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Perceptions of Educators Regarding the Acceptance of
Multi-User Virtual Environments
as an Educational Tool

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Abstract

The concept of Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVES) has opened new avenues in the educational spectrum. Despite its popularity as an educational environment tool, the successful implementation of a virtual classroom is heavily reliant on the educator. This research focuses on the perceptions of educators regarding the acceptance of the MUVE as an educational tool. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was used to identify and evaluate the potential benefits of the MUVE in the domain of education. The qualitative approach was considered to be the suitable approach for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 educators; these interviews included the demonstration of a virtual class located in the Second Life Island known as Jokaydia. The collected data was transcribed using NVivo software, and analysed using constant comparison analysis. The transcribed interviews were provided to another researcher in order to obtain an independent analysis; this created the basis for triangulation of participants' perceptions. A summary of this analysis was then sent to all participants to confirm its credibility. The conclusions of the study suggest that the combination of MUVES' features and strengths will eventually influence the educators to accept the MUVE as an educational tool, although several areas of concern are identified. Future growth in the educational uses of MUVES is examined, the implications and limitations of the study are discussed, and ideas for future research are elaborated on.

Keywords: MUVE, Second Life, education, TAM, ease of use, subjective norm, enjoyment, facilities, compatibility, security and trust, collaboration, awareness, media richness, discovery learning, situated learning, role playing, controlled environment, immersiveness.

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