



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

PROCEEDING FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON NEXTGEN CONSTRUCTION

2025

*Future-Ready Construction and Facility Management:
Driving Research and Innovation for a Smart Built Environment*

**PROCEEDING FOR
INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON
NEXTGEN CONSTRUCTION
2025**

Organiser:

Universitas Pamulang (UNPAM)

Co-organiser:

Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology,
Faculty of Built Environment,
UiTM Perak Branch

Faculty of Built Environment, UiTM Sarawak Branch

Colloquium Date:

6 May 2025

Unit Penerbitan UiTM Perak, 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means; electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise; without permission on writing from the director of Unit Penerbitan UiTM Perak, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Branch, 32610 Seri Iskandar Perak, Malaysia.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloging in Publication Data

No e- ISBN: 978-967-2776-60-4

Cover Design : Nur'Ain Ismail

Typesetting : Nur'Ain Ismail

PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) IMPLEMENTATION AMONG BUILDING TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS IN SARAWAK DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

Haifa Afieqah Hasbi^{1*}, Hemyza Budin¹, and Mohd Dzuliqyan Jasni¹

¹ Building Department, Faculty of Built Environment,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

*Corresponding Author: haifaafieqah@uitm.edu.my *

Abstract

The implementation of Online Distance Learning (ODL) has gained prominence in higher education, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. In Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has adopted an ODL period lasting 1-3 weeks at the beginning of the semester, including the March-August 2024 and March-August 2025 semesters, to provide students with flexibility. However, the effectiveness and acceptance of ODL among building technology students during festive seasons remain uncertain. This preliminary study investigates students' acceptance of ODL, the challenges they face, and potential strategies to enhance its effectiveness during festive periods. The study employs a quantitative research method using online questionnaires distributed to students to gather data on demographics, ODL participation, challenges faced, and coping strategies during the festive period. The findings reveal that while students generally accept ODL as a necessary learning mode, their overall experience ranges from neutral to moderately satisfied. Key challenges identified include distractions due to family and cultural obligations, poor internet connectivity, especially in rural areas and difficulty managing time. Despite these issues, students expressed that ODL can be effective if supported with appropriate tools, such as pre-recorded lectures, flexible schedules, and offline learning materials.

The festive season, moderately to highly impacted students' ability to participate in synchronous ODL sessions. However, students demonstrated adaptability by using self-paced learning strategies and adjusting study hours. Most respondents agreed that institutional support, such as improved academic consultation, flexible deadlines, and better digital infrastructure, would enhance their ODL engagement. These insights highlight the need for more culturally responsive and student-centered ODL strategies that balance academic continuity with students' personal and festive commitments.

Keywords: Online Distance Learning, Building Technology Students, Festive Season, Acceptance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid global shift toward Online Distance Learning (ODL), especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly impacted higher education institutions, including those in Malaysia. ODL was adopted to ensure the continuity of academic instruction during periods of physical distancing and has since remained a viable learning mode in the post-pandemic context (UNESCO, 2021). Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has implemented an ODL period at the beginning of the semester, lasting approximately 1-3 weeks. This initiative was carried out for the March-August 2024 and March-August 2025 semesters, aiming to provide students with flexibility while maintaining academic continuity.

Despite its advantages, the effectiveness and acceptance of ODL among students pursuing technical programs such as Building Technology remain unclear. These

programs often rely on hands-on and experiential learning, which may be constrained by virtual delivery formats. Additionally, festive seasons can introduce unique challenges, including time constraints, cultural obligations, and environmental distractions, potentially influencing students' participation and engagement in ODL. This study aims to investigate the extent to which students accept and adapt to ODL during festive seasons and to identify the factors influencing their experiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The shift to ODL has been widely studied for its potential to democratize education by offering flexible, accessible learning environments (Moore et al., 2022). However, in technical education settings, the transition to online platforms presents pedagogical and logistical challenges (Rahim et al., 2022). Students in construction and building-related fields often require hands-on practice and real-time engagement, which can be difficult to replicate in ODL formats.

According to Davis's (2022) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of a system are primary predictors of user acceptance. In the context of ODL, students' acceptance is also influenced by external factors such as digital readiness, access to technology, and learning environment quality (Ali et al., 2023). Festive seasons add a cultural dimension that affects learning behavior. Ahmad et al. (2023) highlighted that cultural celebrations can significantly reduce study time, disrupt routines, and diminish concentration. Similarly, Kamaruddin and Ismail (2023) noted that festive periods can hinder time management and motivation, especially among students from rural areas with limited internet access (Chong & Lim, 2023).

To address these challenges, researchers have advocated flexible teaching strategies, such as asynchronous learning, modular content, and increased academic support, to enhance ODL effectiveness during culturally significant periods (Tan et al., 2022; Yusof et al., 2024).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a preliminary quantitative research design, focusing on collecting early insights into the acceptance and experiences of Online Distance Learning (ODL) among Diploma in Building Technology students at UiTM Cawangan Sarawak during the festive season. As a preliminary investigation, the objective is to explore general patterns, identify emerging challenges, and gather foundational data to inform future in-depth research.

A structured online questionnaire was used as the primary instrument, designed based on previous validated studies on ODL and technology acceptance (Ali et al., 2023; Davis, 2022). The questionnaire was adapted to suit the context of festive season learning and comprised five key sections: demographic background, ODL participation, challenges, coping strategies, and recommendations. Items included multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale responses.

This method aligns with literature advocating for early-stage, low-resource research tools that can capture a broad range of student perceptions while maintaining

accessibility and ease of deployment (Singh & Thurman, 2023). Preliminary studies such as this are critical for identifying key variables and shaping future frameworks for more comprehensive or longitudinal studies (Rahim et al., 2022).

The sample population consisted of Diploma in Building Technology (CFAP126) students enrolled during the March–August 2024 and March–August 2025 semesters, who participated in ODL during the designated period at the beginning of the semester. Responses were collected anonymously via Google Forms, ensuring voluntary participation and ethical integrity.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, providing an overview of students' experiences and identifying trends. These findings serve as a foundational step toward developing evidence-based strategies for improving ODL, especially in contexts impacted by cultural and seasonal variables (Ahmad et al., 2023; Kamaruddin & Ismail, 2023).

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Student Demographics

The respondents of this study consisted of 75 students enrolled in the Diploma in Building Technology (CFAP126) program at UiTM Cawangan Sarawak. Respondents were between the ages of 20 and 21, aligning with the typical age range of diploma-level students. In terms of location, most students reported residing in urban areas during the ODL period conducted in the first week of the March–August 2025 semester. Despite the common assumption that urban settings ensure better digital infrastructure, some students still reported having slow or unstable internet connections, indicating that location alone does not guarantee seamless online learning experiences. However, overall, most respondents stated they had access to stable internet during the ODL period.

4.2 Experience and Participation in ODL

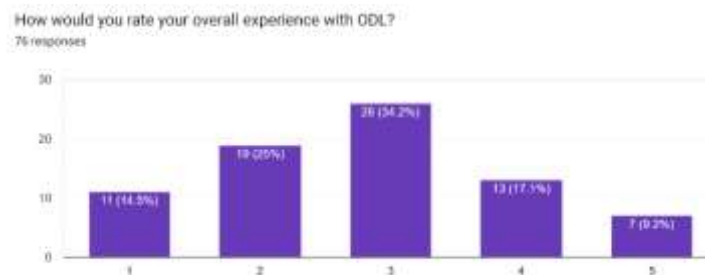


Figure 1. Experience of ODL during Festive Season

Based on Figure 1 above, the overall experience with Online Distance Learning, the responses were diverse. While a small number of students rated their experience positively, with a score of 4 or 5 (satisfied to very satisfied), several students expressed dissatisfaction, rating the experience as low as 1 or 2. This suggests that students' ODL experiences varied considerably, possibly influenced by differences in internet connectivity, learning environments, or individual learning preferences. Regarding the

effectiveness of ODL for technical subjects like construction and building technology, 47.4% of the respondents responded with uncertainty ("Maybe"), while 32.9% stated "No". These findings point to a general skepticism among students about the effectiveness of online formats in delivering hands-on or skill-based content. This perspective is supported by studies such as Rahim et al. (2022), which emphasize the limitations of virtual platforms for practical subjects. Interestingly, despite this skepticism, majority of the respondents indicated that they often participated in ODL sessions during festive seasons, showing a strong sense of commitment or requirement to remain engaged.

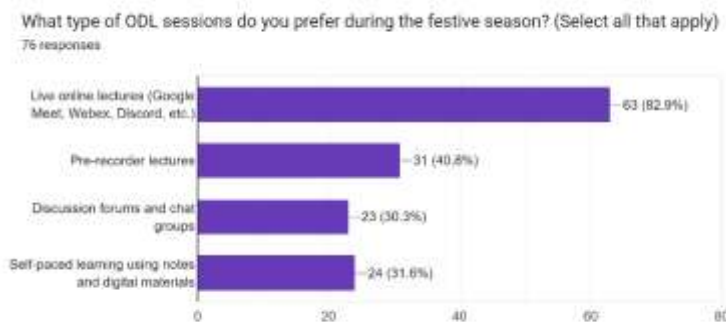


Figure 2. Preferred ODL Mode during Festive Season

Responses as Figure 2 showed preference modes of ODL during festive seasons for live online lectures via platforms such as Google Meet or Webex, as well as pre-recorded lectures and self-paced learning using digital modules. The popularity of pre-recorded lectures and self-paced formats suggests a preference for asynchronous learning, especially during busy festive periods when students must juggle academic work with family obligations. This aligns with the findings of Tan et al. (2022), who noted that flexibility is a key factor in the success of ODL implementations.

4.3 Challenges of ODL

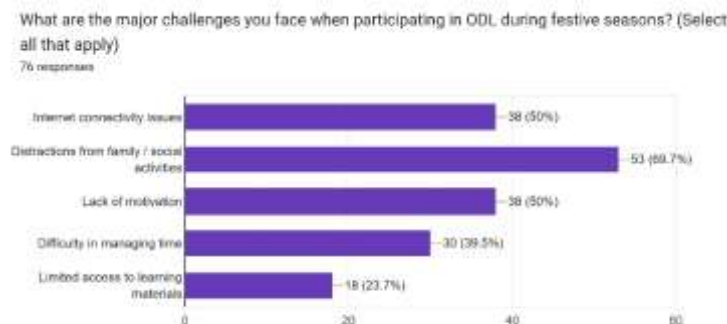


Figure 3. Challenges of ODL during Festive Season

In terms of challenges faced, the most common issue reported was distractions from family and social activities (69.7%) during festive seasons. All respondents mentioned this factor, indicating its universal impact. Other notable challenges included internet connectivity issues and lack of motivation (50%), limited access to learning materials

(23.7%), and difficulty managing time (39.5%). These results are consistent with research by Kamaruddin & Ismail (2023) and Chong & Lim (2023), who documented similar difficulties among students from rural and even some urban areas. Together, these findings underscore the complex interplay between cultural obligations and the demands of online learning.

Most students rated the impact of their families' festive activities on their ability to engage in ODL as "slightly" to "moderately impactful." This indicates that while students generally attempted to balance both responsibilities, festive obligations did exert some pressure that could hinder full academic engagement. A few students reported difficulty balancing their studies with festive commitments, further highlighting the importance of institutional understanding and adaptability during such periods. This supports the findings of Ahmad et al. (2023), who noted that disruptions to study routines during cultural festivals can negatively impact academic performance and consistency.

4.5 Coping Strategies

Students reported a variety of coping strategies to maintain their focus during ODL sessions. Several respondents mentioned using pre-recorded lectures and self-paced digital learning materials to study at their own convenience, a strategy that allows flexibility during family activities. Others adopted flexible study schedules or set fixed daily routines to keep up with academic tasks. Notably, one student admitted to having no specific strategy, revealing a potential gap in student preparedness or the need for better guidance. The diversity in responses indicates that while many students actively manage their time and engagement, others may lack the tools or motivation to do so effectively pointing to a need for targeted academic support.

4.6 Time Management and Institutional Support

Responses regarding time management revealed a mix of strategies. Some students reported studying only during free time, while others said they followed a fixed schedule. However, several students struggled to manage their time effectively, especially during the peak of festive celebrations. This challenge further emphasizes the need for institutional support, such as time management training and academic counseling. When asked if additional support from the university would help them engage better in ODL during festive seasons, most students responded affirmatively. This feedback is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 2022), which posits that external support systems can significantly influence the perceived ease and usefulness of digital learning platforms.

4.7 Recommendations by Students

The findings found a variety of practical measures to enhance ODL experience during festive seasons, these include increased access to pre-recorded lectures, provision of offline study materials, flexible scheduling for classes, and improved internet infrastructure. Several students also emphasized the need for better time management resources. The majority expressed a strong preference for universities to offer more flexible schedules during festive seasons and agreed that academic consultations and learning materials should be more readily available during these periods. These

suggestions align with current best practices in ODL implementation, which advocate for student-centered approaches and adaptability to individual circumstances (Ali et al., 2023; Moore et al., 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

This preliminary study highlights that while Building Technology students at UiTM Sarawak generally accept Online Distance Learning (ODL), festive seasons like Hari Raya present significant challenges to their engagement and performance. Key issues include time management, family obligations, and internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas. Despite these barriers, students demonstrated adaptability through self-paced learning and flexible strategies. The findings suggest that with improved institutional support such as flexible scheduling, asynchronous materials, and better digital access, ODL can be a viable learning mode even during culturally demanding periods. These insights serve as a foundation for enhancing future ODL implementations and guiding more extensive research.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors extend their sincere appreciation to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Sarawak for the support and facilitation of this study. Special thanks are also conveyed to the Diploma in Building Technology students for their participation and valuable insights, which significantly contributed to the success of this preliminary research.

7. REFERENCES

- Ahmad, R., Mohd Salleh, N. A., & Zainuddin, N. (2023). Student engagement in online learning during festive seasons: A Malaysian perspective. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 20(1), 56–70. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2023.20.1.4>
- Ali, M., Hassan, N. A., & Yusof, Z. (2023). Evaluating student readiness and technology acceptance for online distance learning in technical education. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 15(2), 25–39. <https://publisher.uthm.edu.my/ojs/index.php/JTET/article/view/12345>
- Chong, W. Y., & Lim, H. C. (2023). Challenges of online learning in rural Malaysia: Infrastructure and accessibility. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 13(2), 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2023.13.2.07>
- Davis, F. D. (2022). Revisiting the Technology Acceptance Model in post-pandemic education. *International Journal of Educational Technology*, 18(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/ijet.2022.01.001>
- Kamaruddin, R., & Ismail, H. (2023). Cultural obligations and academic responsibilities: The impact of festive seasons on Malaysian university students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(5), 234–246. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i5/12345>
- Moore, J. L., Dickson-Deane, C., & Galyen, K. (2022). E-learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same? *The Internet and Higher Education*, 50, 100–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2022.100814>
- Rahim, N. F. A., Hashim, H., & Salleh, N. M. (2022). Strategies for effective online distance learning among Malaysian technical students. *Journal of Educational*



- Technology & Society, 25(4), 62–74. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48678456>
- Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2023). How student engagement with online learning environments is influenced by instructional design: A review. *Online Learning Journal*, 27(1), 45–67. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v27i1.23456>
- Tan, C. Y., Lim, M. S., & Leong, T. Y. (2022). Time management in online learning: Issues during festive seasons. *Journal of Educational Management*, 14(3), 89–98. <https://doi.org/10.21315/jem2022.14.3.6>
- UNESCO. (2021). Education: From disruption to recovery. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>
- Yusof, N. H., Zainal, S., & Ariffin, R. (2024). Institutional support and student performance in ODL settings during festive breaks. *ASEAN Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, 16(1), 40–55. <https://ajodl.oum.edu.my/vol16-no1-2024/article4>



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

PROCEEDING FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON NEXTGEN CONSTRUCTION 2025

*Future-Ready Construction and Facility Management:
Driving Research and Innovation for a Smart Built Environment*

eISBN 978-967-2776-60-4

