

**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION AND
INTERACTION IN ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMS**



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the level of communication and interaction in web-based learning environments. The main objectives of the research are: (1) To determine the levels of communication and interaction in online learning, (2) To identify the respondents' computer skills, and (3) To identify the communication frequency between students and the instructors.

The research employed the quantitative methodology. Data were collected using the Communication and Interaction Survey Instrument (CISI), which was designed and developed to measure the level of communication and interaction. The data set comprised of 121 students responding to the CISI instrument.

The research revealed that the level of communication and interaction is high. The research also revealed that majority of the students has good computer skills.

The research concluded that there is a need to improve the level of communication and interaction among students in web-based learning environments.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Web-based distance education is a new and rapidly growing area of education in Malaysia. Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) are just a few of the higher learning institutions offering web-based distance education programs. This new mode of learning offers enticing advantages to adult learners giving them flexibility and autonomy over time, place, and the subject matter that they study. However, not every web-based distance learner experiences achievement with this new format. In fact, the dropout rates and failures in some programs are disturbingly high (Masculli, 2000).

Background of the Research

Generally, this study examines the nature of communication and interaction in an online course from students' perspectives. Online communication refers to reading, writing, and communication via online. This includes synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication. Synchronous computer-mediated communication is a type of communication whereby people communicate in real-time via chat or discussion software, with all participants at their computers at the same time. On the other hand, asynchronous computer-mediated communication is a

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Online education has become one of the most dynamic and enriching forms of learning that exist today. It is a subcategory of distance education. It has been defined as the formal delivery of instruction in which time and geographic location separate students and instructors (Holmberg, 1989; McIsaac & Gunawardena, 1996; Verduin & Clark, 1991). Online education conquers the time and place constraints. These constraints restrict access to instruction in traditional educational settings. Other reasons that make online education favourable include the relatively low cost and availability of computer technologies.

Definition of Communication

Barnlund (1997) defined communication as a process of creating meaning. It is as a process that requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. Communication is a dynamic process with the interacting components of sending, receiving, and feedback. Motley (1993) stated that communication is characterized by information transfer, where both the sender and the receiver are actively involved in a communication system.