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## Student's Willingness and Perception Towards Online Teaching and Learning Through the Psychoeducational Group Counseling Approach

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the willingness and perception of students toward online teaching and the learning process among students through a psychoeducational group counseling approach. This study was carried out due to the occurrence of several psychological issues among respondents, including the difficulty of giving focus to the activities of teaching and learning online. The design of this study is in methodical way, namely by running four group counseling sessions through a psychoeducational approach. The method used to get information from these group counseling sessions is by using related modules such as Introduction Session, Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis, a Day in Life (as a Time Management), and Fantasy of Success. The study found that, despite some identified constraints, online teaching and learning are still preferred by the respondents in terms of their willingness and perception to embrace this new norm of the teaching and learning process.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

When COVID-19 struck the country then there have been many lives that have been taken by the epidemic then the kingdom announced Movement Control Order (MCO) starting on March 18, 2020. After already a few months of this control, the Malaysian people were forced to change their daily routine when almost all the people were not given the right to go to the office to work and school students and higher learning institutions were also unable to gain knowledge face to face with their educators. All things need to be done from home and learned from home. As of 4 May 2020, MCO has been fully implemented and online learning continues to take place to replace face-to-face meetings. Learning activities need to continue to build a new generation that is knowledgeable of all the challenges that need to be faced. Online learning provides several platforms that can help continue the Silibus recitation to ensure children's education is not left behind.

21st-century learning (PAK21) has demanded online learning which has become the new norm, not something that is uncommon in education. The objective of PAK21 is to train students to be more communicative, collaborative, creative, and critical thinkers, which requires educators to be more technologically advanced to share knowledge more effectively.

In this era of new norms, as an effort to ensure all students are not left behind in teaching and learning activities. Digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Zoom are among those used by lecturers to conduct their teaching and learning process throughout the MCO implementation period (Sopian & Saja, 2021). Online teaching and learning are a new alternative to replace conventional education, i.e., face-to-face. This new norm causes the country's education sector to accept the maximum use of technology to launch the MCO process.

Teaching and learning continue to evolve and play an important role in education in Malaysia. The world of education in this pandemic era has moved towards online teaching and learning that utilizes a variety of existing tools. Technology and internet users in the present are one form of academia that is an enabler for this teaching and learning activity to continue to be carried out. Among the materials that are often used such as the use of text, visual graphics, words, animation, video, and audio based on computer technology resources and equipment. Online teaching and learning as face-to-face learning using computer equipment where students can see and hear the teaching from a distance.

The study of Siti Balqis and Muniroh in 2020 found that students are not yet ready from a physical and mental perspective. Moreover, the study of Abdillah and Musa (2021) also found that student's willingness to online learning was at a simple stage. Ishak and Talaat (2020) showed that the level of students' willingness to learn online was at a simple stage with an overall min score of 3.14. The study related to the relationship between student willingness and online learning is that there is a significant relationship that is positive and at a modest level (69.0%) between student willingness and online learning. This shows that students remain willing and show a positive attitude in participating in online learning despite limitations and challenges (Ishak & Talaat, 2020).

Based on a perception study of 150 diploma students who took the Arabic communication course at UiTM showed that students' perceptions of the content of online learning, high min scores were obtained as much as 3.67 and this shows that students are satisfied with the content of learning carried out ODL and can master or understand the contents of the lessons delivered well by the lecturer (Sopian & Saja, 2021). In addition, there is also another study that states regarding the perception study that there is the lowest min item score of 3.38 for the item related to students' perceptions of "online learning is the same quality as learning in

a classroom for Chinese language courses". This suggests that online learning is not equivalent to the quality of in-classroom learning for Chinese language courses (An & Lai, 2022).

The implementation of MCO has led to the closure of public universities. This closure has resulted in the conventional teaching and learning process not being able to be carried out as usual. To ensure the teaching and learning process is not affected, the online method has become the main alternative. According to Hussin *et al.* (2021), online learning is a way to ensure the learning process can be carried out regardless of time and place. Online teaching and learning are also one of the ways to break the COVID-19 chain, and at the same time, ensure that the learning process is not delayed, and the students are not left behind.

The online learning process has impressed many students. The level of learner's willingness to online learning is very important considering that the learner is the main subject in the teaching and learning process. Aspects of learner psychology including emotions, attitudes, and distress will influence the learning process and outcomes. The acceptance of this new norm is not only difficult for students but for teaching staff as well who are also faced with the difficulty of adapting and changing existing educational practices. This series affects student commitment during online PdP which needs to be emphasized because it directly affects the quality of learning during MCO and in turn can affect the level of student learning achievement.

In line with this new norm, the University of Malacca – as other public universities do – has also implemented online learning to ensure that the teaching and learning process is not stunted and students are not left behind in learning. However, this online method is not free from constraints and limitations based on the experience and sharing of students to the reviewer some students expressed regarding their commitment in attending online teaching and learning, device and network problems, difficulty in implementing the programs required by the subject, motivation to learn and various other problems that are often shared by students. They also said that they were not comfortable with the online method that often changed, after the physical programs were implemented, they changed back to online teaching and learning. This is due to the prevailing COVID-19 transmission. Therefore, the researchers aim to study students' readiness and perception towards online teaching and learning via a psychoeducational group counseling approach.

This study is expected to help add to the knowledge of community educators about online learning, especially regarding students' willingness and perceptions of online teaching and learning. It can be a guide to community educators on the knowledge of using online learning as a willingness to build new alternatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Next, this study is expected to provide information to the university regarding students' willingness and perception of online teaching and learning. Therefore, it shall help public universities to be more concerned about issues related to students' willingness and perceptions of online teaching and learning. In addition, it is hoped that this study can help future researchers as a reference to advance this kind of study in the future and is also expected to increase the number of studies given this kind of study has become a new trend.

## 2. METHOD

The study that will be carried out is in the form of an online method of meeting online, namely using the Google Meet application to help get more precise and more information. Understanding the implied and explicit meanings and experiences will allow a particular phenomenon to be understood and conceptualized. Respondents were five students randomly drawn from the University of Malacca and interviewed in group counseling sessions.

The debriefing was conducted through educational psychoeducational group counseling sessions conducted over four sessions with five respondents. The first session conducted was focused on an introductory session to build relationships between members and create a comfortable atmosphere between group members using the 'Suai Kenal' activity. The second session focussed on questions about students' willingness as well as perceptions and experiences during online teaching and learning which was carried out using the SWOT analysis method. Next, in the third session was to use the time management activity module, which aims to help students to be more committed to the teaching and learning process by setting schedules that must be prioritized and those that are needed immediately. The fourth session focused on helping students to be more motivated using the Fantasy of Success module where students were asked to imagine their future.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have been divided into sections through the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one way to analyze data to identify patterns or find themes through the data collected by the researcher. Among the things that will be expressed in the findings are related to the willingness, perceptions, challenges to online teaching and learning, and alternatives to increase learning motivation.

#### 3.1. Theme 1: Willingness

This study found that there are students who are experiencing problems in terms of devices that are the students' platform to follow online teaching and learning. Students expressed the problem of having a laptop that does not support some applications causing students to be forced to use smartphones to keep up with classes online.

*"When learning online, the goods are not sufficient, sometimes at the beginning of PKP, I did not have enough money to buy a laptop and I only used the telephone to join classes" (R. 1).*

*"In the beginning, I didn't have a computer, I used an old laptop, and sometimes the laptop had problems with support and experienced these problems within a year" (R.2).*

*"There was one time when there was a laptop problem, I had to use my mobile phone to go to class, but it was difficult to read the slides or notes because they were small, it was difficult to understand" (R.5).*

Some students stated that they were also dealing with network issues. However, all students stated that they were not faced with such problems.

*"Internet is the most down for me because my village does not support many lines, only maxis, Maxis are expensive, and the quota is also small. I experienced the problem five to six times in one semester, making it difficult to attend online classes" (R.1).*

*"Internet, thank God, at the beginning of PKP my house was ready to install wifi and it was easy" (R.2).*

*"The internet is all ok fate before the PKP applies, I have installed it at home" (R.3).*

*"In terms of laptops and internet, everything is close to home" (R.4).*

*"Sometimes the class is missed because of line problems" (R.5).*

Based on these findings, it is evident that students faced platform availability problems at the beginning of MCO. Some students experience network problems. However, the majority of students have good device and network availability. Despite the various problems faced by the students, they are still willing to attend classes online even if they are forced to use smartphones only. This shows that students still have a good willingness to attend classes online.

Furthermore, the student's willingness in disciplining themselves to attend online teaching and learning. They always faced problems attending class on time, often miss to attend class or at worst cannot attend directly as indicated in their responses below:

*"I have a hard time waking up early, sometimes I'm late to join a class or can't join it right away. Usually, when the class meets I have friends who surprise me. At home my family all work and I am alone no one can surprise me" (R.1).*

*"After that happened, I didn't wake up at all, I asked my friends for help to call and shock me so that I wouldn't be late and avoid not attending class" (R.1).*

*"Because it rains early in the morning, the class...I feel sometimes lazy to go in, even if I go in, I fall asleep. Sometimes there is a slow entry to class" (R.3)*

*"Sometimes the problem of absence is due to falling asleep after dawn and forgetting to understand the family. I will always ask my family for help if I fall asleep after dawn. But sometimes I forget to understand" (R.4).*

*"Sometimes I was late for class, sometimes I fell asleep at the beginning of PKP tu. So, I ask for help from other friends to surprise me. Please check if I'm still not in class, please find me and wake me up" (R.5).*

Through the findings that have been stated above, it shows that students have a good willingness to attend online teaching and learning, although at first students often deal with missed attendance to class; however, students have an effort to solve the problem by asking about their surroundings or friends to make sure they can present themselves to attend the online class. Overall, students have an effort to discipline themselves to attend online teaching and learning (Sopian & Saja, 2021).

### 3.2. Theme 2: Perception

Student views on online teaching and learning.

*"In the beginning, I felt uneasy, scared, and worried about this online learning. Because we are forced to lose our social presence with our friends and learners. After all, it is not a habit for a student to lose the pleasure of learning face-to-face." (R.1)*

*"At first I felt a little depressed because the knowledge learned was a little difficult to accept because of the sudden change in learning style and learning atmosphere but soon I was able to apply this new norm atmosphere" (R.2).*

*"There were many challenges that I faced and my feelings were mixed. At first, I was still trying to adapt to the new norm. My feelings at that time were a bit depressed, but after 3 semesters I felt happy because I was closer to my family and a little bit as much as being able to arrange my schedule well" (R.3).*

*"The feeling I feel is that I am not very strong because there are many things that I cannot do due to COVID-19. One of the things is looking for references in public libraries. But I need to be mentally strong to face all the challenges that will occur" (R.4)*

*"For me, online teaching and learning is a new thing that needs to be traveled through. So, it has good and bad things for ourselves and learning" (R.5)*

Based on the findings of this study, most of the respondents stated that initially they were faced with a situation of anxiety, distress, and a state of wondering because of the new norms that were not a habit for them and forced them to keep accepting the situation.

Students' views on the learning methods that the translator uses online

*"Every lecturer who teaches uses different methods and methods. But there are a handful of lecturers who only rely on slides. In fact, the slides are also contained in the notes and can be read on their own. This gives students the impression to understand something learning more clearly" (R.1)*

*"Every speaker has different techniques based on their skills. Some utilize class time with question and answer sessions and in-class conversations, playing games, and quizzes. It really helps me to stay focused and pay attention" (R.2).*

*"The method used by the lecturer was a little boring. The lecturer only reads the slides and the students can do it themselves. This causes students to feel sleepy" (R.3).*

*"Tutors need to diversify their teaching methods during online learning so that students understand better and don't feel bored" (R.4).*

*"This new norm is not something that all students can fully adapt to. No matter how much the learner teaches, but in terms of the learner's understanding of what is learned, it is up to them or not." (R.5).*

The study findings show that the respondents expressed their views differently. The majority of respondents stated that speakers need to diversify their teaching techniques to enable students to receive clearly what is conveyed by their speakers, in fact, interesting techniques can attract students' attention to focus. Thus, it can increase their enthusiasm and motivation when they are in the classroom.

Online teaching and learning are of the same quality as classroom learning.

*"For me, it doesn't matter if it's in a classroom we will be clearer and understand what is conveyed by the speaker. In contrast to online, online is sometimes less clear and sometimes left behind topics due to internet and environmental disturbances" (R.1)*

*"In my opinion, it is not the same quality because the way the knowledge is delivered is not continuous, but the two-way conversation is very helpful for quality improvement during learning sessions" (R.2).*

*"Not because the atmosphere and the way of delivery delivered by the speaker is not the same" (R.3)*

*"No, it's. Not at all the same. Because in the classroom students and teachers meet each other and at that time students will be more focused on learning compared to online." (R.4)*



Based on the above responses, it shows that students agree that the quality of online teaching and learning in comparison to the classroom method is not the same. They stated that the way of delivery is different and so are the conditions and atmosphere.

Online teaching and learning can be substituted for classroom learning.

"For me, it is not appropriate because I cannot give a good commitment" (R.1).

"For me yes, because every teaching can still be learned anywhere and in any situation." (R.2).

"It can be because the instructor can record teaching videos for students to watch. If the lecturer cancels the class, the lecturer can use other mediums such as quizzes, topic-related games, projects, and so on even if the lecturer runs the class" (R.3).

"Not allowed, because the conditions and atmosphere in the classroom are different when compared to online. So, the focus of the students should be unfocused if it is online" (R.4)

The results that have been found show that each student has different views and acceptance characteristics. Some students stated that online teaching and learning can replace the in-classroom method, but some students stated that it cannot. This may be due to the way of adaptation and the experiences they face are different (Hussin et al., 2021).

### 3.3. Theme 3: Discussing Alternatives to Increase Student Motivation

Class Time Management by providing a structured schedule.

In Malaysia, teenagers aged 13 to 17 years old tend to be the ones dealing with the problem of trying to kill themselves. Academic pressure is said to be one of the causes of this problem. Therefore, time management is an important thing in living life as a student.

*"As a student, we naturally don't run away from assignments and projects that need to be done. So, time management can help to control those assignments healthily. Students will be more ready for other assignments that are given without facing excessive pressure."* (R.2).

*"In my view, good time management can help in increasing student motivation by dividing study time with other things in a balanced way"* (R.3).

*"Good time management is very important to increase motivation when studying because, with good time management, students will be able to prepare all assignments given according to the right time. This will be able to motivate me to follow all the timetables that have been made to ensure that I will be able to continue to make it my target to succeed until the end line when studying."* (R.4).

*"Students need to make a careful learning schedule to divide the time well so that students are not burdened, instead it helps students to be more motivated."* (R.5).

Overall, students stated that time management is important so that all matters of responsibility can be organized and balanced, especially in preparing assignments given by instructors. Good time management can prevent students from stress and pressure even with the existence of a schedule can move a person more motivated to achieve the goal until the end. Life as a student is inseparable from the assignments given by the supervisor in addition to the work of the union. Students who wisely manage time can reduce the pressure face while studying (An & Lai, 2022).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

All in all, this study examines students' willingness, and perceptions of online teaching and learning process and discusses alternatives to increase students' motivation. Online method is one alternative that can be implemented to help educators to continue implementing the teaching and learning process during this COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, this study found that students who have a good willingness for "online teaching and learning" have been provided better stimulation as the pandemic prolonged. However, this method is still inseparable from the limitations and constraints including student focus issues, weak interactions, student attendance issues, network problems, and device availability. Despite all these constraints, online teaching and learning are still perceived as beneficial to the students because it motivates them to become more communicative, collaborative, creative, and critical thinkers; thus, they are willing to adapt to this new norm. As for educators and teachers, the online method certainly requires them to be more technologically advanced to smooth the process of sharing knowledge more effectively.

#### 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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