

THE ADVANTAGES OF E-PORTFOLIOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM THE STUDENTS' FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT

The use of an e-portfolio as a tool for learning and assessment has shown a positive effect on the learning process for students. There are many benefits associated with using an e-portfolio for student learning. This research aims to examine the feedback received from students when using an e-portfolio. Data is gathered via e-portfolio assignments via the Google Sites platform, which involved ten e-portfolios written by final year students who enrolled in the Islamic banking and finance course in a higher education institution in East Malaysia. Thematic analysis was employed to evaluate students' feedback on the advantages of using e-portfolios as part of their course assessment. Findings showed that three main themes emerged from the study: better understanding, improved skills and interesting learning. In sum, the utilization of e-portfolio as learning and assessment tools is highly recommended, as e-portfolio improves students' learning experiences in their studies.

KEYWORDS: *assessment tools, e-portfolio, feedback, higher education institutions, thematic analysis*

PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

Traditional assessment methods in higher education often rely on standardized tests and assignments that may not fully capture students' learning progress, creativity, or critical thinking skills. Many students struggle to engage with these conventional approaches, leading to lower retention of knowledge and limited opportunities for reflection. The rise of digital education tools has prompted educators to explore alternative assessment methods that encourage active learning and student participation.

Prior research has shown that e-portfolios provide an engaging and reflective learning experience (Hsu, 2020; Ngui et al., 2020) and help students better understand complex subjects (Tiwari & Tang, 2003). Additionally, studies have demonstrated that e-portfolios improve collaboration and digital literacy skills, making them a valuable tool for future career readiness (Yastibas & Cepik, 2015; Kongsuebchart & Suppasetseree, 2018). This study addresses the challenge of engaging students in higher education by examining the effectiveness of e-portfolios as a learning and assessment tool. Moreover, this study extends the previous study conducted by Azmi et al., (2023). The primary objectives of this research are to identify the advantages of using e- portfolios in enhancing understanding the course.

DESIGN DESCRIPTION

E-portfolios serve as an innovative digital platform that allows students to document, reflect upon, and showcase their academic achievements and learning progress. Unlike traditional

assessments that focus on examinations and essays, e-portfolios offer a dynamic approach to learning by enabling students to create a personalized repository of their coursework, reflections, and projects.

In this study, students from a business and finance course developed e-portfolios as part of their group assignments. These e-portfolios were created using Google Sites, providing a user-friendly interface for students to integrate various multimedia elements, such as text, images, videos, and hyperlinks, into their portfolios.

E-Portfolio Guidelines for Students:

To ensure consistency and quality, students were provided with specific guidelines for developing their e-portfolios:

1. Careful Selection of Materials – Students must carefully choose relevant learning materials, artifacts, and reflections to include. E-portfolios should be well-organized and professionally presented. It is strongly recommended that students have another individual proofread their documents before submission.
2. Cover Page Requirements – The cover page should include essential details such as the student's name, phone number(s), and email address for easy identification and communication.
1. Clear Labelling of Sections – Each component of the e-portfolio should be distinctly labelled, ensuring clarity and ease of navigation. The required sections include overview of the company, calculation on Shariah screening, company capital structure, visual representations of data and concepts, reflection and feedback, Gantt Chart & work evidence, and appendices.
2. Official Platform Usage – Students are required to use Google Sites as the official platform for publishing their e-portfolios. This ensures uniformity, ease of access, and integration of multimedia elements.

This structured approach enables students to take ownership of their learning, enhance critical thinking skills, and actively engage in the assessment process, making e-portfolios an effective educational tool.

VISUALS



Diagram 1: Snapshot of students' e-portfolios via Google Sites

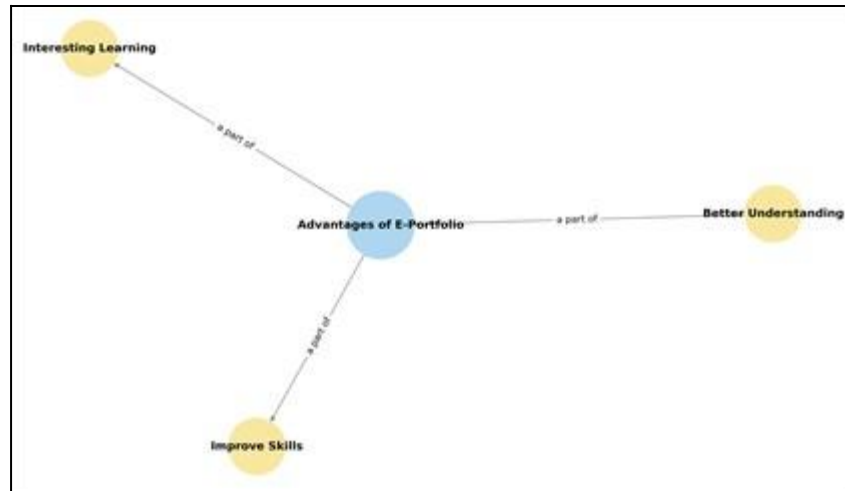


Diagram 2: Advantage of e-portfolio via ATLAS.ti

NOVELTY AND UNIQUENESS

The integration of e-portfolios into higher education represents a transformative shift from traditional assessment methods to digital learning tools. Unlike conventional exams, which primarily evaluate memorization, e-portfolios foster continuous learning, critical reflection, and real-world application of knowledge. The uniqueness of this approach lies in its ability to:

- Encourage self-directed learning – Students take ownership of their academic journey by organizing and reflecting on their coursework.
- Integrate multimedia elements – Unlike static assessments, e-portfolios support images, videos, hyperlinks, and interactive content, making learning more engaging (Bekri et al., 2015; Barret, 2007).
- Provide a digital footprint of student progress – Students can track their growth over time, which is beneficial for future academic and career opportunities (Gertner et al., 2023).
- Facilitate collaborative learning – E-portfolios encourage teamwork and knowledge-sharing, enhancing students' ability to work effectively in group settings (Yastibas & Cepik, 2015).

By leveraging e-portfolios, universities can enhance student engagement, skill development, and employability, making them a valuable innovation in modern higher education.

BENEFITS TO MANKIND

- Deeper Understanding – E-portfolios promote active engagement and reflection, helping students retain knowledge and develop critical thinking skills (Hsu, 2020; Ngui et al., 2020; Tiwari & Tang, 2003).
- Skill Development – Students improve collaboration, digital literacy, and problem-solving skills through teamwork and communication, essential for professional success (Yastibas & Cepik, 2015; Kongsuebchart & Suppasetseree, 2018).
- More Engaging Learning – The interactive nature of e-portfolios increases motivation and creativity, allowing students to document progress in a personalized and structured way (Pospisilova & Rohlikova, 2023; Conefrey & Smyth, 2023).

Beyond student learning, e-portfolios support lifelong learning and personalized assessment, enabling educators to provide meaningful feedback and encourage continuous improvement. By integrating e-portfolios, higher education institutions can create a dynamic, student-centered learning environment that enhances both academic performance and career preparation.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL

- **Market Potential** – The increasing shift toward digital education and competency-based learning makes e-portfolios a valuable alternative to traditional exams and assessments. Universities worldwide are integrating e-portfolios to support interactive, skills-based evaluation (Bekri et al., 2015).
- **Competitive Advantage** – Unlike conventional assessments, e-portfolios offer personalized learning, foster critical thinking and employability skills, and provide real-time performance tracking (Gertner et al., 2023).
- **Scalability** – E-portfolios can be easily integrated into Learning Management Systems (LMS), allowing institutions to scale adoption with minimal infrastructure costs while supporting large student populations (Lin, 2008).
- **Business Model** – Universities can adopt a subscription-based or licensing model, with premium features such as analytics, AI-driven feedback, and portfolio certification to enhance student and employer engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of e-portfolios as a learning and assessment tool in higher education. By offering an interactive platform for knowledge documentation and reflection, e-portfolios enhance student understanding, skill development, and engagement. The findings align with previous research, demonstrating that e-portfolios improve critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy (Hsu, 2020; Ngui et al., 2020; Tiwari & Tang, 2003; Yastibas & Cepik, 2015). The integration of e-portfolios into university curricula can lead to better academic outcomes and personalized learning experiences, making education more relevant to real-world applications. Future research should explore educators' perspectives to optimize implementation strategies and assess the long-term impact on teaching effectiveness. Additionally, expanding e-portfolio applications across diverse academic disciplines will maximize their benefits, ensuring they remain a valuable and scalable tool in technology-driven education. By embracing e-portfolios, higher education institutions can foster lifelong learning, enhance student engagement, and equip graduates with essential skills for the modern workforce.

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