ASSESSING THE DETERMINANT OF FACULTY PERCEPTION ON PROVIDING ONLINE LEARNING: A LITERATURE REVIEW ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Online learning is not something new in the education field. Since 1972, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has established the Educational Technology Division to encourage the usage of online learning. During the movement control order, online learning has become the mainstream to provide teaching and learning services. As most industries are facing a complete shutdown of business operations, universities are still able to continue providing services to their students. Online learning provides a different experience to both lecturers and students from the traditional classroom environment. Thus, this study attempts to discuss the faculty members' perceptions of providing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This conceptual paper aims to contribute to the educational institutions in preparing better supports to the lecturers in delivering online learning.

Keywords: Faculty, perception, online learning, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, online learning ensures educational institutions able to continue providing teaching and learning services to the students. This enhances the education literature associated on the faculty's teaching conditions. Almost all the previous research mentioned about the additional time required to teach online learning compared to the conventional classroom. Online learning is considered the latest form of distance learning education ever since the introduction of distance learning two centuries ago (Hussain, Rafique, & Basit, 2020). However, online learning is not something new in Malaysia. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has established the Educational Technology Division to encourage the usage of online learning since 1972. During the COVID-19 global pandemic outbreak, the world has seen the most extensive educational system disruption in history (Almahasees, Mohsen, & Amin, 2021). Hence, online learning has become the mainstream for universities to provide teaching and learning services without completely shutting down business operations, unlike other industries.

Online learning provides a different experience to both lecturers and students from the classic classroom environment. Some universities especially from underdeveloped countries are not fully equipped with the right technology to provide online learning efficiently (Almahasees et al., 2021). This pandemic caught the education system off guard making some faculties embark on online learning unplanned with little preparation and insufficient bandwidth internet. As a result of these shifts, our educational system must now take online teaching and learning into account. Student-centred learning has evolved from lecturer-centred to more student-centred, and learners are given more opportunities to be self-directed and self-responsible. Adapting to these developments will necessitate new ways for lecturers and students to make use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which are technologies that have no boundaries to the amount of information they can access.

Unfortunately, it is revealed that during the implementation of the Movement Control Order in Malaysia, some educators are ill-equipped for the unexpected shift to remote learning. They are lack the skills, training, and tools required to held successful online teaching and learning (Education International, 2021). Therefore, faculty concerns regarding online learning might be another greatest barriers to the advancement of online learning, and if online learning is to maintain its relevance in today's higher education landscape, it is critical that we have a better understanding of faculty perceptions of online learning (Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012). Furthermore, the COVID-19 has forced educational institutions, including instructors and learners, to move online, with which they were not familiar (Henriksen, Creely, & Henderson, 2020). The lecturer was not psychologically ready for such a shift. Thus, the main objective of this study is to analyse the perceptions of faculty on providing online learning. This research tries to identify the attributes that can be used to measure the faculty perceptions of online learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a study conducted by Rouadi and Anouti (2020), COVID-19 has a significant impact on the state of learning in the twenty-first century. The form of instruction has shifted from face-to-face instruction to online instruction at both secondary and postsecondary levels of education (Strielkowski, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has proven to be a viable alternative to traditional classroom instruction. To comply with the requirement for social distance, many colleges were obligated to develop alternatives ways that would still provide students with a high-quality education while still meets the social distancing requirement. On the other hand, some faculty members are hesitant to provide online courses because they have considerable doubts about the influence of such formats on the quality of instruction, learning, and participant interaction that they believe they will receive. Faculty and students faced a variety of obstacles, including those related to technology, workload, digital competency, and interoperability. They concluded that education would become a combination of face-to-face instruction and online training (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

Faculty Perception on Online Learning

Faculty should not be expected to figure things out on their own; instead, they should be supplied with some type of aid. It is usually the administration that decides whether to proceed with online learning in most circumstances. This has most likely maintained growth since they can see that more people are interested in using this technology and are ready to pay the higher fees associated with this form of education. It is, thus, unsurprising that Rosalina, Yustina, and Suzanti (2021) showed that most faculty have good attitudes towards online learning. The study also demonstrates that online learning activities benefit individuals in thinking innovatively and artistically, compensating for their lack of computer talents. Niemi and Kousa (2020) discovered in their study that both teachers and students generally have positive perceptions of the benefits of distant learning. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hebebci, Bertiz, and Alan (2020), who elaborate on the several overlapping advantages mentioned by teachers and students, such as having shorter, more concise sessions, ease of access, and promoting continuous learning. However, despite the positive perceptions, there are also negative perceptions. According to the findings of a study conducted by Hebebci et al. (2020), the overall lesson process has been disrupted due to lack of time as well as a decrease in student interaction, which has made it difficult for students to comprehend their lessons.

Herman (2012), observed that faculty who had never taught online before but were suddenly asked to do so had a negative attitude towards online learning in general, and particularly if they thought they had not received appropriate training. As noted by Martin, Wang, and Sadaf (2020), faculty without a background in online teaching or online learning was at a disadvantage and did not have the tools required to effectively teach in this medium which then negatively impacted their students. As a result, the pandemic has expedited the move from traditional classroom studies to distance and online learning, which has been ongoing since the outbreak. The importance of understanding the influence of faculty perspective towards online learning cannot be overstated considering the real possibility that online learning will play a critical role in the direction of future educational development.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to Synder (2019), a literature review is regarded as a systematic way to collect and integrate previous research. By using literature review as the research method, it will create a better foundation for future knowledge and theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002). Thus, this study was conducted by studying the secondary data from websites, journals, or articles. Literature analysis was conducted to discuss the factors of faculty perceptions on online learning. The article selection of this review is based on an extensive and systematic review of relevant databases (Web of Science, Scopus, and Emerald). A keyword of online learning, COVID-19, faculty perception, virtual learning, education, and online environment were used in the literature search. We primarily focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, published in the English language, giving a preference to recent articles (posted above the year2000), including relevant ones published in 2021.

FINDINGS

Similarly, to what has been discussed in the literature above, faculty perceptions of online learning are critical, particularly in a circumstance of physical separation such as the one we are experiencing because of COVID-19. Online learning, on the other hand, is not going away, and the medium is expected to continue growing as technology advances and makes it possible to communicate and connect with students in new and innovative ways. In this setting, faculty members are likewise growing and developing their abilities. Faculty perceptions of online learning have been found in various research findings for measuring faculty perceptions of online learning.

For instance, the study of Almahasees et al. (2021) aims to engage faculty and students' perceptions of online learning which has identified the following factors which are online teaching experiences, computer literacy and online class preparations, the effectiveness of online education, and time and assignment management. Based on a study by Sims and Baker (2021), student-faculty interaction, student-student interaction, effective teaching practices, technology interaction, and supportive environment have a significant effect in determining the faculty perceptions of online learning.

However, Hosny et al. (2021), found that online teaching in needs of course design skills, digital communication, basic computer skills, advanced computer skills, and using learning management systems. It is important to determine the faculty perceptions on online learning. From the findings, the authors recommend faculty developments need online teaching and course design skills in the learning management systems as the areas are important which affect the readiness for online teaching.

The empirical study by Joshi, Jamadar, and Dixit (2020) are focusing on the following factors in determining faculty perceptions which are as follows; perceptions of the faculties towards online teaching, quality of online teaching, face-to-face teaching versus online teaching, and incorporation of online teaching in the medical curriculum. Meanwhile, a study by Shreaves, Ching, Uribe-Florez, and Trespalacios (2020) on how faculty perceived online teaching has identified six factors which are (1) teaching values compatibility, (2) attractiveness to students, (3) regulation of online learning, (4) faculty resources, (5) personal influences, and (6) technology and infrastructure.

Next, the study by Moralista and Oducado (2020) has listed four factors which are student learning, class dynamics, faculty experience, and favourability towards online education. This study was conducted before the COVID-19 outbreak, where it explored faculty perceptions of online education in a state-funded college in a developing country. This study highlighted that faculty members were generally unsure if they are in favour of online education.

Walters, Grover, Turner, and Alexander (2017), on the other hand, has identified that online environment factors, institutional factors, personal (faculty) factor, and student engagement active learning factors are the important factors for faculty perceptions

of online learning. On the contrary, a study by Totaro, Tanner, Noser, Fitzgerald, and Birch (2005) identified the following, flexible times, students' teacher interaction, online course structure, technology requirements, and general topic as factors contributing to faculty perceptions of online learning. For this study, the factors derived from the literature review findings, are summarised in Table 1 below.

From the findings below, a wide range of factors have been found to contribute to addressing the faculty perceptions on online learning. Studies have also highlighted that there is a different type of perception that involves the faculty perceptions on online learning. It is also crucial to understand that faculty perceptions may be different globally. This finding has also highlighted different faculty perceptions from various studies conducted by researchers. However, for this study, in the context of faculty perceptions on online learning, this study will introduce the followings factors which are (1) student-faculty interaction, (2) online environment factors, (3) technology requirements, (4) institutional factors, and (5) personal factors. All these factors are adopted from the findings listed in Table 1. The factors are discussed in detail in the following section.

Table 1: Literature findings of the factors on faculty perceptions on online learning

No.	Authors/ Year	Factors	Findings
1.	Almahasees et al. (2021)	1. Online teaching experiences 2. Computer Literacy and Online Class Preparations 3. Effectiveness of Online Education 4. Time and Assignment Management	Researchers concluded based on the findings, that online learning is beneficial during this present pandemic. However, it is less effective than both face-to-face learning and teaching in terms of efficiency. To create a more challenging learning environment, the researchers suggest incorporating blended learning into classrooms.
2	Sims and Baker (2021)	1. Student–Faculty Interaction 2. Student–Student Interaction 3. Effective Teaching Practices 4. Technology Interaction 5. Supportive Environment	According to the study, most faculty members who previously had no teaching online experience had transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online teaching. Several speakers were unable to complete their online classes. According to the survey, younger faculty were less confident than older faculty that their online training met the same quality standards as face-to-face instruction.
3	Hosny et al. (2021)	1. Online Teaching and Course Design Skills 2. Digital Communication 3. Basic Computer Skills 4. Advanced Computer Skills 5. Using Learning Management Systems	Results indicated that "Online Teaching and Course Design" and "Using Learning Management Systems" were found to be areas that needed development.
4	Shreaves et al. (2020)	1. Teaching values compatibility 2. Attractiveness to students 3. Regulation of online learning 4. Faculty resources 5. Personal influences 6. Technology and infrastructure	Online learning has the potential to improve educational opportunities for students of all backgrounds, especially those from traditionally underserved communities. Students and their perceptions of online learning's effectiveness play a significant role in this influencing aspect.
5	Moralista and Oducado (2020)	1. Student Learning 2. Class Dynamics 3. Faculty Experience 4. Favorability Toward Online Education	In comparison to younger faculty with reasonably more experience, older faculty which has reasonably more experience tend to favour online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, possibly because they are aware that the risk for severe COVID-19 illness increases with age.
6	Joshi et al. (2020)	1. Perception of the faculties toward online teaching 2. Quality of online teaching 3. Face-to-face teaching versus online teaching 4. Incorporation of online teaching in the medical curriculum	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, online teaching and learning have become increasingly significant in medical education in recent months. Online learning offers its own set of advantages for boosting students' learning and understanding, and it has the potential to be used as a teaching method in medical education in certain circumstances

7	Syofyan et al. (2020)	1. Effectiveness 2. Major complaints on online learning 3. Major obstacles to online learning 4. Preferred mode of learning 5. Most effective online learning media	The faculty members perceived that online learning was not very effective and only considered achieving some aspects of learning outcomes.
8	Walters et al. (2017)	1. Online environment factors 2. Institutional factors 3. Personal (Faculty) factors 4. Student engagement/ active learning factors	This study revealed that faculty were least satisfied with student engagement in their classes/active learning. Faculty with more experience regarded student participation as more satisfying than those with less experience. Depending on the faculty member's expertise, a different method of growth may be required.
9	Totaro et al. (2005)	1. Flexible times 2. Students' teacher interaction 3. Online course structure 4. Technology requirements 5. General topic	The findings indicates that the faculty recognize the students are quite pleased with distance-learning courses, despite shortcomings perceived by faculty themselves.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research is to determine the faculty perceptions regarding online learning. Understanding the perceptions of faculty regarding online learning is necessary to ensure instructors are effective and prepared in the classroom. As discussed in the findings above based on the previous study, the followings factors which are (1) student-faculty interaction, (2) online environment factors, (3) technology requirements, (4) institutional factors, and (5) personal factors are identified as important factors for faculty perceptions on online learning. All the factors proposed are important in playing a major role in determining the faculty perceptions of online learning.

For instance, the factor that needs to be considered in terms of new challenges is learning how to foster student interaction when the learners are geographically dispersed and working asynchronously. Student-faculty interactions are important, as according to the finding of Robinson, Phillips, Sheffield, and Moore (2015), it revealed that in online learning, the role of the teacher shifted from teacher-centred to student-centred, from low interaction to high interaction, and from low initiator to high initiator.

Next are the online environment factors. Online learning demands faculty to engage in a setting devoid of physical and verbal cues, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Text-based exchanges inside the online environment are used to communicate with students and receive feedback from them. This distances online faculty from their pupils (Ruth, Sammons, & Poulin, 2007). Here, the online environment will contribute significantly to the faculty's perceptions of online learning.

Following that, technology requirements are crucial because, according to Govindarajan and Srivastava (2020), there is a digital divide among faculty, with some faculty members comfortable using course management systems, web conferencing tools, presentation software, and technologies for facilitating student learning. Meanwhile, others have never used such tools and have been hesitant to learn about them in the first place. Teachers were required to master new technologies while teaching their content areas because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the movement of faculty and institutions to online learning throughout the outbreak.

The next factor that should be considered is institutional support. Support from the institution that acknowledges the issues faced by online teachers, such as the need for technical assistance and access to proper technology are essential to their success. Shreaves et al. (2020) found that faculty members desire their schools to provide excellent technological tools and support, but they also believe that other resources are crucial. Faculty participants expressed desire for more diversify supports from the institution, including pedagogical training, time, and salary, as expressed in qualitative replies.

The final factors included are individual factors such as personal goals and situations as well as preferences, concerns, experiences, and interests, all of which can have an impact on faculty's opinions of online teaching (Shreaves et al., 2020). The faculty members who were involved in the design of the course, expanded their skills in teaching and technology, reflected on their own teaching practices, and engaged with and learned from the learners were all reported feeling personally satisfied with online teaching (Conceição, Olgren, & Ploetz, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Online learning has arisen as an alternative to traditional learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure the success of online learning at schools and universities, it is necessary to have a properly maintained technological infrastructure (Nikdel Teymori & Fardin, 2020). As COVID-19 is still progressive, online learning offers the means for educational institutions to provide their services to the students. Hence, it is important for researcher to conduct more empirical research on online learning. Any concerns about the implementation of online learning must be thoroughly addressed through surveys that cover all areas of this unprecedented reliance on online learning in education. This research is necessary to improve the virtual university experience and eliminate any obstacles to achieve successful online learning.

Apart from that, this study provides a basis for faculty to design policies to better the implementation of online learning in their respective institutions. Continuous support, training, and development must be provided to faculty as they transition and adjust to the new normal in the higher education landscape. They must also be provided with the opportunity to better comprehend and enhance the potential that online education brings to them. However, even though learning is taking place online, it is hoped that learning results would stay as high as possible.

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