A Preliminary Observation of Teacher Challenges in Implementing Home-based Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

In the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, education systems struggle to function and achieve their intended goals. Globally, all children are affected, though to varying degrees, based on various factors, including the country/region where they live, their age, family background, and whether they had access to certain substitute/alternative educational opportunities throughout the pandemic. Most educational institutes have shifted to online learning platforms to keep academic activities going. However, the questions about the preparedness, designing and effectiveness of e-learning are still not clearly understood, particularly for a developing country like Malaysia, where the technical constraints like suitability of devices and bandwidth availability pose a severe challenge. The teaching profession in our country is the critical pillar in shaping the future of exceptional human beings. Thus, teachers and facilitators are responsible for ensuring the transmission of transparent and high-quality knowledge to students of all levels. The Covid-19 worldwide visible crisis that has struck the world today has had a variety of effects on a country's economy, society, and politics, as well as the field of education. Although there are other challenges, it focuses on the experience of instructors in adopting Home-Based Learning (HBL) with literature sources and prior studies.

Keywords: Covid-19, education, home-based learning, online studies

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013 - 2025) requires that every student access education to attain their full potential in life. Education can occur in a classroom setting with the teacher or in a separate location without the teacher (N. M. Nasir & Mansor, 2021a). Teachers often provide education to the community face to face, and teachers should be present in the classroom educating their students. The fundamental objective of teacher reflection is the success of student learning through Home Based Teaching and Learning (HBL). Teachers, as facilitators, must ensure

that learning and teaching can take place without interruption using a centralized teaching technique, students, and learning materials (Chaiyo & Nokham, 2017).

In response to the challenges of a rapidly developing globe, education is becoming more modern (Pashby et al., 2020). The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has long established the notion of virtual learning, as evidenced by the launch of the Smart School concept in 1996 and the deconstruction of the School and Frog VLE sites in 2006 (Ahmad et al., 2016). When the COVID-19 viral outbreak occurred in late 2019, the community established and accepted concepts and methods for this learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has hastened society's acceptance of virtual learning, which was initially supposed to take longer to adapt (Greenberg et al., 2021). According to the Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025), the first shift is to provide equal access to international level education, and the sixth shift is to leverage communication and information technology (ICT) to improve learning quality in Malaysia. The MOE has launched the Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa) in support of that effort. It is an educational platform that aims to assist and facilitate teachers in delivering lessons by providing links to Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Digital Textbooks, EduwebTV, CikguTube, a learning app, and gamification app links that can assist home-based learning (Kirin et al., 2021). In this endeavour, the MOE has also arranged several courses to give instructors skills to use digital learning platforms and create several learning resources to implement HBL. Among these are Education TV and ASTRO TV instructor, which can be accessed via the RTM Okey channel. Online learning has introduced students to a wide range of apps and cutting-edge technology, all of which have various teaching and learning benefits.

Leaders must take the initiative to effect change in the educational system to fulfil the school's goals (Samjis & Alias, 2020). Change initiatives must be implemented under the academic development of the moment. Principals who serve as instructional leaders in schools must develop strategic and comprehensive strategies to increase student involvement in the classroom online to increase student accomplishment. According to Samjis & Alias (2020), principals and headmasters play a significant role in enhancing and improving student achievement in teaching and learning.

HBL is an alternative to KPM for assisting instructors in implementing new teaching norms. Furthermore, when all citizens must 'sit at home,' the government has advised it as a necessary move to level the curve and stop the spread of disease (Saidin & Husnin, 2021). As a result, implemented HBL can be carried out at home, at a community center, or in any other appropriate way and comply with the established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). According to the HBL rules and guidance, there are three online approaches: internet connection, device use, and real-time learning via DELIMa programs such as Google Meet, Zoom, e-gamification, video, audio clips, eBooks, video recordings (Lubis et al., 2021). Teachers are more imaginative and optimistic in their approach to diversifying these HBL strategies. More teacher professionalism is contextualized with the help of administrators and an interaction network with the District Education Office (Penjabat Pendidikan Daerah, PPD) and State Education Office (Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri, JPN). While the ministry made several proactive initiatives, such as forming HBL, to allow teaching and learning to continue, it is viewed as a complete and systematic process, rather than focusing solely on infrastructure and modality factors (Kirin et al.,

2021). In 2020, the Prime Minister took proactive actions to realign the Primary and Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR and KSSM) to adapt to unpredictable learning settings during the Movement Control Command (MCO) and targeted control orders (Mahad et al., 2021). However, the reality of HBL implementation is not so straightforward.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers are one of the most crucial elements of a school system. Teachers' knowledge and experience will impact how they deliver lessons and use pedagogies in their instructional teaching and learning process (Pusparini et al., 2017). Integrating technology into instructional materials can improve the teaching and learning process (Ashiyan & Salehi, 2016). To successfully integrate ICT into the teaching and learning process, teachers must first acquire the knowledge and abilities of technology integration (Ghavifekr et al., 2016). Moreover, teachers are recommended to integrate appropriate technology into the teaching and learning processes for the best learning outcomes (Kirin et al., 2021).

Teachers are urged to understand the clear benefits of technology for education continuation during a pandemic (Mohamad, 2021). Hence, teachers play an essential role in the success of education continuation, and the use of technology is explicitly specified in the 'Guidelines for Teaching and Learning During MCO' (Mohamad, 2021). Teachers need to use effective teaching methods to accomplish their lesson objectives in the current environment. However, they also need to consider other external aspects that can help the success of online education (N. M. Nasir & Mansor, 2021a). According to Mohamad (2021), different online teaching and learning phases require various competencies.

Online teaching during COVID-19 school closure

The COVID-19 pandemic condition has created new obstacles for teachers, forcing them to adjust to online instruction. Until March 2020, the usual educational environment was defined by pupils succeeding in classrooms according to their schedules and teachers covering the conventional material of their disciplines, frequently through formal teaching (Tamin & Mohamad, 2020). Students were expected to listen to their teachers, work independently or in groups, and re-create knowledge for evaluations (Countryman, 2017). The school lockout presented a completely new situation to teachers, kids, and parents (N. M. Nasir & Mansor, 2021b). Continued teaching and learning could only be accomplished through different modes of education. Teachers were required to transition to online instruction, which required them to utilize various digital tools and resources to address challenges and adopt novel teaching and learning strategies (Greenberg et al., 2021). Apart from instructional aims, teachers were supposed to keep in touch with their pupils to ensure the social cohesion of their learning groups.

ICT transformation process in educational systems

COVID-19 made an unexpected and rapid transition to online teaching as part of the educational systems' more extensive ICT transformation process (Greenberg et al., 2021). Education has recently become more digitally oriented. According to Nasir & Zakaria (2017), the school curriculum should be integrated with ICT extensively to close the 'gap' between students' conventional learning and skills and information technology. Students should be given opportunities to use advanced technological tools.

According to Mahad et. al (2021), the use of ICT in elementary and secondary schools has been increasingly common in recent decades, and evidence suggests that digital technology may allow new opportunities for teaching and learning. Despite its potential impact on teaching and learning, the presence of computer technology hardware does not necessarily lead to the advancement of student learning (Simin & Sani, 2015). Teachers and students must be encouraged and supported in their digital tools, despite technological infrastructure.

The ability of a teacher

Teachers' content knowledge (CK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) are the most commonly used classifications in the cognitive field (Guerriero 2017). Teaching requires teachers to draw on a wide range of professional knowledge and weave it together into a coherent set of understandings and skills (Pusparini et al., 2017). As a reaction to the growing importance of ICT transformation in educational systems, these teacher knowledge categories have been expanded to include the knowledge needed to use ICT in teaching and learning at school successfully.

Confidence in online teaching is essential in the COVID-19 environment, as well as knowledge and skills. Teachers' self-efficacy is one of the most important constructs in teacher competency in the affective-motivational area (Tamin & Mohamad, 2020). Hsia (2016), defines teachers' self-efficacy as the confidence teachers have in their skills to perform well under pressure. Teachers' willingness to take action, investment of effort, and endurance in the face of potential problems can influence how much they believe in their efficacy (Jang, 2018). When schools are closed due to COVID-19 school closures, teachers' self-efficacy is a critical resource.

CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT HOME

Technology's Drawbacks

The directions in ensuring that effective learning, curriculum delivery based on the Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Pentaksiran (DSKP), two-way teacher-student interaction, and support from parents, administrators, and leaders will ensure effective learning (Fadzly & Izab, 2011). This HBL can be

accomplished by various methods produced by the current and must consider the student's resources. According to Saidin & Husnin (2021), small mobile phone screens are also a challenge because what teachers present during online learning using Google Meet or Zoom meetings where students do not participate actively. Students' readiness to take online lessons is determined by their device, data plan, and self-motivation (Mohamad, 2021).

Other difficulties arise when students or parents lack ICT abilities to access DELIMa, Zoom, Google Meet, and various HBL tools. As a result, the instructor must devote more time to educating students on using ICT if the student fails to describe the steps for using ICT (Tsihouridis et al., 2018). Students' motivation to implement HBL will dwindle. Low coverage of internet access in some areas where students live poses a challenge to teachers (KPM, 2014). It does not allow the pupil to follow the HBL internally online while pupils complete with all equipment and internet access but face challenges to students 'lazy attitudes and lack of motivation cause students to be reluctant to engage in HBL (Mahad et al., 2021). According to the Khazanah Research Institute (KRI) study report 'Covid-19 and Unequal Learning,' as many as 37% of children have device equipment such as laptops and tablets that can be used during HBL implementation. In contrast, only 6–9% of children have their laptop devices. Lack of devices, inadequate equipment, and unstable internet access significantly impact the HBL process to be applied effectively (Noreen & Ruslin, 2021).

According to Namiha & Suziyani (2019), several countries have taken proactive measures to deliver gadgets to classrooms and improve access to the Internet. While in Finland and some states in China & the United States, students are permitted to borrow digital devices from the school to facilitate access to online learning platforms(Mansor et al., 2021). According to a study conducted by Peng & Daud (2016), previous studies have shown that most developing nations experience similar challenges in introducing ICT in schools. Other frequently raised difficulties include deficiencies and limitations in physical infrastructure, support, and maintenance, as is the situation in India, Namibia, and Bangladesh (Ali & Aliyar, 2012).

Administrators, Teachers, Students, and Parents Face Difficulties

On a talk show, Special Teacher's Day with the Senior Minister of Education, Malaysian Education Minister Dr. Radzi Jidin (2021), a sufficiently comprehensive policy is needed to strengthen the training preparatory competency structure. Teachers must have the opportunity to learn and improve their digital knowledge and abilities to deliver the knowledge they have accumulated effectively. According to Mohamad (2021), around 80%of instructors in schools don't have a solid grasp of the teaching and learning that are available to them. There are additional obstacles for educators to improve their knowledge and skills with diverse teaching methods. As a result of COVID-19 spreading throughout the country, teachers must now work from home, leading their routines and work cultures to shift during the Order Movement Control (MCO) period (Rahayu et al. 2020). A teacher's job includes more than just teaching; they also need to develop their ICT skills and expertise. Several online systems, like Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas, and Blackboard, can help teachers enhance their potential (Tamin & Mohamad, 2020).

Parents of children in Selangor's primary and secondary schools have complained about the inconsistency of teachers in HBL lessons, where they regularly swap social media platforms and teaching mediums in preparation for teachers to perform all teaching online (Tamilmullai & Salini, 2021). Aside from that, the instructional materials used are insufficient to meet the demands of students and teachers who do not have access to HBL. According to a father with children ages six, eight and ten, the HBL does not just require strict discipline from pupils but also emphasizes the importance of parents' involvement in ensuring that their children do not drop out of school (Atika, 2021).

Providing proper devices and internet connections for use in the education of young children can be a difficult task for parents. However, it is essential to fulfill this requirement to ensure that the education process is uninterrupted from one generation to the next. Additionally, parents should supervise their children when they are learning via HBL. For parents to enhance their skills with technology, it is not necessary to get their children involved. According to the research conducted by Mohamad (2021), the parenting factors that present a challenge include those of providing goods or facilities, knowledge, skills, and managing the family. Awang (2020) said that while opportunities offered by MCO have provided them with time and space to be together, they also provide time and space for them to give to children. This has built a new relationship between instructors and parents, which is more vital than previously. A new standard is accepted and absorbed by parents after their children are educated.

Before Covid-19 pandemic, student involvement in teaching and learning (pengajaran dan pembelajaran-PdP) activities was typically conducted through observations in the classroom (Rahman et. al, 2014). According to Nailul (2016), students' frequency of asking questions, answering instructor inquiries, sharing opinions in groups, delivering presentations, and assisting a friend with problems are the parameters for determining their level of questioning aptitude. However, although time and data elements cannot be denied entirely, implementing HBL negatively prevents pupils from interacting with each other, apart from the teacher (Mahad et al., 2021). In addition, they are dealing with numerous other difficulties when using their time on HBL to aid their families (Mohamad, 2021). Many students had to take care of their sick family members and went to the hospital with them.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Based on other research findings, it can be concluded that teachers' challenges of online learning may be split into three categories in the epidemic era such as assisting with facilitation, the learning process, and the learning environment itself. Moreover, teachers miss out on their students' meaningful relationships, and they are not able to regulate students' affective elements, which are crucial to the teaching and learning process. In online school contexts, Countryman (2017) discovered that social presence is a predictor of online school retention and final accomplishment. Emotional responses and speech, open communication with others during the classes, and coherent communicative responses are all part of social presence, which is crucial to promote the social and interpersonal communication required for online teaching and learning (Ashiyan & Salehi, 2016).

Students, material, and technology are interacting via cognitive, emotional and administrative systems throughout the delivery of online classes (Kassim & Zakaria, 2015). It is also backed up by Kennedy and Archambault (2012), who claim that online learning is not the best learning approach. In contrast, according to a study by Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2005), cited in Yang et al. (2016), social contact and interaction are essential for students to feel connected and form interpersonal relationships; however, interaction alone does not guarantee student participation in the cognitive investigation process, nor does it ensure that cognitive presence is formed automatically.

According to several research studies, lack of access to facilities (especially home access) is another dynamic barrier that stops teachers from implementing current technology into education (Mohamad, 2021). Supporting facilitation, such as an internet connection, is the most critical aspect of completing online learning. If teachers or students are not able to access any internet connection, the online learning activities would fail. According to Abdullah (2014), Teachers must examine their involvement in delivering their lessons rather than face-to-face experiences in these challenging times. Schools are critical in this approach because they provide education and courses for teachers to develop remote learning skills and information (Samjis & Alias, 2020).

The purpose of the National Education Philosophy (FPK) is to ensure that all students receive an education that continuously develops their potential as a pupil in parallel with the six student ambitions outlined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2017). This goal ensures that all students develop knowledge, critical thinking skills, leadership abilities, bilingual abilities, ethics and spirituality, and a sense of national identity. The goals will be accomplished when all stakeholders demonstrate dedication to the education system, whether in-person or online. Ineffective teaching implementation and improvement must be addressed immediately by all partners, not just one. The administrator's role becomes critical in developing the strategy and addressing the issues faced by instructors, students, and parents.

As the backbone of the educational system, teachers should always be prepared to enhance their competence and the college's professionalism (Aziah & Taufik, 2016). Teachers must always find ways to improve themselves and their classroom practices to keep up with technology advancements and current professional demands (Mokhtar & Abu Karim, 2021). Teachers must adapt to the changes that are occurring. All teachers' technological abilities and knowledge and their approach tactics are critical (Lin et al., 2018). Teachers who use creative strategies and create competent learning methods and procedures will significantly impact students' comprehension during the learning process ("Benefits and Challenges of Adopting Google Classroom in Malaysian University: Educators' Perspectives," 2021).

Additionally, motivation among students, instructors, and parents must be increased to implement HBL to go well. Pupils must be continually reminded and motivated and have the spirit to participate in HBL to maintain the momentum to continue learning. Teachers have a critical role in ensuring that this HBL is enforced.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the obstacles faced by teachers when teaching and learning at home are very severe, as is their ability to adapt to the use of technology. Teachers must arm themselves with current knowledge. Teachers must invest time and money in developing their competencies and self-skills because of technological advancements with numerous applications. Teachers' desire and enthusiasm must be maintained to continue educating pupils while also attempting to overcome obstacles or limits encountered while implementing teaching and learning or HBL. To summarise, this HBL dilemma cannot be solved unilaterally, it requires the cooperation of all stakeholders. Teachers, parents, and students all contribute their own responsibility to ensuring that HBL is appropriately implemented and directly addresses the ambitions outlined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025).

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