

E-learning Readiness during the School Suspension Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of English language Teachers in Sabah, Malaysia

Hu Ke^{1,2}, Asmaa AlSaqqaf^{3*}

^{1,3}*Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; kingsleywuwu@gmail.com, asma3030@ums.edu.my*

²*School of International Business, Hunan University of Information Technology, China*

**correspondance author*

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Abstract

The quick spread of COVID-19 across the world has badly affected all aspects of human life, especially the educational sector. In Malaysia, all the educational institutions were closed to comply with the lockdown promulgated by the Malaysian government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Yet, the teaching and learning process had to be continued during this period, and that was carried out through a full resort to e-learning. This study investigates the level of readiness among secondary school English language teachers to utilize e-learning in teaching during the lockdown in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Psychological readiness, technological skills readiness, and content readiness, adopted from Chapnick's (2000) readiness model, were the main dimensions to investigate. A total of 83 online cross-sectional surveys were received and analyzed using descriptive analysis. The construct validity of the measuring items was performed by the exploratory factor analysis, and the instrument reliability was obtained at an acceptable level. Results showed that although the secondary school English language teachers in Kota Kinabalu were technologically ready to use e-learning in teaching, they had unsatisfactory readiness levels for psychological, content, human resource, and equipment readiness. Importantly, the current research stresses the need to develop an up-to-date survey that technically and comprehensively addresses the various aspects of the advanced technological skills that should be mastered by teachers and educators in this era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0). Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are also highlighted.

Keywords: COVID-19, e-learning, e-learning readiness, english language teachers, Sabah, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Currently, all nations across the world, including Malaysia, have been suffering from a global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic since its emergence in 2020. As a result, massive gatherings have been prohibited with a temporary closure of all educational institutions to reduce any potential risk of infections. Therefore, to deal with the problem of school suspension, the educational sectors had no option but to fully utilize e-learning in the teaching and learning process during the lockdown.

E-learning has been promoted by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MoE), where the importance of integrating e-learning in the teaching and learning process is clearly stated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013- 2025). For this, MoE has invested plenty of efforts to reinforce schoolteachers to integrate e-learning into teaching, especially to encourage English language teachers to teach the English subject utilizing e-learning. However, unsatisfactory outcomes have been obtained (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013), as several schoolteachers are unwilling to implement e-learning effectively in teaching as their readiness to use e-learning is perceived as low while the integration of e-learning in teaching has been highly emphasized by MoE and required by the fourth industrial revolution (IR 4.0) (Noh et al. 2019). Thus, a critical and serious concern is arising as to the level of e-learning readiness among teachers.

Following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, several studies dealing with different academic areas related to the theme of COVID-19 have been conducted in a short period. However, many of these studies are not research-based articles and are not related to the field of education (e.g., Dyer & Harris, 2020). On the other hand, research focusing on education was concerned only with tertiary education (e.g., Toquero, 2020). Additionally, some of the research papers focused on the issues related to the students during the lockdown (e.g., Mukhopadhyay & Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Bowen, 2020; Sintema, 2020). Thus, there is hardly any research dealing with English teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Therefore, this current research attempts to fill in the gap identified in the relevant literature.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Based on the discussion above, the main research objective of this paper is to identify the level of readiness to utilize e-learning by secondary school English language teachers during the school suspension caused by COVID-19 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This research-based study tries to provide the concerned educational authorities and stakeholders with an insight into the problems of utilizing e-learning in teaching during a crisis such as a pandemic, especially among secondary school English language teachers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Hopefully, this will help policymakers rethink the gap between the ideal level and practical level in terms of whether secondary-school English language teachers are truly ready to use e-learning in teaching, particularly when there is no choice but to use e-learning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CHAPNICK'S READINESS MODEL

Chapnick's readiness model was proposed by Chapnick (2000) to assess the readiness towards the use of e-learning within an institution or organization. Therefore, Chapnick's readiness model was adopted by the current study as the theoretical framework to investigate the secondary school English language teachers' e-learning readiness level during the lockdown. Chapnick (2000) defines eight constructs in the model and suggests that a varied combination of the constructs can be utilized for practical use. The eight constructs are displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The eight constructs proposed by Chapnick's readiness model

Construct	Definition
Psychological readiness	Focuses on an individual's thoughts as it is influential for users on whether they are willing to take the initiative to utilize e-learning.
Sociological readiness	The relationship between end-users where the e-learning implementation is deployed.
Environment readiness	The force impacting on end-users from both inside and outside the organization.
Human resource readiness	The accessibility and feasibility of human support systems such as management aspect.
Financial readiness	Financial investments of e-learning implementation.
Technological skills readiness	Required skills and ability to solve technical matters and operate e-learning devices.
Equipment readiness	The ownership, equipment allocation, and supportive resources for e-learning implementation.
Content readiness	The relevance of the content is delivered by e-learning form.

In this study, sociological readiness, environment readiness, and financial readiness were excluded, whereas only psychological readiness (PR), technological skills readiness (TSR), human resource readiness (HRR), equipment readiness (ER), content readiness (CR) were retained in the study as they were particularly suited to the research context during the school suspension taking place nationwide. Therefore, the theoretical framework of the study was redrawn based on Chapnick's readiness model and according to the actual needs of the study.

METHODOLOGY

This section illustrates the methodology used in the study including the research approach, the involvement of participants, instruments, as well as data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Approach

A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design is adopted by the current research. The survey was randomly distributed to the respondents through an online survey platform empowered by Google Form during the suspension of schools after the lockdown implemented by the government.

Participants

A total of 83 secondary school English teachers from different secondary schools located in Kota Kinabalu district, Sabah, responded to the online survey. They were randomly sampled based on the list of English language teachers given by the Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Kota Kinabalu (PPDKK) (Education Department of Kota Kinabalu District). They are all in-service teachers teaching English subjects in Kota Kinabalu.

Instruments

Questionnaire

The use of a five-point Likert scale (from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree) questionnaire was designed in two parts. Part A was employed to collect the data for the demographics of participants (e.g., gender, age, race, teaching experience, etc.), and Part B presented the items for the conduct of e-learning readiness among participants, which was adapted by Mutiaradevi (2009), Agarwal and Prasad (1998), and Terzis and Economides (2011). Furthermore, the questionnaire was translated into both English language and Bahasa Malaysia to ensure that the respondents would give their responses as accurately as possible. A framework suggested by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) was employed for translation. The method of back translation was used in the study, where the initial translation was done by two experienced Bahasa Malaysia teachers from secondary education who worked collaboratively in translating the English version to the Bahasa Malaysia version. After that, an expert in Bahasa Malaysia was involved in checking the equivalence of both versions of the questionnaire to ensure the completion of the back-translation method. Finally, it was confirmed that both translations were consistent with each other, and they could be used for the actual study. On the other hand, the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire used in this research had been established before the online administration of the questionnaire to the respondents.

Determination of E-Learning Readiness Score (ELR)

The mean scores of e-learning readiness for every construct were calculated based on Aydın and Tasci (2005) measurement of the E-Learning Readiness score (ELR) as shown in Figure 1 below.

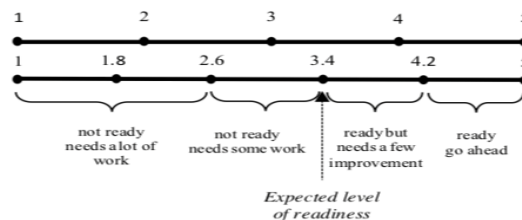


Figure 1: Aydın & Tasci's measurement scale of the E-Learning Readiness Index

As displayed in Figure 1, the level of e-learning readiness has been divided into four degrees based on the mean score for each construct of e-learning readiness; 1-2.6 (not ready needs a lot of work), 2.61-3.4 (not ready needs some work), and 3.41-4.2 (readiness but needs a few improvements), as well as 4.21-5 (ready go ahead). Thus, an average of 3.41 and above is the minimum index of the expected level of readiness (Aydın & Tasci, 2005).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire was randomly forwarded to secondary school English language teachers in Kota Kinabalu. 83 responses were received, and the collected data were processed using a descriptive statistical analysis in SPSS version 26 to answer the research question proposed in the study: *What is the level of readiness to use e-learning by secondary school English language teachers during the school suspension caused by COVID-19 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah?*

RESULTS

In the section, the raw data have been analyzed using SPSS version 26 so that the data can bring out more meaningful interpretations from the results shown.

Demographics

Table 2 below provides information on respondents' demographics in terms of gender, age, race, the length of teaching English, and the length of using computers in teaching English. A total of 66 respondents are females (79.5 %) while 17 respondents are males (20.5%). Regarding age, only four respondents are aged between 20 and 30 years old (4.8%), followed by 38.6% of respondents ranging between 31-40 years old (n=32), and most of the respondents are under 41 years old and above with 56.6 % (n=47). Moreover, 53 respondents are Bumiputera (indigenous people of the land) (63.9%), followed by 23 Chinese respondents (30.1%) and five respondents are Indian (6.0%). Based on their experience of teaching English, a total of seven respondents has one to five years of teaching experience (8.4%), 14 (16.9%) are between the length of 6 to 10 years, 23 respondents are under 11 to 15 years, (27.7%), and 39 (47%) of respondents are more than 16 years of teaching experience.

Lastly, when it comes to their length of using the computer in teaching English, more than half of the respondents (53%) have at least seven years of using the computer in teaching English (n=44), and 13 respondents show that they have 5-6 years (15.7%), 17 respondents (20.5%) have got three to four years, and only nine (10.8%) respondents have chosen Option 1 representing two years of using the computer in teaching English.

Table 2: Profile of the respondents' demographics

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	66	79.5%
Male	17	20.5%
Total	83	100%
Age		
20-30 years old	4	4.8%
31-40 years old	32	38.6%
41 years old and above	47	56.6%
Total	83	100%
Race		
Bumiputera	53	63.9%
Chinese	25	30.1%
India	5	6.0%
Total	83	100%
The length of teaching English		
1-5 years	7	8.4%
6-10 years	14	16.9%
11-15 years	23	27.7%
16 years and above	39	47.0%
Total	83	100%
The length of using the computer in teaching English		
1-2 years	9	10.8%
3-4 years	17	20.5%
5-6 years	13	15.7%
7 years and above	44	53%
Total	83	100%

Instrument Reliability Test

The reliability analysis for the items employed in the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The minimum accepted value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 (Taber, 2018). As Table 4 illustrates, an overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.878 was reported for all items used in the study, which means that the questionnaire is highly reliable. Additionally, a further reliability test was performed to examine Cronbach's alpha value of the e-learning readiness constructs involved in the current study. Results showed that all constructs are highly reliable with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.774 and 0.866. Thus, the instrument is considered reliable to be implemented (Hu et al., 2020).

Table 4: Results of the reliability test

E-learning Readiness Constructs	Number of Items	Reliability	Category
Psychological readiness	3	0.863	Reliable
Technological skills readiness	4	0.824	Reliable
Content readiness	3	0.774	Reliable
Human resource readiness	4	0.845	Reliable
Equipment readiness	7	0.866	Reliable
Overall e-learning readiness	21	0.878	Reliable

Level of Secondary School English Teachers' E-Learning Readiness

Based on the summary of the psychological readiness construct shown in Table 5 below, the psychological readiness of secondary school English language teachers during the school suspension was indicated as *not ready* since it did not meet the minimum expected level of e-learning readiness ($3.257 < 3.41$). By looking at the measuring items one by one, only Item 3 of the psychological construct reached the expected level of readiness except Items 1 and 2 describing English language teachers' initiative of using e-learning were found below the expected level of readiness.

Table 5: Descriptive analysis of respondents' psychological readiness

No.	Psychological Readiness (Overall mean=3.257, n=83)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I would be more comfortable using e-learning in teaching English if I were familiar with e-learning.	3.78	0.699
2	Compared to my colleagues, I am usually the first to try out new information technologies in teaching English.	3.01	0.836
3	I like to experiment with new information technologies in teaching English.	3.33	0.726
4	If I hear about a new ICT tool that could improve my English lesson, I would look for ways to experiment with it.	3.43	0.726
5	The overall mean of psychological readiness	3.257	0.763
	Aydin & Tasci's measurement scale of the E-Learning Readiness Index		Less than 3.41 Not ready and needs some work

On the other hand, Table 6 illustrated that the respondents' technological skills readiness was found generally *ready, but it needs a few improvements* with a mean score of 4.021. It is evident to indicate that the respondents had essential skills to manipulate a computer. Surprisingly, however, Item 3 about the technological skills construct scored a mean value of 3.59 when compared with the other 3 items regarding the technological skills.

Table 6: Descriptive analysis of respondents’ technological skills readiness

No.	Technological Skills Readiness (Overall mean= 4.021, n=83)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I have the basic skills to operate a computer (e.g., keyboarding, etc.).	4.35	0.651
2	I am good at using Microsoft programs (e.g., Word, etc.) in teaching English.	4.01	0.648
3	I know how to install any software on my computer to support my teaching of English.	3.59	0.806
4	I have the basic skills to use search engines (e.g., Google, etc.) to find the needed materials and information on the English subject.	4.13	0.629
The overall mean of technological skills readiness		4.021	0.684
Aydin & Tasci’s measurement scale of the E-Learning Readiness Index		Greater than 3.41 Ready but needs a few improvements	

Concerning the respondents' content readiness, an average of 3.378 was obtained (see Table 7 below) from respondents, which means that their content readiness is categorized as not ready. However, they admitted that e-learning is useful for their teaching profession, which indicates that they are still torn between the appropriateness and subsequent effects of the content delivered by e-learning while conducting lessons.

Table 7: Descriptive analysis of respondents’ content readiness

No.	Content Readiness (Overall mean= 3.378, n=83)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Using e-learning is relative to my English syllabus.	3.34	0.569
2	I will become more comfortable using e-learning in teaching English if I were familiar with e-learning.	3.58	0.607
3	Teaching English through e-learning is “understandable and clear” to my students.	3.22	0.585
The overall mean of content readiness		3.378	0.587
Aydin & Tasci’s measurement scale of the E-Learning Readiness Index		Less than 3.41 Not ready and needs some work	

As for the human resource readiness of respondents in Table 8, the results indicated that the mean value is 3.188, which fell into the category of not ready and needs some work for improving human resource readiness. However, respondents reached an arrangement that their schools come to welcome and encourage the teachers to employ e-learning in the process of teaching and learning English, but the values for both statements (HRR1 and HRR2) have just slightly surpassed the minimal expected level of 3.41 which remained low.

Table 8: Descriptive analysis of respondents' human resource readiness

No.	Human Resource Readiness (Overall mean= 3.188, n=83)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	My school has a vision on the use of e-learning.	3.42	0.942
2	My school principal encourages me to use the e-learning facilities at my school or after office hours.	3.42	0.735
3	My school has experienced human resources to organize and evaluate training and to help other teachers with career development.	3.04	0.818
4	My school's human resource department is able to design Web pages for e-learning.	2.87	0.955
The overall mean of human resource readiness		3.188	0.863
Aydin & Tasci's measurement scale of the E-Leaning Readiness Index		Less than 3.41 Not ready and needs some work	

As the results indicated in Table 9, the respondents were not ready in terms of their as its overall mean value of 2.874, which was less than the expected level of readiness of 3.41. Thus, it is so distant from equipment readiness from reaching the expected level of readiness. Therefore, some necessary remedial measures must be provided to update the equipment from time to time.

Table 9: Descriptive analysis of respondents' equipment readiness

No.	Equipment Readiness (Overall mean= 2.874, n=83)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I have access to a computer at my school.	3.72	1.075
2	I have access to a fairly new computer at my school (e.g., enough RAM, good speakers, fast processor) for preparing for my English subject.	2.99	1.087
3	I have access to a computer at my school with adequate software (e.g., Microsoft Programs).	3.12	1.014
4	My school is using technology to run its daily operation	3.18	0.890
5	The Internet connectivity at my school is adequate to support my teaching of English via the use of e-learning.	2.87	1.085
6	The number of computers at my school is sufficient for teachers to use.	2.15	1.084
7	LCD projectors at my school are enough to be used for every class.	2.10	1.161
The overall mean of equipment readiness		2.874	0.863
Aydin & Tasci's measurement scale of the E-Leaning Readiness Index		Less than 3.41 Not ready and needs some work	

Thus, the level of readiness to integrate e-learning in teaching among secondary school English language teachers during the school suspension in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, has been generally found not ready and needs some work (overall mean = 3.344, < 3.41). However, only technological skills readiness exceeded the expected readiness level of e-learning among sub-constructs of e-learning readiness (4.021>3.41). Unfortunately, psychological readiness, content readiness, human resource

readiness, and equipment readiness were all below the expected readiness level for e-learning (3.257, 3.378, 3.188, and 2.874 respectively).

Table 10: Descriptive analysis of respondents' overall e-learning readiness

E-learning Readiness Constructs	Number of Items	Overall Mean Values	Results
Psychological readiness	3	3.257	Not ready needs some work
Technological skills readiness	4	4.021	Ready but needs a few improvements
Content readiness	3	3.378	Not ready needs some work
Human resource readiness	4	3.188	Not ready needs some work
Equipment readiness	7	2.874	Not ready needs some work
Overall e-learning readiness	21	3.344	Not ready needs some work

DISCUSSION

Psychological Readiness

Secondary school English language teachers' psychological readiness is vital to be addressed as it is related to one's mental preparedness toward the use of e-learning. Five items were used to measure respondents' psychological readiness during the school suspension caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Results show that English language teachers of Kota Kinabalu secondary schools are not psychologically ready for e-learning as the overall mean value of their psychological readiness is 3.257 (see Table 10). These results are in line with the studies of Noh et al. (2019), Alzu'bi (2018), and Al-Furaydi (2013) who reported that teachers who utilize technology confidently would be more willing to integrate e-learning in classes when compared to those whose confidence is low. Besides, lacking the initiative to teach students by utilizing e-learning would probably fail to deploy e-learning in real settings.

One of the justifications for this result could be attributed to COVID-19 which has swept the world without full preparation; where schools in Kota Kinabalu were closed at once to avoid potential risks of affected cases caused by mass gatherings. English language teachers were not aware that the unforeseen outbreak would affect the teaching activities badly. Besides, they were required to continue teaching students through e-learning with newly introduced platforms or software to supplement the teaching of English during this unexpected situation. These platforms or software are quite unfamiliar to the teachers since they lack adequate exposure to using various e-learning technologies before, which has caused them to be insecure and uncomfortable using e-learning when asked to work from home (Kanyakumari, 2020). Additionally, their readiness to use e-learning in regular teaching activities is insufficient due to the overloaded administrative tasks given by their respective schools, which is highly likely to weaken their readiness.

These assumptions are supported by many previous studies (e.g., Kaur & Hussein (2015), Shuib et al. (2018), Razak (2018)) who argued that the low level of psychological readiness could impede teachers from accepting the initiative of e-learning usage, besides the work pressure that would also demotivate their psychological readiness because they have additional important tasks to be done. Moreover, teachers also have difficulties in operating advanced e-learning tasks related to teaching activities because they did not receive adequate training for it. Therefore, these factors have resulted in a low level of psychological readiness among English language teachers at secondary schools in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Technological Skills Readiness

Respondents' technological skills readiness measures to what extent an individual can use e-learning with the proper skills required. Technological skills readiness scored a mean value of 4.021, which was the highest mean value obtained by the respondents among the other readiness constructs. These respondents have mastered the essential technological skills to fulfill their basic needs for e-learning. They can work on computers and can find learning materials online.

The results are in alignment with Reimers and Schleicher (2020), where proximately 73% of Malaysian teachers were reported to be equipped with the technological skills to use e-learning in teaching, which is greater than the average level of the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development countries (OECD). Similarly, according to Mehran (2017), teachers could manipulate basic computer tasks, however, they have problems with using the computer for more advanced purposes in the teaching and learning process. One possible explanation for this high mean in technological skills readiness is attributed to the fact that the adapted questionnaire items do not comprehensively address the real and actual technological skills that educators in this era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) should own (AlSaqaf & Hu, 2020). As broadly known, most individuals nowadays, including children, have the basic technological skills such as operating a computer (e.g., keyboarding, etc.), using Microsoft programs (e.g., Word, etc.), and searching engines (e.g., Google, etc.), the aspects measured by the current study's questionnaire. Thus, this research stresses the need to develop an up-to-date survey that technically addresses the various aspects of the advanced technological skills that should be mastered by teachers and educators.

These assumptions are confirmed by several studies (e.g. Reimers & Schleicher (2020), Singh & Chan (2014), Al-Furaydi (2013)), which reveal that although teachers have been provided with many opportunities to be exposed to use e-learning to fulfill their essential needs of using e-learning, they still lack comprehensive and dynamic training programs of utilizing e-learning to enhance their e-learning competence in the teaching and learning process. Most of the training emphasizes how to use Microsoft programs, such as PowerPoint since most teachers rely on it for presentation purposes. Additionally, although schoolteachers have some experience in doing internet-based activities, they are more likely to use computers or any other electronic devices for socializing and entertainment purposes. Thus, teachers are reluctant to implement e-learning in teaching due to the fact they do not

possess sufficient technological competency to integrate e-learning into a real situation. As argued by Hu and AlSaqqaf (2021), even though English language teachers' technology acceptance towards integrating e-learning into the teaching of English was found at a high level, they should still be trained by up-to-date teaching approaches to always get themselves ready for any unexpected situation.

Content Readiness

Content readiness deals with the curricular content and teaching objectives concerning e-learning. In general, respondents scored an overall mean of 3.387 for content readiness in the study which means that they are not ready and need some work. Particularly, they confirmed that e-learning is useful for their teaching of English, however, they also perceived that the teaching and learning content used by e-learning is not relevantly in accord with the requirements of the English subject curriculum and syllabus which are set by the Ministry of Education.

The results are in line with previous studies conducted by Sabzian and Gilakjani (2013), Aldhafeeri and Khan (2016), and Shuib et al. (2018), who argued that teachers need to be provided with knowledge of curriculum evaluation and materials development when asked to have e-learning in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they might not be struggling and insecure in selecting proper learning content and operating e-learning devices confidently.

One justification why the English language teachers at secondary schools in Kota Kinabalu have low content readiness is because some materials used in e-learning are not suitable for their needs or learning context, even though these materials are partially practicable to be used in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the teachers must spend extra time adapting and developing the materials that they had to use during the school suspension so that they fit the requirements of the MoE syllabus, something that could hardly be achieved as the teachers have also been burdened by other heavy administrative work and teaching periods assigned by schools. Furthermore, English language teachers realize the usefulness of e-learning, yet they might have problems manipulating advanced functions related to e-learning since training did not go further to the advanced level. Therefore, these assumptions would result in the unexpectedly negative consequences of content readiness related to the use of e-learning in teaching.

These assumptions are supported by Shraim and Khlaif (2010), Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2013), Daniel (2020), and Gong (2020). Malaysia's MoE has made remarkable efforts to enhance e-teachers' competencies in using e-learning learning in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, training programs should not only be restricted to improving teachers' technological skills but ought to offer comprehensible information to them on how to develop the appropriateness of content used by e-learning. However, during the school suspension, the curricular content had to be presented by either asynchronous or synchronous-based teaching via e-learning. Both options differ in the way how teachers conduct their lessons online. While an asynchronous teaching method offers teachers more flexible time in planning their lessons, selecting materials, and designing activities, the synchronous

method requires real-time interaction between teachers and students through technical support, like the real flows of the teaching and learning process occurs in the classroom. Therefore, choosing which way to conduct the lesson and deliver the content affects the teachers' and students' concepts of the content being "clear and understandable". Therefore, it has been quite hard for them to cope with both teaching methods within the school suspension.

Human Resource Readiness

Human resource readiness is another influential construct in the measurement of e-learning readiness. In the study, human resource readiness was more into the aspects of school management and the necessary support from the human resource sectors, including the vision of e-learning usage, the principal's encouragement to use e-learning, and the strong support of e-learning backups at schools. As the results disclosed in the previous section, an average of 3.188 was obtained for human resource readiness. It shows that participants are not ready for e-learning and some work is needed to be provided to attain the desired consequence of enhancing the usage of e-learning in teaching and learning English.

The findings concur with those studies of Koo (2008), Noh et al., (2016), and Al-Furaydi (2013) affirming that the encouragement from principals or any other relevant authorities to use e-learning, enough exposure to necessary technological-based training based upon the needs of e-learning into teaching, as well as the related human resource support to assist e-learning are crucial to affect the level of teachers' human resource readiness. However, few studies reported the opposite findings to this current study.

One possible explanation for the low level of human resource readiness among English language teachers is because of the time constraints and insufficient support and assistance from particular human resources. These factors could mainly hinder the development of human resource readiness among them. Generally speaking, teachers should be provided with enough support and be encouraged to use e-learning to result in successful e-learning implementation. Otherwise, teachers could not relate themselves to the use of e-learning while there is no encouragement and support from schools. Moreover, English language teachers involved in the study claimed that they did not agree that they have experienced technical teams to resolve the potential problems that might occur in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, most of the time, teachers are reluctant to integrate e-learning into teaching since time-constraint is an obstacle to prevent teachers from using e-learning effectively in reality. Therefore, they would probably lose the passion to embark on e-learning in teaching.

These justifications are supported by previous studies (e.g. Al-Furaydi, 2013; Sabzian & Gilakjani, 2013; Aldhafeeri & Khan, 2016) which reported that the limited time could restrict teachers to get good quality of content done via e-learning, this would probably let teachers feel insecure when asked to deploy e-learning as part of teaching when there is no reliable human resource support from others to support the use of e-learning. Therefore, a low level of human resource readiness would badly low

teachers' initiative of using e-learning, and teachers' anxiety would be induced due to their low confidence.

Equipment Readiness

In the study, equipment readiness is about whether the schools are well infrastructure with adequate numbers of equipment to support the e-learning implementation. As the results indicated that an overall mean of 2.874 was attained for equipment readiness.

The results of the current study are consistent with the previous literature (e.g. Shuib et al., 2018; Noh et al., 2016). They found that teachers with a high percentage of electronic device ownership might not give rise a high level of readiness to use e-learning in teaching as it can be seen that 68% of equipment ownership (computers) has been found but they still expressed a low level of equipment readiness. Apart from that, the infrastructural development such as connectivity and equipment (LCD projectors) is another problem to be faced by teachers when using e-learning at schools since the unstable connectivity or insufficient amount of LCD projects might impede teachers to prepare the materials via online and discourage them to use e-learning. Conversely, a study conducted by Thowfeek and Zawaz (2019) revealed that teachers have owned a high level of equipment readiness regarding of e-learning because they are invested in the equipment and basic modern e-learning devices to reinforce the quality of using e-learning in teaching.

Moreover, the possible explanation for the low level of equipment readiness among English language teachers is that their respective schools are lacking the necessary equipment to support e-learning, which could demotivate teachers to deploy e-learning in the teaching and learning process, and then it may cause the traditional teaching methods to remain active among many teachers now. This assumption is supported by Aldhafeeri & Khan (2016) who reported the insufficient number of equipment would impede the development of teachers' readiness to use e-learning since they might need to fight for the use of equipment with other teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study focused on examining the level of e-learning readiness among English language teachers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Moreover, the existence of an imbalanced number of male and female respondents contributes to the limitations of this study. Therefore, future research could cover the other categories of teachers to get a more comprehensive understanding of e-learning readiness among teachers during school suspension. Additionally, the range of fieldwork should be extended to other districts in Sabah or even be in other states in Malaysia. Therefore, further research should consider the stratified sampling technique since it could be used to reasonably represent male and female participants. Meaningfully, this paper can be perceived as a reference for whosoever wants to investigate a similar topic in the future.

CONCLUSION

To think positively, the outbreak of COVID-19 has provided chances to rethink the current educational system and existing policies in terms of their efficiency and suitability to the stakeholders. This study has provided statistics as to the level of readiness among secondary school English language teachers to utilize e-learning in teaching during the period of school suspension caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As known that teachers' high levels of e-learning readiness could enable them to be more effective and innovative in their teaching professions since teachers play a role in facilitating the learning progress of students and bringing positive changes in students to embrace 21st-century learning skills. In conclusion, Malaysian secondary school English language teachers' psychological, content, human resource, and equipment readiness were found not ready, thus these e-learning readiness constructs should all be reinforced gradually.

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