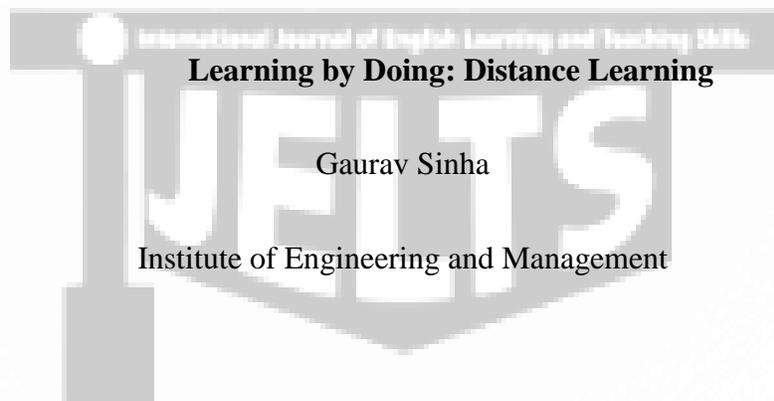


Running Head: DISTANCE LEARNING

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### **Abstract**

The physical classroom learning nowadays is no longer applicable for the current younger generations. 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 seen 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.

### Introduction

**Distance education** or **distance learning** is the education of students who may not always be physically present at a school. Traditionally, this usually involved **correspondence courses** wherein the student corresponded with the school via post. Today, it involves **online education**. A distance learning program can be completely distance learning, or a combination of distance learning and traditional classroom instruction (called hybrid or blended). Massive open online course (MOOCs), offering large-scale interactive participation and open access through the World Wide Web or other network technologies, are recent educational modes in distance education. A number of other terms (distributed learning, e-learning, m-learning, online learning, virtual classroom etc.) are used roughly synonymously with distance education.

### HISTORY

One of the earliest attempts was advertised in 1728. This was in the Boston Gazette for "Caleb Philips, Teacher of the new method of Short Hand", who sought students who wanted to learn through weekly mailed lessons. The first distance education course in the modern sense was provided by Sir Isaac Pitman in the 1840s, who taught a system of shorthand by mailing texts transcribed into shorthand on postcards and receiving transcriptions from his students in return for correction. The element of student feedback was a crucial innovation of Pitman's system. This scheme was made possible by the introduction of uniform postage rates across England in 1840. This early beginning proved extremely successful, and the Phonographic Correspondence Society was founded three years later to establish these courses on a more formal basis. The Society paved the way for the later formation of Sir Isaac Pitman Colleges across the country. The first correspondence school in the United States was the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, which was founded in 1873. Founded in 1894, Wolsey Hall, Oxford was the first distance learning college in the UK.

## **OPEN UNIVERSITY**

The Open University in the United Kingdom was founded by the-then government led by Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, based on the vision of Michael Young. Planning commenced in 1965 under the Minister of State for Education, Jennie Lee, who established a model for the Open University (OU) as one of widening access to the highest standards of scholarship in higher education and set up a planning committee consisting of university vice-chancellors, educationalists, and television broadcasters, chaired by Sir Peter Venable. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Assistant Director of Engineering at the time, James Redmond, had obtained most of his qualifications at night school, and his natural enthusiasm for the project did much to overcome the technical difficulties of using television to broadcast teaching program.

The Open University revolution the scope of the correspondence program and helped to create a respectable learning alternative to the traditional form of education. It has been at the forefront of developing new technologies to improve the distance learning service as well as undertaking research in other disciplines. Walter Perry was appointed the OU's first vice-chancellor in January 1969, and its foundation secretary. The election of the new Conservative government under the leadership of Edward Heath, in 1970; led to budget cuts under Chancellor of the Exchequer Iain Macleod (who had earlier called the idea of an Open University "blithering nonsense"). However, the OU accepted its first 25,000 students in 1971, adopting a radical open admissions policy. At the time, the total student population of conventional universities in the United Kingdom was around 130,000.

### **2019–20 coronavirus pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the vast majority of schools worldwide. Many schools moved to online distance learning via platforms including Zoom, Google Classroom. Concerns arose over the impact of this transition on students without access to an internet-enabled device or a stable internet connection.

### **Benefits**

Distance learning can expand access to education and training for both general populace and businesses since its flexible scheduling structure lessens the effects of the many time-constraints imposed by personal responsibilities and commitments. Devolving some activities off-site alleviates institutional capacity constraints arising from the traditional demand on institutional buildings and infrastructure. Furthermore, there is the potential for increased access to more experts in the field and to other students from diverse geographical, social, cultural, economic, and experiential backgrounds .As the population at large becomes more involved in lifelong learning beyond the normal schooling age, institutions can benefit financially, and adult learning business courses may be particularly lucrative. Distance education programs can act as a catalyst for institutional innovation and are at least as effective as face-to-face learning programs, especially if the instructor is knowledgeable and skilled.

### **Criticism**

Barriers to effective distance education include obstacles such as domestic distractions and unreliable technology, as well as students' program costs, adequate contact with teachers and support services, and a need for more experience. Some students attempt to participate in distance education without proper training with the tools needed to be successful in the program. Students must be provided with training opportunities (if needed)

on each tool that is used throughout the program. The lack of advanced technology skills can lead to an unsuccessful experience. Schools have a responsibility to adopt a proactive policy for managing technology barriers. Time management skills and self-discipline in distance education is just as important as complete knowledge of the software and tools being used for learning. The results of a study of Washington state community college students showed that distance learning students tended to drop out more often than their traditional counterparts due to difficulties in language, time management, and study skills.

## CONCLUSION

The applications for Distance Learning are potentially limitless. Educators are finding that even subjects that seemed beyond its scope, such as surgery, are now being successfully taught in Distance Learning programs: even some aspects of medicine and surgery have proved to be subjects suitable for this form of education. The distance education work done by the Centre for Medical Education of the University of Dundee in Scotland testifies to this. (Holmberg, 1995: 14) Distance Learning is an education delivery system that has come of age. The technology now exists to provide an effective and efficient distance education delivery system that overcomes the barriers that prevent individuals from achieving all they can through education: The barriers of distance, time, educational resources, and cost are being overcome with the continued refinement of distance learning programs. What will higher education look like in the first decade of the twenty-first century?... The question is not whether a new higher education paradigm will develop but rather how fast it will occur. Although we cannot yet fully answer the question..., we can begin to see an outline of higher education that is easier to access, unconstrained by barriers of space and time, student centered.

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