THE IMPACTS OF ODL DURING MCO@COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

For the past 5-months, COVID-19 is inevitably being part of our daily lives. New-norms are forced to be implemented in order to survive and move-on. This includes on how we seek knowledge, where globally all educational institutions are force to apply online-learning, e-learning or open-distance learning (ODL). WFH has also became a new-norm. Adjustments must be made to cater the new-norms, and it applies to all parties consist of students, lecturers, administrative and logistics. After 5 months, we can now study the positive and the negatives impacts of these new-norms in our educational systems. For what I believe for every grey clouds, there is a silver lining!

Keywords: *Corona virus, COVID-19, WFH, MCO, PKP, PKPP*

Introduction

What is COVID-19? Corona virus (2019-nCoV) or also known as COVID-19 was firstly isolated from Wuhan market China at 7 Jan. 2020. This novel coronavirus originated from the Hunan seafood market at Wuhan, China where bats, snakes, raccoon dogs, palm civets, and other animals are sold, and later rapidly spread up to 109 countries (Muhammad, Suliman, Abeer, Nadia and Rabeea, 2020). This virus causes respiratory infection including pneumonia, cold, sneezing and coughing while in animal it causes diarrhoea and upper respiratory diseases. Corona virus transmitted human-to-human or human to animal via airborne droplets. Corona virus enters in human cell through membrane ACE-2 exopeptidase receptor. The World Health Orgnization (WHO) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) advised to avoid public place and close contact to infected persons and pet animals. (Dharmendra, Rishabha and Pramod, 2020).

What is MCO, PKP, RMCO or PKPP? Why is MCO@PKP necessary for Malaysia? When did Malaysia decide to start MCO? The 2020 Movement Control Order (MCO) or in Malay knowned as "Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan" (PKP), is a cordon sanitaire implemented as a preventive measure by the federal government of Malaysia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country started on 18 March 2020 (Bunyan, 2020). The order was commonly referred to in local and international media as a "lockdown" or "partial lockdown" (Sukumaran, 2020). The MCO and a subsequent relaxed phase known as the RMCO or PKPP which stands for "Recovery Movement Control Order" or "Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan Pemulihan" have been imposed beginning from 10th June, the government is lifting several restrictions as the country moves into the recovery phase (Ministry of Health, 2020).

What are the impacts of MCO onto the Educational Institutions? To students, lecturers and administrative? Cultural-shock to the new-norms we may say. No doubt. The global lockdown of education institutions somehow force everyone to accept the new-norms, leave us no choice accept to implement e-learning (EL), online teaching (OL) and open-distance learning (ODL). Now other questions arise. Could everyone accept this new way of learning? What are the challenges that students, lectures and administrative have to deal with? How do we access labs and field-works? More, how do we assess the students knowing that the risk of cheating is high especially when they cannot be monitored in person (Choong, 2020).

Methodology

The total number of UiTMCPP students involved in this study are 57. Thirty (30) of them are sem-4 electrical engineering students taking MAT575, twenty-six (26) are sem-4 civil engineering students taking MAT455 and one (1) is a sem-4 mechanical student taking MAT455. So in total, 57 students involved in this brief study that are done in two (2) ways, firstly by collection of data using google-form survey and secondly, by using observations.

Data Analysis

Table 1 shows the percentage of students' involvement in their weekly study. From the data we can see that as week progress students slowly adapts to the new way of learning. The increment of percentage in lectures shows that students do not have ample times to do their tutorials within the 5 days' duration given to them.

Table 1: Responses from MAT455 & MAT575 students, weekly basis.

WEEK	LECTURES (%)	TUTORIALS (%)	BOTH LECTURES & TUTORIALS (%)
5	44.4 (455)	0.0	55.6
	37.9 (575)	0.0	62.1
6	-	-	-
	50.0 (575)	0.0	50.0
7	53.8 (455)	0.0	46.2
	60.7 (575)	3.6	35.7
8	72.0 (455)	4.0	24.0
	63.3 (575)	0.0	36.7
9	66.7 (455)	0.0	33.3
	62.5 (575)	4.2	33.3

However, based on the current eRES results (refer to Table 2), it clearly shows that the overall performances for MAT575 codes are much better and higher in grades, as students can always revise back all the online materials given to them in Google Classrooms such as notes, videos-lectures, discussions and You Tubes links. This is one of the advantage of online learning. Table 2 also indicates good performances by the students where for MAT575 (ODL) 96.7% students passed, while only 3.3% failed, in comparison to the semester where the all lectures are delivered face-to-face where only 77.8% passed and 22.2% failed. In addition, for MAT455 (ODL) also shows the same impact, where 96.2% students passed and only 3.8% failed, in comparison to its face-to-face classes done during previous semester where 80.5% passed and 19.5% failed.

Table 2: MAT575 eRes comparison in terms of final grade performances (F2F vs ODL)

GRADES	NUMBERS OF ACHIEVERS (F2F - JAN2020) -27 (%)	NUMBERS OF ACHIEVERS (ODL - AUG2020) -30 (%)
A+	0 (00.0)	1 (03.3)
A	1 (03.7)	12 (40.0)
A-	1 (03.7)	5 (16.7)
B+	1 (03.7)	5 (16.7)
B	7 (25.9)	1 (03.3)
B-	4 (14.8)	3 (10.0)
C+	5 (18.5)	2 (06.7)
C	2 (07.4)	0
C-	0 (00.0)	0
D+	1 (03.7)	0
D	2 (07.4)	0
E	3 (11.1)	0
F	0 (00.0)	1 (03.3)

Personal Views on the advantages of ODL, Online Learning and WFH

These are some of the advantages come along ODL and Work-from-home (WFH):

(1)   Having the flexibility of ensuring all the tasks given to us are at the fullest and delivered on time at its best.

(2)   Having the flexibility of presenting and preparing your lectures using any mediums, which we believe for the best interest of both parties, the lecturers and mainly for the students.

(3)   The sudden implementation somehow forcibly give all of us no choice but to adopt and adapt online learning or distance learning. E-learning is no more an option, suddenly it becomes the AIR for each institution to breathe in order to survive.

(4)   The 'informal' environment, which is undoubtedly hilarious. The meetings or sitting for formal exams with only kain batik, or kain pelikat!

(5)   The opportunity to venture new knowledge and various online applications such as Team, Zoom, WebEx, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp's, Telegram, Facebook live, One Drive, etc. as mediums of discussions and sharing information.

(6)   Abundance of webinars to grab and grasp when every branch of UiTM offers countless "e-latihan" and e-seminars.

(7)   The students are more active asking questions and participating in the group conversations. E-learning is surely an advantage for introverts, like me! They speak their minds better and more confidently.

(8)   The time spent will family members are at its maximum.

Personal Views on the disadvantages of ODL, Online Learning and WFH

While, these are some of the advantages come along ODL and WFH:

(1)   The lack of face-to-face learning, the direct eye-to-eye communication, the smell of the whiteboard markers and the dirty fingers as proof of the lecturers' hard work sharing knowledge with those eager of knowledge will surely be much missed and cannot be replaced.

(2)   The pdf-answer sheets. For us with eyesight problems, this is a big issue because of the need to stare at the glary screen hours and hours ... and hours. The head pounds that come with it is just unavoidable and sometimes, unbearable.

(3)   The "multi-tasking" is double or even triple from always; juggling between family and job under the same roof is no doubt a struggle, or at least at first phase of adapting. We seems to have parallel life moving along at the same time between doing our jobs and the teachers' job passed on to us for the children's whom also are force to home schooling.

(4)   The preparation time of teaching materials for e-learning is no doubt at least triple the normal face to face lecture times.

(5)   The new-norms need new teaching materials as well. Online-shopping websites suddenly becomes your best friends!

(6)   Weekdays, weekends, holidays or not seem to be the same. We tend to get this 'amnesia' on live-time and dates …and days seems to pass by us too quickly.

(7)   E-classes also meant 24/7-classes, meaning that students are opened to ask lecturers any time of the day and night. WhatsApp is also available 24/7 and students are welcome to send any queries come to their mind. Office-hours are now are just a myth!

Conclusions

As a conclusion, the emergence of the COVID-19 has certainly affected our usual-daily norms and also, the tertiary education industry in Malaysia. Universities and colleges also need to be better prepared for unexpected crises such as financial losses, disruptions in schedules and ongoing classes while staff and students face additional stress, no doubt. On the other hands, COVID-19 has also widened all of us the opportunity to explore new things and skills that have been put aside for 1001 reasons. Thus, we need to believe that "every dark cloud has a silver lining"! In Al-Quran, Allah reminds us not once but twice that for every difficulty and narrowness, HE surely will grant us with happiness and enjoyment, insyaAllah (AQ AtTalaq: 7; AlInsyirah: 5-6)

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