

## **To Investigate on the Readiness of the Employees Towards the Social Interaction with Technology in the Workplace in Malaysia**

**Yeoh Wee Win<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*School of Business,  
INTI International College, Penang.*

*\* Corresponding Author*

### **Abstract**

The recent advancement trend of the technology had motivated the need for the study to explore the readiness of the employees in the workplace in accepting the new technology engagement. With this, the current study will focus on investigating the readiness of the employees towards the social interaction with the technology in the workplace in Malaysia. The previous study had suggested that there is indication of the social interaction among employees to have positive relationship against the acceptance of the technology at workplace which provide the indication that the employees are not ready for the shift into the digitalization era of working environment. The quantitative analysis method had been taken into the account for the methodology of the research where the quantitative analysis will focus on the output based on the 150 questionnaires distribution among the Malaysian employees based on the convenience sampling. The outcome of the result through the quantitative analysis had observe the lack of evidence to prove the presence of the significant in the relationship between the social interaction of the employee towards the acceptance of the technology in the workplace. This had been providing the evidence to show that the Malaysian employees had been not affected by the social interaction factor when comes to the transitioning towards the engagement of new technology in the workplace provide the indication that the Malaysian employees are likely to be ready for the shift into the transitioning and shift into the use of technology in the workplace.

**Keywords-** *readiness, Malaysia, employees, social interaction, workplace*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of keeping up with technological developments for the long-term success of a firm has grown in recent years. It was widely believed that widespread uptake of the technology would occur as the result of the accelerating rate at which it was being used (Barkhi & Kozlowski, 2017). Artificial intelligence (AI), robotic process automation (RPA), data visualization, cloud software, and many others have become widely adopted as a result of technological advancements. According to Zhang (2019), this is going to be a big thing in the workplace in the near future, thus it's important for workers to have a head start on the learning curve involved in incorporating these technologies into their daily work. Promoting adoption is based on the idea that increasing productivity in the workplace may be achieved by adopting digital tools and methods that are in

step with the market and emerging trends. In recent years, technology has increasingly come to be seen as an absolute requirement in the workplace, essential to any business that hopes to improve the effectiveness of its operations and increase productivity (Cheung, 2020).

There was never any doubt that organizations, and especially multinational corporations, would follow the current trend of adopting technology, which has made the adoption of modern technologies a must for the transformation of business (Zoey, 2019). It was the development of workplace technology that prompted the widespread adoption of ideas like cost cutting and process optimization. These factors have been major motivators for businesses to advance their use of technology within the company in the pursuit of delivering greater commercial value (Walker, 2017). Since the company's primary goal is to expand its worth and wealth in order to meet the expectations of its shareholders, this strategy was consistent with the company's overall objective.

In the grand scheme of things, incorporating technologies like AI, RPA, data visualization, and cloud software into the workplace would require not just the acquisition of such tools, but also ready access to the necessary skills and ability within the staff (Tarhini, et al., 2016). In other words, it's up to the staff to work in tandem with the company's technology to produce the results that customers demand. In light of this, the company may need to allocate more resources to employee benefits and emphasize the importance of employees making the transition from manual to automated processes within their current roles, with the goal of increasing the company's efficiency and reaping the many rewards of doing so (Sousa & Rocha, 2018).

With this, the problem statement arise in the view to explore the doubt on the readiness for the individuals in facing the shift towards the engagement of new technology in the workplace. The social interaction had become the new norm through the technology where the blending on the application of the technology facilities as well as using the virtual conference and meetings through online platform had been seen as the opportunity to bring the world closer without borders allowing the higher efficiency of work being achieved. This had directed the research objective for the current study to initiate the need to address the problem statement of the study by exploring the readiness of the employees at the workplace in facing the technology engagement with reference to the social interaction to understand the ability and comfort for the employees to blend into the digitalization era of the workplace in the twenty first century.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is possible that the automation functions incorporated into the process and jobs would lead to less human touch and engagement amongst the employees, which is a potential downside of the employment of contemporary technology. According to Schwabe and Castellacci (2020), synergy in the workplace can be achieved by adequate communication and cooperation among workers. The reverse effect is anticipated to occur as a result of the increased use of technologies, with social interaction leading to a considerable decrease in staff morale. According to research conducted by Spanjol, Tam, and Tam (2015), the application of technology to the delivery of a task enhances both its efficiency and quality. The need for less social interaction among workers has become a major motivator for increased concentration and productivity through less time and effort waste. Sharma, Tam, and Kim (2012) all agreed that if businesses use technological

solutions, their workers will be better able to focus on their tasks. Because of this, the adoption of new technology has increased, and it's become easier to collaborate with colleagues.

In accordance with the conventional method of doing things, you'll have to engage in the customary activities, which entail social engagement with your coworkers and peers. Involvement in such social activity is often framed more as a requirement than a preference (Muk and Chung, 2015) Due to the prevalence of certain technological advancements, we will see a marked decrease in face-to-face interaction amongst coworkers and peers. Some workers may feel uneasy about putting their faith in systems like AI and RPA, which will make their jobs easier while simultaneously reducing the amount of human interaction needed to complete them. It was noted by Sharma, Tam, and Kim (2015) that some workers consider technological solutions to be the best option because they expect less interruptions and less time spent on meaningless small talk while using such solutions.

Kim (2012) notes, however, that there are opposing viewpoints on the topic of workplace social contact. Employees would rather engage with other humans, according to the research's findings, because a workplace where every activity is automated makes for a less stimulating and collaborative working atmosphere. Kim (2012) noted in his own study that some workers remained optimistic despite the fact that technological advancements made it possible to eliminate time-consuming manual tasks and reduced the amount of time spent dealing with difficult stakeholder concerns. Employees' social interactions, which have been seen to have a positive relationship against the acceptance of technology on the part of employees, would benefit from the reduction in operational chores that will lighten their communication load.

Previous research has shown that the social connection does play a significant role in influencing the acceptability of technology among employees. This is due to the fact that after the introduction of new technologies, workplace interactions and communication will change.

**H0: There is no significant social interaction factors positively affecting the acceptance of the technology in the workplace.**

**H0: There is significant social interaction factors positively affecting the acceptance of the technology in the workplace.**

## **METHODOLOGY**

An essential part of any research report, the research design specifies how the study's data will be collected, analyzed, and presented as evidence (Apuke, 2017). The quantifiable nature of the data necessitated by the study's design means that we can put the literature review's hypotheses to the test and return to the original questions that prompted this investigation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Rather than relying on speculation or anecdotes, advocates of quantitative research point to the method's track record of producing objective findings through data analysis in service of the study's stated aim, thereby providing a more concrete and actionable result for the scholarly contribution (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). In addition, the study's selection of quantitative analysis is predicated on the fact that it can analyze copious volumes of data, expanding the scope of the study and increasing its potential for data collection (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In addition, the use of numerical data in quantitative analysis allows for more objective and certain results to

be obtained from the examination of data, free from the influence of doubt or subjective judgment (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

Employees currently working for MNCs in Malaysia will make up the bulk of the study's population. The rapid growth and development of technology in the workplace was a major factor in deciding that Malaysia would serve as the study's destination of choice for the target demographic. The questionnaire design will become the instrument for the quantitative data collecting procedure, which will be conducted through the primary data market. One hundred fifty people from the study's identified target demographic were given access to the survey via the study's online platform; these people were chosen through a convenience sample technique that reduced both the time and money spent on gathering data (Etikan, 2016).

In order to understand the possible relevance in the real-world business setting, this study will incorporate ontological considerations by investigating the nature of the world. To understand how businesses are embracing new technologies, it is helpful to have a firm grasp on ontology, the study of human thought and belief about the nature and character of reality (Apuke, 2017). To ascertain whether or not a topic can be considered objectively true, the ontology approach will offer viewpoints on reality based on the results of empirical investigation. There are various potential methodologies and branches within epistemology, such as interpretivism and positivism. Positivism is described as the idea of factual knowledge acquired from the outcomes of study based on observation, including quantitative measurement (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Research positivism is often constrained by the depth to which data was collected and analyzed.

In order to draw conclusions about the connection between workers' behavioral intentions and their adoption of technology in the workplace, the authors conducted a quantitative data analysis using statistical output that included the aforementioned study. To guarantee high accuracy and reliability in the achievement of findings and results for the study, the reliability test will serve as the basis for verifying the consistency and quality of the data (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Next, the correlation analysis will encourage investigation into the direction and degree of the association between the two variables (Sharela, 2016). The empirical evidence derived from both the correlation analysis and the regression analysis will become the fundamental testing for the hypothesis as drawn from the literature review discussed in the study, and this will be accomplished by incorporating a regression analysis into the quantitative analysis.

## **DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

The findings of the result is based on the interpretation of the data input from the questionnaire that contribute to the quantitative analysis of the study. The SPSS software had become the quantitative tool that assist the generation of the statistical output for the purpose of research. Firstly, the reliability analysis had been conducted as part of the fundamental step in quantitative analysis with the intention to check the quality of the data. The reliability analysis test the consistency of the data which will contribute to ensuring the elimination of the potential data error in the data set. Based on this current research, the reliability analysis for the social interaction

factor had achieved the 97.2% which provide the green light as the benchmark for the reliability analysis had been set to be above 70% to be verified to proceed with the quantitative analysis. Moving on into the correlation analysis, the correlation analysis intended to study the correlation whether it's positive or negative between the two variables where the Pearson Correlation Coefficient will determine the strength of the correlation between the two variables. For the current study, the two variables that will put into the test for the correlation analysis will be comparing the variables of social interaction and the acceptance in the shift towards the technology in the workplace. Based on the result, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient achieved had recorded 0.399 with the p-value of 0.000 indicating the presence of the positive correlation for the two variables are being significant. Besides, the 0.399 indicating that the two variables are sharing weak positive correlation in terms of strength where the increase of the movement of one variable will observe the slight increase of the movement in another variable.

The regression analysis will become the importance component for the quantitative analysis where the regression analysis will analyse the data to test for the significant of the relationship between the independent variable against the dependent variable within the framework of study. Based on the current framework of study, the regression model constructed will observe the social interaction factor as the independent variable while the acceptance of the technology in the workplace will become the dependent variable for the study. Based on the result, p-value recorded for the social interaction had been recording 0.117 which is indicate as not significant based on the tolerance level of 5%.. With reference to this, there is lack of evidence from the data input to point out that the social interaction of the employees provide the significant impact towards the acceptance of the technology in the workplace.

With the result observed indicating the presence of the positive correlation through the correlation analysis but fail to point out the evidence for the significant relationship of the impact from the social interaction towards the acceptance of the technology, this had concluded that there is no significant in the relationship between the two variables. With this, the result had not been aligned with the hypothesis drawn in the literature review which suggest the opposite outcome where the H1 hypothesis will be rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis for the H0 will be acceptance based on the outcome of this research.

**H0: There is no significant social interaction factors positively affecting the acceptance of the technology in the workplace.**

**H0: There is significant social interaction factors positively affecting the acceptance of the technology in the workplace.**

Based on their findings, Spanjol, Tam, and Tam (2015) concluded that employing technological aids would boost both the speed and quality of service delivery. Having fewer interactions with coworkers has become a major motivator for people to be more productive with their time. Sharma, Tam, and Kim (2012) all agreed that when workers use new technologies, they are better able to focus on their tasks at hand. This study's findings, however, don't reflect that similar notion; the empirical evidence didn't point to a good correlation between social connection and tech acceptance. It's possible that this is because workplace social interactions aren't valued as much as they formerly were. If the essential concept of work remains the same with or without social interactions, then there's no reason to prioritize them. This will show that there are variables outside social contact that may be a barrier to adopting new technologies.

## CONCLUSION

The research had concluded with the findings where there is no significant impact from the social interaction towards the acceptance of the technology in the workplace. In other words, the involvement of the social interaction between the employees and the technology doesn't matter in the transitioning towards the digitalization era of the working environment. Therefore, this indicates that the current workforce within the employment had been showing the sign of readiness for the shift in the transformation and digitalization of the workplace introducing new modern technologies as the social interaction factor will not come significant that will lead to the rejection of the technology. This had been the crucial contribution of the study to provide the significant reference towards the academic study within the scope of area of expertise. This will provide the evidence that the employees had slowly transition into the new norm of technology in the workplace and becoming more comfortable with the engagement of the new technology. The current outcome of the study will serve as the new knowledge and reference for the potential future researchers.

The current study had been limited with the target population where the target population had only been targeting the workforce population of the Malaysian employees working in the MNCs. Malaysia had been recognized as the developing countries showing the rapid development of the technology advancement in the country for the business world which observe the engagement of the new technology as the significant shift into the acceptance of the technology at the workplace. However, the current findings will only be limited to the working employees and culture in Malaysia which may not be applicable for a different target population. Therefore, the study should further extend to study the similar concept in terms of the readiness of the employees for the social interaction towards the acceptance of the technology in the workplace. The target population for the study can be proposed to European countries like UK, France and Germany to induce a more different demographic and cultural background among the employees.

## REFERENCES

1. Apuke, O.D. (2017). 'Quantitative Research Methods A Synopsis Approach', *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter)*, 6(10).
2. Ashraf, A., Thongpapanl, N. & Spyropoulou, S. (2016). 'The connection and disconnection between ecommerce businesses and their customers: Exploring the role of engagement, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease-of-use', *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 20, pp. 69–86.
3. Barkhi, R. & Kozlowski, S. (2017). 'ERP in the classroom: Three SAP exercises focused on internal controls', *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting*, 14 (1): 77–83.
4. Barkhi, R. and Kozlowski, S. (2017). 'ERP in the classroom: Three SAP exercises focused on internal controls', *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting*, 14 (1): 77–83.
5. Çakmak, A.F., Benk, S. & Budak, T. (2011). 'The Acceptance of Tax Office Automation System (VEDOP) By Employees: Factorial Validation of Turkish Adapted Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)', *International Journal of Economics and Finance*, 3(6), pp. 107-116.
6. Cooper, D & Schindler, P 2014, *Business Research Methods*, 12<sup>th</sup> edn, McGraw-Hill/Irwin. Boston.

7. Etikan, I. (2016). 'Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1).
8. Kim, S. (2012). 'Factors affecting the use of social software: TAM perspectives', *The Electronic Library*, 30(5), pp. 690-706.
9. Muk, A. and Chung, C. (2015). 'Applying the technology acceptance model in a two-country study of SMS advertising', *Journal of Business Research*, 68(1), pp. 1-6.
10. Nath, R. Bhal, K.T. & Kapoor, G.T. (2013). 'Factors influencing IT Adoption by Bank Employees: An Extended TAM Approach', *The Journal for Decision Makers*, 36(4), pp. 83-96.
11. Schwabe H, Castellacci F (2020). 'Automation, workers' skills and job satisfaction', *PLoS ONE* 15(11).
12. Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*, 7th edn, Wiley, New York.
13. Sharela, B.F. (2016). 'Qualitative and Quantitative Case Study Research Method on Social Science: Accounting Perspective', *International Journal of Economics and Management Engineering*, 10(12), pp. 3849-3854.
14. Sharma, P., Tam, J.L.M. and Kim, N. (2015). 'Service role and outcome as moderators in intercultural service encounters', *Journal of Service Management*, 26(1), pp. 137-155.
15. Sousa, J. and Rocha, A. (2018). 'Digital learning: Developing skills for digital transformation of organizations', *Future Generation Computer System*, pp. 98-131.
16. Spanjol, J. Tam, L. & Tam, V. (2015). 'Employer–Employee Congruence in Environmental Values: An Exploration of Effects on Job Satisfaction and Creativity', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 130, pp. 117-130.
17. Tarhini, A., Elyas, T., Akour, A., and Al-Salti, Z. (2016). 'Technology, Demographic Characteristics and E-Learning Acceptance: A Conceptual Model Based on Extended Technology Acceptance Model', *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 6(3), pp. 72–89.
18. Walker, B. (2017). 'How automation threatens third world stability', *Social Contract Journal*, 27(2), pp. 22–23.
19. Zhang, C. (2019). 'Intelligent process automation in audit', *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting*, 16 (2): 69–88.
20. Zoey, Y. (2019). 'Finance and Accounting Automation Starts with Invoicing', *China Briefing, Issue*, 186, pp. 10-11.