

Exploring the Advantages of Using Home-Based Learning in Malaysian during the COVID-19

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Abstract

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak affected the whole world. It has caused many problems and affected numerous sectors. The education sector encountered a profound impact on student learning progress during the outbreak. Since face-to-face learning could not be carried out, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) launched a new online learning programme so that students would not fall behind. The programmes were classified (HBL) for primary and secondary school students and the open distance learning (ODL) for students in higher institutions. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the advantages of online HBL based on the findings of previous studies. The findings showed that there are eight advantages of online HBL. Overall, online HBL helped Malaysia keep pace with developed countries that follow the trend of modernisation.

Keywords: Online Learning, Home-Based Learning, Benefit of Online Learning, COVID-19

Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, the world was hit by the COVID-19 outbreak, which caused various problems faced by the whole world. As a result, World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 pandemic as dangerous and even deadly. Various measures were taken by the whole world to deal with this pandemic. Malaysia was no exception. With that, Malaysia launched a Movement Control Order (MCO), which forced various sectors to close down, in an effort to reduce the rate of cases. The education sector was amongst the sectors affected as learning and teaching activities in schools and campuses could not be operated (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Therefore, MOE has implemented online learning platforms to sustain the learning and teaching activities (Rahmawati et al., 2021). This online platform uses technology as an electronic medium that connects teachers and students (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Through this approach, it is possible to ensure that the COVID-19 virus does not spread and that people's education is not neglected (Ali, 2020).

Amongst the technology used in online classes were laptops, tablets, computers and mobile phones with internet access in synchronous and asynchronous environments (Singh & Thurman, 2019). The technology served as a tool help utilise teaching and learning session (Singh & Thurman, 2019). The MOE, used online learning as an alternative to continuing learning sessions (Wen et al., 2021). Online learning based on the concept of Open-Distance Learning (ODL) is used in institutions of higher learning, while for school students the MOE provides a platform called Home-Based Learning (HBL) (Wen et al., 2021). HBL refers to a learning platform conducted at home or in any suitable location (MOE, 2021). The MOE implemented HBL to replace teaching and learning sessions that cannot be carried out during the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak which causes students to be unable to attend school (MOE, 2021).

Research Background

Online learning uses technology as a platform for online teaching and learning has long been used in Malaysia since 1969 (Dzakiria et al., 2005). Nevertheless, HBL is new for school students in Malaysia (Mansor et al., 2021) and it was only implemented for primary and secondary school students when the COVID-19 outbreak occurred (MOE, 2021). The HBL concept is similar to home schooling used in studies abroad or private schools (Asadullah, 2021). The method used in HBL is the same as home schooling, the difference is only in terms created by the MOE for country-specific programmes (Asadullah, 2021). Therefore, the MOE has released the first manual in version 1.0 released in 2020 for the reference of schools and teachers in applying the HBL system (Asadullah, 2021).

The use of the manual issued by the MOE becomes a school reference in conducting HBL, although the HBL programme is considered a temporary programme run as an alternative by MOE to continue teaching and learning sessions (Asadullah, 2021). Many schools still conduct HBL through the use of DELIMa platform in order to get students familiar with the online learning (Asadullah, 2021).

The full use of technology in teaching and learning activities is different if conducted face-to-face (Dzakiria, 2004). The challenges faced are different as online is more challenging when compared to face-to-face classes (Dzakiria, 2004). This is because there is an interaction gap between teachers and students (Dzakiria, 2004). So, this will contribute to a weak level of communication that causes teachers to not fully know the students' learning progress (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Learning without face-to-face interaction would present significant challenges to educators in ensuring the existence of appropriate feedback to help students achieve learning objectives (Putra et al., 2020). In fact, this online learning will result in no specific observations made by the instructor (Putra et al., 2020). This will affect the monitoring activities to be difficult to measure the level of student understanding (Putra et al., 2020) where, the quality of education may be affected and not the same as the face-to-face learning system (Coman et al., 2020).

Full implementation of technology in teaching and learning has caused challenges and various perceptions for all parties, particularly school students (Ni, 2020). As the use of

technology is becoming more widespread and Malaysia follows the development of developed countries, online learning needs to be applied and used (Ni, 2020). Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the advantages of HBL and to open the public's eyes to the challenges and weaknesses of this programme, also there are advantages that can be gained through online learning methods in the future.

Methodology

In this section systematic review served as the literature review. Meta-analysis is a method for conducting a systematic review of research findings. Journal article related to the advantages of online learning in learning and teaching were collected. The researchers searched 16 research journal articles published from various networks, such as Scopus, PubMed, Scribd, Science Direct Journal, and so forth. The researchers also conducted a manual search using Google Scholar.

The journal articles were searched and compiled by using terms such as advantages of "online learning", "HBL", "students' perceptions of online learning" and "online learning during COVID-19." These terms were used to search for empirical studies in order to answer the objectives of this study. These articles were collected commencing from 2015 to 2022. Based on the results obtained, the researcher found 16 articles that met the objectives of the study. Table 1 shows the articles used in this study which are related to the advantages of online learning.

Table 1

Advantages Online Learning

No	Author, year	Title	Sample	Type Research	Advantages Online Learning
1.	Anwar & Wahid, 2021	Learners' Perception on Online Learning Implementation during COVID-19 Pandemic	68 students of the English Education Study Programme in Indonesia	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning is accessible everywhere - Flexible time - Learners have the autonomy to learn to their needs and pace
2.	Mukhtar et al., 2020	Advantages, Limitations and Recommendation for Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic era	12 faculty members and 12 students from University College of Medicine and University College of Dentistry, Lahore	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy access to materials - Help students become confident to appear or speak during online learning - Provide conducive learning environment - Build an independent attitude

3.	Tay, Lee & Ramachandran, 2021	Implementation of Online Home-Based Learning and Students' Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Singapore Mathematics Teachers	8 mathematics teachers from 2 elementary and 2 secondary schools	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become more creative - Build an independent attitude - Flexible time
4.	Maatuk et al., 2022	The COVID-19 pandemic and E-learning: Challenges and Opportunities from the Perspective of Students and Instructors	Society members that include teaching staff and undergraduate students of all departments in the IT Faculty at the University of Benghazi	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Save time - Manage study time easily - Easy access to materials - Help reduce the school fare and book expenses
5.	Wang et al., 2021	Impact of COVID-19 on Achieving the Goal of Sustainable Development: E-learning and Educational Productivity	385 responses from private middle school students	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable education - Independent learning style - Easy access to materials - Learning is accessible everywhere - Teachers can become more creative
6.	Syafiq et al., 2021	Increasing Speaking Skill through YouTube Video as English Learning Material during Online Learning in Pandemic COVID-19	85 students, first year's English course students, from Universitas Muhammadiyah Kudus in the academic year of 2019-2020	Mixed methods (Qualitative and Quantitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help students learn without limits - Help students interact with teachers confidently - Provide various learning platforms
7.	Mardiah, 2020	The Use of E-Learning to Teach English in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic	Lecturers from different institutions	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase students' comprehension - Enhanced the students' active participation

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed independent learning - Improve material and training quality
8.	Agormedah et al., 2020	Online Learning in Higher Education during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Ghana	467 students in a higher education in Ghana.	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning is accessible everywhere - Flexible time - Provide various learning platforms - Easy access to materials
9.	Igai and Yunus, 2022	Secondary School ESL Teachers' Perceptions of E-Learning during COVID-19 in Bintulu District	32 respondents in Bintulu, Sarawak.	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility time - Help student find information easily - Develop independent study
10.	Ishak et al., 2021	Exploring Digital Parenting Awareness during Covid-19 Pandemic through Online Teaching and Learning from Home	89 primary and secondary school students, colleges and universities who involved in HBL	Mixed methods (Qualitative and Quantitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spend more time with family - Flexibility time - Develop independent study
11.	Mansor et al., 2021	Home-Based Learning (HBL) Teacher Readiness Scale: Instrument Development and Demographic Analysis	3826 secondary school teachers in Gombak District Education in Selangor.	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open opportunities for students to ask questions regardless of time - Students become technology savvy - Develop independent learning
12.	Gilbert, 2015	Online Learning Revealing the Benefits and Challenges	Students from eleventh graders who are currently enrolled in an online American	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide conducive learning environment that is compatible with their learning needs - Avoid bullying

			History course. II		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student and teachers can become more creative - Help students speak confidently in public
13.	Bahasoan et al., 2020	Effectiveness of Online Learning in Pandemic COVID-19	115 respondents from University of West Sulawesi.	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can explore more online platform - Easy excess to learning materials - Learning is accessible anytime and everywhere - Develop independent study
14.	Ismail, Bakar & Wafa, 2020	Online Learning Challenges during Pandemic COVID-19 in Malaysian Higher Learning Institution	542 students in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia (UniSZA).	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy access to learning materials - Participate in any online learning activities and forum - Students' learning assessments are monitored
15.	Coman et al., 2020	Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the Coronavirus Pandemic: Students' Perspective	762 students from Romanian universities.	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control the content learning - Control over the time spent learning - Develop independent learning
16.	Rasmitadila et al., 2020	The Perceptions of Primary School Teachers of Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Period: A Case Study in Indonesia	67 class teachers in primary schools.	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible learning - Easy access to information - Develop independent learning - Develop creativity

Table 1 shows a list of journals used in this study based on search terms used to explore the advantages of home-based learning. Sixteen journals displayed the advantages of using technology in learning and teaching. The journals consist of studies conducted by previous scholars in relation to Online Learning research (Anwar & Wahid, 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2020; Tay et al., 2021; Maatuk et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Syafiq et al., 2021; Mardiah, 2020;

Agormedah et al., 2020; Igai & Yunus, 2022; Ishak et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2021; Gilbert, 2015; Bahasoan et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2020; Coman et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the list of journals collected from 2015 to 2022. The findings revealed that using online learning during the COVID had many advantages for both students and teachers when using online learning during the COVID-19 outbreak. Meanwhile, Table 2 shows a summary of the articles collected. There are eight categories of advantages of online learning, which are "flexible time", "easy access materials", "help students be more confident", "more independent", "be more creative", "find information faster", "affordable education" and "avoid cases of bullying at school".

Table 2

Summary of Article

Advantages of Online Learning	Scholars	Number of Articles
Flexible Time	Anwar & Wahid, 2021; Tay, Lee & Ramachandran, 2021; Maatuk et al., 2022; Syafiq et al., 2021; Agormedah et al., 2020; Igai & Yunus, 2022; Ishak et al., 2021; Gilbert, 2015; Bahasoan et al., 2020; Coman et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020	11
Easy Access Materials	Anwar & Wahid, 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2020; Maatuk et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Agormedah et al., 2020; Bahasoan et al., 2020; Ismail, Bakar & Wafa, 2020; Coman et al., 2020	8
Students Become More Confident	Mukhtar et al., 2020; Syafiq et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2021; Gilbert, 2015	4
Students Become More Independent	Mukhtar et al., 2020; Tay, Lee & Ramachandran, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Mardiah, 2020; Igai and Yunus, 2022; Ishak et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2021; Bahasoan et al., 2020; Ismail, Bakar & Wafa, 2020; Coman et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020	11
Students Become More Creative	Tay, Lee & Ramachandran, 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Syafiq et al., 2021; Agormedah et al., 2020; Mansor et al., 2021; Gilbert, 2015; Bahasoan et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020	8
Find Information Faster	Igai & Yunus, 2022; Rasmitadila et al., 2020	2
Affordable Education	Maatuk et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021	2
Bullying Cases	Gilbert, 2015	1

Based on Table 2, one of the advantages of online learning was time flexibility, where students could be able to determine their own learning schedule (Anwar & Wahid, 2021). It was also stated that flexible learning time was difficult to apply in traditional classes (Anwar et al., 2020). Therefore, this would be a great advantage that could not be obtained through traditional classes (Anwar et al., 2020). Flexible learning time enables students to spend more time with their family or do other work (Tay et al., 2021). In fact, according to Tay, Lee and Ramachandran (2021), online learning could help students find side incomes (Tay et al., 2021). It was demonstrated on Table 2 that flexible time was one of the most significant advantages of online learning. Another advantage of using online learning was easy access to materials.

Online learning gives an advantage to students and teachers where all learning materials can be provided on a platform that is suitable and easily accessible to students (Coman et al., 2020) This is because teachers can provide learning materials through google classroom, DELIMa, WhatsApp, Telegram, e-mail or through Video conferences and so on

(Maatuk et al., 2018). Therefore, the learning materials provided by teachers using the internet technology can enable students to control the content and time of learning, where they can access the materials provided whenever they want (Suresh et al., 2018). Coman et al (2020) agreed that when students could access learning materials at any time, it would be easier to revise and understand the information conveyed through the materials. Furthermore, the other advantages of using online learning during COVID-19 was that it could help students become more confident (Coman et al., 2020).

Online learning that fully uses technology can help students with self-confidence problems to discuss with teachers about topics they do not understand in learning or any problems they can convey through WhatsApp or other application platforms (Mukhtar et al., 2020). This is because they do not need to face the public (Mukhtar et al., 2020). This can be seen through the study of Mukhtar et al (2020), who showed that students with introversion problems prefer online classes because they do not have to face people. All the activities that students need to do to make a presentation would be done online (Syafiq et al., 2021). This, would help students become more active in learning activities (Syafiq et al., 2021). Next, another benefit received by students when fully using online platform in teaching and learning activities was to help students become more independent.

Self-concept learning, such as online learning, could be able to help students to become more mature where they would be more independent (Igai & Yunus, 2021). Compared to traditional concepts in the classroom, such as face-to-face, teachers will organise student learning and school activities created to ensure students are active, which would cause them to encounter problems in the future when they are in a university environment where the university environment is more self-concept that requires students to be more independent (Igai & Yunus, 2021). Online learning that uses the concept of independent learning style will be able to help students display or develop their creativity in completing tasks and so on (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

Furthermore, amongst the advantages obtained through online learning when COVID-19 occurs was that it would be able to highlight talents where the students would become more creative than during traditional classes (Agormedah et al., 2020). This can be seen in Figure 1, which shows amongst the presentation templates used by students during online learning.

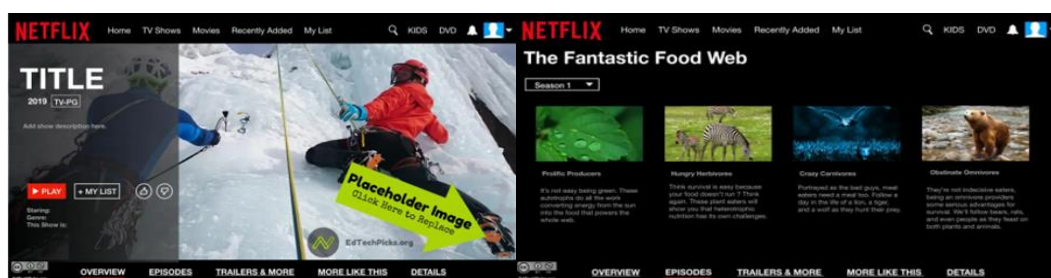


Figure 1: Template Use in Online Presentation (source: <https://slidechef.net/templates/free-netflix-powerpoint-template/>)

Figure 1 shows the use of presentation templates based on the Netflix interface that students created during COVID-19 where the use of templates was more interesting than face-to-face classes that still used paper as a medium for the students to perform a presentation (Wang et al., 2021). This is not inline with the rapid development of technology that requires students to be more creative (Wang et al., 2021). Through online classes,

students can explore various digital platforms and produce an interesting presentation by placing various pictures and engaging in transitions to attract the audience (Syafiq et al., 2021). Even online learning can help students get information faster than face-to-face classes (Syafiq et al., 2021).

This is because when the class is in a face-to-face system, the source of information that students would use were books and teachers itself which consumed more time compared to online searches (Igai & Yunus, 2021). Online uses provide web-based applications that have a variety of information, as well as up-to-date information (Igai & Yunus, 2021). The examples of web-based used in searching information or data was Google which displayed the answers and information needed in a few seconds compared to face-to-face classes (Igai & Yunus, 2021). Amongst other things, the benefits received through online classes was online classes practice affordable education (Wang et al., 2021).

Online learning allows less capable students to participate because, they only need the internet and technology access as a learning medium (Wang et al., 2021). As compared to face-to-face classes that require students to attend school, this would definitely cause parents to spend money to buy school clothes, school books, school fees and pocket money expenses (Wang et al., 2021). According to Fauzi and Suryadi (2020), various efforts were made by the government to ensure that all groups of students can get adequate learning. Amongst them were by providing tablets, laptops and internet plans with cheap fees (Fauzi & Suryadi, 2020). In addition, online learning would make it easier for school students who live outside the city or who need to get public transport services to go to school (Fauzi & Suryadi, 2020). Finally, with the use of online learning during COVID-19, bullying cases in schools could be decreased (Fauzi & Suryadi, 2020).

According to Gilbert (2015), online learning could reduce the cases of bullying at school because they would be in a safe zone (Gilbert, 2015). It can be seen that the number of bullying cases at school increased during face-to-face classes as compared to the number of bullying cases during online learning classes (Gilbert, 2015). This is because they cannot be the target of bullies, which helps the students to be more comfortable when they obtain the opportunity to learn at their own pace (Gilbert, 2015).

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study showed that home-based learning that fully utilised technology could be beneficial to continue learning and teaching sessions. With that, the researcher believed that using online learning would help to keep pace with developed countries that follow the trend of modernisation. Therefore, the researcher hoped that more research would be carried out online to make learning more effective, especially by using the best pedagogy for online classes. Therefore, the weakness could be reduced by implementing the right pedagogical method.

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