

ABSTRACT

This report is based on a research study under the Ministry of Higher Education's Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) involving 6 researchers from the Graduate Department of Information Technology, College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia. The aim of the research is to investigate ethical use of information technology and cyber café among Malaysian youths and to propose a framework for ethical usage of public access ICT services. With the proliferation of the Internet, there has been an unprecedented trend in public access to information and digital content. This has brought about a new kind of social challenge particularly among the youth, who based on their nature are inquisitive and tend to look for explicit and exciting endeavor to satisfy their youthful lust. Public Internet access facilities such as cyber cafés have been at the forefront as avenues in attracting youths to perform anti-social and unethical activities. This study intends to gather empirical data on the activities performed at cyber cafés and propose an ethical cyber café model as guidelines for ethical usage of ICT services at public access centres. To meet the objectives of the study, surveys were carried out involving users and operators of cyber cafes. Feedbacks from communities and parents were also sought using the Theory of Planned Behavior to operationalise the research variables. In addition, relevant enforcement and regulatory bodies were also interviewed to provide inputs and experiences in enforcing and monitoring the cyber cafés. Appropriate sample sizes were used to represent the populations for each unit of analysis following the principle of statistics. For cyber café users and communities of infinite population, the sample size taken was 650, whilst sampling for cyber café operators is based on a sampling frame from the Companies Commission of Malaysia. Questionnaires were designed using items constructed from the Theory of Planned Behavior. Four factors representing the independent variables were identified: Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control and External Factors determining the dependent variables represented by Behavioral Intention. The questionnaires were tested and found to be valid and reliable. Data collection involved administration of the questionnaire to the respective respondents and fieldworks in the form of interviews to the respective regulatory authorities. Among the main findings of the study are that there was no clear regulations and consistent enforcement of cyber café operations. Whilst peers and teachers do influence ethical use of cyber cafés, parents appear not to be a significant factor. The study also found that the use of CCTV is an effective behavioral control, however the imposition of rules and regulations were found to have no significant influence. Similarly, external factors such as internal environment of cyber café and location are found not to be significantly related to ethical use. Results of this study indicate positive implication to the operation of cyber cafés in Malaysia if efforts are made to focus attention to education and good personal values, with clear visibility to discourage unethical acts as a form of behavioral control. Based on the findings of the study, an ethical cyber café model is suggested which comprises of three main components namely people, facilities, and governance.