

Chapter 6

Student and Educator Perspective on Unconventional Online Classes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to gain insights on students' and educators' perspectives of the current unconventional learning and teaching methods carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main data is sourced from BruCERT's online survey of 785 students and 664 educators conducted during the closing downs of educational institutes due to preventive measures imposed by the government of Brunei Darussalam. The result shows that 77.96% of students and 72.14% of educators preferred the conventional classes. The main reasons are due to their inability to acquire good internet connectivity and proper area and time management that best suits online classes. In addition to that, the respondents perceived that the aforementioned problems become the root cause of their low discipline, productivity, and motivation to conduct and attend such classes. This chapter would be beneficial as a guideline to synthesize better teaching and learning strategies in online settings in the future.

INTRODUCTION

In this unprecedented time of COVID-19 pandemic, developing countries such as Brunei Darussalam has to close down its public premises including educational institutes, mosques, restaurants and many others, in the effort to contain the virus outbreak within the community. With reportedly hundreds of cases of community spread in the South East Asia region within short period of time, "Social Distancing", "Movement Control Orders", "Lockdowns" are few of the many notions that are prominently heard

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of in countries that are affected by the pandemic. This newly imposed social restrictions by the governments has pressured their public and private sectors to adapt towards the “new normal” as well as to find alternative ways to stay operational and relevant without the need of being present in the workplaces.

In the domain of education, the students and educators (i.e., teachers, lecturers, tutors) from primary to tertiary levels finds utmost challenge to adapt to the new unprecedented learning and teaching environment via internet connectivity, thus giving rise to the notion, “learning from home” for the students and “teaching/working from home” for the educators (also refers to as “teachers”). This unconventional way of learning and teaching is quite unfamiliar to developing countries such as Brunei Darussalam as its educational system been accustomed to the traditional learning and teaching methods. The process of adapting to the “new normal” for the students and educators alike, are believed to be mediated by their familiarity towards the new learning and teaching environments (Wang et al., 2013), intrinsic motivations to interact with each other as well as the sets of standard guidelines imposed to facilitate the learning outcomes of the classes (Song & McNary, 2011)

Therefore, this study aims to explore general insights on students’ and teachers’ perspective of the unconventional online learning and teaching method conducted during this pandemic in Brunei Darussalam. The followings are the objectives of this research:

1. To investigate the learning methods that students and educators preferred during this pandemic;
2. To identify the challenges and its effects faced by the students and educators in participating and conducting online classes respectively;
3. To recommend better learning and teaching strategies that would aid the students and educators alike for online classes in the future.

The rest of the paper will be structured as follows: next section will cover on the literature reviews on the social restrictions during this pandemic, brief insights on the learning and teaching methods deployed in unconventional class as well as the new unfamiliar environment. Then, it will be followed by the methodology that is being deployed for this research. Then, next will be on the results and discussion section and lastly ended with conclusion, limitation and recommendation of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unconventional Learning and Teaching Method

Unconventional method in the context of class settings, refers to the type of classes that is unfamiliar and unheard of, as well as the type that has never been conducted in the past. Conventionally, traditional classes comprised of the teachers and the students physically present at the same location or place at a given dedicated of period of time (Odhaib, 2018). This traditional class setting is believed to allow for a better conducive learning environment as it enables interactions and communication via instant real-time feedbacks and discussions which in turn will initiate trusts between the students and teachers (Nazarenko, 2015; Sarraf et al., 2014). Given the social restrictions imposed during this time of pandemic, the traditional classes are needed to be conducted unconventionally, particularly in online setting, but still required to deliver the same level of knowledge dissemination as the conventional method.

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