Exploring mobile learning development lifecycle with cultural context

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ABSTRACT

Based on the preliminary study, there are two problems that the development team faces; lack of development model or guideline with culture context for mobile learning developments and lack of cultural context in user interface and user experience of mobile learning development and practices. The main objectives are; (i) to propose Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model and to (ii) assess the proposed Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. An IT scholar and five IT staff involved in mobile learning development based on the public and private sector at Klang Valley, Malaysia had been chosen for the interview session. The collected data has been analyzed by applying the thematic analysis approach. The first objective was achieved based on IT scholar reviewed on the model proposed. The IT scholar reviewed, (i) challenges on mobile learning development, (ii) theory of Hofstede on the design phase, (iii) user persona on the requirements phase, (iv) advantages of using the proposed model and (v) challenges on Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. Then, the second objective was achieved by analyzing the qualitative information from the IT staff on the model proposed. The assessment was done by the IT staff for the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. There were four primary categories highlighted by the IT staffs which were (i) challenges on mobile learning development, (ii) overcome the challenges, (iii) important elements in mobile learning development and (iv) advantages of Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. For future work, this study can include more IT scholar and IT staff from diverse positions from multiple organizations.

Keywords: Culture, Mobile development lifecycle, Mobile learning development, Thematic analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

In general, mobile learning carried out by using portable, hand-held devices and mobile devices [1]. It can be PDA, smartphone or mobile phone. Mobile learning not merely a type of e-learning by handheld devices or an application of classroom education with less formal settings. Mobile learning known as mLearning or m-Learning, encourages learning from anywhere facilitated by a variety of technologies and is not limited to mobile devices.

However, the existing adoption models for mobile learning development lifecycle are the Agile and Mobile Application Development Lifecycle (MADLC). The two models are considered as an alternative for mobile learning development. The Agile models aim to reduce the risk of projects by splitting the project into separate phases, usually the tasks or activities from one week to one month. Every stage is a small project.
including planning, designed, coded, test and documented. The Agile models aim to satisfy users with quick, consistent delivery of meaningful implementation delivered in weeks rather than months [2]. In other words, the Agile model is a productive and responsive attempt to solve user requirements that focus on providing faster and cheaper suitable applications. There are few studies on cloud computing [3-5] that may be relevant to mobile learning development, however, they lack systematic conceptual modeling integration.

The usage of agile principles had been suggested [6]. Figure 1 shows a summary of the literature review to support the conceptual understanding of (i) mobile computing, (ii) mobile learning and (iii) model adoption of the mobile learning development lifecycle. In addition, the cultural context by Hofstede Theory was discussed and addressed. In general, the paper presents results for the qualitative work on the proposed mobile learning development lifecycle cultural model. The main objectives are; (i) to propose Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model and to (ii) assess the proposed Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model.

Figure 1. Conceptual mapping of mobile learning development based on literature review

2. RESEARCH METHOD
An IT scholar and five IT staff involved in mobile learning development based on the public and private sector at Klang Valley had been chosen for the interview sessions. The collected data had been analyzed by applying the thematic analysis approach. The first objective was achieved based on the IT scholar reviewed on the model proposed. The IT scholar reviewed (i) the challenges in the mobile learning development, (ii) Hofstede theory on the design phase, (iii) User Persona on the requirements phase and the (iv) advantages of Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. Then, the second objective was achieved by analyzing the information from IT staffs on the model proposed. The IT staff assessed the proposed Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. There were four primary categories were highlighted by the IT staffs; which were (i) challenges on mobile learning development, (ii) overcome the challenges, (iii) important elements and (iv) advantages of Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model.

3. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS
The analysis and findings from data had been gathered from an IT Scholar and five IT staff from the development team based on the public and private sector at Klang Valley, Malaysia. The crucial part of the research study is the analysis of the data. It can be made from the raw data and context of the research problem. The findings of the interviews are analyzed to fulfill the objectives of the research. Lastly, the final findings and conclusions of the research study are discussed. The Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model and sets of data analysis using qualitative content analysis by applying thematic analysis were discussed.
3.1. Mobile learning development lifecycle cultural model

The first objective is to propose a Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model as shown in Figure 2. It illustrates the information about the phases of mobile learning development with cultural dimensions. The current development demands for mobile learning applications were being incorporated into the development of the model. It comprises of the requirement, design, develop, test, deploy & release and monitor & update phases. The Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model also includes Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and user persona in the requirement and design phases. Besides that, the proposed model used Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to understand the cultural differences and determine how business is carried out across different cultures in mobile learning development particularly in the design phase. Therefore, in the design phase researcher identifying the Hofstede cultural background as a guide [7]. They are the cultural indication on ‘Navigation’, ‘Content’ and ‘Context’ Dimension and also impact of culture on Navigation, Content and Context Dimension of Mobile Learning as shown in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. The process model proposed starts from phase 1 until phase 6 including the process of requirement, design, development, test, deploy and release and monitor and update as illustrated in Table 4.

Figure 2. Mobile learning development lifecycle cultural model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
<th>Navigation Dimension of Mobile Learning (Example)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualism (IND)</td>
<td>System for navigation (custom &amp; global)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism (COL)</td>
<td>System for navigation to include context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Uncertainty</td>
<td>Avoid disorientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance (HUA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Uncertainty</td>
<td>Navigation (control less)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance (LUA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity (MAS)</td>
<td>More on exploration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Adopted general cultural indication to the content dimension [7] for mobile learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
<th>Content Dimension of Mobile Learning (Example)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualism (IND)</td>
<td>Task orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism (COL)</td>
<td>Modular orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Power Distance (HPD)</td>
<td>Hierarchy based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Power Distance (LPD)</td>
<td>Minimal hierarchy included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Uncertainty Avoidance (HUA)</td>
<td>Support mental model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Uncertainty Avoidance (LUA)</td>
<td>Information organized by task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity (MAS)</td>
<td>Clear role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Orientation (LTO)</td>
<td>Practicality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Orientation (STO)</td>
<td>Incorporate rules and regulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Adopted general cultural indication to the context dimension [7] for mobile learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
<th>Context Dimension of Mobile Learning (Example)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Power Distance (HPD)</td>
<td>Portrayal of symbols of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Power Distance (LPD)</td>
<td>Less portrayal symbols of identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Explanation of mobile learning development lifecycle cultural model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Phase 1: Requirement | • In the requirement phase, it is important before any technical work can be created to communicate and work cooperatively with users and stakeholders. The ideas or requirements of the mobile learning development team, users and stakeholders are collected and categorized accordingly [8].
  • The purpose of mobile learning development is to define necessary planning tasks to team members, risks, schedule and other data related to them, and the desired functionalities and features.
  • Identify user personas [9]. A user persona is a proxy for a group of users of mobile learning.
  • Identify the use case diagram which is scenarios when, where and how a user persona will use mobile learning [10]. Use case diagram represents the interaction between user and mobile learning for fulfill requirement and goals.
  • The user persona will be based on Hofstede Culture Dimensions. Example: Muslim users based on Islamic Culture Dimensions which are similar to Hofstede’s Culture Theories. In this process, the work done by all ideas or requirements is documented and forwarded to the design process.
| Phase 2: Design | • The ideas or requirements are documented in initial application design. Development of mobile learning on all mobile platforms was feasible and the functionality of mobile learning is separated into prototypes and modules [11]. Defining the mobile learning’s User Experience (UX), create storyboards for User Interface (UI) and Wireframing (High-level flow of application screens). [12] This provides new mobile learning appearances to stakeholders and makes it an excellent platform that affects mobile learning development.
  • Also, identifying the cultural background based on the cultural dimensions of Hofstede as a guide.
  • Cultural Indication on Navigation, Content and Context Dimension [7].
    i. Impact of Culture on Navigation Dimension of Mobile Learning
    ii. Impact of Culture on Content Dimension of Mobile Learning
    iii. Impact of Culture on Context Dimension of Mobile Learning
  • In this process, the work done by all designs is documented and forwarded to the development process.
  • Mobile learning is coded in this process. Parallel coding can be made for the different modules of the same prototype which are distinct from each other.
  • Each prototype (mock-up) is analyzed for its functional requirements. Prototypes were tested and forwarded back to users and stakeholders until the final prototype is ready and prototyping, process, and testing are repeated [8].
  • The work done in the development and prototype process is documented and forwarded to the testing process.
| Phase 3: Develop | • The prototype is tested with an emulator or simulator also the real device. Many prototypes of mobile devices with variable-screen size should be tested on several operating system versions
  • The emulator is a process, where code runs without changing the code itself from one environment to another. It duplicates the functions and operates on the device.
  • Type of testing
    1. Black box testing: Functional or non-functional testing. Inputs, outputs, specifications are available for the tested component. It excludes the internal element process and focuses on outputs that are generated without the knowledge of the source code.
    2. White-box testing. Recognized as structural testing, the internal data structure used to verify the consistency of the test conditions is based on good source code information.
    3. Functional User Interface Testing. Verifies that the mobile learning complies with interactions between the user interface as expected.
  • Security Testing. Safety and user privacy risks are controlled.
  • The test case is documented and forwarded to the user for their feedback.
| Phase 4: Test | • Mobile learning is ready for deployment and launch after testing is completed and final input from the user is received [2].
  • The part of the distribution, mobile learning is uploaded to the appropriate user consumption application stores.
  • Mobile learning is released after distribution with a subgroup of mobile learning users in the early version. Before mobile learning is widely released, the development team will fix technical or user interface problems.
  • Mobile learning monitoring and updating are the final processes and the ongoing process of this phase.
| Phase 5: Deploy & Release | • All feedback from users is collected, and bug fixes or enhancements are made [8].
| Phase 6: Monitor & Update | |

The Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model may also be customized accordingly with integration of relevant results for mobile learning, educational game [13] and mobile applications [14 – 25].

3.2. Data analysis and interpretation

Theme 1 is the IT Scholar review on the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. Figure 3 illustrates the first theme with the subject IT Scholar review based on Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. The fifteen reviews had been coded into five main categories which were (i) challenges on mobile learning development, (ii) theory of Hofstede on design phase, (iii) user persona on requirement phase, (iv) advantages of using the model proposed and (v) challenges on Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model.
Theme 2 assessed the proposed Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. It describes the analysis information from the interview sessions with IT staff such as project manager, system analyst, and the development team review and assessment on the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. The qualitative was done to achieve Objective 2, which is to support for Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model as illustrated in Figure 4. The twenty-two review had been coded into four main categories which were (i) challenges on mobile learning development, (ii) overcome the challenges on mobile learning development, (iii) important elements in mobile learning development and (iv) advantages of Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model.
4. CONCLUSION

Through qualitative review and assessment of the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model from the IT Scholar and IT Staffs, the research study has achieved its objective and aim to focus on proposing a suitable method in the mobile learning development as future references to the development team of mobile learning with cultural context. Based on the review and assessment done on the proposed model, it is supported that the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model inclinations towards ‘Navigation’, ‘Content’, and ‘Context’ of the mobile learning are influenced by the culture. The findings and results from the review and assessment of the proposed model are provided important support to the Mobile Learning Development Lifecycle Cultural Model. In conclusion, the research study through the literature review, review and assess the proposed model by IT Scholar and IT staff provide a good understanding of the cultural incorporation of mobile learning development.

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