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BOOK OF EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

iVCPPTS 2021

1ST INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

iVCPPTS 2021:

**REGIONAL ISSUES IN PUBLIC POLICY
AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

CO-ORGANIZED BY:

**FACULTY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE
AND POLICY STUDIES, UTM KEDAH
& FAKULTAS ILMU SOSIAL DAN ILMU POLITIK
UNIVERSITI OF AIRLANGGA (UNAIR)**

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COVID-19 AND ONLINE LEARNING IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS: REVIEW ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the sectors that has been impacted by Covid-19 causing the closure of education institutions worldwide. Since then, it is an obstacle for implementing face-to-face teaching and learning process. A major shift is needed from face-to-face teaching and learning to online learning. Online learning is no longer an option but has become a necessity for students during Covid-19. While higher education may have transformed and moved to online on the era of Covid-19, not all students are generally prepared to adapt to the online learning due to some challenges. The main purpose of the paper was to explore the issues and challenges of online learning faced by students in higher learning institutions during Covid-19. This also includes article reviews focusing on current and early reports published once Covid-19 pandemic has become global issue. Results of the review show that the issues and challenges can be classified into four: facilities, technological literacy problem, lack of emotional and psychological support and financial problem.

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of Covid-19 has radically changed the landscape of teaching and learning process across the world. Many sectors have been affected during COVID-19 including educational sector which had a significant impact on educators, students, and institutions around the world (Mailizar et al., 2020). This can be seen that most countries have ordered the closure of educational institutions as part of measures to curb the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, according to UNESCO (2020), confirmed that the implementation of nationwide closure over 160 countries, has affected over 87% of world's students population. Correspondingly, higher learning institutions worldwide have been pushed to using online learning as the physical classes (face-to-face) learning is impossible to be done during Covid-19. According to Adidoyen & Soykan (2020), it is stated that Covid-19 pandemic has prompted the physical closing of schools and higher education institutions around the world forcing them to shift to online platforms. In order to continue teaching and learning during the difficult times of the Covid-19, most higher learning institutions have introduced or developed their online learning platforms as an alternative to class-based teaching and learning (Chang & Fang, 2020; Daniel, 2020; Marinoni et al., 2020; Raaper & Brown, 2020; Radha et al., 2020; Shahzad et al., 2020; Wotto, 2020; Zhu & Jing, 2020). Online learning is the

use of internet and some other important technologies to develop materials for educational purposes, instructional delivery and management of program (Fry, 2001). In recent decades, much research have focused on the effectiveness of online learning rather than traditional face-to-face learning, as well as the factors that influence the effectiveness of such education (Bowen, 2014). But many students face challenges that may hinder their learning because of the teaching and learning process is fully implemented by online learning impacted by Covid-19. Therefore, this paper was to investigate and explore the issues and challenges of online learning faced by students especially in higher learning institutions during Covid-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

This paper reviews on existing literature of online learning during Covid-19 based on available literature in the context of facilities, technological literacy problem, lack of emotional and psychological support and also financial problems.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING FACED BY STUDENTS IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS DURING COVID 19

Facilities

In the context of facilities, the effectiveness of online learning is influenced by good internet connection, the availability of electronic learning devices in order to ensure that the students are capable to adapt to their learning smoothly without disruptions. According to Adedoyin & Soykan (2020), they pointed out that online learning is entirely reliant on technological devices and the internet which students with poor internet connections may be denied access. The dependency of online learning on technological equipment and the provision of the equipment is a big challenge. Students at higher education institutions have faced significant challenges due to poor Internet connections (Wargadinata et al., 2020), a lack of gadgets and study tools, and poverty (Azman, 2020). The lack of a reliable internet connection for online learning has also been reported in the literature (Mamun et al., 2020; Naciri et al., 2020) as the main reason for the majority of students' non-participation in online learning. Some students in rural areas are likely to face difficulties in obtaining adequate and reliable Internet access (Lim, 2020; Arumugan, 2020; Kapasia et al., 2020), compared to students who live in urban areas (Yee, 2020). In addition, having a flexible learning environment that is free from distractions is also important. Students faced challenges due to unconducive environment at home for the teaching and learning process via online learning. According to Mseleku (2020), it is stated that lack of physical learning space and environment also presented itself as a challenge for some students learning online during lockdown. A study conducted by Nassr et al., (2020) found that students in Malaysia has difficult experiences on online learning due to unstable internet connection, the lack of learning device (old computers, lack of software) and also unsuitable environment (noisy houses, no private room, family responsibilities). A study was conducted by Kapasia et al., (2020) on 232 students from various colleges and universities in West Bengal, India came up with similar results. Kapasia et al. (2020) found that 44.4 percent of students do not have a dedicated study space, and 12.6 percent do not have a conducive environment in which to study at home. Furthermore, 32.4 percent of students have difficulty connecting to the internet.

Technological Literacy Problem

Most of the students are unable to use basic technology software correctly as they are lack of literacy of technology and competency. This is supported by Ahmadon et al., (2020) in his systematic review whereby he stated that there are several problems occur such as finding support or help on computer problem including zipping files, producing digital systems to store and retrieve academic work, navigating massive databases, and knowing whether a pop-up is safe to download or not. Most of these basic problems occur because of the

students' perception of technology whereby they see it as an obstacle to pursue the continuous of learning during the pandemic. Therefore, the lack of technology knowledge has caused them self-regulation issues such as low motivation to study and ineffective communication with other fellow students. Nassr et al. (2020) stated that students also have problems finding online help and students did not get sufficient support because they were out of their face-to-face classes. For instance, a Malaysian student, Saifullah Baiduri has stated that the best learning method is face-to-face because it is more familiar and understood by the students (Lim, 2020).

Lack of emotional and psychological support

Online learning can cause students lacking in emotional and psychological support since students are forced to adopt online learning when universities are required to shut down, regardless of the level of one's readiness. The excessive of workload has given a rise to emotional impact on the students whereby they feel demotivated such as being isolated, frustrated and confused. The implementation of online learning during the pandemic situation develops fear and hopelessness among students, makes students lose self-control, develops social stigma among students, develops psychological trauma among students, discourages students from study and learning, discourages academic trust among students, and denies students group discussion (Rose et al., 2020). Another factor that influences the lack of emotional and psychological support in online learning is the fear of the unknown about the future. Online learning also can cause virtual fatigue and boredom whereby the amount of time spending online has caused mentally draining. This is because students are unable to process the information in the way they usually do. The more complex or difficult to pick up these cues, the harder our brains have to work in order to interpret the information that is conveyed. This can cause extra mental fatigue. When this is coupled with the constant self-awareness of being on-camera in front of others, stress levels can easily begin to rise. It can be referred to Associate Professor Dr Azlina Wati Nikmat from University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Psychiatry Department Faculty of Medicine clinical psychologist, whereby the restriction on movement and social contact might lead to intense boredom, emotional instability and other psychological issues (Karim, 2020).

Financial Problem

A study conducted by Adnan and Anwar's (2020), half of their respondents said it was impossible to complete courses effectively through online learning due to financial problem. Due to financial difficulties, some students are also expected to work for their families to survive. Some of the families are unable to provide food or having electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones, computers, and good Internet access for online learning. In order for the students to be able to participate in the online learning, they have to work part time as to afford all the essential necessities. However, their jobs might affect their online studies if their school or university conducts synchronous classes. Even if the duties do not interfere their online courses, they might be too tired to attend classes. In addition, students also need to purchase mobile data in order to join the online classes. Therefore, their monthly expenses will be increased as they need to subscribe a better internet packages and have a better line coverage.

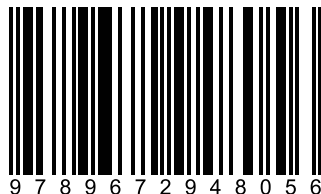
CONCLUSION

Online learning during COVID-19 has obviously brought about many challenges for students in higher learning institutions. As discussed above, the challenges faced by students is highlighting on facilities, technological literacy problem, lack of emotional and psychological support and financial problems. Overall, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning and its variants, such as e-learning, are a basis for education. It has allowed students all over the world to continue their education. Higher education

institutions must consider students' needs in order to accommodate the growing demand for online learning in the coming years. When students are unable to attend physical classes, technology is one of the most valuable resources for supporting online learning. In pandemic situations like COVID-19, we need a high level of preparations so that we can react quickly to changes in the world and adapt to different delivery models, such as online learning. Students must, however, have a high level of self-discipline and be resourceful in their self-learning in order to succeed in online learning. More time is also needed to adjust to the new changes, which necessitate empathy, ingenuity, and a significant level of effort.

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