

Issues and Challenges in Online Teaching and Learning during Movement Control Order (MCO)

Shaharudin Ismail ^{1*}, Halimaton Sa'adiah Ariffin ², Zul Hilmi Abdullah ³

¹Faculty of Science and Technology, University Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan.

²Pusat Tamhidi, University Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan.

³Faculty of Information Technology & Sciences, INTI International University, Negeri Sembilan.

*Email: shaharudin@usim.edu.my

Abstract

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered strain of coronavirus; a type of virus known to cause respiratory infections in humans. This new strain was unknown before December 2019. The first case of COVID-19 in Malaysia was detected on 24 January 2020. The Movement Control Order, commonly referred to as the MCO, has been announced by The Prime Minister on 16 March 2020. As the results, many non-essential sectors including higher education institutional (HEI) in Malaysia are close. The teaching and learning processes need to implement in a new norm – Online Teaching and Learning. Lecturers and students experience a new way of teaching and learning processes. This paper discusses issues and challenges faced by lecturers and students on Teaching and Learning process via Online Teaching and Learning mode during the Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO).

Keywords

Online Teaching and Learning, Movement Control Order (MCO).

Introduction

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered strain of coronavirus; a type of virus known to cause respiratory infections in humans. This new strain was unknown before December 2019, when an outbreak of a pneumonia of unidentified cause emerged in Wuhan, China. The first case of COVID-19 in Malaysia was detected on 24 January 2020 (WHO, 2020). The Movement Control Order, commonly referred to as the MCO, has been announced by The Prime Minister on 16 March 2020 [2]. The MCO is under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967 [3]. The MCO 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. The initial period of the order is taking place starting from 18 March 2020 onwards until 31 March 2020. MCO has been extended to MCO Phase 2, 3 and 4, then Conditional MCO from 04 May 2020 – 09 June 2020.

During the implementation of MCO, all higher education institutional (HEI) in Malaysia are in learning semester sessions and were instructed to close. Prior to MCO, majority of the Teaching and Learning (TnL) process were done in face-to-face mode in classrooms or lecture halls. Since most of the HEIs are in Week 4 or 5 of the semester, some HEIs continue their semester sessions and lecturers need to conduct classes via online. During MCO, students are everywhere – some at their hometown, some stay in the HEIs' hostels or some located in their rental house.

Lecturers and students experience a new way of teaching and learning processes. This paper discusses issues and challenges faced by lecturers and students on Teaching and Learning process via Online Teaching and Learning mode during the Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO).

Methodology

In survey research, the important elements are randomization and bias, and the descriptive survey method demands that the researcher select from the general population a sample population that will be both logically and statistically defensible (Leedy, 1997).

A total of 73 students in the Knowledge Management course in the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) participated in this study. The survey questionnaires were distributed online to collect data from the targeted samples. In addition to the collected data, the research was done to further discuss the issues and challenges faced by lecturers and students on Teaching and Learning process via Online Teaching and Learning mode during the Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO).

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the results and issues / challenges for Online Teaching and Learning process including **Access to the Internet**, and **Availability of the Electronic Devices**.

Access to the Internet

Access to the Internet is important in Online Teaching and Learning, both in Synchronous and Asynchronous environments (USIM,2020). Online Teaching and Learning is very dependent on Internet access; however, the problem is that some students do not have access to the Internet or may have a weak connection, especially those living in rural areas or from poor families. According to an English language teacher Mohd Fakhrol Anwar from SK Seri Jemerli, Kuala Ketil, Kedah, the biggest obstacle is that not all students have Internet access or even electronic devices (The Star, 2020).

The following survey was asked to 73 students in the Knowledge Management course in the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). It shows not all students have access to the Internet to participate in the Online Teaching and Learning. Based on Fig.1, the survey results shows only 70 students have access to the Internet, while the

remaining 3 students do not have access to the Internet. In order to implement Online Teaching and Learning, the HEIs management and also lecturers need to consider a special arrangement for those students, who without the Internet access, could participate or complete the teaching and learning processes for the semester. One of the options is to post (via Pos Malaysia or courier services) the materials to the students. It is not fair for these students not to complete the teaching and learning sessions for the semester.

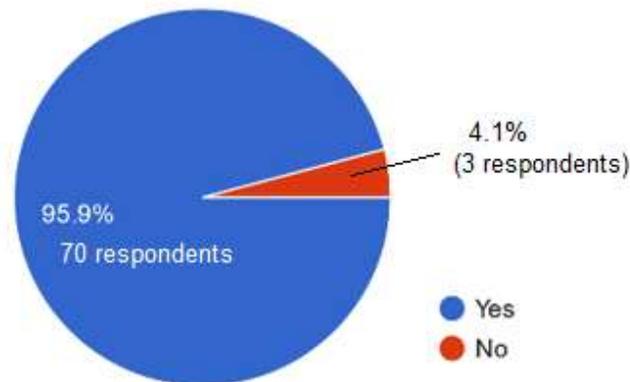


Figure 1. Respondents that have access to the Internet

Those 70 respondents who have access to the Internet, further questions related to their access to the Internet were asked. Table 1 shows the results for Types of Internet Connection available for the students during the MCO periods. From the result, it shows majority of the students (44 students or 62.9%) use mobile data plan to access the Internet during the MCO periods. Among the 44 students who are using mobile data plan, 12 of the students also using Broadband.

Table 1. Types of Internet Connection available for students during MCO

Internet Connection	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Mobile Data Plan	44	62.9
Broadband	33	47.1
Hotspot	11	15.7
Wi-Fi	1	1.4

Table 2 shows the survey results for the students' Internet connection quota / limitation. It shows majority of the students have limited quota for their Internet Connection. This may incur cost to them if the usage is more than limited quota. Lecturers need to take this into account when deciding and preparing the materials for the online teaching and learning methods.

Table 2. Internet Connection quota caps/limitation available during MCO

Internet Connection Quota	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Unlimited	20	28.6
Limited	36	51.4
Limited and Unlimited	14	20.0

During MCO, students are everywhere – some at their hometown, some stay in the HEIs’ hostels or some located in their rental house. Fig. 2 shows the survey results for the available Internet speed for the students during the MCO periods. (Rate the Internet Connection speed (Rating: 1 = poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good; 4 = Very Good; 5 = Excellent))

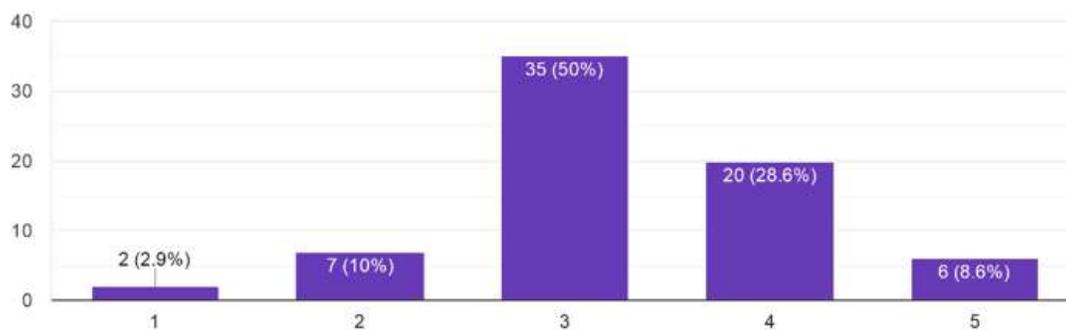


Figure 2. The Internet speed for students during MCO

Fig.3 shows the survey results for the Internet connection reliability for the students during the MCO periods (Rating: 1 = poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good; 4 = Very Good; 5 = Excellent).

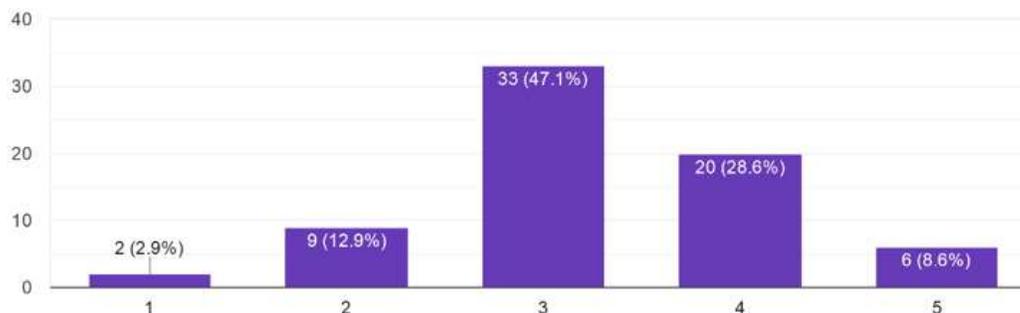


Figure 31 The reliability of Internet connection for students during MCO

From the results in the above questionnaire survey, we could conclude that the main issue and challenge in Online Teaching and Learning is the **availability and reliability of the Internet Connection** for the students to participate in the Online Teaching and Learning. Based on this, the Lecturers could decide how to conduct the Online Teaching and Learning sessions.

Availability of the Electronic Devices

The availability of the appropriate electronic devices also is an issues and challenges in Online Teaching and Learning. The survey shows majority of students (66 students or 90.4%) have laptop or notebook to participate in the Online Teaching and Learning process during the MCO. Table 3 shows the survey results for the electronic devices availability to students during MCO.

Table 3. Electronic devices available during MCO

Electronic Devices	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Personal Computer	6	8.2
Laptop / Notebook	66	90.4
Tablet	1	1.4
Smartphone	63	86.3
Printer	16	21.9
Speaker	5	6.8
Microphone	1	1.4

Even though basically students need only the Internet access and smartphone to participate in Online Teaching and Learning, students still need the suitable electronic devices, for examples laptop, notebook or personal computer to complete their online assignments or projects especially involving word processing, code programming, etc.

In the survey, three (3) out of six (6) students who owned Personal Computer are also owned laptop or notebook. Thus, only 69 students or 94.5% of the students have suitable electronic devices to complete their Online Teaching and Learning process including completing their assignments and projects.

This survey indicates that not all students have the suitable electronic devices to participate in Online Teaching and Learning process. Thus, Lecturers should think of the way for students to participate in the Online Teaching and Learning process. But the biggest issue and challenge are the students do not have both - Internet access and the suitable electronic devices. Lecturers need to identify these students and send them (via mail post, or courier services) the materials such as lecture notes, assignments, etc.

Conclusion

The Teaching and Learning processes need to implement in a new norm – Online Teaching and Learning, where lecturers and students may experience a new way of teaching and learning processes. During the Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO), lecturers and students are facing some issues and challenges in the implementation of the Online Teaching and Learning processes. Some of the issues and challenges including **Access to the Internet** during the MCO periods, and the **Availability of suitable electronic devices** for the Teaching and Learning processes. The Teaching and Learning processes could continue during the Malaysia Movement Control Order

(MCO), but the biggest issue and challenge is those students do not have both - Internet access and the suitable electronic devices – to participate in the Teaching and Learning process. In order to implement Online Teaching and Learning, the HEIs management and also lecturers need to consider a special arrangement for those students, who without the Internet access, could participate or complete the teaching and learning processes for the semester. One of the options is to post (via Pos Malaysia or courier services) the materials to the students. It is not fair for these students not to complete the teaching and learning sessions for the semester.

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