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E-learning for post-graduate students in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

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Abstract

The expansion of information technology had transform the whole education system by substituting the traditional method such as blackboard to more modern technology such as printing the press, laptops (Smith and Winthrop, 2012). The purposes of study are to identify the eLearning's usefulness and effectiveness for post graduate students in Malaysia and to determine whether it helps post graduate students to achieve higher academic performance.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak had announced a new motto of "Soaring Upwards" to promote Malaysian higher education system to increase the pace of creating a first-rate educated workforce; while the launch of Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 has targeted that at year 2025 at least one Malaysian university has ranked among the top twenty-five in Asia, two universities ranked in the global top hundred as well as four universities in the global two hundred (Selvaratnam, 2016). Thus, this research paper will highlight on the factors of students' satisfaction and students' engagement on the students' academic performance.

The research methodology is used correlation which is a quantitative survey to study the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in order to get the extent of the relationship whether the relationship exist. Furthermore, conclusion and recommendation will be given in this study therefore the outcome will be harmonized regarding the usefulness of e-learning to increase students' performance.

Keywords: E-learning; Post-graduate students; Malaysia

Table of Contents

List of Tables viii
List of Figures ix
List of Abbreviations ix
1.0 Introduction 1
1.1 Chapter Overview 1
1.2 Background of the Study 1
1.3 Problem Statement 2
1.4 Research Objectives 3
1.5 Research Questions 4
1.6 Significance of study 4
1.6.1 Significance to Academe 4
1.6.2 Significance to Government 5
1.6.3 Significance to Industry 5
1.7 Scope of study 5
1.8 Limitations of study 6
1.9 Operation Definitions 6
1.9.1 E-learning 6
1.9.2 Learning Management System (LMS) 6
1.9.3 Students' Performance 7
1.9.4 Online Subject Syllabus 7
1.10 Organization of Chapters 7
2.0 Literature Review 9
2.1 Chapter Overview 9
2.2 E-learning 9
2.2.1 E-learning Benefits 11
2.2.2 E-learning Models 13
2.2.3 E-learning in Malaysia 15
2.3 Students' Performance 16
2.4 Student Satisfaction 18
2.5 Students' Engagement 19

2.6 Cost of e-learning 20
2.7 Online Materials of E-learning 21
2.8 Online Subject Syllabus of E-learning 23
2.9 Grounded Theory: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) 25
2.10 Theoretical Framework 26
2.11 Hypothesis 26
2.12 Chapter Summary 27
3.0 Research Design and Methodology 28
3.1 Chapter Overview 28
3.2 Research Design 28
3.3 Unit of Analysis 30
3.4 Sampling Design 30
3.5 Measurement Instrument 31
3.5.1 Pilot Test 32
3.5.2 Validity Analysis 32
3.5.3 Factor Analysis and Reliability Test 33
3.5.4 Pearson's Correlation Test 34
3.6 Data Collection and Analysis Method 35
3.7 Questionnaire Development 36
3.8 Ethical Consideration 37
3.9 Chapter Summary 37
4.0 Data analysis, Findings and Interpretation 38
4.1 Chapter Overview 38
4.2 Demographic Analysis 38
4.3 Normality Test 41
4.4 Descriptive Analysis 42
4.5 Factor Analysis 47
4.6 Validity and Reliability test 49
4.7 Multiple Regressions 54
4.8 Conclusion 57
5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation 58

5.1 Chapter Overview 58
5.2 Discussion of results 58
5.3 Contribution 61
5.3.1 Contribution to Academia 61
5.3.2 Contribution to Industry 62
5.4 Recommendation 62
5.5 Limitation 64
5.6 Future Research 64
5.7 Personal Reflection 65
5.8 Conclusion 67
References 68
APPENDICES 88
Appendix A: Initial Research Proposal of Project (IRPP) 88
Appendix B: UH Ethics Approval 128
Appendix C: UH Ethic Forms 130
Appendix D: Questionnaire 157
Appendix E: Project Paper Log 163
Appendix F: Turnitin Report 168
Appendix G: SPSS Output 169

List of Tables

Table 1: Sampling Table. Source: Krejci & Morgan (1970) 31
Table 2: KMO value (Source From: Hair et al. (2010)) 33
Table 3 Pearson Correlation R value.(Source From: Hussey and Hussey (1997)). 34
Table 4: Crosstab on Gender against the GPA before e-learning implementation. 39
Table 5: Crosstab on Gender against the GPA after e-learning implementation. .. 40
Table 6: The Skewness and Kurtosis Test for Normality. 41
Table 7: Crosstab on Gender toward their perspectives on e-learning as learning method. 42
Table 8: Crosstab on respondents' gender against their perspectives on e-learning in term of save time and money. 43
Table 9: Respondents' perspectives on e-learning's online learning materials. 44
Table 10: Respondents' perspectives on online course content enhance their learning interests. 45
Table 11: Respondents' perspectives on e-learning their academic performance. 46
Table 12: Crosstab on gender against their willingness to take e-learning module in future. 47
Table 13: Communalities for Final Data Collection.. 48
Table 14: Overall Satisfaction with E-learning. 49
Table 15: Cost of E-learning 50
Table 16: Subject Syllabus of E-learning. 50
Table 17: Online Materials of e-learning. 51
Table 18: Overall engagement of e-learning. 52
Table 19: Students' academic performance. 53
Table 20: ANNOVA Table. 54
Table 21: Model Summary. 54
Table 22: Coefficients. 54

List of Figures

Figure 1: Holistic e-learning systems theoretical framework 12
Figure 2:Theoretical Framework 26
Figure 3: Research Design 28
Figure 4 : Gender of the respondents. 38
Figure 5: Age of respondents. 39
Figure 6: The perspective of respondents on time saving through participating in e-learning. 43
Figure 7: Perspectives of respondents on online course learn more than face-to-face course. 44
Figure 8: Respondents' perspectives on interaction between lecturers and students are adequately through e-learning. 45
Figure 9: Respondents' perspectives on e-learning encourage users to learn independently. 46

List of Abbreviations

ANNOVA- Analysis of variance

CMS- Content Management System

GPA- Grade Point Average

HEI- Higher Education Institutions

KMO- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

LMS- Learning Management System

SPSS-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TAM-Technology Acceptance Mode

VIF- Variance Inflation factor

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

In chapter one, it mainly discusses about the basic knowledge and information which directly relevant to the research topic. Besides, it reveals few important points that become the foundation of this study. It will include the background of the study and list out few reasons for doing this research. Moreover, it will follow the research objectives and research questions that relate to the research problem. Lastly, chapter one will also provide an overview of the approach for making this study success and introduces the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

As disruptive technologies had existed in the past two eras, it has a dominant impact on all aspects of the individual's life and society (Gisbert and Johnson, 2015). Besides, disruptive technologies had promoted growth in the industries where it penetrated and created entirely new industries by the introduction of products and services which is dramatically cheaper, better, and more convenient (Kostoff, Boylan and Simons, 2004). As a result, it has change the structure of environment in term of educational and cultural modalities (Castells, 2004). In addition, the expansion of information technology had transform the whole education system by substituting the traditional method such as blackboard to more modern technology such as printing the press, laptops (Smith and Winthrop, 2012).

Moreover, UNESCO had recognized the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as the key elements for reconstructing education, promoting universal access to information and knowledge, fostering expression freedom and sustainable development of society to be more cultured, inclusive and equitable (Mansell and Tremblay, 2013). In facts, information Communication Technology (ICT) in education had been viewed as modern, efficient and cost-effective process which transform how students from higher institutions learning (Woreta, Kebede and

Zegeye, 2013). In addition, it is also the method of resolving the educational institution's cost and quality difficulties (Lee, Yoon and Lee, 2009).

There is no doubt that e-learning has become one of the central points of university education in recent years (Romero Tena, Cabero Almenara and Barroso Osuna, 2016). In other words, it has been "institutionalized" in all universities (Aguaded and Diaz, 2010). Cavus (2013) explained that most of the universities has accepted and adopted the interactive way of learning just like learner-centered concept in a short amount of time. Besides that, research has shown that effective blended learning experiences do contribute to successful student engagement and success (Alayyar, Fisser and Voogt, 2012; Carvalho, Lustigova, and Lustig, 2009; Geer, 2009; Keppell, Souter, and Riddle, 2012; Pelliccione and Broadley, 2010; So and Brush, 2008; Stacey and Gerbic, 2009; Wiesenberg and Stacey, 2009).

1.3 Problem Statement

Blended learning or E-learning has been adopted by many educational institutions to students for accommodate diverse learning styles and offer flexible learning (Christensen and Evamy, 2011; Pelliccione and Broadley, 2010). It had become current trend in recent years as practitioners seeking to upskill their qualifications (Dunworth, Fiocco and Mulligan, 2012; Keppell et al., 2012). Hrastinski (2010) stated that effective blending of synchronous and asynchronous features can create a sense of stability which help students stay on task and gain stronger connection with other participants. Meanwhile, it highlighted by Kolowich (2010) that advantages of exchanges occurring within an online learning environment had resembling those that occur in classrooms and replicate genuine learning environments.

However, Karabenick (2011) also mentioned that ICT was seen as a major breakthrough to support and help education but its rapid development had brought some challenges for the learners too. Besides, it also supported by PISA (2009) that although ICT might be a better way to learn good quality education, but it's not an effective and efficient way to use in other course such as mathematics, statistics and

mechanical. Therefore, sustained and conscious effort is continuously required for ensuring that participants engaged in the meaningful learning activities conducted by facilitators (Garner and Rouse, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to provide insights toward the implementation of e-learning which is mainly to identify the usefulness and effectiveness of e-learning for post graduate students in Malaysia to determine whether it helps post graduate students to achieve higher academic performance. The rationale for focusing on effectiveness of e-learning is that the learning management systems (LMS) adopted have yet to be proven to be useful for learning at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Objectives

Research objective is helps to convey the explicit understanding of the study and helps to focus on the reasons why this study has been done (Farrugia, Bhandari, Petrisor and Farrokhyar, 2010). From this research, it is expected to achieve the following research objectives:

- To ascertain whether there is a relationship between students' satisfaction with e-learning and students' academic performance.
- To determine whether there is a relationship between students' engagement with e-learning and students' academic performance.
- To ascertain whether there is a relationship between cost of e-learning and students' academic performance.
- To ascertain whether there is a relationship between online materials of e-learning and students' academic performance.
- To determine whether there is a relationship between subject syllabus of e-learning and students' academic performance.

1.5 Research Questions

According to Farrugia et al. (2010), research question helps to structure the study for giving a clear direction from where the data can be collected and analyzed to achieve the research objectives. Based on the identification from the research objectives, this paper is looking forward to measure and identify the influence of e-learning in private universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia followed by an investigation of students' engagement, satisfaction towards e-learning, cost of e-learning, online material and online subject syllabus in this research. Throughout the research, we will identify the factors that influence the e-learning process. The research model will be built for the purpose of this study, and to support the building of the framework. Thus, the research questions are formulated as:

- Is there a relationship between students' satisfactions with e-learning and students' academic performance?
- Is there a relationship between students' engagement with e-learning and students' academic performance?
- Is there a relationship between cost of learning and students' academic performance?
- Is there a relationship between online materials of e-learning and students' academic performance?
- Is there a relationship between subject syllabus of e-learning and students' academic performance?

1.6 Significance of study

This research would add a value to three aspects which are as follows:

1.6.1 Significance to Academe

This paper will provide the contribution of the study in the Academic view. The outcomes from this research will increase the understanding and the knowledge about the factors that are influencing the e-learning system in Malaysia. In addition,

this research will help researchers, especially those Malaysia's researchers to be more understand on how students' satisfaction, students' engagement, e-learning cost, online learning materials and e-learning's subject syllabus toward students' performance. To sum up, the research findings will provide a more critical view on implementing e-learning using technology into education institutions.

1.6.2 Significance to Government

For contribution of the study in the Government view, this research will deliver more useful information to the Malaysia government as they are not aware of the barriers of e-learning. Based on the finding of this research, government can examine the most significant factors that influencing the e-learning system in the HEIs and formulates the relevant policies to invest more IT infrastructure to facilitate e-learning. Moreover, Malaysia government also can encourage and support HEIs to enhance the quality of e-learning toward learners.

1.6.3 Significance to Industry

This research will provide a useful and genuine feedback for the e-learning industry. The findings will contribute sustainable e-learning system which help to create a positive perception especially for students that eventually could lead students to achieve higher performance in their studies. Besides, as tradition learning system also has their pros and cons, this study will also list out some barriers to shape up e-learning system to be more effective and helpful for students.

1.7 Scope of study

This research aims to identify and verify the impact of post graduate students' engagement, students' satisfaction, cost of e-learning, online material and online syllabus towards their academic performance. Meanwhile, this paper also helps to determine the relationships that will be established with the positive outcomes of e-learning. Post-graduate students are chosen as the research priority due to fact that e-learning nowadays is often being used by various higher education institutions (HEIs). Moreover, students' backgrounds and university's facilities also serve as a

fruitful resource for investigation purpose. Questionnaire approach will be used by the researcher in order to collect data and this study aims for to distribute the questionnaires to approximately 550 sample.

1.8 Limitations of study

Similar with other researches, this research has also contained some limitations in the effort to complete it. Therefore, the existing of limitations had caused the value of academic research is decreased. Time constraints will be the main limitation of the study as this research need to be complete within four months. Besides, limited resources also another limitation since this paper only focus on Klang Valley which is part of Malaysia, thus, it might be not representing the whole Malaysia's post graduate students' opinion. Both limitations might cause the data might be skew and the sample section may be biased. However, the outcomes of this research will still able to help HEIs to identify the students' perception towards e-learning and the barrier to implement it.

1.9 Operation Definitions

1.9.1 E-learning

E-learning unites two main areas, learning and technology. Learning is a cognitive process for achieving knowledge, and technology is an enabler of the learning process, meaning that technology is used like any other tool in the education praxis, as is a pencil or a notebook (Aparicio, Bacao and Oliveira, 2015).

1.9.2 Learning Management System (LMS)

Dias and Diniz (2012) stated that Learning Management System (LMS) act as potential solution to synthesis between interactive learning activities and collaborative learning whereby it is expected to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of learning which is received by the users, teachers (implicitly) and learners (explicitly).