



Online Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic in Primary School: The Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract. The Covid-19 Pandemic has left the people all around the globe to isolate and stay in their homes due to the need of social distancing in order to avoid the spread of Covid-19 virus. Offices, restaurants and including schools were closed down. In which resulting to a huge challenge towards the education system with the sudden change from in class learning to online learning. For Malaysian local primary schools, no online class were made in the first few months of lockdown until further noticed by the government of Malaysia. This study aims to find out the perspective of primary school teacher during online learning of Covid-19 period. The study was conducted using qualitative method. The result recorded can be viewed for future references on conducting online classes for local primary school students better in the future.

Keywords: Online Learning · Primary School Teachers · Covid-19 Pandemic

1 Introduction

The Director General of WHO in March 2020 (WHO, 2020) declared Covid-19 as a pandemic after assessment of the rapid spread and severity of the deadly virus across the globe with additional announcement of social distancing as a means of curbing the spread of the pandemic. Public places such as parks, mosques, offices including schools were all closed down in order to avoid the spread of Covid-19. Thus, also resulting to an abrupt change towards the education system that changes from in class learning to online learning. In Malaysia, there were no online learning for the local primary school children in the first few months of lockdown back in March 2020. Until further noticed by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia to have an online class using the Google Classroom as the main platform for the primary school students to learn.

1.1 Issues on Handling Online Class During the First Movement Control Order (MCO)

1.1.1 Technical Issues

However, too little training had been prepared for the teachers to conduct online learning. Some teachers never had the experience of handling online learning before the pandemic.

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Resulting to technical issues before and during the online class period. There were seminars for the teachers to learn on conducting online class for their primary school students but some teachers preferred a hands-on approach of training rather than online to understand. Technical mistakes such as forgetting to unmute the microphone while conducting online class are also quite common in online class. Besides, another common issue faced by many during online learning are lack of internet connection. Especially in the rural areas where the internet is limited, were hard to run the online classes smoothly.

1.1.1.2 Time Needed to Prepare Teaching Materials and Student Engagement

Besides, the method of teaching changes and it is different from in class teaching and online learning. Teachers also need to allocate time to prepare the teaching materials for the students to learn before conducting online classes in order for the students to understand better. The preparation can be made through using the platforms online that are available for teaching tools such as YouTube, Padlet, Kahoot and many more to have more engagement and interaction during online class.

During the online learning period, the students' engagement and attendance kept decreasing by week. These are due to the difficulties and challenges faced at home and decreasing level of motivation among students for online class learning as there were only virtual conversation and no direct and authentic engagement towards the students and among them.

2 Literature Review

Online Learning or E-Learning Rapid developments in technology have made distance education easy (McBrien et al., 2009). "Most of the terms (online learning, open learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning, m-learning, for ex.) have in common the ability to use a computer connected to a network, that offers the possibility to learn from anywhere, anytime, in any rhythm, with any means" (Cojocariu et al., 2014). Online learning can be termed as a tool that can make the teaching-learning process more student-centered, more innovative, and even more flexible. Online learning is defined as "learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students" (Singh & Thurman, 2019).

The Malaysian government have stated that "There must be a variety of teaching-learning methods in order to achieve the eight domains of learning outcomes and to ensure that students take responsibility for their own learning". It also states that institutions or schools "should establish teaching and learning mechanisms through the use of the latest technology and through global networking to access real-time information and to identify up-to-date topics of importance for inclusion in the curriculum and its delivery." (MQA, 2009). Therefore, the use of an online teaching and learning system would be viewed favourably as it meets the criteria for expanding teaching and learning methods, encouraging teachers to practice self-directed learning and providing the suggested mechanism for enhancement of content and delivery.

Due to the pandemic, particularly when all educational activities are stopped, online and web-based learning platforms have become dramatically popular. It allows universities to adapt their conventional blended-based learning during the pandemic quickly. However, the migration process onto online learning must not be time-consuming and easy to set up.

3 Method and Procedures

The methodology used for the research are qualitative research. A few numbers of primary school teachers from SK Polis Depot in Kuala Lumpur teaching various subjects been interviewed to find out their views and perspective of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Lists of related questions prepared and the answered recorded are based on their individual views teaching different subjects and different year of students in the primary school. The recorded data were analysed for future references.

4 Results and Findings

Different teachers that teach different subjects has various point of view when it comes to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers that have to teach the core subjects has more pressure and more teaching time rather than the regular subjects.

Younger teachers enjoyed more during the online class period due to their ability to master technical skills for online classes more than the older teachers that prefers in class learning more. Learning tools such as YouTube, Quizizz, Padlet are one of main tools for teachers to use during the online learning period.

Materials for teaching needed for online class were time consuming and needed to practice the tools before conducting the class. Resulting to a more time-consuming preparation rather than the traditional learning.

Parents played an important role in order to ensure the smoothness of online learning for their children as they were more familiarised in terms of technical and tools of learning rather than the children. Parents and teachers that communicates well helped a lot to ensure the students understand and caught the lessons well.

Although the second Movement Control Order (MCO) was more planned and organised, the attendance rate kept decreasing by weeks. This is due to children having lack of interest towards online learning and parents unable to monitor well since some parents have to work in their work place.

5 Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced most sectors to close down its operation due to the need of social distancing and avoidance of the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Due to the school closure, the education system has to change from in class learning to online learning. Resulting to an abrupt change that needs a new method of teaching that involves technical skills for teachers. However, lack of trainings for the teachers to conduct online learning can be an issue. Besides, newer teachers with more experience towards technical

skills for online learning found online learning quite interesting than the traditional ones as there are more tools can be used in online learning. Offers various kinds of teaching method. In which through videos, quizzes, breakout rooms for discussions and many more.

6 Conclusions

Education are very important to ensure a bright future generation. Thus, needed to continue although it is been conducted synchronously and asynchronously online during the covid-19 pandemic period. A proper preparation is needed in order to have a succeed of online learning. Teachers with good technical skills tend to enjoy more of online classes due to their ability to master the tools needed for the teaching of the children in their primary school.

Although the limitation of the research would be only a small number of interviews for the teachers were made in a local primary school of SK Polis Depot from Kuala Lumpur. The results may not be too relevant for overall views in the perspective of teachers conducting online class during Covid-19 lockdown in Malaysia. Further research can be done for future reference for a better way of teaching for online learning. Initiatives by the government should be more effort in finding out the best ways for the students to learn productively as it is important for future generations.

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