THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING USAGE FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract
During Movement Control Order (MCO), where most schools and universities have to shut down their operations due to Covid-19, online learning has been seen as a platform where educators can share their knowledge with the students. This paper explains about what is coronavirus, online learning in Malaysia, the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, how to overcome the disadvantages of online learning and why online learning is the good choice to conduct class for tertiary education during Movement Control Order in Malaysia.

Index Terms-- Movement Control Order (MCO), Online Learning, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, most of the lecturers use physical presence of classrooms and textbooks. However, with the development of technology, electronic learning or e-Learning can be used by the lecturers to teach the students anytime and anywhere. Nowadays, most of the countries in the world have been affected by a virus named Coronavirus (Covid-19). According to [1], Covid-19 is the disease caused by the new coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019. The symptoms of Covid-19 including cough, fever and shortness of breath.The virus can be spread from person to person. Because of that, Malaysia has taken prevention by using Movement Control Order (MCO)to prevent the virus from spreading more. It gives huge impacts especially for education system in Malaysia. Most of the universities have to utilise e-Learning to prevent physical contact between students and the lecturer. This article looks the advantages and disadvantages of online learning and why online learning is the best choice to conduct lecture for all universities in Malaysia during MCO.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to:

1)   Identify the advantages and disadvantages of online learning classroom to be conducted during Movement Control Order (MCO).

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

According to [1], Coronavirus is a virus that started in China in December 2019. The symptoms of this virus including cough, fever and shortness of breath. The virus can be spread from person to person. The conditions of Covid-19 patient will become worst if the patients are older people or people with chronic disease such as diabetes or those who had respiratory disease.

A. How to Prevent Coronavirus from Spreading?

The best way to prevent or slowing down the spreading of this virus is to know well about this virus and how it spreads. People should protects themselves and others by washing their hands using alcohol based rub frequently and not easily touching their face.

ONLINE LEARNING IN MALAYSIA

Previously, online learning only offered by some of the universities which offered online course. By offering online course, students do not have to attend classes physically, and it is suitable for part time students as online classes are able to tailored students' schedule. Online courses offer almost every subject, and at the same time it also offers flexible timetables to suit students' flexibility. Online learning has been chosen by part time students as an alternative to brick and mortar class. By using online course, it would enable students who want to pursue their study abroad to do it in their respective country without leaving their country.

Online education comes in a variety of contexts, such as E-learning, distance learning and networked learning. According to [2], online education refers to instructional environment supported by the Internet and it is can be fully online or blended with face-to-face interaction. Online education also can be defined as an approach to teaching and learning that utilizes Internet technologies to communicate and collaborate in an educational context.

In Malaysia, according to [3], through the dramatic changes in public and private institutions have transformed Malaysia to become one of education hub in the South East Asia.Thus, the traditional way which is face-to-face interaction slowly changed to online learning in most of private colleges and universities. However, the traditional way is still being used in many public universities.

There are many benefits when the lecturers use online education. One of the benefit from online education is it gives flexibility for the students to learn. Students can also save their money by not having to go to the college or university. Other benefit is students can access online books or journals to complete their assignment.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

According to [4], online learning approach has several advantages than face-to-face approach. Below are four advantages when the lecturers use online learning to deliver their instructions during Movement Control Order in Malaysia:

a) Flexibility of time

When the lecturers conduct online learning classes, it will give flexibility to the students to learn. Students can fit their schedule more easily. This is because the lecturers will schedule online class and students can interact with the lecturers and fellow classmates using online video. Live discussions can be conducted at that time with the presence of all course mates and the lecturer.

b) Flexibility of environment

By using online learning, students and the lecturer can choose their own learning environment that suits them well. When the lecturer conduct online class, it means students do not have to attend actual class, where this is very encouraged during this pandemic. Students also do not have to worry about missing an important class.

c) Lower costs

Students and the lecturer can stay where they are without going to the classroom during MCO. It will save costs to the students and the lecturer when the lecturer conducts online class.

d) Self-discipline and responsibility

Studying online requires more self-discipline and responsibility from the students and the lecturer. It is because students will spend time on their own without someone physically to keep them focused on the deadlines. Students need to responsible for their own learning when the lecturer uses online learning as students' attendance for online class might be detected by their presence during online video session.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

Besides the advantages of online learning, there are also disadvantages of online learning. According to [5], there are six disadvantages of online learning.

a) No self-discipline

When using online learning or electronic learning (e-Learning), lecturer might face students' commitment to use online learning as students do not need to appear physically in the classroom.

b) No face-to-face interaction

While online learning can be interactive these days, especially during Movement Control Order in Malaysia, it is still not the same as sitting in a real classroom. It means, there is no substitute for interacting with, and learning from, a fellow human.

c) Lack of input from lecturers

Online learning or e-Learning is structured. When a program is developed, it is based on the course developers or the lecturers think is the right curriculum at that time. However, learning materials can quickly become outdated and it could contain errors from the beginning.

d) Good online learning is difficult to do

Developing an effective online learning course takes time, money, and a great amount of expertise. A good online learning contains multimedia, custom web development, technical support, and strong User Interaction design.

e) No facilities to support online learning

No student facilities such as laboratories or libraries, although some online learning incorporate practical activities to be done at home, virtual laboratory experiments, reading lists of freely-available papers or temporary subscriptions to journals.

f) Hard to resolve difficulties

It can be hard to find answers to questions or resolve difficulties, especially when discussion forum participation is low.

HOW TO OVERCOME THE DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

During Covid-19 pandemic, most universities and schools have to implement online learning. It could be interesting to those who love to use the technology to teach and to learn. However, not all people love to use the technology. Some people prefer to use traditional way which is face-to-face to teach and to learn.

Most of the lecturers in the universities will use online learning to encourage discussions among the students by using course forum in e-Learning website. Based on [6], by posting comments and thoughts to the forums, it can help the students to overcome the feelings of isolation, particularly in courses that use community mentors or teaching assistants to respond to student posts.

Online learning could be useful for weak students as they can rewind and watch back the video uploaded by the lecturer in e-Learning website. Students can also ask the lecturer or instructor by using forum, skype or WhatsApp if they have any question regarding the content of a video uploaded by the lecturer.

WHY ONLINE LEARNING IS THE GOOD CHOICE TO CONDUCT CLASS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION DURING MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER IN MALAYSIA?

During Covid-19, most of schools and universities around the world have to close their operation, impacting millions of students. In Malaysia, this equates to 4.9 million school students and 1.2 million in higher education institutions (across public and private universities, polytechnics, and community colleges), including about 130,000 international students (some who returned home before the movement control order). Now, the focus has turned to online learning as more than just a substitute to ensure that education continues.

According to [7], online learning is not new in Malaysia. In 1900s, online learning has been known as online distance learning movements.

While in the 2000s, there was 1Bestari.net for schools while in 2014, the Malaysia MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) initiative was launched through a collaboration between Meipta (the Malaysian Council for e-Learning Heads) and OpenLearning between 2018 and 2020.

Based on[7], there are top three challenges when using online learning such as (i) educators skill and experience in using online system and online applications; (ii) the readiness of the infrastructure, for example, Internet connectivity, bandwidth and devices; and (iii) the lecturers' and students' mindset.

Online learning is more than just videos, quizzes and PDF files that being uploaded by the lecturer. For Malaysian students and educators, this is an opportunity to "enculture" a new love for learning. This is all about lifelong learning.

The art of online learning design is growing around the world. In Bloom's taxonomy, it can be seen that students learn best when they involve in the learning process.

In short, if we let our students to take ownership of their own learning, they will be better learners – and the current Covid-19 situation necessitates makes us thinking long and hard about this. Educators need a mindset shift from "sage on the stage" to "guide on the side". If we truly get serious and dedicate paramount importance that online learning deserves, we should be able to future-proof our education system – during the good times and the bad times.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be seen that online education is a method that can benefits both lecturers and students especially during Movement Control Order (MCO), where most of the schools and universities have to close down their operation due to Covid-19. Online learning can be a solution for the educator to share their knowledge by using e-Learning or other platform as education needs to be conducted even during MCO. One of the online learning benefits is students become active when they learn using online learning as they are the one who take responsibility of their learning. This will lead to a new era in Malaysia education system where it can replace traditional way of learning to suit with the current situation of MCO.

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