Students' acceptance of tablet PCs in Italian high schools: Profiles and differences

# Details

## Year

2017

## DOI

10.1111/bjet.12591

## Issued

2017

## Language

English

## Volume

49

## Issue

3

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

British Journal of Educational Technology

## Publisher

Wiley

## Sample

296 students from Milan aged 14-18

## Implications For Educators About

# Abstract

The tablet PC represents a very popular mobile computing device, and together with other technologies it is changing the world of education. This study aimed to explore the acceptance of tablet PC of Italian high school students in order to outline the typical students' profiles and to compare the acceptance conveyed in two types of use (learning and communicative activities at school). Data were collected using an online survey that was filled out by students at home. Two hundred and ninety-six students from six public high schools in Milan and surrounding suburbs voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. The results show a varied situation in the Italian schools despite the availability of and funding for the technology. Three clusters were identified with high, moderate and low acceptance of tablet PC and a comparison between such clusters revealed significant differences in gender, grade level and usage frequency. The groups showed also significant differences in relation to the uses of tablet PC at school that appeared coherent with their level of acceptance: students who have higher level of acceptance are those who use the tool more both for learning and communicative purposes. To conclude, students with lower acceptance probably need to better understand the opportunities offered by this technology and how to use it. Based on examining the data from the survey, preliminary recommendations are made.

# Outcome

"This study aimed to distinguish different student profiles with reference to the factors affecting students’ acceptance of tablet PCs, to identify differences according to gender, grade level and experience with Tablet PC and to compare the acceptance conveyed in two types of use (learning and communicative activities) in Italian high schools. [...]
Students were categorized into three dispositional profiles named according to the traffic light metaphor: green light, red light and yellow light students. Students of the first cluster are characterized by higher positive acceptance of tablet PCs due to a good perception of advantages in terms of easiness of use, usefulness and empowerment in learning, a positive affect towards tablet PCs, but they perceive to be just moderately supported by the Institution. In the second cluster, students have a moderate acceptance profile due to a scarce perception of advantages in terms of easiness of use, usefulness and empowerment
in learning, a moderate positive affect towards Tablet and they indicate a scarce support by the Institution. The third cluster is composed by students with low acceptance of tablet PCs due to a lack of recognition of the potentialities of tablet PCs in terms of easiness of use, usefulness and empowerment in learning, a low positive affect toward tablet PCs combined with the perception of absence of support available from the institution.
[...]
As shown by analyses of gender differences, males are present in greater proportion in the yellow light cluster, while females are present in greater proportions in the red light cluster and thus appear less enthusiastic about tablet PC adoption.
[...] Clusters are also significantly characterized by different students’ grade levels. The acceptance of tablet PC and the recognition of opportunities for learning appear as moderate in younger (green light cluster) and older students (yellow light cluster).
[...] Concerning the personal experience with the tool, the frequency of use of the tablet PC significantly differs among groups. Specifically, students that use the tablet PC several times a week are present mostly in the green light cluster.