

**COVID-19 and Emergency Online Learning: Perspective of Learners towards Communication Effect, Satisfaction and Productivity Level**

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**Abstract:** The global COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted universities worldwide, necessitating a swift transition from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning within a remarkably short time frame to ensure academic continuity. This study aims to explore COVID-19 and Emergency Online Learning: Perspective of Learners towards Communication Effect, Satisfaction and Productivity Level. Specifically, this study focuses on the experiences of BA118 students at UiTM Melaka and their communication with lecturers. Furthermore, the study aims to discover the satisfaction levels of BA118 students at UiTM Melaka in relation to online classes and to describe how online learning impacts student's productivity. The findings presented in this paper are based on interviews conducted with a randomly selected group of 10 students who enrolled in the Diploma in Office Management and Technology (BA118) at UiTM Melaka.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, online learning, communication, Office Management, lecturers, students, satisfaction, productivity.*

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## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 virus, which was brought on by the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, first raised alarm in December 2019; on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) proclaimed it to be a pandemic. Social segregation and stay-at-home orders were issued, and schools all across the world were closed while scientists raced to comprehend and manage the virus (Muller, 2021). When the pandemic first started, there was a chance that the shutdown might only last a short while, but as the weeks and months went by, it became obvious that the emergency online learning would not stop soon (Muller, 2021).

The term "online learning" refers to educational activities conducted via the Internet, often known as "e-learning." However, it is important to note that online learning represents just one facet of "distance learning," encompassing any form of education learning occurring outside of the traditional classroom setting and typically spanning a considerable geographic distance. The higher education landscape, students and lecturers were significantly affected by the unforeseen changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic as highlighted by Chung et al., (2020). Subsequently, numerous prestigious universities worldwide have wholeheartedly embraced online learning as a means of ensuring uninterrupted education (Chung et al., 2020). To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the University of Cambridge became the first university in the United Kingdom to transition to a fully online teaching and learning approach for the entire 2020/2021 academic year (Europe News, 2020). Additionally, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has mandated that both public and private universities conduct their teaching and learning activities exclusively through online platforms until the end of December 2020, (Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education, 2020).

Studying communication, particularly within the realm of education, is imperative as effective communication between educators and students has the potential to enhance the learning experience and foster a positive environment (Awalamleh et al., 2020). Communication, as defined by Awalamleh et al., (2020), involves the transfer of information from one person to one person, or group to another.

The objectives of this research are:

- To explore whether online learning affects communication between lecturers and students BA118, UiTM Melaka either in a good or negative term.
- To discover how satisfying it is to take an online class for students BA118, UiTM Melaka.
- To describe the productivity of students increases during online learning classes.

The research questions for this study are as below:

- Does online learning have a good or negative effect on communication between lecturers and students BA118?
- How satisfying it is to take an online class for students of BA118, UiTM Melaka?
- Is the productivity of students increasing during online learning classes?

## 2. Literature Review

**Online Learning:** The realm of online learning provides a diverse range of lectures facilitated by lecturers (Simamora, 2020). Instructions can take the form of synchronous communication, where participants engage in real-time interactions through platforms like video conferencing, zoom, Google Meet, MS Team, and WebEx. Alternatively, they can be asynchronous, characterized by interactions occurring at different times and locations, such as e-mail, google form, streaming video content, posting lecture notes and social media platforms as stated by Simamora (2020).

According to the study, the globe totally switched to an online learning system during the first wave of the fictional COVID-19 pandemic; during the second wave, the majority of educational institutions adopted an online learning system (Wang, et al., 2021). Therefore, many institutions in Malaysia have switched from conventional methods to online learning. In an experiment, the usefulness of an online lecture format and a conventional lecture format was compared. The instructor, the subject matter of the lessons, the worksheets, and the assessments were all found to be identical, except for the format (Wang, et al., 2021). For example, with e-learning many lecturers or instructors will use online methods to test students by using Quizlet, Kahoot and Google form, they must shift learning from text-based methods to more interactive, creative and strategic ways that keep the learners engaged throughout the learning process. In the same vein, research has revealed that the main limit to e-learning practices and, consequently, the degree of student satisfaction with the course materials, is an online assessment. Few solutions exist that can truly authenticate the experience of an online examination (Barber et al., 2015).

**Communication:** Studying communication is essential because virtually all administrative tasks and operations, whether directly or indirectly, rely on some form of communication. Communication, as defined by Awalamleh et al. (2020), refers to the process of conveying information and popular knowledge from one individual to another. Whether it's online or in person, the objective of communication remains consistent: establishing connections, sharing information, and ensuring that one's message is heard and comprehended. Cultivating a sense of community within online classes can enhance students' learning experiences and maintain their engagement throughout the course. The act of sharing thoughts, ideas, and similar content is a means of making information commonly understood and acknowledged. Gestures, signs, signals, expressions, and writing can all be used to communicate thoughts and ideas (Valentzas and Borni, 2014). When people are discussing a topic, conversing on the phone, or exchanging information via letters, they are said to be in communication. The exchange of information, whether written or spoken, is what communication is all about (Valentzas and Borni, 2014).

## 3. Methodology

A qualitative method was used to conduct the research by utilizing the content analysis of an interview with BA118 students. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 respondents from BA118 students in UiTM Melaka. The interview responses were analyzed and categorized whether online learning has a good or negative effect on communication between lecturers and students BA118, how communication between lecturers and students of BA118 can be improved, and the problems faced in online learning and its effect on students' participation and their productivity level.

For this research, a qualitative approach was employed, involving the content analysis of interviews conducted with students from the BA118 program. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select 10 respondents from the BA118 student body at UiTM Melaka. The responses obtained from these interviews were meticulously examined and categorized into three main themes; the impact of online learning on communication between BA118 lecturers and students (whether positive or negative), strategies for

enhancing communication between BA118 lecturers and students, and challenges encountered in online learning and their influence on student's participation and productivity levels.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the outcomes derived from the viewpoints expressed by the respondents regarding several aspects. Firstly, it explores whether online learning has a favorable or unfavorable effect on communication between lecturers and students BA118. Secondly, it devolves into strategies for improving communication between lecturers and students of BA118 and finally, it examines the challenges experienced in online learning and their impact on students' participation and their productivity level. This section presents the findings based on the perspectives of the respondents regarding the impact of online learning having a good or negative effect on communication between lecturers and 10 of the students of BA118.

**Table 1: The Effect of Online Learning Communication between Lecturers and Students of BA118**

Total Respondents	Question	Reasons
5 respondents	• How do you feel when taking your courses online?	• Nervous, I'm afraid if I can't catch up on the lesson
3 respondents		• I'm not ready yet
2 respondents		• I'm ready
10 respondents	• Is it easy for you to ask questions during online learning classes?	• Yes, because we do not need to open the camera when asking the question
8 respondents	• Do you understand the teaching process given by the lecturers during online classes?	• Understand
2 respondents		• Sometimes do not understand

In Table 1, 5 respondents stated that they feel nervous and a little bit afraid if they can't catch up with the lesson or topic given by the lecturer. Three respondents said that they are not ready because this is new for them and they need to be proficient in using applications such as Google Meet, MS Team, Webex, etc. Two respondents said they are ready to learn by using online learning. All respondents said they easily ask questions to their lecturers. They do not need to open the camera because in the physical class sometimes they are a bit shy. Eight respondents said they understand the teaching process given by the lecturers during online classes because lecturers have teaching aids such as slides and videos that make them fun and not boring.

This section provides the findings on the respondents' views on how satisfied taking online classes between 10 students of BA118 and lecturers.

**Table 2: How Satisfied Taking an Online Class for Students BA118, UiTM Melaka?**

Total Respondents	Question	Reasons
8 respondents	• Do you prefer a classroom or online classes?	• We prefer the classroom. We can concentrate more in class if the lecturer is in front of us
		• Online class is more comfortable because I do not need to get prepared for dressing up and transportation to go to university.
2 respondents		• Online classes, they had mobile or personal computer issues for example damage and not well function

Table 2 shows that eight respondents prefer to go to class because they become more motivated if lecturers are in front of them. They also informed me that they can share thoughts and questions with classmates and lecturers in the classroom. Sometimes, they are not prepared for online learning/classes and classrooms are more interactive. Online classes sometimes, due to many reasons, for example, bad internet connection, bad service that will enable students to enter the online meeting or even listen to the lecturer, mobile or personal computer issues for example damage during online classes, etc.

**Table 3: Are the Productivity of Students Increased During Online Learning Classes?**

Total Respondents	Question	Reasons
<b>8 respondents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to your experience, do you think your productivity as a student has increased?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, I become lazier and not in the mood to study. Furthermore, I understand more in-classroom courses because my major needs to be explained directly, otherwise, it will be hard”</li> <li>Online classroom demotivates, especially with what’s happening around us. Classroom classes engage the student to feel more productive”</li> <li>Long hours in front of a computer make my eyes blurred and painful</li> </ul>
<b>2 respondents</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online class is more comfortable because I do not need to get prepared for dressing up and transportation to go to university.</li> </ul>

Table 3 shows that eight respondents became lazier and not in the mood to study. They understand more in-classroom courses because their major needs to be explained directly, otherwise, it becomes hard. Furthermore, online classrooms become demotivated, especially with what’s happening around them. Classroom classes engage the students to feel more productive. Productivity decreases because long hours in front of a computer make their eyes blurred and painful. However, two respondents felt more comfortable because they did not need to get prepared for dressing up and save on transportation to get to university.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, the study had two main objectives; first to investigate the impact of COVID-19 and emergency online learning from the perspective of learners specifically focusing on the communication effect, satisfaction, and productivity. Second, the study aimed to assess and propose strategies to enhance effective communication between lecturers and students in online courses. Data was collected through interviews with 10 students enrolled in the BA118 at UiTM Melaka. As indicated in the preceding results section, the data analysis and insights shared by the students align with the study’s research questions. The majority of the respondents expressed a preference for traditional classroom-based classes over online classes due to several challenges they encountered including lack of motivation, difficulty grasping the course content, and diminished communication between the students and their lecturers.

In light of these findings, it is advisable for lecturers to proactively maintain contact with their students through online learning platforms. Facilitating informal communication channels such as WhatsApp groups, Telegram groups, and private video call meetings can foster better engagement. Furthermore, lectures should encourage active participation and ongoing motivation among students by periodically providing incentives. They can also incorporate interactive activities such as using Kahoot, Quizzes, Quizlet and group discussions to enhance the learning experience. To improve the lecturer's effectiveness in delivering online content, the university should consider organizing additional training sessions. These sessions can equip lecturers with the necessary skills to excel in online teaching.

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