Modern communication technology and acculturation of children education essay

Over the last several years, as new waves of African immigrants and their children have continued to enter the United States, researchers have considered the impact of semiotics of modern communication networks and technologies on acculturation and cultural identity, as well as the effects of immigration on the nation's economy and society. However, the way immigrant children adapt to American values by using social networks and technologies has been mostly ignored. McDonnell & Hill (2008) explained that children entering the United States today represent a particularly diverse range of cultures, and most importantly, some have had little or no formal education in their native countries.

Little is known about how cultural conflicts evolved from the use of these technologies and became integrated into core American values in communications, behavioral skills, attitudes and finally understand the norms of American society and the cultural semiotics that are prevalent. Another overlooked factor is generally the impact the act of using modern communication technology has on the adaptation process and the psychological consequences that emerge as these new young African immigrants learn a new culture, new social norms and values, and most importantly, a new cultural language.

Relevance of this research

Kristin McCarthy (2010) confirms that immigration and the subsequent acculturation process results in enormous stress for children. McCarthy (2010) clarified how experts agree that being connected and accepted is an important component of adolescent development, and the inability to have this connection and behave as Americans could result in an increased risk of

depression, suicide, bullying, alienation, school failures and drop-outs. Failure to connect could also lead to misinterpretation of societal values leading to criminal activities. Most importantly, the language barrier may bring about rejection from the society. Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936) showed that there is growing attention on the role of acculturation, the complex process of change that individuals experience as a result of continuous contact with another culture in behaviors of immigrants residing in the United States.

Evidence is mixed as to whether acculturation using Social networks and modern communication technology helps or harms African immigrants who make America their new home. This study will be the first to evaluate the relationship between acculturation and modern communication technologies amongst African immigrants. This study should provide a foundation for further cross-cultural research on social communication networks, acculturation and the physical and psychological functioning of African American children

Significance of the Problem

The influx of African immigrants and their children to the United States in the last two decades has been phenomenal. The number of African immigrants to the United States more than quadrupled in the last two decades (Immigration and Naturalization Services, 2009;, Jo, 1999). We are aware of the correlates of social activity behavior of African American children (Chandler et al, 2002), However, little is known about the social activity behaviors and unique personal, social and environmental correlates of social activity in African immigrant children use of social networks and

communication technologies in their adjustment to a new society. Thus, it is important to identify the influence of acculturation process using social networks and modern communication technologies, in addition to commonly examined correlates of social activity on African American children's social activity behavior.

Objective of this study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the use of Internet social communication networks like MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and modern communication technologies like smart-phones instant messages, multimedia (online gaming), blogging and discussion forums – called ' Social Activity", have impacted the acculturation process of young African immigrants(18-25 years) to the nation. The larger goal is to increase understanding of cultural conflicts, semiotics of language differences, and adaptation process in order to promote diversity and enrichment in American society.

Research questions

The proposed research will answer the following questions

What are the social activity behaviors of young African immigrants using social networks or modern communication technologies?

What are the metrics of young African immigrant's potential strategies to be pursued within their adaptation process correlated with their use of social networks and modern communication technology?

Is there a direct effect and/or indirect effect of acculturation on social activity behavior through intrapersonal correlates of social activity using social networks and modern communication technology?

What are the relationships between acculturation (multidimensional [young African immigrant and American acculturation] and proxy [language, length of stay in the US, age at immigration]) and other background correlates of social activity (use of social network sites, communication with peers on Internet and communication technologies serving as status symbol), interpersonal correlates of social activity and social activity behaviors of young African immigrants.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to guide this study will be adapted from Anthony Giddens' structuration theory of interaction of groups and organizations with information technology called " Adaptive Structuration Theory" (DeSanctis, G., & Poole (1994) modified this model and used it successfully and criticized the technocentric view of technology use and emphasized social aspects. DeSanctis, G., & Poole, M. S. (1994) emphasized that groups and organizations using information technology for their work dynamically create perceptions about the role and utility of the technology, and how it can be applied to their activities. These perceptions can vary widely across groups. One major assumption of this model is that the role and utility of technology and how it can be applied influence the way and how technology is used and hence mediate its impact on group outcomes. To understand and give validity to these perceptions by DeSanctis & Poole's theory (1994), Gordon (1964) concept of " Assimilation in American life" will

be evaluated to determine changes in behavior's pattern of immigrants based on use of technology.

Literature reviews

This research will present a comprehensive literature review on acculturation of young African immigrant into american's social-cultural pattern in their use of social technologies. An in-depth look will be provided into the aspects of web-based social technology associated phenomena including languages, interactions, cultural influences and status quo of these technologies as modern wave of new generation acceptance. Amongst specific literatures to be reviewed will be based on the following model lists.

Social change and Acculturation

Social activity enables psychology of social change and acculturation, which showed that many psychological characterizes become altered as individuals experience changes in their socio-cultural milieus (Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 2002). These changes can be as a result of social changes that are taking place from within a society (Georgas, 1993), or may result from contact with other cultures (Feldman et al, 2002). Berry et al (2002) also concluded that these changes have been identified as economic changes that move people away from traditional pursuits and norms towards new forms of employment and empowerment, alteration in social relationships including intergroup and interpersonal relations, and cultural changes that involve the alteration of traditional institutions and the replacement of these with imported ones.

Socio-cultural values of technology assimilation by young West African immigrants

Information technologies are both a by-product of the socio-cultural environment within which they evolve as well as a substantive and strategic sub-system of that environment (Elmandjra, 2001). McGinn (2006) explained that the significance of understanding a new cultural environment is to accept the invasion of technologies and their products or to opt for an active stand and for the elaboration of strategies and policies to ensure social relevance as well as cultural coherence. Steward (2009) believed that cultures do not change according to some inner logic, but rather in terms of a changing relationship with a changing environment even with technology.

Americanism and Social Networks

The Internet has fundamentally changed our communication patterns in which people's interactions are increasingly dependent on electronic communication channels and less confined by territorial gaps. Such change has shrunk the distances between physical location significantly and thus brought about a brand new view of space and time (Miller, 2002; Watson et al., 2002). As the need for adaptation of African immigrant children into American way of life continues, the need for study of the cross-cultural adoption and use of IT has been souring which is evidenced by the surging number of pertinent research papers published and presented. Computer networks have been used to support information and knowledge exchange among geographically dispersed users and distributed social interactions

(Ahuja et al., 2003).

Social-cultural adaptation of modern communication tools

Blau (1964) showed that social exchange theory positing that individuals engage in social interaction because they expect to receive some type of reward whose form does not necessarily confine to monetary value but also emotional values including approval status and respect. Wasko et al. (2005) clarified further that one potential way an individual can benefit from active participation is the perception that participation enhances his or her personal reputation in the society. Therefore, reputation, acceptance and status symbols are assets that young West African immigrant can leverage to achieve and maintain assimilation within a collective environment (Jones et al., 1997).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology consists of three phases to leverage the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods. The first phase will review extant research literature related to the influential factor of web-based social networks as a form of communication technology participation. The picture of the semiotics of cultural interaction will be evaluated as an adaptation process of young West African immigrants. The objective of this exercise will be to identify explanatory constructs from academic works across disciplines including social network theory, cultural dimensions, and individual level technology acceptance as evidence amongst selected young West African immigrants to the United States.

The second phase will allow researcher to conduct in-depth interviews of young West African immigrants that meet the minimal requirements for web-based social network usage on one hand and other physical communication

tools such as cell phones, blogging and multimedia. These interviews will be guided by a qualitative interview instrument, which contains a series of open-ended questions for the interview process. By engaging in the interview will allow the researcher to further elicit driving factors of user adoption of both social networks and the social activity involved in the use of the physical communication tools.

The final phase, along with indicators generated in phase one and two will allow researcher to gather data from these interviews to create a 100-page quantitative survey that will be distributed to a random population of young West African immigrant in 25 states in the United States of users of both social networks and communication tools. In this way, empirical evidence can be obtained through analyzing users ratings of indicators that pinpoint the significance of social communication technology to acculturation of young West African American immigrants. The instrument will be subjected to content validity analysis, the sampling frame will be identified to enable the broadest generalization, and the instrument items will be assessed for discriminated validity.

Work plan for data collection

In order to maintain both social and material properties, it is important to adopt a triangulation concept which could establish legitimate ground to reduce the methodological conflict between qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Orlikowski and Robey 1991; Yin, 1994). McGrath (1982) justified the use of both qualitative and quantitative method in three methodological dimensions namely generalizability, precision and realism.

Researcher intends to incorporate the three dimensions in his research work plan for data collection.

Sample Frame

Researcher intends to select research subjects before the research design can be carried out for data collection. The sample frame for pre-test and large scale survey will be drawn from two distinct areas. The first will be from college students whose ages range between 17 to 24 in United States and new West African immigrants who recently won the DV Visa lottery. In order to justify using this frame, the researcher will revisit the focal issue of this research and explain how it would be difficult to conduct meaningful research without studying young west African immigrants who are both new and young web-based social communication tool users or adopters.

Data Collection

Since this research will include technology study, survey and controlled experiment are considered widely adopted to establish causal relationships between observed variables. Each of them bears advantages and disadvantages and it is contingent upon various factors to decide which one has better fit with the research context. Lyberg and Kasprizyk (1991) explained that expected quality of collected data, estimated costs, expected level of errors and length of the data collection period are major reasons for controlled experiment. Bailey (2002) agrees that this will explain why lab experiment are not as popularly used in social science as in other disciplines such as natural science. In addition to survey, other content analysis techniques including secondary data sources, archive data exploration,

objective measures or tests, and semi-structured interviews are used to compensate for some limitations of quantitative data analysis.

Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative data collection to be used will range from interviews, observational techniques such as participant observation and fieldwork, through to archival research. Both primary and secondary sources of data will be used exclusively in this research. Insights into social networks and web-based communication tools will be generated based on a wide range of discovery of industrial reports, newspaper stories, national statistics and descriptive research. The primary sources of data will refer to those data which are unpublished and which the researcher has gathered from the subjects or organization directly. The interview process will involve interviewees from US and from 25 states primarily at selected colleges. Written permission will be obtained with the application for IRB approval from each college. The screening process will consider subjects' commonalities and cohesion of traits including culture, education and social communication tool activity in a web-based environment. Guidelines will also be incorporated into the interview design to elicit the subjective, contextual, and spontaneous information concerning web-based socializing activities and consistent use of modern communication tools.

Quantitative Data Collection

Selltiz et al., (1976) explained that when using the explanatory survey approach that makes logical inferences from non-experimental data, the researcher does not need to manipulate predicting variables or make assignment of groups because the variables are observed in their natural

settings. Newsted et al., (1996) further clarified that epistemologically, surveys provide one way of obtaining and validating knowledge and raised the question whether surveys had outlived their usefulness and concluded that surveys are appropriate in certain conditions and less useful in others.

Selltiz et al. (1976) argued that an explanatory survey is applicable when studying complicated social phenomena in which causal patterns contain multiple factors and more than one predicting variable is found. Cronbach (1971) explained that the main purpose of conducting the survey is to move from observations to theory validation by using an instrument that captures necessary data in an unbiased manner. It is suggested that by doing this will require a clear understanding of the concepts of constructs and their relationships which are important to make sense of human behavior involving information systems use.

Scales Development

The researcher will use psychometric response scales, a five point Likert scale will be selected: Strong Disagree/Disagree/Neutral/Agree/Strongly Agree. Researcher chose this type of response scale because of its good balance between parsimonious design and room of response. Researcher did not use the most popular wider range of scale such 7 or 10 because of its ambiguity in transformation data. Dawes (2008) found that data from 5-level, 7-level and 10-level items showed very similar characteristics in terms of mean, variance, skewness and kurtosis after a simple transformation was applied. He further explained the lack of precision regarding the differences between " somewhat" disagree and " somewhat agree". Dawes (2008) further clarified that " in order to avoid response bias which poses challenges

in collecting effective data that accurately reflect the social facts, it is important to use a scale with balanced keying, such as a five point scale that has an equal number of positive and negative statements which can mitigate the problem of acquiescence bias because acquiescence on positively keyed items will balance acquiescence on negatively keyed items" (pg. 79).

Proposed Instrument

Researcher will cover three general areas of structuration theory of interaction of groups and organizations with information technology called " Adaptive Structuration Theory" and pertinent hypothesis are rooted in research literature of IS and socio-cultural theories that would help to answer the research questions suggested in this research. The areas to be covered will include the use of technology and social communication tools, social behavior motivation to acculturation and cultural conflict influence of the immigrants

Pretest

Researcher will engage in pretest which refers to a research process/experiment that precedes a full scale study to examine whether operational constructs or variables are appropriate for further analysis. Researcher will use various forms of experiments and aims to replicate the formal experiment but on a smaller scale. Hunt et al., (1982)

An important rule of thumb in conducting pretest is to use sampling subjects who

have the closest characteristics with those of full scale data collection. For this research,

both groups of college students and DV lottery winners in the U. S. will be selected to complete the questionnaire to provide further feedbacks in terms of appropriateness of items, length of time required to finish, and overlooked dimensions. This feedback will be considered in the process of finalizing the instrument that will be distributed to a large scale sample target. The research methodology will also include content validity, measurement equivalence, common methods bias, and non-response bias.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Researcher will describe data collection procedures and also present data analysis results using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Researcher also plans to use supportive empirical finding which will be explained along with how statistical assumptions are satisfied. These statistical evidences will be used to examine any hypotheses generated from literature study and inferences. Researcher will also provide both descriptive and interpretive data analysis using the structural equation modeling techniques. Researcher will also answer most research questions from a confirmatory perspective, links theoretical assumptions and conclusions and completes the research methodology

Qualitative Data Analysis

Researcher will use narrative style and open ended interview questions rather than retrieving answers based on fixed options multiple choices. Shim et al., (2002) explained that qualitative data can reveal the " realism" aspect

of investigated subjects. So this section will be used to interpret perceived

data obtained from interviewees in a focus group environment

Method Description – Focus Group

Researcher believed that it is important to understand what motivates

subjects of this research and the understanding of user behavior in the use

of social communication network and tool when they find themselves in a

different cultural environment. Researcher will use focus group method by

selecting a group of interviewees (in this case, less than 30), which consist of

individuals that meet the pre-screening requirements (Morgan 1998). The

group will participate in the discussion whose topic is designated by the

researcher. As a validated approach in behavioral sciences, focus groups are

administered in US. All participants are selected social network and

communication tools users including rejecters (used Social network and

communication tools and decided to discontinue usage). Researcher intends

to have a table list of profile of interviewees in the United States.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Researcher will analyze perceptional data statistically to discover interesting

patterns hidden behind human behaviors. Respondents will be asked to

report their true opinions according to a structured survey that contains

items generated in literature review and qualitative data analysis.

Method Description – Large Scale Survey

Lee (1999) argued that surveys are particularly useful in determining the

actual values and interactions of variables. Researcher will use an approach

which would be seen to have the following strengths: compared to

interpretive methods, it will be easy to administer; it will determine the

values and relations of variables and constructs; generalizability and

replicability will also be tested; it will be capable of testing theoretical

propositions in an objective fashion. Selltiz et al. (1976) argued that an

explanatory survey should be adopted when studying complicated social

phenomena in which causal patterns contain multiple factors and more than

one predicting variable is found.

Cronbach (1971) emphasized that the main purpose of conducting the

surveys is to move from observations to theory validation by using an

instrument that captures necessary data in an unbiased manner. Researcher

will use both paper based and web based survey instrument. The selection of

sample subjects will be strictly based on how well the characteristics of the

target population can be represented.

Data Collection & Analysis

Researcher will use analysis that would demonstrate respondents' social

background that is consistent with the research design, namely, young

African immigrants with appropriate social network and communication tool

use experience. Researcher will also use a pilot study that will examine initial

content validity of the collected data. Straub (1989) explained that non-

response bias is a major threat to the validity of the survey method.

Demographic Statistics

Researcher will use a demographic statistics of respondents that are

categorized in four dimensions: age, gender, web or Internet experience and

modern communication tools. Researcher will use high level of homogeneity

of domestic nature within one group young west African immigrants and a high level of heterogeneity across groups

Structural Equation Modeling

Researcher will use the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is a statistical technique widely used in social science research. Byrne (2006) indicated that this consists of two major parts: a measurement model and a structural model. This technique is similar to multiple regressions; however, SEM is a powerful technique in constructing and examining causal relationships using measurement error and model fitness. The justification for using SEM is that it employs a confirmatory rather than exploratory approach to test models. Therefore, it is an ideal selection for theory verification instead of development, even though in reality SEM does carry some exploratory nature. Chin (2008) suggested that SEM enables IT researchers to achieve the goals including: evaluate and control measurement model errors of latent variables, simultaneous analysis of multiple paths relationships, and flexibility of testing theoretical assumptions.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The core issue of research is to examine how the use of Internet social communication networks like MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and modern communication technologies like smart-phones instant messages, multimedia (online gaming), blogging and discussion forums – called ' Social Activity", have impacted the acculturation process of young African immigrants(18-25 years) to the nation. Most of the research questions are expected to be answered in this research and findings discussed to explain

different related behaviors in acculturation of young west African immigrants. Using mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative, the researcher will be able to reveal context-oriented insights that are complement empirical findings which are statistically inferred to large population of samples. With this in mind, researcher will divide the discussion of findings into two aspects of quantitative and qualitative including further justifications of research methodology, the implications of these findings, future research directions and conclusions.