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Challenges for Education in Post-COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review on Managing Retrenchment, Unemployment and Crime

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Abstract

Stress and violence cases are increasing during the lockdown period in many countries. The increasing reported cases of mental health must be taken as an emergency issue. The need of skillset for fast job placement to avoid crisis is getting more crucial, either for socially or economically benefits. Malaysia as the model of success story in managing COVID-19 pandemic can be utilized as the main advantage towards pursuing digital talents through the Teaching and Learning (T&L) using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Statistical analysis, data mining and business intelligence are among the approaches that prove its importance during post-COVID-19 pandemic. It is also plausible that crime rates will possibly increase in post-COVID-19 pandemic mainly due to economic and unemployment crisis as well as the rising of mental health issues in the society.

Introduction

Due to Covid 19 pandemic, majority of the Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia have decided to conduct teaching and learning sessions using the hybrid mode. The term hybrid in this context refers to combination of Distance Learning (ODL) and face-to-face (F2F) interaction with the learners. As an example, lectures will be conducted online while the tutorials and labs will be conducted in F2F manners while taking precautions for social distancing. Therefore, due to F2F, students are required to come back to campus after being away from the campus for almost six (6) months.

Regardless of challenges faced, the learning sessions should be continued to ensure the learners are not affected by the recent pandemic, academically. However, there are many students who were reported as not motivated to study when the changes of teaching and learning mode has to be implemented.

Challenges for Education in post-COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the press release from the Department of Statistics Malaysia, in February 2020, the labour participation rate is 68.7% with the unemployment rate of 3.3% at that particular month. The number of labour force increased to 2.1% in February 2020 as compared to February 2019. However, it is still important for the researchers to take note that a total of 31.3% of working age population (15-64 years) were outside the labour force which consisted of students, retirees, housewives, and those who have no interest to work.

Filter by subject area, most of the publications in Scopus database linked to the keywords ‘COVID’ and ‘unemployment’ are from the area of Medicine (142 publications) followed by Social Sciences (32 publications), Psychology (30 publications), and followed by the other subject areas closely. The amount of the related documents clearly indicates that this is a serious issue that is less attended, therefore, more researches needs to be conducted in the near future to fill the body of knowledge in this area. The access types for these literatures consist of Open Access (19) and Others (3) and all of

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them are dated (2020) due to COVID-19 pandemic that hit the whole world currently. The document types related to this research are shown in Figure 2 as follows;

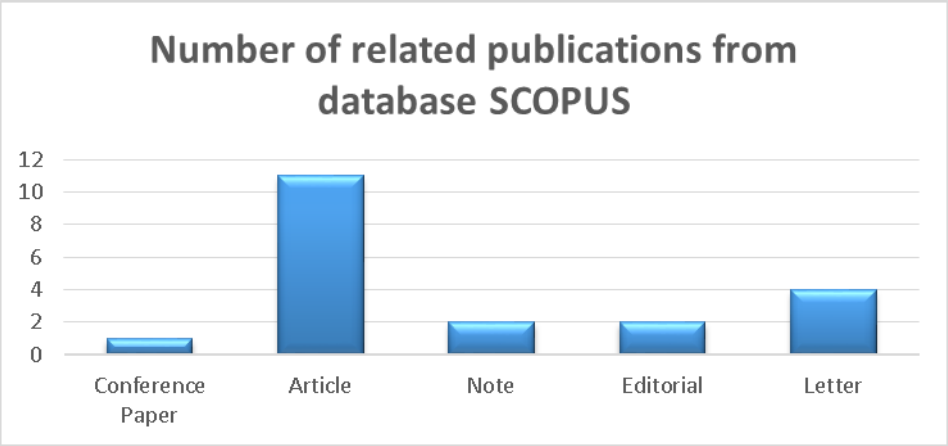

Figure 2. The bar chart showing the comparisons of related document types

A review from the number of related publications from database SCOPUS shows that there are lack of researches in this field. The keywords used are “COVID-19”, “unemployment” and “education” only, with the aims to identify efforts taken and recorded in order to solve these issues. Since COVID-19 is the new issue starting early of the year 2020, all of these publications are from the year 2020; one (1) conference paper, eleven (11) articles, two (2) notes, two (2) editorials and four (4) letters for publications into SCOPUS database.

The purpose of this research is to explore the educational challenges anticipated during the post-COVID-19 pandemic. Since education is self-improvement certification and many professional bodies and institutions related, there are costs involved. The inability for students to pay and getting loans may force them to go to work; which is limited in post-COVID-19 pandemic. Gig economy had become one of the only choices. The dropout rates from universities begin to rise due to all of the problems related to the closing of the educational institutions (Tanveer et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the challenges for education system can be expected during post-COVID-19 pandemic since most of the students claimed that they are not comfortable with the amount of guidance that they get from online learning or virtually (Tanveer et al., 2020). Furthermore, they suggested that online learning or virtual education is not only a possible source of new revenue but also can be regarded as the systemic continuity and institutional success for every classes, in the future to familiarise the students with the tools and applications that are suitable to be used for this purpose. Strategic implementation of online courses can be done by strategic scheduling, setting up regulations and procedures according to institutions’ rules and guidelines.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that more than 100 countries executed nationwide closures which is also directly impacting over half of the world’s student population (Onyema et al., 2020). According to UNESCO, the world of education before COVID-19 pandemic was already facing challenges in providing education as human essential needs and it was far more worse during the outbreak. The challenges for Education particularly High Education Institutions has to consider many issues, especially the impact of COVID-19 pandemic itself first. Onyema et al. (2020) shows from the results of their analysis that COVID-19 pandemic has affected the education system including the decreasing access to facilities, increasing of the students’ debts and learning disruptions, as well as losing jobs for most of them who are undertaking part-time programme. Onyema et al. (2020) mentioned as quoted; “The outbreak of coronavirus negatively affected educational activities worldwide… it created serious disruptions in academic activities, as well as in career plans”.

Closure of High Education Institutions due to COVID-19 pandemic had impacted students and lecturers especially for those with limited digital skills and resources for continuing education. The burden of the parents is increasing due to they need to struggle not only to provide at home but also to

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perform on their jobs which are either working remotely from home or facing retrenchment. The graduation time of students might be extended which might shatter their academic and dreams of good jobs. Multiple problems occurred in educational sectors due to the pandemic including loss of interests among learners, besides decrease the opportunities for underprivileged learners and disadvantaged people (Onyema et al., 2020). However, their findings recognized and emphasized the needs of technology in education including the emergency times during the pandemic.

The main issue here is on the challenges for High Education in post-COVID-19 pandemic in producing the graduates that will be able to survive the new norm due to the increasing of retrenchment and unemployment. Higher Education have to train students either to become entrepreneurs or preparing for getting jobs; or else, without jobs, crime is expected to increase due to one of the worst economy crisis faced by the whole world. Retrenched parents had put burden on their children for furthering their education. According to Kwon and Adler (2014), certain types of social capital can also give rise to demotion thus inhibit career opportunities and experiences. Furthermore, they explained that “More precisely, when an individual does not possess certain types of social capital, such as positive relationships with their manager, or the ability to socialize effectively in an organizational context, it may lead to demotion.” Underemployment and underpaid may also occur due to the inability of the job market to cope with the graduation of students in post-pandemic scenario. Urgent actions need to be taken where the current graduates need to be trained with the new technologies to ensure their competitiveness including IoT, Big Data and Virtual Reality are at par.

Several related researches can be summarized as shown in Table 1;

Table 1. Related researches

Method	Finding	Author	Title
Quantitative Method: Questionnaire Online Survey, through Google Forms, Social Media, and websites.	The most sensitive to the stress: 1) people with affective disorders, 2) young people (aged ≤20), 3) unemployed persons, 4) single persons, 5) people with no formal education, 6) women. The measures’ implementation should be targeted, to the identified vulnerable social groups.	Sorokin, M. Y., Kasyanov, E. D., Rukavishnikov, G. V., Makarevich, O. V., Neznanov, N. G., Lutova, N. B., & Mazo, G. E. (2020).	Structure of Anxiety Associated with COVID-19 pandemic: The online survey results
Quantitative Method: Survey	To monitor young people’s mental health status over the long term. How prolonged school closures, strict social distancing measures, and the pandemic itself affect the wellbeing of children and teenagers.	Lee, J. (2020).	Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19
Not available	Prioritization within mental health services with available resources may be required with increasing demands of mentally ill persons.	Kavoor, A. R. (2020).	COVID-19 in People with Mental Illness: Challenges and Vulnerabilities
Scenario-based public perceptions were collected via a purposive sampling survey method through a questionnaire.	Maintaining partial lockdown with business and economic activities with social distancing and public health guidelines is the best strategy to maintain.	Mashura Shammi, Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Md. Bodrud-Doza, & Abu Reza Md. Towfiqul Islam (2020).	Strategic assessment of COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh: comparative lockdown scenario analysis, public perception, and management for sustainability

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Not available	Hidden inequalities and injustices is depressingly large among autistic people. 3 possibilities: (1) The experience of abuse and exclusion from appropriate care; (2) The pandemic could have a disproportionate effect on the mental health of autistic people; (3) Economic inequalities	Elizabeth Pellicano & Marc Stears (2020).	The hidden inequalities of COVID-19
Exploratory Analysis; Data was collected from the top 50 countries ranked by the number of cases and factors related	COVID-19 crisis shows that we have to rethink of our community and our health system for our children and future generations or receive excessive mortality within the time of crisis and pandemic Focus on health and prevention of diseases rather than healing care should be a central theme in the public domain. The country's readiness and long-term investment in IPC in both high-context and low-resources should be facilitated globally]	Joost Hopman & Shaheen Mehtar (2020).	Commentary: Country level analysis of COVID-19 policies

Conclusion

Integrated efforts based on global and local awareness on managing retrenchment, unemployment and crime can be deemed as highly necessary. This is because, it is proven from the reviews that not only technological skills need to be improved but also mental health must be strengthened in order to cope with various issues and decisions that need to be made. Statistical analysis, data mining, creative media, and visual decision support systems (VDSS) using dashboards can be proposed as the platforms by the High Education Institutions to distribute information and awareness on the challenges for education during post-COVID-19 pandemic in order to manage the issues effectively in the future.

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