



Adoption of electronic books in a higher education setting: an exploratory case study based on Diffusion of Innovation and Garner's Hype Cycle paradigms

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The purpose of this research was to examine the status of library users' adoption of e-books in line with Rogers's Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory and Gartner's Hype Cycle (GHC) Model in the context of Fiji National University (FNU). The FNU Library introduced e-books to its user community in 2014. Purposively chosen 40 undergraduate students from the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies were selected as the sample to conduct in-depth interviews. The study revealed that the participants' e-book adoption habits were primarily divided among early adopters, early majority, and late majority. The results disclosed many factors that influence the adoption of e-books, such as familiarity with the technology, personal taste, exposure to trial access, use of preferred access devices and enthusiasm for reading. Findings indicate that e-books adoption of university undergraduates in line with the DOI and GHC paradigms has substantiated how the underpinning theories could help interpret the adoption of e-books in teaching and learning environment. Thus, this research will help librarians and educators develop a robust mechanism for better understanding the inherent status-quo of e-book usage in higher education institutions. These research findings will also help develop strategies that can significantly enhance universities' traditional teaching and learning performance with emerging technologies.

Keywords: e-book adoption; Information access; Information use; Library services; Academic libraries

Introduction

Today, the teaching and learning process in academic instructions is dialectically intertwined with many technological advancements, which provide "a richer engagement with the ways education is shaped and practised with and through the digital"¹. New devices have emerged in the market during this period in various forms such as tablets, smartphones, e-book readers, laptops, etc. Also, the advent of electronic books (e-books), electronic databases (e-databases) and other web-based products has created a common ground for all stakeholders to understand the dynamics of digital innovation in the teaching and learning process in the higher education sector².

Today, many publishers bring a more significant number of e-books to the book industry, passing through a wide range of business models. Many organisations, including universities and other academic institutions, promote e-books among their wider user community and extensively procure more e-books than ever before. During the last decade, there has been a significant growth in e-books and the use of e-books³. The research on e-books, publishing models and use of e-books in different market segments has become increasingly significant. Even if

the distribution of e-books to the global publishing industry is exponentially growing, a considerable decline in readership has been noticed in the last few decades^{4,5}. The diffusion of technological innovations across universities in developing countries has been acknowledged to be uncoordinated and somewhat lingering. In addition to this fact, academic librarians in higher education, especially in developing economies, believe that their libraries could be at some risk with the use of new technology. Funding and specialised knowledge are two essential elements in implementing and maintaining new technologies. Thus, the risk is exacerbated by poor financial stability, lack of specialisation, and inability to retain the speciality in their libraries. However, many university libraries that have come out of this situation, i.e. lack of money and expertise, are also widely seen in developing countries. They are carrying out technology-based initiatives similar to developed countries.

There are times when the faculty pushes the librarians hard to reach new technological innovations in university libraries in parallel with the libraries in developed countries. Due to this demand and market pressure, librarians are compelled to look at new