## UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

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**ENGLISH FOR REPORT WRITING (EWC661)**

**(GROUP ASSIGNMENT)**

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OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) EXPERIENCE AMONG STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Open Distance Learning (ODL) is a one of method of learning that triggers off the problem especially to students. Moreover, nowadays, the whole world faces the covid-19 pandemic that contributes to increasingly people's death. This causes many societies to lose their jobs and become very hard for them to work as usual. With this chaos situation, the student forcibly uses technology such as smartphone or computer to undergo the situation learning in open distance learning. Now, after a few months of ODL conducting, a lot of innovations of teaching and learning are happening. The tutors have done their best and work hard to help students through the challenging teaching and learning. According to Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Prof. Emeritus Datuk Ir. Dr. Mohd Azraai Kassim, mentions that business affairs, teaching and learning, administrative affairs and etc are new habits online and it is becoming a necessity for today's lifestyle. Most students are more comfortable using methods on face to face learning than the ODL.

Open distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education nowadays and it has a substantial impact on all education delivery systems. The new ODL system is growing fast because of the development of internet-based information technologies and in particular the World Wide Web. The concept of ODL education happens where the tutor and students stay in separate locations and become for them to communicate with each other long distance. In addition, open distance learning also occurs between two people which is between tutor such as teachers and lecturers and students that are difficult to communicate with. However, ODL also may both of them cannot come close to each other to make the entire education system flexible.

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For your information, open distance learning is still young in Malaysia and needs better requirements in understanding and its system enhancement. The scenario of distance learning in Malaysia, the first distance education program is in Malaysia by USM in 1971 and the first entirely virtual mode of education delivery is held by UNIRAZAK in 1998, the first truly open distance learning (ODL) university.

Overall, ODL contributes to many challenges and impacts to students and also society. Many students are not comfortable with ODL because ODL makes it impossible to focus in class and during ODL also it has slow internet connection from geographical situations such as rainy, thunder and others. Even so, ODL also provides the benefits to students such as practicing us to be independent people and able to take care ourselves in faced covid-19 pandemic. Next, it also makes us brave and strong in the face of studies.

2. Problem statement

The problem statement here is about open distance learning (ODL). With the covid-19 pandemic, the students consider to stay at home rather than on campus. It is to ensure they are safe from getting that virus. In fact, covid-19 virus is dangerous and we need to stay at home. The issues make the students difficult to get more information and they spend a lot of time with the family members at home. In addition, most students cannot focus in class during open distance learning (ODL). At the same time, they can be sleepy during class sessions and the students get a little information. The students also need to through the slow internet connections that made the students think on how to handle it. ODL makes the students more use of technology such as smartphones and laptops during class sessions. From the OLD also, the students will be facing stress problems and this situation will worsen for our mind and our body. With this ODL, the students need to overcome this situation towards goodness to help students be more focusing on learning.

3. Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the issues of ODL among students. It is important to ensure the students can study well and cannot face any problems. This study provides several objectives that highlight:

1. To identify students need for ODL

2. To determine the challenges of ODL to students.

3. To know on effectiveness ODL to students

4. To highlight how students overcome challenges ODL

4. Significance of the study

The findings of the study will give benefits to students to help them to be ready facing the odl method. The significance of this study to help students and tutors with new normal situations using odl methods. Other than that, the significance of the study to determine the issues from odl where the students need to know from perspectives of issues and challenges of odl. In addition, this study measures the readiness level of students to face these situations. Next, this study to ensure students get study in good condition.

5. Limitations of the studies

There are several potential limitations in this study. Based on Growing by Degrees, Online Education in the United States (2006), mentions that students need more discipline to succeed in online learning. Though the tutor is not seating in front of you, the students need to complete the task or assignment on time. Other than that, the limitations of this study is where the distance learning requires the students to have constant, reliable access to technology. The students need total access to the equipment necessary to fulfill course requirements.

## 6. Previous Studies

### 6.1 The challenges of ODL

There are several challenges on ODL based on previous studies. First is on technology. Online learning in its aggregate is subordinate to technological gadgets and web, lecturers and students with terrible internet connection are at risk to be denied access to online learning. The dependency of online learning on equipment and the arrangement of the equipment ear was an enormous challenge for lecturers and students.

On the impacts of Covid-19 and online learning on education and teaching mentions that with outdated technological devices might find it hard to meet up with some technical requirements of online learning, like citing the case of the understudy who needs to answer semester e-quiz by utilizing Respondus. (Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. 2020). This specific understudy may not download the browser after several endeavors and this found that she uses an obsolete gadget that's not compatible with the browser.

Second impact is socio-economic factors. Within the socio-economic status of understudies, a few depend on the computer and free internet in school and due to the closure of schools, the movement handle of these set of students are anticipating to be moderate. It is evident that understudies with socioeconomic background will unquestionably discover it troublesome to emigrate as early as anticipated since they cannot come to school due to the pandemic.(Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. 2020). An inquire about discoveries on what students with no internet get to are to do amid this Covid-19 pandemic appear that as the level of destitution increments within the community, the rate of web accessibilities decline rapidly and by suggestions, understudies with no or low socio-economic control to manage broadband connection are most defenseless to drop behind or experience extra challenges to meet up with others in online learning.

Thirdly is digital competence. Digital competence is the bunch of aptitudes, requiring information and attitudes when utilizing ICT and digital devices to perform duties, such as issue tackling, data administration, collaboration with regard to viability, proficiency and morals. Students and lecturers with low digital competence are liable to lack behind in online learning. Due to digital change of instructional activities amid this pandemic, libraries are to take after the slant in arrange to convey viable services to students and lecturers through computerized library, understudies and workforce with low digital competence might discover it troublesome to form ideal utilization of the computerized library. (Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. 2020)

Fourthly is the overwhelming workload. The speedy and sudden advanced change prepare of colleges has gigantic workload on ICT units of institutions to construct e-platforms, coordinates existing outside applications into their frameworks and as well as full movement into outside applications. The lecturers moreover share a portion of the workload because they are mindful of changing their course substance to be e-platform-friendly to the learners. (Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. 2020). This overwhelming workload is the anticipation to cause unexpected money related and time fetched. Some researchers made references that they got complaints of students receiving more emails from the college, a few of these emails contain vital messages, while others are unimportant messages and to teachers, these emails are insignificant to them because those messages are understudies centered. These loads of emails have included the stretch of students and staff and this may result in mental wellbeing issues.

Last challenge is Human and pets' intrusions. Human and pets' interruption here is the startling appearance or interference of family members, friends and or pets that will cause disturbance or preoccupation of online learning participants' attention during the online instructing and learning process. (Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. 2020). Example of pets' intrusions is, through situations where online learnings are in progress via video conference and someone's pet such dogs will be barking, or the cat will walk across the table.

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6.2 Impact of online distance learning towards university students during pandemic

First impact of online distance learning is lack of face to face interaction,face to face method allows for a live interaction between learners and instructors. Learners benefit from a greater level of interaction with their fellow students as well. In face-to-face learning, students are held accountable for their progress at the class's specific meeting date and time. Face-to-face learning ensures a better understanding and recollection of lesson content and gives class members a chance to bond with one another. Due to this pandemic online learning can be interactive however its not the same sitting in a real classroom. It means, there is no substitute for interacting with, and learning from a fellow human (Mohd Salleh, Md Ghazali, Wan Ismail, & A.Rahim, 2020).In other context, its will be huge impact toward knowledge sharing and that will be missed and cannot be replaced for student that eager for knowledge.

Second impact of online distance learning is the commitment of students towards class . When using online learning or electronic learning (e-Learning), lecturers might face students' commitment to use online learning as students do not need to appear physically in the classroom. (Mohd Salleh, Md Ghazali, Wan Ismail, & A.Rahim, 2020).Students commitment plays a huge role in ensuring that learning can achieve objectives. Online distance learning at home lecturers cannot see the physical body of the student ,so what they do during class time will affect them. Students commitment can be demonstrated by following learning in the classroom by taking responsibility as a student or simply attending for attendance without caring about what is presented . Online Distance Learning can be challenging especially for students or lecturers that stays with other family members including young childrens. Face-to-face classes allow them to be separated from their childrens by sending the childrens to nurseries or schools and can go to class with full focus.

Unfortunately, that is not easy for them during this crisis. When students at home they need to be more multi -tasking double or even triple from always juggling between family and online learning under the same roof is no doubt a struggle, or at least at first phases of adapting. We seem to have parallel lives moving along at the same time between life as childrens and as students. (Abdul Rahman, 2020) .Without any commitment during class can they understand the content presented by the lecturers. It is one of the impacts of online distance learning that needs to be refined in order to produce more responsible students and to ensure that the university can produce graduates who are able to give one hundred percent commitment to their jobs later.

From physiological perspective also has huge impact to students .Based on the previous studies, it indicates that 20.4%, 6.6%, and 2.8% of the students experienced minimal to moderate, marked to severe, and most extreme anxiety levels, respectively during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown period. This shows that physiological factors predominantly financial constraints, remote online learning, and uncertainty related to their academic performance, graduation, and future career prospects. For some students, the pressure comes from the feeling isolated from their teachers, from the content of the course and from their classmates. To reduce the level of anxiety among students, Disease Center Control (CDC), has proposed several guidelines - minimize watching, reading, and listening repeatedly to new stories about COVID-19, particularly from unreliable social media sources; taking care of health diet, exercise, adequate sleep and free from mental stress by communicating with friends and family members . Finally, take the time to relax and enjoy the activities that one enjoys . (Sundarasen et al., 2020) . This can prove that the psychology of students during this pandemic has a big impact on students satisfaction with online distance learning.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of online distance learning will be better with basic equipment suitable for students such as the internet to support online learning. Today we can see how important internet coverage is in helping us during this pandemic. Student must ensure that they have high-speed internet. Sometimes, low-speed internet may disrupt student interaction and that can be frustrating. But fortunately, we don't think it is the most pressing issue, our country's internet is still satisfying. However, for some students there is limited availability of devices to support e-learning. Findings from a survey by the Ministry of Education (MOE) involving close to 900,000 students indicate that 37% of students do not have any appropriate devices. At the same time, only 6% to 9% of students own a personal computer or a tablet.

Even if a household has a personal computer, many would have to share with other household members for work or studies. Many households face financial constraints, especially now, with increased unemployment. During tough times, poorer families typically would prioritize putting food on the table over purchasing digital devices and getting access to the internet. Internet and digital devices have a huge impact in identifying students needs for online distance learning and assist them to determine effectiveness online distance learning.

7. Methodology

This study will be conducted to university students throughout Malaysia through an online survey using a Google Form. An online survey will be conducted entitled Open Distance Learning (ODL) experience among university students in Malaysia. There are 100 students who will be respondents to answer the questionnaire in the allotted time. A set of questionnaires will be distributed to respondents through the WhatsApp application for them to answer. In this online survey, there are four sections of questionnaire related to online distance learning experience. It uses four Multiple-choice grid type scales with choices from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This instrument was designed to know the experience of students during ODL which are the students needs for ODL, challenges, effectiveness and how they overcome the challenges. In addition, this study also through the review of articles from the online database searched on the internet themed online distance learning.

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