa pengantara di antara kepuasan dan faedah. Kesimpulannya, faktor kualiti yang memberi kesan kepada kepuasan tidak semestinya memberi kesan kepada penggunaan sebenar. Selain itu, kepuasan mempunyai kesan separa pengantara kepada faktor kualiti dan penggunaan sebenar, manakala penggunaan sebenar mempunyai kesan pengantara separa ke atas faedah. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan tentang faktor kualiti yang mempengaruhi kepuasan, penggunaan sebenar dan faedah untuk pelaksanaan mampan program belia maya di UAE, khususnya dan negara-negara Timur Tengah amnya. Ia juga memberikan pandangan yang berharga, khusus untuk Kementerian Belia untuk merancang secara strategik dan mereka bentuk program belia maya yang mampan dengan matlamat untuk mencapai UAE Centennial 2071.

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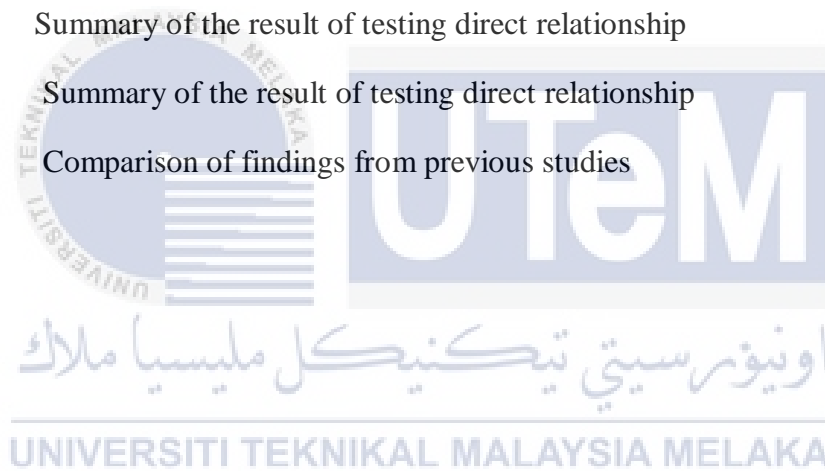
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LIST OF SYMBOLS

R^2	-	Coefficient of Determination
f^2	-	Effect Size



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	-	Actual Use
D&M	-	DeLone and McLean
EF	-	Efficacy
FYA	-	Federal Youth Authority
INQ	-	Instructor Quality
IS	-	Information System
BEN	-	Benefits
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRQ	-	Program Quality
PYD	-	Positive Youth Development
SAT	-	Satisfaction
SEQ	-	Service Quality
SSQ	-	System Quality
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
UN	-	United Nation
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	-	United States Agency International Development
YDP	-	Youth Development Program

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The followings are the list of publications related to the work on this thesis:

Alhammadi, K.A., and Sidek, S. 2022. The taxonomy and elements of youth development programs, Evaluation and Program Planning, *Mathematical Statistician and Engineering Applications*, 71 (3s2), PP. 1366-1374. (Scopus Indexed)

Alhammadi, K.A., and Sidek, S. 2022. Actual Use, Satisfaction, and Quality Factors' Impacts on Virtual Youth Programs' Net Benefits, *Mathematical Statistician and Engineering Applications*, 71 (4), PP. 462-475. (Scopus Indexed)



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Positive development among youth has been recognized globally as an important factor for the future economic and wellbeing development of a nation. In this regard, governments all over the world have made concerted efforts to provide a variety of youth programs to make sure that their youth become the assets of their country.

The increasing usage of online technology for the delivery of e-learning coupled with the impact of pandemic COVID-19 that restricts face-to-face interactions have resulted in the UAE government to opt for the implementation of virtual youth programs for the positive development of their youth (Arnold, 2020; Ettekal and Agans, 2020; Enyioha and Cotman, 2021). Specifically, the Ministry of Culture and Youth, UAE has made a move to deliver youth programs virtually to their youths across the country. However, the quality of these virtual programs is still questionable since a comprehensive evaluation of this program is still lacking. Further, although virtual learning has long been established in the domain of formal education, its use for the delivery of youth development programs is still in its early stages.

This thesis is the result of a study that investigated the relationship between quality factors, satisfaction, actual use, and benefits of virtual youth programs provided by the UAE government to their youth. Specifically, this study examined the relationship of the online platform, services, information, facilitator, and user satisfaction on the benefits of virtual youth programs. This study is motivated by the need to provide high quality virtual youth

programs that facilitate the development of positive growth among youths (Lerner, 2004; Lawford, Ramey et al., 2018).

This chapter is an introductory chapter to the thesis and is organized into nine sections. The first section provides the background to the research, followed by a problem statement of the research in the second section. The third and fourth section present the research objectives and questions, while the fifth section presents the conceptual framework and the hypotheses to be testing in this study. The sixth and seventh section explains the scope and significance of the study respectively. Finally, section eight describes the operational definitions of the constructs included in this study and section nine summarizes the outline of this thesis.

1.1 Background

This section provides the background of this study, highlighting the importance of youth as the country's future generation, government's role in developing youth and the adoption of virtual youth programs for the positive growth of youth. Due to the recent implementation of virtual youth programs and the lack of evaluation on the quality of the virtual youth programs, there is a need to investigate the quality of the virtual youth programs in relation to satisfaction, actual use, and benefits of the virtual programs to the youth of UAE. For this purpose, this section is divided into four sub-sections: The first sub-section presents the importance of youth development, followed by the second sub-section that presents the role of government and non-government organizations in developing youth. The third and fourth sub-section presents the youth development programs in the UAE and virtual youth programs in the UAE respectively.

1.1.1 The Importance of Youth Development

Youth are typically thought of as a group that exists between childhood and maturity, while the precise age range is debatable. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) classified youth as those between the ages of 15 and 24, while the Commonwealth defined youth as those between the ages of 15 and 29. Meanwhile, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggested that the age group of youth is between 15 and 29. In relation to this, the United Arab Emirates' National Youth Strategy (2022) states that the country's youth are between the ages of 15 and 35. Considering that this study was conducted in the UAE, youth is defined as being between the ages of 15 and 35, which is consistent with the definition of youth provided by the UAE National Youth Strategy (2022).

Youth are regarded as an important segment of the global population. Youth aged between 15 and 29 made up 1.8 billion people, or almost 24 percent of the world's population, in 2018, compared to those 60 and older, who make up around 13 percent of the global population. By 2075, the number of young people is projected to reach over 2 billion (UNDESA, 2019, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021). Due to their significant size in comparison to the adults, youth ought to be fostered, developed, and empowered for the prosperity of nations.

Youth development is defined as "improving the status of young people, empowering them to build on their competencies and capabilities for life, thus enabling them to contribute and benefit from a politically stable, economically viable, and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens in their countries" (Youth Development Index, 2020; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021). Youth growth is therefore synonymous with change and advancement towards the future. Recognizing the importance of youth development, Islamovich (2019) asserted that youth actively participate in the

regeneration, modernization, and upkeep of their societies, making them the future of their societies. Youth are empowered on both an individual and a group level through social, economic, psychological, and political empowerment (Chang et al., 2022). Young people must be given more authority because they are essential to bringing about a future that is more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021). In this case, the lack of interest in youth might contribute to a negative balance, in which this group may not be able to contribute to society in a meaningful way (OECD, 2021).

Youth need to be empowered to be able to take charge of their own destiny, hence empowerment is crucial. Additionally, empowering youth contributes to their improved understanding of their responsibilities to society. Youth are given the chance to form support networks, gain knowledge, improve their self-worth, and be active members of their communities via youth development and empowerment. Empowered youth can also start many social and economic initiatives that have various beneficial effects (Ukwayi et al., 2017). A survey of 2,653 young people from youth service centers in Hong Kong revealed that there are favorable connections between youth empowerment in the community and those centers that offer a variety of services and activities for youth (To et al., 2021).

Considering the importance of youth empowerment, several initiatives have been made suggested. Specifically, Arnold and Gagnon (2021) suggested for enhancing professional development, creating better evaluation processes for programs to assess their quality and outcomes, and addressing the lack of standardized implementation of programs. According to Arnold and Gagnon (2021), programs should be emphasized as a backdrop for youth development and more attention should be through advancements in program design and assessment.