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## **FBM INSIGHTS**

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# **COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE INSIGHTS ON ONLINE LEARNING**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

COVID-19 pandemic has changing most of normal things including the higher education system which is changing from face-to-face class to the online learning. Higher education institution's operation is one of the affected sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic that spread all around the world. Majority of universities and colleges have revised their courses to suit with a fully remote online learning approach. Their focus during that time is merely more towards survival than daily growing success (Woods, 2020). Thus, students and educators face difficulties to adapt with the new norm and new systems that already had been changed.

Ensuring digital accessibility is critical, during this difficult time. Not every educator or student has access to all or any digital devices, the internet, or Wi-Fi. Due to a lack of suitable digital tools, no internet connections, or unreliable Wi-Fi connections, some students may miss out on valuable learning possibilities (Woods, 2020). Students from lower and middle socioeconomic strata not only have problem to access good quality internet service and good learning equipment and devices, but also have limited learning space at home and online learning resources (Barrot, Llenares, & del Rosario, 2021).

The fact that higher education institutions, government, policy makers and internet companies' provider play a vital role in the success of online learning. Proactive strategies must be implemented in order to reduce the difficulties faced by educators and students.

## **ONLINE LEARNING AS NEW NORMAL**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning became a change in education from traditional methods to a trendy approach of teaching-learning, from the classroom to Zoom, Google Meet, Webex, or any other type of platform for online learning, from personal to virtual, and from seminars to webinars. Online learning, remote education, and mail courses were previously thought to be part of non-formal education. However, if the current circumstances continue to remain over time, it may progressively supplant the formal educational system.

At this point, standardisation of online teaching-learning is also critical. There has been an overnight change from traditional classrooms to online classrooms, and educators have shifted their entire educational method to address new market realities and adapt to changing circumstances. During this difficult time, the focus is not on whether or not online teaching-learning methods will provide high-quality education. Rather, educational institutions are eager to embrace online learning in a big way (Carey, 2020).

From the perspective of students, online learning can be tedious and uninteresting at times. Students' engagement with lecturers and classmates has been constrained as a result of the lockout. Thus, it caused despair and had an impact on students' learning process (Barrot, Llenares, & del Rosario, 2021). In fact, flexibility of online learning gives a lot of time for students to study but they are unaware of it. Students must wisely manage their time in order to get higher learning outcomes (Anu, 2021). Online learning also has a big problem with personal attention and practicality. Students require two-way communication, which can be difficult to execute. Furthermore, the educational method cannot reach its full potential till students apply what they learn. Online content might be theoretical at times, making it difficult for students to observe and learn properly.

Students in online learning also face challenges such as a loss of community engagement, technical obstacles, and difficulties understanding educational goals. In an online learning environment, students were found to be unprepared to reconcile their tasks, families, and social life with their studies and also underprepared for a variety of online learning and academic-type abilities. Furthermore, they have a low degree of preparation when it comes to using learning management systems. However, in spite of many online learning challenges, most students exhibit a greater interest on online classes after certain period of time being exposed (Wei, Kuah, Liew, Lee, & Koh, 2021). This may due to the technology savvy among young generation.

Instead of educators and students, universities also need to play their role to smooth the online learning process. Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh and Althunibat (2020) suggested that universities need to conduct a constant technical maintenance for online learning system and provide the necessary hardware, software and internet connection for educators and students. This would be able educators and students to implement online learning effectively.

## CONCLUSION

In short, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the country's educational scene, as well as hastened the digitization of higher education. Online learning has become the new standard, more varied teaching and learning methods, and it must continue long after the pandemic is over to guarantee that effective learning is done in the best possible way. Higher education institutions could then consider shifting their focus away from traditional norms and toward a more promising option, such as recognising online learning as the new normal.

Efforts ought to be taken by higher education institutions, government, policy makers and internet companies' provider to ensure that all parties especially educators and students keep motivating to go through this online learning process. All parties must play their role to immediately come up with few alternatives to overcome the challenges and problems faced by educators and students in this online learning process.

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