

Students' Perception towards E-Learning: A Descriptive Analysis at Uitm Kampus Bandaraya Melaka

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has changed the operating system in Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia. New norms had been implemented to face the situation of the pandemic. The academic system must go on so that the students will not be left behind. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) which is generally known as online education or E-Learning plays a vital role in the country's education system. The aim of this study is to examine the factors that influence the e-learning acceptance of students in UiTM City Campus Melaka as perceived by the students. This study utilized a quantitative research approach and the data has been collected through questionnaires. Students undertaking Strategic Management subject were chosen as a population and the sample size was 117. To answer the objective of this study, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used. The finding of this study shows respondents agree that the use of e-learning on the Strategic Management course gives ease for them during this ODL. Students perceived that the most important factor influencing online learning is the instructor. This is followed by accessibility and university support. This finding is important to the university to strategize and make plans in enhancing the implementation of e-learning for their students. Since this study focuses on the students from UiTM City Campus Melaka, it is suggested that future research to extend this study to a bigger scope that include other UiTM branches, public universities or private universities.

Keyword: Instructor, Accessibility, University Support, E-Learning, Perception

Introduction

Malaysia Higher Education system needs to respond to the pandemic by initiating the use of teaching and learning activities. Before Covid-19 pandemic, the use of classroom sessions is common but now, teaching and learning activities was transformed into Open Distance

Learning (ODL). This change is not only for students, but it also involved the lecturers and the university management. It is not easy initially, but slowly it is going to be easy because everybody right now is doing the same method to deliver and receive the knowledge. Students easily access e-learning at a low cost that will help them to study by using various methods such as Webex, Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Massive open online courses (MOOCH) and U-Future. As for UiTM's students and lecturers, the method used for teaching and learning is wider and acceptable by both parties. This is because, each of the students has their own limitations in using the e-learning platform such as the accessibility of the internet connection, location of the students and also the tools that are used by students. The growth of e-learning has increased tremendously nowadays as we had to face the Covid-19 pandemic. Everybody is using digital mediums especially in delivering the knowledge. As for UiTM's students, the implementation of ODL has become commonly used to fulfil academic requirements.

Despite many e-learning benefits such as flexibility, convenience, cross platform, ease of update, collaborative learning and easy to monitor the learning progress (Abdelsalam et al, 2021, Pham & Tran, 2020), e-learning possess challenges that need to be overcome. To begin, digital divide problems caused by the gap between urban internet user and rural internet user in Malaysia is still clearly visible. The internet penetration rate of the urban households has reached 75.6% compared to only 24.4% of the rural households (MCMC, 2020). As a result, problems such as low adoption rate, bandwidth issue and connectivity and also lack of quality e-content hinder students to catch up with ODL.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that more than 1.37 billion students (80% of the global student population) have been affected by the Covid-19 crisis (UNESCO, 2020). This pandemic has caused massive disruption of the academic field and the Covid-19 crisis has forced the education institutions to change the method of delivery from physical classes into e-learning. These changes not only affect Malaysia's educations, but it affected the worldwide education system. The struggle to transition rapidly to e-learning settings has impacted colleges, teachers and students at all levels. According to Yassine (2020), this pandemic has made distance learning mandatory. However, in order to make e-learning education possible, there are a lot of factors that need to be considered by the management of universities. Thus, this study is designed to observe the perceptions of students towards factors influencing e-learning acceptance among students. This study is important as the findings will shed some light for the university to focus on improving the deliverance of online learning.

Literature Review

Instructor

Teachers are vital individuals for constructing learners' conduct in the e-learning course, and in this way, their attitude may influence learners' behavior (Sun et al., 2008). The instructor must move very fast to adapt to the e-learning process. Sun et al., (2008) discussed teachers' responsiveness that it is learners' perception of a prompt response from the instructor to online requests and problems. The use of suitable and relevant pedagogy for online education may depend on the expertise and exposure to information and communications technology (ICT) for both educators and learners (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Some of the online platforms used so far include unified communication and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft

Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas and Blackboard, which allow the teachers to create educational courses, training and skill development programs (Petrie et al. 2020).

Teacher attributes are response timelines, self-adequacy, innovation control, concentration on the association, and attitude towards e-learning, attitude towards students, circulative decency, operational reasonableness, and interactivity (Sun et al. 2008). Teachers who are open-minded, flexible and interested in developing themselves became self-taught and tried to improve their teaching skills (Coman, et al. 2020). The instructor explores their wisdom to make sure that the students received fairly their learning process. Especially when e-learning is very important in delivering knowledge. Traditionally, the use of classroom sessions is common, but now it is transformed into online or e-learning education for students and lecturers. Although it looks difficult, the instructor has the responsibility to guide and support the student to complete the course. No matter what will be the reason, the challenge still needs to be faced.

Accessibility

Accessibility is very important during practising e-learning. It has been widely noted that the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can provide solutions of conventional teaching through e-learning, distance education, and virtual universities (Kheyrandish, 2011). Both educators and students should have good internet access to resume the e-learning class. The growth of e-learning classes is rapidly increasing use by educators but how students perceive, access, and react to it are the factor that educators should take into consideration. During the pandemic of Covid-19, the popularity of online learning in Malaysia spreads not only in the small cities but also in the villages even in rural areas. The same goes for the educational system that involves pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education.

University Support

In general, student support services are referring to the support that provided by the university in various aspects such as, academic, counseling, technology. All these supports are important to make sure, the process of open distance learning and the implementation of e-learning is successful.

Therefore, both university members and students came across many challenges (Coman, et al. 2020). OECD (2020) reported that universities have to face challenges to maintain an equilibrium between online courses, which could affect students' health, spending hours in front of a screen, and non-digital activities. Universities are expected to observe on student's emotional health and providing them with support throughout the process of learning, taking into account the fact that not all students have access to the internet, and managing and monitoring their access to devices in order to effectively.

E-Learning

According to Horton (2006), e-learning can be described as a mean of incorporating information and computer technologies as well as systems to design and create learning environment. Engelbrecht (2005) describes elements such as the internet, CDs & mobile phones are part of the E-learning experience. In a different perspective, Other scholars have defined E-learning as digitally permitted and technology-facilitated learning tools and

equipment that utilize a digital camera, personal computers, digital videos, tablets, projector; OHP, software, operating systems that support interaction of students and teachers (Olojo et al., 2012; Eze et al., 2018).

Research Methodology

A quantitative study was used in this study as the main methodology to examine the most factors that affected the acceptance of E-learning among students. The population of this study is bachelor degree students in UiTM City Campus, Melaka. Based on the population of the study, the sample size is 109 as suggested by G-Power. The primary data was collected using an online questionnaire survey through Google Form. The scale of response is 5 points Likert-scale and the survey items were adapted from the study by Pham & Tran (2020). This study used Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to analyse the collected data and the analysis involve is frequency analysis and descriptive analysis.

Finding of the Research

Response Rate

This study presents the results of the analysis by assessing the characteristics of the respondents and examining the possible factors through descriptive analysis. Feedbacks from a total of 171 respondents were collected with the intention to capture the issue based on respondents' experiences using E-learning at UiTM City Campus Melaka.

Demographic

Table 1.0 illustrates the demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1.0

Demographic Information

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Age		
20-22 years old	30	17.5
23-24 years old	133	77.8
25-26 years old	8	4.7
27 years and above	0	0
Total	171	100%
2. Gender		
Male	19	11.1
Female	152	88.9
Total	171	100%
3. Program		
Office System Management	26	15.2
Human Resource Management	63	36.8
International Business	34	19.9
Finance	48	28.1
Total	171	100%

More than half of the respondents were female (88.9%), which is higher than male respondents (11.1%). This can be justified since majority of students at UiTM City Campus Melaka is dominated by females. It appears that there were 8 respondents aged between 25-26 years old (4.7%). The group age of 23-24 years old has the highest number of responses in

this study, with a total frequency of 133 (77.8%). This is followed by the age range of 20-22 years old, with a frequency of 30 respondents (17.5%). In terms of the study program, it reveals that there were 63 respondents from the Human Resource Management program (36.8%) slightly higher than the Finance program with a frequency of 48 (28.1%). This is followed by programs in International Business with a frequency of 34 respondents (19.9%) and Office System Management with a total frequency of 26 respondents (15.2%).

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2.0 summarizes the descriptive analysis of the variables.

Table 2.0
Descriptive Analysis

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
E-Learning Acceptance	3.49	.80	171
Instructor	3.81	.77	171
Accessibility	3.60	.80	171
University Support	3.56	.84	171

The result of M=3.49 indicates that respondents have a good and acceptable level of understanding of e-learning acceptance in UiTM City Campus Melaka especially among those four programs. The respondents agree that the use of e-learning on the Strategic Management course eases the learning process during ODL. The highest mean among the independent variables is the instructor which is M=3.81 followed by access ability with the value of M=3.60. The lowest mean is university support, with a mean value of M=3.56.

Next, this survey also analyses the perception of the students on the e-learning activities. The questions that were asked is “Do you find the e-learning for Strategic Management is helpful?”, “Have you used another e-learning platform besides Strategic Management?”, “I read hardcopy rather than digital format” and “I prefer to purchase E-learning materials rather than traditional materials”. All of these questions are important in order to get a clear picture from the student perspective on the implementation of e-learning.

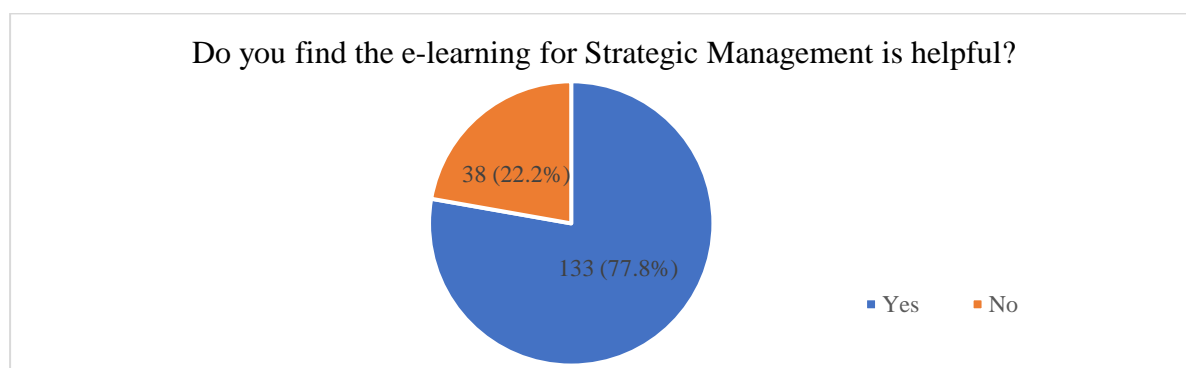


Figure 1.0: E-learning is helpful

Figure 1.0 presents the analysis of the student opinion on whether they find E-learning of Strategic Management is helpful. A total frequency of 133 respondents (77.8%) agrees that e-learning for Strategic Management course is helpful while 38 respondents (22.2%) disagree.

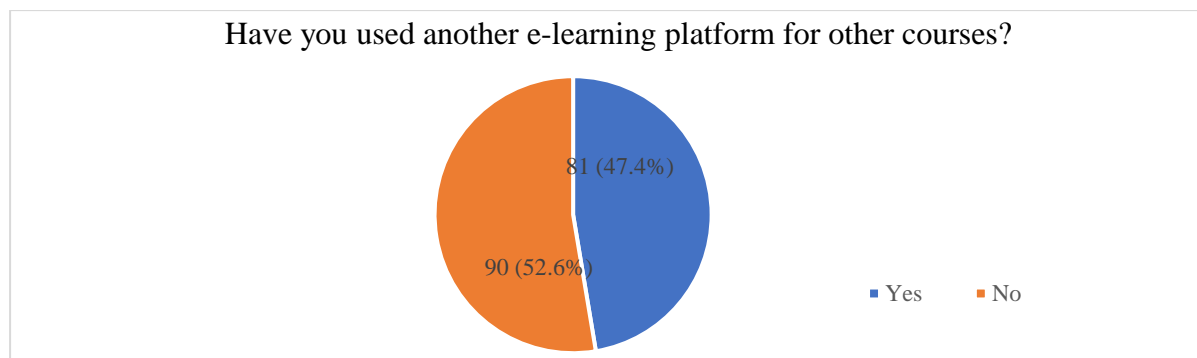


Figure 2.0: Usage of another E-Learning platform

Figure 2.0 presents the analysis of the student opinion on whether they engage in another platform of E-learning. Based on the analysis, 52.6% of students use another platform of e-learning for other courses with a total frequency of 90 respondents. However, 47.4% of students only used one e-learning platform for this course which is equivalent to 81 respondents (47.4%).

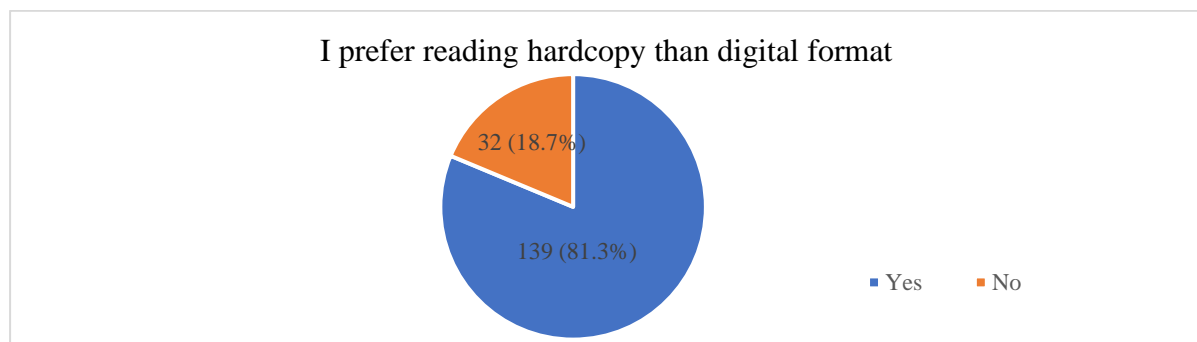


Figure 3.0: Preference of reading materials

Figure 3.0 presents the analysis of the student's opinion on the selection of preference for educational materials. Most students agreed to read a hardcopy of the textbook rather than a digital format with a total frequency of 139 respondents (81.3%) while 32 respondents (18.7%) prefer to read using a digital format textbook.

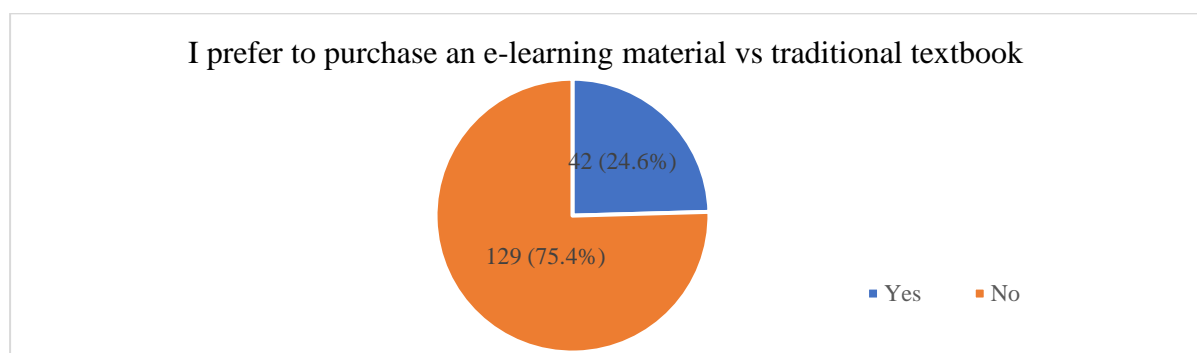


Figure 4.0: Purchase preference

Figure 4.0 present the analysis of the student opinion on the preferable to purchase the education materials. Based on the analysis, students also agree to purchase hardcopy

traditional textbook as compared to e-learning material with a total frequency of 129 respondents (75.4%) while 42 respondents (24.6%) prefer to purchase an e-learning material for Strategic Management course.

Discussion

The above analysis presents the perception of students undertaking Strategic Management course through online platform at UiTM City Campus Melaka. As reported, among all independent variables, the respondents perceived that the instructor or lecturer (M=3.81) is the most important factor that influences e-learning. This is followed by access ability (M=3.60) and university support (M=3.59). In a previous research by Pham and Tran (2020), those researchers discovered that the top three factors affecting e-learning acceptance by Vietnamese students were student's computer competency, university support and infrastructure. While Sarker et. al (2018) suggested that better orientation of the users, quality content and lecturers-students interaction are the key pre-requisites to harness the optimum benefit from e-learning platforms in Bangladesh.

The responses given by students in this study showed that instructor is the most dominant factor that encourage them to use e-learning medium. In addition, instructors' style of teaching and presentation, enthusiastic feeling in teaching, always motivate students to use e-learning and active discussion using e-learning in a class cause high acceptance of students towards e-learning. Thus, it indicated that the instructors are vital individuals for constructing students' conduct in the e-learning course, and in this way, catch the student's attention towards course, instruction and readings, and influence students' behaviour. When students are satisfied with instructors' attitudes; then, this impacts the overall achievement of the learning management system (LMS) positively (Ozkan & Koseler, 2009; Mahwish, 2009).

Access ability is the second highest important factor on e-learning acceptance of students in UiTM City Campus Melaka. This finding shows that the high e-learning acceptance among students is dependent their ability to get internet access. This could be explained from the student's response that learning is facilitated by some form of interactivity with classmates through the online platform. Furthermore, instructors' responsiveness to online requests and problems contributed to the success of e-learning.

The lowest impact factor in the success of e-learning acceptance is university support. Perhaps, the reason for the lowest response as perceived by the respondents was due to the difficulty of obtaining technical supports from the technician. Thus, university management should improve on providing technical support services for students and also lecturers from human support, organizational as well as technical assistance. For instance, platforms such as UFuture, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Webex and many more were provided to support the implementation of e-learning. It is also proposed by Baleghi-Zadeh et al (2017) that university support is one of the critical success factors of the e-learning system. Even though this factor is perceived as the least important factor among the three, providing sufficient technical support is deemed to be essential as this could minimize the difficulty faced by students through online platform.

Based on frequency results, the majority of students had positive attitudes about e-learning as they found it is helpful for them to study Strategic Management course. Surprisingly, many

of them are still willing to purchase traditional textbooks as compared to e-learning materials. This could be explained as they prefer reading a traditional textbook or printed versions as compared to digital format. At the same time, students are slowly adjusting to ODL at home by accessing various ODL methods such as asynchronous (Google Classroom, MOOC and UFuture) and synchronous (Webex, Zoom, Google Meet) online learning.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to assess perception and characteristics of respondents on the factors pertinent to the e-learning acceptance of students at UiTM City Campus Melaka through descriptive analysis. The findings of this study acknowledged that all three factors were deemed important towards student's acceptance of e-learning. The instructor had a mean score of $M=3.81$, followed by access ability with a mean score of $M=3.60$ and university support with a mean score of $M=3.59$.

Commitment and support by the instructors are essential to ensure that the students can adapt to e-learning environment effectively. Instructors of online courses should implement evaluation approaches to ensure students are able to participate in collaborative learning environments. With this, instructors are encouraged to identify which presentation approach is more effective in order to provide a supportive learning environment, so that students can devote their effort and resources to learning. Regarding the access ability, students with poor internet connections back home, were given permission to return to the campus where the internet access is more stable. The reliable and good internet access would definitely influence the effectiveness of the e-learning process. Furthermore, providing good planning, training and information to the instructor and student is a great support by the university and will increase the awareness and satisfaction amongst them. The initiative from higher education institutions to introduce the careline to provide social support to the students was also commendable. However, it needs a more aggressive communication on this effort throughout campuses. Support by the university is compulsory to make sure the implementation of e-learning in higher education gives a positive perception and students are able to adapt to the changes.

Theoretically, the outcomes of this study validate the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) in which factors such as lecturers, accessibility and university are perceived as important for e-learning acceptance. Contextually, lecturers as the agent of teaching deliverance, must continuously equip and update themselves with technological changes and be IT savvy. Their reservation to embrace changes in the technology may influence the acceptance level on e-learning among students.

Among the limitation of this study, was the lack of male respondents to participate in the survey as female students represented the majority in UiTM. Should the gender proportion is acceptable, a further study can be conducted by comparing male and female respondents acceptance and readiness on e-learning. Another limitation is on the size of the sample. Perhaps, in the future the sample can be increased by engaging students from different campuses or the other public universities for better generalization of the finding. Besides, future research might want to consider other variables such as computer competency, student satisfaction, course content and design, students' engagement and assessments. Therefore, it brings new perspectives into the body of knowledge.

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