

Current Issues and Challenges of Online Learning Approach due to Pandemic Outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19)

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Abstract-The pandemic outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) recently since March 2020 has constrained many people in the world to opt for a different lifestyle, a new way of work as well as an alternative way to learn. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the face-to-face traditional class is the most common and favorable learning approach among the students, teachers, parents, academic institutions, and the Ministry of Education. However, online learning has become a famous and well-known resolution around the world after the movement control order is enforced. The online mode of learning has many issues and challenges. Both students and teachers require more time to adapt to online learning because the majority of them are still trying to explore the new technological innovation and techniques to use in the online learning process. In the future, a mixture of the mode of learning would be one of the selections for the academic institution, especially a higher learning institution.

Keywords:- Pandemic outbreak, Covid-19, Traditional class, Online Learning, Issues and Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

An educational institution such as schools, colleges, and universities are mostly reflecting traditional learning approaches that are they adopt the conventional set up of face-to-face classroom learning. While some educational units have now begun integrated with blended learning where many of them are having issues with old procedures. However, the sudden outbreak of a deadly disease called Covid-19 induced by the Corona Virus created traumatism towards the entire world.

The World of Health Organization (WHO) announced it as a pandemic. This situation resistance the education system across the world and enforced educators to alteration to an online mode of teaching overnight. At an earlier stage, the majority of educational institutions were unwilling to adopt their traditional pedagogical approach. Thus, there has no other opportunity but to transfer completely to online teaching learning. Each academic institution has put some light on the current pandemic issue to find a proper way to deal with current challenges associated with online learning.

Nevertheless, the shutdown of the educational institution all over the world was a test paper towards the preparedness to handle the pandemic issue with advanced technology including hardware and software to facilitate effective online learning. Thus, the learning process would not be disrupted due to the closure of the academic institution with the development of online learning environments. Despite some institutions have become

responsive to deliver course content online, get learners engagement, and conduct assessments. Consequently, Covid-19 is not only being a hazard to humanity but it also expanded academic institutions to invest in online learning. Online learning is web-based learning to distribute, track, and executing courses over the internet. It is an engagement of advanced technology to direct, design, and deliver the learning content and to promote two-way communication between students and teachers. These might promote productive and convenient ways to achieve learning goals through chat rooms, polls, quizzes, discussion forums, and presentations. Most institutions are applying Microsoft Teams, Google meet; Zoom, Skype, WebEx, and Adobe connect as a learning management system along with the applications of video conferencing

The spread of Covid-19 has compelled millions of students and teachers to move their communication online where they have to adapt to a new learning lifestyle. The educational institution is working hard during lockdown trying to maintain students on track, changing to online learning within the shortest period. Nevertheless, the evolution of technology now enables many things to achieve but have not confidence possible the transition to online learning will be conducted as smoothly as we want it to be. Encountering the pitfalls of online learning might be discouraging and frustrating for both teachers and students to achieve the learning goals. There are most common online learning issues and challenges which need to address and find the proper resolution to achieve the learning outcome.

II. THE ISSUES OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

There are several reasons why the online learning approach has become a famous form of distance learning in educational institutions today. The online learning environment provided extraordinary opportunities for students who have limited access to education especially in the current pandemic situation as well as a new approach for educators in which dynamic courses of the utmost quality can be created. Whilst, online learning approach has substantial strengths and provided unique access to quality of learning conversely there are issues ingrained in the application of this learning medium that can pose potential risks to the success of any online learning program.

Firstly, before any online learning program to succeed, it must have a group of students who can access the online learning environment. Lack of access due to either economic or logistics reasons will exclude otherwise qualified students from the course. This is a crucial issue in rural and lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. In terms of administrative point of view, if students are unable to afford the technology the education institution will lose the customers. As far as internet accessibility is concerned, internet access constitutes a huge cost to the user, which is the students. If the students' time for online learning is limited by the amount of internet access they can afford, then online learning participation will not be fair for all students in the course. A huge group of students is not able to access the internet for online learning due to technical and monetary issues. Some students are unable to access high speed or reliable internet services hence battling with online learning.

Secondly, both students and teachers must leverage a minimum level of computer knowledge to perform effectively in an online learning environment. They must be able to get use a different type of search engines and be comfortable browsing using the current technology. If they do not acquire those technology tools, therefore they will not succeed in online learning and might drag the entire learning process. For an effective and productive online learning program, students must not only know how to adapt to the fast-paced online classes but they should also require to have sound computer and technological skills to learn from online learning.

Thirdly, user-friendly and reliable technology is very much essential to a successful online learning program. However, even the most cultivated advanced technology is not 100% reliable. Adversely, it is not a question of if the equipment used in an online learning program will cause the failure but the technology might be a low profile which unable to support the learning process. Thus, a failure can happen at any point along with the system. For instance,

the internet server which host the learning program might crash and terminate all the participants off from the class, a participant may access the learning program through a networked computer that could go down, the students' laptops or PCs can have various problems that could limit them to access and the internet connection could fail or bogged down. Under these circumstances, the technology is neither persistent nor reliable and it can diminish the learning quality. In some situations, due to the limited resources of educational institutions, only numerous institutions were able to initiate effective online classes during the beginning month of Covid-19.

Fourthly, an online learning approach shall be an extremely effective alternative medium of learning for the mature, self-disciplined student. It is not a suitable learning environment for more dependent learners. Online self-paced learning provides students to manage their learning experience and enables flexibility of study schedules for futuristic modern students which emphasis a huge responsibility on the student. Thereby to effectively participate in an online learning program, the students must be well arranged, organized, self-motivated, and possess a high degree of time management skills to maintain the pace of the course. Grounds to these reasons, online learning is not suitable for younger students such as elementary or primary students. Those dependent learners also have issues assuming responsibilities needed by the online learning paradigm.

Likewise, successful on-ground instruction does not always interpret successful online learning. If the teachers are not adequately trained in online delivery and methodologies, the success of the online learning program will be jeopardized. The teacher must be able to communicate well throughout the online learning program. Otherwise, it will be weakened if the teachers are not properly prepared to function in the online learning classroom.

The teachers must be able to replace the lack of physical presence by establishing a supportive environment in the online learning classroom where all students feel convenient and comfortable participating specifically when students are aware on the teacher's is accessible. The failure to do this can estrange the class both from each other and from teachers. Even with a competent teacher, creating a comfortable learning environment in which the online learning class can function, still, the lack of physical existence in a classroom can be a constraint for an online learning program. For the education institution and students, those events require on-site communication could present a constraining factor in an online learning program.

Apart from the above, in some surroundings the implementation of online learning is disruptive. Some

administrators and/or school staffs who are unpleasant with change and working with technology usually express that online learning programs unable to provide quality education and always hinder the process of implementation. These groups of people portray a significant weakness in an online learning program because they can prohibit its success. Normally they are unable to foresee the bottom line where they look at online learning programs only as methods to raise revenues. They are not dedicated to seeing online learning programs as a means of offering quality learning to students who would otherwise not be able to access it. Under these circumstances, an education institution that is not conscious of the importance of proper teacher training, significant teacher characteristics, and restriction of online class size would not realize the impact that these factors can have on the success of an online learning program.

Besides, the online learning program has its most encouraging potential in the great synergy representing by active dialog among the students. However, in bigger classes with more than 20 students, the synergy level began to shift on the learning continuity until ultimately becomes an autonomous study to adapt to the large class. At this point, the dialog is restricted as well as the connection among students and the teacher where the medium is not being used to its highest potential.

Notwithstanding, with excitement and passion for online learning, it is essential to acknowledge that some subjects should not be taught online because the electronic medium does not allow the best method of delivery where hands-on subjects needed a physical movement and practice to contribute to the achievement of the learning objectives. Perhaps hands-on subjects are best taught in a face-to-face traditional learning environment. Nevertheless, hybrid courses may portray a temporary solution to this problem, thus causing that portion of the course more accessible to a higher number of people. Anyhow, the solution still stresses the fact that online learning unable to fulfill all educational needs and goals. Due to the technologically possible, to inspire a physical learning experience, but this does not inevitably mean that it is the better way for learning.

Into the bargain that, the curriculum on any online learning program should be thoroughly considered and developed to be successful. The importance of the curriculum and the need for qualified professionals to establish it are overlooked. The success of curriculum and teaching methodology in on-ground instruction will not always spell out a successful online learning program where the learning approach is quite diverse. Online learning must consider using a dialog among the students and group communication and participation. The traditional classroom learning method has no way to gain a successful online learning program. Learning of the

greatest quality possible to occur in an online learning program given that the curriculum has been created or transformed to fulfill the requirements of the online learning program.

Moreover, online learning will be more impressive and attractive only if the students have consistent access to the internet and computers, and if the teachers have obtained targeted training and support for online instruction. However, these needed requirements for effectiveness have been extremely absent for much online learning during the pandemic has retarded the learning process. Whilst, online learning in some circumstances works well for students for whom intentional, personalized, and adequate resources are available. The crisis provoked the delivery of online learning without time for planning around students' learning styles and environments where they are not reproducing similar models or not receiving the related benefits.

More than that, chronic absenteeism issues faced through online learning where the for those least prepared students especially to those at risk of becoming disengaged and eventually dropping out should be extended with appropriate support. In some situations, the students' non-serious attitude in terms of time and flexibility is creating many problems. Not all learners are similar and they differ in degrees of their capabilities and confidence level. Some of them do not feel comfortable and convenient during online learning, which might lead to a raise of frustration and confusion. Insufficient compatibility between the design of the technology and component of psychology needed by the learning process and deficient customization of learning processes can inhibit the teaching process and create disparity.

Finally, at present is a very impressive time for technology and learning approach. The online learning programs provide a technology-based learning environment that expands learning opportunities and can offer top-quality learning through a variety of methods and approaches. It is suitable for adult learners who want to continue their education where the online learning programs offer very much suitable solution to the dispute with work, family, and study schedules. Successful online learning needed the curriculum, the teachers, the technology, and the students must be cautiously considered and assessed so that possible to avoid pitfalls that might result from the weakness or issues.

III. THE CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

In many countries, the educational institution set to keep teachers or lectures online until the end of the year where there is an increased spotlight on the challenges faced by students. The most common issues and challenges

urgently need to address in order the online learning to proceed as a long-term continuity plan.

The first and foremost challenge is the teachers who are required to shift their classes online right away having no additional training and extra budget. As a comprehensive learning management system, normally will cost an arm and leg where sometimes the teachers mandatory to utilize numerous digital tools and application to deliver the learning context. Usually, they began their day by opening multiple tabs for multiple purposes and switching between them. They required attending online meetings as well as trying to find the most effective learning method to deliver.

On some occasions whereby not every student has a personal gadget to use for online learning. Many of them are required to share laptops and computers with their parents, siblings to stay on the learning track. The World Bank's "Learning Poverty" indicator shows that the pandemic Covid-19 has the potential to worsen the learning outcome even more if the countries do not react fast to get a resolution. In most countries including Malaysia, implementing online learning approaches will have a very inequitable education system especially for middle and poor students. This situation is very heterogeneous and if do not act appropriately the immense inequality of opportunities might exist and might be amplified as well.

Many students do not have a proper desk, books, internet connectivity, and electronic gadgets at home or supportive parents. Besides that, millions of students around the world are encounter technical difficulties or connectivity because of the high usage rate of online learning approaches. The online platforms are overloaded because of poor quality video, audio, and internet problems. The internet connection is either unsteady or the current data plan is not enough to cover the progressive learning needs. Both urban and rural areas students are struggling with the homework gap due to the poor internet connection. Yet, the fact is each individual has to accommodate a slow internetspeed amid the Covid-19 lockdown and learn to live with it.

Similarly, it is hard for students including teachers and parents to start using an online learning approach by using the digital tool out of nowhere without any additional training. They also would be overwhelmed by the amount of data they used to go with digital as well as disappointed facing the unknown.

Furthermore, the deaf and hard of hearing students were taken from their offline classes with translators and put home with poor ability to change the remote learning to their requirements as well as intensify these adjustments. Given that, internet learning is now a sort of challenge for

the students, those hard of hearing and deaf confronting a twofold issue multiplying the chances of falling behind.

Meanwhile, obtaining the main objective of a quick shift to online learning was most focused by almost all education institutions by neglecting data privacy. There is a possibility that the remote conference services company to store all video conference recordings on storage space without a password. The learning approach must be a thoughtfully approach in terms of selecting the digital tools for online learning delivery. The Covid-19 outbreak is a productive ground for cybercriminals, liberating the wave of cyber-attacks. By keeping the sensitive data from being, stolen is a number one precedence for digital tools that help deliver online learning. For instance, mistakenly use suspicious websites and applications, follow suspicious links, and mistakenly open emails from unknown senders especially teachers and students.

Moreover, the psychological factor is still extremely influencing students' motivation and learning progress. Being in the classroom, students got using instant eye-to eye contact and communication with each other enabling reacting together, sharing the experiences, joking, or making a non-verbal contact, enhancing the social skills. In other words, for many students, aclassroom has been a kind of sanctuary that is currently disappearing. It is not a stun most of them feel isolated, frightened by the pandemic where they lost physical connection with teachers, friends as well as school and classroom environment.

Apart from the above, it is very much difficult to keep and maintain students engaged without a teacher's physical presence and face-to-face contact during the online learning process. The most key concern is being connected to science labs especially physics, chemistry, biology subjects become impracticable without in-person instructions and learning processes usually depending on hands-on work. Creating students' interest, best engagement, and involvement in the learning process becomes a part of the interactive teaching strategy.

At the same time, a poor learning management system (LMS) also one of the cornerstone problems of the learning approach. A creation of LMS without a proper assessment, validation, and guidance by a professional learning consultant with teaching experience will not get much success in the online learning process. A proper LMS must create after conducting multiple thorough research with teachers and students in terms of social, psychological, and online teaching aspects.

Besides, online learning approaches even more stressful than regular classrooms. Some of the common reasons for this went along the lines where the normal classes may have been difficult but having the friends surrounding

makes the students much more manageable and less stressful throughout the learning process. However, for them, the online learning classes take out the benefits of having friends to socialize with and being trapped with nothing but assignments or homework.

According to many students, the online learning approach has also been declared that the workload given is larger than that of regular classes. The general statement for the online learning approach although very much helpful to education institutions as they are closed but still need some familiarization by students as it is a unique concept and not many are experienced with the application. On top of that, the educational institutions undertook the current shift from classroom learning settings to online learning settings placed an extreme level of pressure with impractical schedules, frequently a matter of days or weeks. Majority of cases, the resultant coursework does not acquire the compliance of the standards reflected for a high-quality online learning approach. Recently published news about online learning where the students or parents urge the education institution to address the online learning challenges soonest possible. There is an increased spotlight on the challenges faced by students due to online learning.

Among them are issues related to communications, assessments, and scheduling. For online learning to proceed as a long-term continuity plan, there is an urgent need to address these problems.

Here below some feedback from university students towards online learning:-

1. The virtues of face-to-face discourse are irreplaceable.
2. Computer-mediated communication is seen to be less effective as it lacks body language, facial expression, and tone.
3. It is difficult to share the points as online discussions can move swiftly from one topic to another and engaging a big class in a live forum can be challenging as well. A moderator's role is critical to structure effective online learning to regulating who can speak up at one time and to ensure that no one is left behind.
4. There is a growing concern about plagiarism surrounding online exams.
5. There is an issue of accessibility and internet coverage. The students who inadequacy strong internet access or devices may fail to catch up with their classmates. Those students who are falling behind will have a thought of abandoning their education.
6. Apart from poor internet coverage, other factors at home can render students unable to focus during classes or feel guilty for choosing studies over family obligations.

7. Lecturer's support is key in online learning where they should ask the students about their ability to attend the classes and assign tasks systematically. However, a few lecturers do not pay much attention to students and only distribute work to be submitted on certain dates.
8. It is impossible for students to effectively communicate during a live online presentation. Lecturers need to consider internet speed and the quality of the platform used. It is much better to provide a recorded video presentation on lesson learning.
9. Complex assignments can be split into smaller components. Lecturers can assess students at several points within the learning process and provide feedback.
10. The students are hoping for a standardized curriculum for online learning.
11. Proceeding with online learning until December 2020 requires students to step out of their comfort zones. It is hard to adapt to the new norm but students need to push their selves more towards online learning which is not a bad approach but students should know how to prioritize well.
12. The online learning flexibility has given some impact on the learning process where students start to have disciplinary problems towards individual learning.
13. The inability to meet lecturers in person can prevent students from fully understanding the particular subject.
14. Lecturers to consider having multiple sessions with short breaks in between which allows students time to think about the topic and form questions about it. It is also better to keep the class short because not every student has the same level of accessibility to the Internet.
15. Those special needs students such as TVET students or final year students who need face-to-face teaching and learning, online learning is an uncondusive home environment even with internet access.
16. The time and location flexibility aspects are fragile and create problems.
17. There is a lack of standards for quality, quality control, development of learning resources, and delivery.
18. The efforts should be taken by academic institutions to make sure that every student and institution is having access to the required resources for online learning.

Overall, Covid-19 much affected the conventional traditional learning approach of academic institutions across the world. The academic world opted for online classes as an alternative solution to recommence education. Although the online learning approach is safeguarding students' health from the Covid-19 pandemic, hence it is not as efficient as the conventional

learning approach where online learning is unable to produce desired results among the students due to learning feasibility and effectiveness. The academic institution and government have to mitigate the issues and challenges by designing suitable and effective content, arrange an effective learning delivery system, and provide digital knowledge training to respective academic staff to achieve a better learning outcome.

IV. CONCLUSION

The world is changing and today's crisis has initiated the door open to many new opportunities such as providing a leading role to students, achieving new standards of online learning, implementation gadgets not only for fun but to get something new by involving online learning and participating students to experience exchange or accessing the free information sources. Overall, education institutions must be responsible to get a handle on the mess a shift to online learning seems to make and find the most efficient tune or approaches towards online learning. The online learning was denoted as an Emergency Learning Approach".

The implementation of technology in adaptive learning as a proactive approach are areas set to feature prominently in the educational system for upcoming years. Hence, there are many learning platforms out there making big strides and still a long way to go. So, the comfort and familiarity with utilizing technology amongst students and teachers should be embedded at an early stage for learning outcome success.

The mission of education systems is to overcome the current learning crisis. The most challenging part today is to decrease as much as possible the negative impact of this pandemic will have on learning and build the experience to get recover on a path of quicker improvement in learning. As of today, the education systems able to manage the current crisis. Nevertheless, they should also find a better solution on how they can get back stronger with a revived sense of responsibility of all actors and with a better understanding, sense of urgency of the necessity to narrow the gap in opportunities and ensuring that all students have the same chances for a quality learning.

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