

## ONLINE EDUCATION: IT'S IMPLICATION TOWARDS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' AT PRIVATE HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTION AND MALAYSIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract

*The physical classroom learning nowadays is no longer applicable for the current younger generations (Gen Y). Internet and distance learning which is generally known as online education plays a vital roles in the country's education system. It is undeniable that online education provides ample of benefits to young learners. Nevertheless, there are also many negative implications from online education. Limited collaborative learning, increase in time and effort are the several negative implications from online education. This study examines the implications of online education among students especially in a private higher learning institution and its effect towards Malaysian national education system. Information has been collected through surveys, interviews and together with secondary data, and were analysed using SPSS. The studies found that there are various serious issues regarding online education and on its effect on the quality of Malaysian Education System to certain extend. Several problems have been identified and these issues have to be solved in order to sustain the quality of education for future generations. Furthermore, Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) should formulate a standard policy, monitor closely the implementation of online education, evaluate and review the method used in teaching and upgrade to maintain the quality of online education in private higher education institution.*

**Keywords: Online education, Implication, Quality Education System**

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### Introduction

The physical classroom learning nowadays is no longer applicable for the current younger generations (Gen Y). Internet and distance learning which is generally known as online education plays a vital roles in country's education system. Government also spending a lot of money in communication technology particularly in higher education and this phenomenon has created the potential for online education among higher private education institution. Many private education institutions encouraging their academic staff to use utilize

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communication technology in teaching and learning activities. This is become trend in private education institutions whereby many of the teaching activities are given through online application web such as Edmodo, Moodles and other applications which available. Moreover, students are also welcoming this teaching methodology where they does not need to be in the traditional classroom to attend their daily lecture, yet they still can be connected with their lecturer for the class lecture, tutorial, quiz and other learning activities. In addition to this, all submission also can be done through online. Recent development in communication technology enabled new forms of flexible education. However, there is no denying that there are some negative implications as a result of online education.

This study attempts to identify the negative implications of the online education towards undergraduate students' at private higher learning institution and to the Malaysian education system from educator's perspective. In addition, this studies also trying to suggest some measures to overcome the major issues in order to private education institution provide online education more effectively and efficiently to undergraduates student.

### **Online Education**

Online education is construed in a variety of contexts, such as E-learning, distance learning and networked learning (Wilson, 2001). According to Marianne (2012), online education refers to instructional environment supported by the internet and it is can be fully online or blended with face to face interaction. Educause Center for Analysis and Research by Jacqueline (2013) in Louisville defined E-learning as learning that involves a web-based component, enabling collaboration and access to content that extends beyond the classroom. Online education also can be defined as an approach to teaching and learning that utilizes internet technologies to communicate and collaborate in an educational context (<http://blackboardsupport.calpoly.edu>).

The theory and practice of distance education appears to continue to hold to the assumptions and challenges that defined the field in the 20th century; that is, independent study to cope with the structural constraints that restricted access to education (Garrison, 2009).

Based on Marianne (2012) research online learning has become popular because of its perceived potential to provide more flexible access to content and instruction by (i) increasing the availability of learning experiences for those who cannot or choose not to attend traditional classroom teaching and (ii) assembling and disseminating instructional content more efficiently.

Besides that, Bowen 2012 claimed that most observers as the best hope for cost-saving innovations in higher education, with the primary channel being reduced labor cost through larger class size and less face-to-face interaction. Thomas (2008) mentioned that there are two benefits from online education which mainly contradict from the traditional educational model; firstly lack of physical setting and time schedule. Apart from the benefits, he also claimed that there are disadvantages from online education. One of the drawback is the materials they'll use such like text books and other where the instructor facing the challenges to make sure that material being used in the online courses are equals in quality the traditional one that it has been adapted to the online course.

Research Michael S. McPherson and Lawrence S. Bacow in Deming, Golden, Katz, and Yuchman (2015) showed that use of online instruction is particularly prevalent in for-profit colleges that operate as chains, in contrast to stand-alone or mom-and-pop institutions suggesting that economies of scale are important to the economics of online learning.

Educause Center for Analysis and Research by Jacqueline (2013) in Louisville research found that more than two third of academic leaders believe that online learning is critical to the long term strategic mission of their institution. Besides that, online learning is capable of supporting a range of educational practices that utilizes the web and communications technology to support individual and group communication (Garrison, 2009). One of the primary reasons campus-based higher education institutions are adopting online learning is because of the pedagogical advantages it offers in terms of addressing the limitations of conventional classroom instruction such as lecture (Twigg, 2003).

In addition to this, broadening geographic distribution, flexible learning environments and variety of educational models that are offered by distance learning facilitate improved education, and if universities do not embrace this technology they will be left behind in the pursuit for globalization and technological development (Gurmak, John & Harvey, 2005).

In Malaysia, higher education formulated through public and private institutions and dramatic development and drastic changes in the number of colleges and universities have transformed Malaysia as an education hub in the South East Asia (Selvaraj, Anbalagan & Azlin, 2014). Thus, the conventional method through face-to-face interaction slowly taking a step backward in many private colleges and universities even though it is still being used in many public universities.

A study conducted by Norazah, Mohamed Amin and Zaidan in a year 2011 shows that 11% higher education institution in Malaysia offers more than 50% of their courses through online, 13.8% of lecturers provide their 80% of teaching materials online and 44.6% of students prefer to read materials uploaded by their lecturers ((Selvaraj, Anbalagan & Azlin, 2014). According to CCA consulting, nearly 50% of higher education institutions currently engage in some type of online learning (<http://blackboardsupport.calpoly.edu>).

There are many advantages through online education for undergraduates students in private education institution. One of the advantages of online education is online education is giving convenience and flexibility for private higher education students particularly for undergraduates. Meantime, with online education chance for interaction among students' increases, instructor can be more approachable and online education also becomes cost-effective choices for students where they can save money by not having to physically attend classes and no more expensive textbooks (<http://www.worldwidelearn.com>).

## **Objective**

The purpose of this article is to examine the negative implications of online education to private higher education institution undergraduate students from the educator's perspective. Discussion also focused on the impact towards Malaysian education system and will highlight several suggestions to improve the way of providing online education in private education institutions.

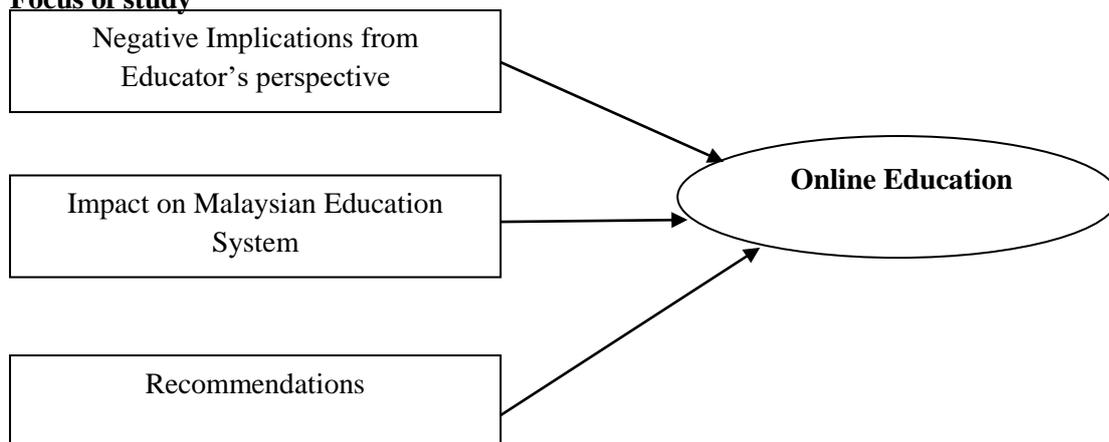
**Methodology (optional, no need for conceptual paper)**

Research was conducted at 5 private education institutions around Klang Valley. Around 150 questionnaires were distributed to educators (lecturers) and 120 questionnaires successfully re-collected and analysed. In addition to this, information also gathered through face to face interview with selected lecturers on their perception towards online education and its implication to undergraduate students. Apart from that, researcher also obtained information from secondary data such as library research and journal articles.

*Table 1: Respondents distribution by higher education institutions*

No	Industry	Number of Respondents
1	AMU	30
2	UCSI	30
3	UNITAR	30
4	UNIKL	30
5	MAHSA	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

**Focus of study**



*Figure 1: Theoretical framework for negative implication for online education towards undergraduate students.*

**Result and Discussion/ conceptual overview**

**Online Education and Its implication towards Undergraduate Students in Private Education Institution and Malaysian Education System**

Malaysian government is taking many initiatives in order to improve Malaysian education system. In order to ensure a stable and strong institution, dynamic and relevant curricula and pedagogy are needed. Thus, a well designed higher education curriculum should include creativity, innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship (Selvaraj, Anbalagan & Azlin, 2014). Effective teaching and learning needs an effective delivery system. Globalization and advancement in ICT changed the delivery style of teaching and learning. Online education is

replacing the conventional method of teaching and many private education institutions in Malaysia.

For many institutions, online education is creating an interesting paradox, growing demand and enrolment coupled by higher withdrawal and failure rates (Theresa, 2011). As online education continues play a vital role in Malaysian education system, many issues has been identified.

Research shows that there many negative implication towards undergraduates students in private higher education institution and about 84% out of 120 educators agreed to this view. According to Mr.Sooria, Senior Lecturer certain subjects which required calculation such as mathematics, accounting, economics, statistics and etc not appropriate for online teaching. Thus, students will face the difficulty to understand these subject if lecturers using online education as a tool for teaching.

Mr.Kumaran Raman, Deputy Dean of Faculty of Business and who has 6 years teaching experience in Tourism subjects in one of the institution where the research conducted mentioned that online education makes the learners undergo contemplation, remoteness and lack of interaction with their instructor/lecturers. Thus, online education requires very strong inspirations as well as skills which are not possessed by undergraduates' students particularly in private higher education institution.

In addition to this, accounting lecturer Ms.Kharunisa explained that with aspect of clarifications, explanations or even interpretation, the online education method is less effective compared with the traditional teaching method. For an example, it is not suitable to teach accounting related subjects using online where it's difficult to make students understand on transactions involved on even in understanding the process.

Ninety out of 120 respondents responded and shared their dissatisfaction when researcher asked about student's assessment method in online education. They said student assessment and feedback is limited for online education. According to them, the internet provides a wonderful way to get all kinds of infrastructure to the students, but it is also makes it difficult to assess certain types of student feedback and information.

Few educators also shared their views on student's campus life. According to them student should enjoy their life while they are studying in universities and colleges. However, online education does not provide this opportunity for undergraduates even though communicating regularly with faculty and classmates where nothing can replace the value of face to face interactions and team work.

Research result also shows that greatest implication of online education is lack of discipline among undergraduate's students. In the traditional classroom, students follow the same academic calendar and they always have to be on par with their lecturers, course content and syllabus. However, via online learning, students can easily opt from following classes; can easily forget to attend classes or procrastination and miss datelines of assignments and exams. Without the routine structure of traditional class, students tend to get lost or even get confuse about course activities, course development and dateline.

It is also found that undergraduate students might face difficulty when comes to managing files and online learning software particularly for those students with beginner-level

computer skill especially from rural area. This is because many students are computer illiterate and this will give them frustration on online education. Indeed, this can bring to demotivation and poor academic performance.

Online education not only causes negative implications for undergraduate students but also towards the Malaysian education system. HRM Asia (2012) report revealed that around 44,000 Malaysian graduates had yet to find work in 2011 and this figure represents an increase from 43,000 in a year 2010 and 41,000 in 2009. Report added Malaysian graduates are not adequately equipped with employability skills, in addition to their poor command of the English language, poor problem solving skills and a lack of professional etiquette. Besides that, online education encourages student to search and use information from internet for the formative assessment without evaluating it. This will bring to high plagiarism among undergraduate students and indirectly affecting Malaysian education system.

Meantime, poor online education also bring negative image towards entire Malaysian education system. Ministry of Higher Education established Malaysian Quality Agency (MQA) to ensure the quality of education provided by the private higher education institutions. Besides that, MQA also developed the Code of Practice for Program Accreditation (COPPA) and Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA). However, poor monitoring and lack of enforcement towards online education provider leads to low quality students and thus private education institution tend to take advantages on this situation and try to gain fast profit with less administrative cost. As a result parents will lose confidence with Malaysian education system they will prefer to send their children to higher education institution which uses international education standard or education system.

The research objectives were achieved through interviews and surveys where at the end of the study found the negative implications of online education towards undergraduates students' and Malaysian education system from educators perspective. Meantime, researcher also identified few recommendations to overcome the issues of online education which provided by the private higher education institutions. Hereby, higher education institutions especially private can offer higher education more effectively and efficiently.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that training and information sessions on online education is needed and to focus primarily on how e-learning technology can help to improvise the effectiveness and efficiency of undergraduates student's learning process and also the quality of graduates (Oye, Iabad, Madar et al, 2012). There few ways or method in order to improve the ways of delivering education via online. Following are the few ways which can consider by the higher education providers:

- Private higher education institution should appoint an effective instructor who can monitor the teaching and learning process through online which mean these instructors should able to actively involved and participate in online discussion whenever needed by the students.

- It is important to give learners/ students customized feedback to help them hone their skills and comprehension. Online education means you're not having in person interactions with your professors and classmates, constructive feedback on grading rubrics and interactions would help improve learner experience.
- As an instructor/ teachers, don't expect students to know *how* to be self-directed, they may need to develop this skill set. Direct students to resources that support students in developing their *self-direction* skills.
- Greater attention should be paid to creation of high-quality online programming. It is worth noting that specific course design features and pedagogy that have substantial impacts on successful online learning remain largely unknown. While many online learning quality rubrics exist, there is little empirical evidence thus far establishing a clear link between specific aspects of course quality and concrete student-level course outcomes.  
[https://evollution.com/revenuestreams/distance\\_online\\_learning/strategies-improve-online-courses/](https://evollution.com/revenuestreams/distance_online_learning/strategies-improve-online-courses/)
- Higher education institutions also should install the Turnitin software to identify plagiarism among students.

In nutshell, the above recommendations can help the higher education learning providers in providing effective and quality online education.

## Conclusion

Quality of Malaysian Education System based on globalization, teaching and learning, governance and knowledge based society (Selvaraj, Anbalagan & Azlin, 2014). Thus, teaching and learning aspects plays a vital role in improving the Malaysian Education System in future. MOHE and online education provider should find a solution to overcome the online education issues in order to patch the gap that exists. This is also important in order to maintain the quality of the education system instead of producing incompetent undergraduates.

In conclusion, online education is one of learning methods that can benefit both students and educators as it has become increasingly popular learning approach due to the growth of internet technologies (Fahneeda & Ong, 2013). Unfortunately based on the research conducted it shows that there are negative implications. Therefore, various improvement and activities are needed as per recommended to enhance or performed to gain the full benefits of online education and also to improve the quality of Malaysian Education System.

## Limitation of Study

Although this study was successful to certain extent and carefully prepared the researcher still aware of its limitation and shortcomings. First, because of the time and cost limit, this study was conducted only on a small size of population (5 private institutions with 30

respondents each). Therefore to generalize the results for larger groups the study should have involved more respondents at different level in future. Second, this study conducted in private organizations only and therefore in future the study should cover public higher education institution as well. Apart from that, the third limitation is this research only was conducted for undergraduates students, thus researcher again could not generalize the findings and should conduct research involving postgraduate students in future.

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