

Limited data-free instant messenger usage for online tutoring: Large, undergraduate class at a historically disadvantaged university

There is a need for synchronous and inclusive online tutoring in large, undergraduate classes. Online tutoring may be limited by a lack of data or internet connectivity. The use of a data-free instant messenger was implemented for online tutoring in a class of 342 students. The Moya application allows students to chat and send voice notes to tutors and each other without using data. Sending attachments incurs data costs but the amount of data is displayed before downloading. The qualitative study used data collected via an online survey from 252 third-year, Information Systems students at a historically disadvantaged university. Data was analysed via thematic content analysis, using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 model as a theoretical basis. Findings indicate that most students (85.71%) did not use the data-free Moya application. Reasons for the low usage included a negative performance expectancy as students did not see the value in using the application to engage with their peers or tutors. Perceived effort expectancy was low as students did not want to learn to use a new application. Results showed that using WhatsApp was a habit. Social influence was a factor as fellow students and tutors were also using WhatsApp. The teaching assistant also highlighted tutors reluctance to use the Moya application. Students stated that they were not aware of the Moya application. Details were, however, provided in their lecture, course outline and on their electronic learning management system. Despite price value being an expected significant factor due to this application not requiring data, this was not the case. Facilitating conditions shows that students had data for WhatsApp. Moya has the same interface design as the preferred WhatsApp so learning to use the application would require minimal effort. The unexpected finding indicates students preferring WhatsApp, an instant messenger that required data, over a data-free instant messenger. The findings may leave lecturers to question whether using WhatsApp for online tutoring is a more viable option.

Keywords: inclusive online tutoring, instant messenger, data-free, large classes, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2