

The Influence of Online Learning Platforms on Cadet Officers' Academic Performance

Mohamad Aizad Norsani, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia,
aizadnorsani35@gmail.com

Afifah Quraishah Abdul Nasir*, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia,
afifah@upnm.edu.my

Muhammad Shafiq Azid, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia,
mshafiq@upnm.edu.my

* **Corresponding Author**

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled the use of online learning immediately. The study was conducted to investigate online learning platforms' influence on Cadet officers' academic performance. A quantitative method (questionnaires) supported by a qualitative method (interview) was used to collect the data. A total of 250 cadet officers of Akademi Latihan Ketenteraan (ALK) in Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) completed the questionnaires, and five cadet officers were involved in the interview sessions. Generally, the findings indicate that the respondents are aware of the use of online learning platforms. The study shows that online learning platforms influence cadet officers' academic performance. These findings are essential for future development and the implications of the use of online learning platforms are also discussed.

Keywords: *academic performance, online learning platform, cadet officers.*

Introduction

Since COVID-19 is causing a pandemic, the government has taken very serious action regarding the students. Taking these steps is meant to keep them from getting the virus. So, higher education institutions have come up with a new way to learn online. This kind of learning only requires a device and a teacher or lecturer. It has made things easier for a lot of people, and the number of people who get the COVID-19 virus could also be reduced. Starting from February, when China's government told the students to go back to school using online learning platforms, the classroom that has been used a lot in China is TenCent. This led to the biggest "online movement". In Wuhan, over 730,000 students attend the TenCent K-12 Online School, which serves 81% of K-12 pupils. (Li et al., 2020). In the late 1990s, Malaysian Higher Education Institutions began to adopt online learning (Hussin et al., 2009). Long-term demand for online education has expanded owing to its ability to reach a global audience, its unique functioning, its accessibility, and its adaptability (Azhari & Ming, 2015). The Malaysian Ministry of Education has set steps for making online learning an integral part of higher education and lifelong learning (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education): E-16), in keeping with educational advancements. The Malaysian government has played a crucial part in helping the B40 family and students by providing them with internet access so they may continue their online classes ('Internet Allowance,' 2020). This demonstrates that online learning is an effective method for both teachers and students to ensure that students learn even when they are not physically present in the classroom.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational process, universities have attempted to employ technology to replace in-class time with online courses and learning activities. Few instructional resources were employed internationally to help students. Due to their inability to participate in formal education, they were denied entry to libraries, bookstores,

radio programs, television shows, and online resources designed to help with education. The most common resource was a website. (Li et al., 2020) state that in real-time courses, students have the freedom to explore at their own pace while also participating in scheduled learning programs given by their professors via virtual meeting platforms. Therefore, there is no limitation or pressure from the teacher, as there is in traditional classroom settings. Students have ample time to absorb and understand the classroom setting. When lessons are offered online, all students must use technology to participate. According to (Ferri F et al., 2020), the online platform was the most utilized tool during COVID-19. MS Teams and Zoom are among the popular online collaboration solutions. This is due to the fact that these platforms are quite useful for students attending online classes because the facilities offered to them are great.

Every institution strives for excellence, and the academic performance of its graduating students is always excellent and competitive against the students from other universities. This is strongly tied to the acquisition of human capital, a crucial sign of the organization's driving power. As found in the world's leading universities, the performance of the students in each university is very proud and capable of shaking the world with the most recent theoretical discoveries, research conducted, and the creation of new products as a result of the sweat of ideas and knowledge acquired during their university studies. This academic achievement is intimately tied to their utilization of an online learning platform as a teaching and learning aid. Consequently, the researcher argues that the students of Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) require an online learning platform as a tool to assist them to study effectively and efficiently and contribute to outstanding and exemplary academic achievement. This research addresses the influences of online learning platforms on student performance, especially the cadet officer.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education system worldwide. As a result of the pandemic, there has been a shift to online learning platforms in many countries where modern information technology was used to deliver the learning content (Juliadi, 2022). Nevertheless, the full and sudden utilization of these online products during COVID-19 may have some negative effects on students side, as a result of some hindrances which may likely hamper many students' learning processes (Al-Kumaim, Mohammed, Gazem, Fazea, Alhazmi, & Dakkak, 2021). The government of Malaysia is hoping that by offering online lessons to the whole country, they might stop the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. In the mid of 2020, Malaysian Higher Education Ministry declared that all teaching and learning activities be conducted via online learning platforms. And from there, it was gradually moved to hybrid learning sessions where universities are allowed to carry out the classes both physically and online.

Online Learning Platforms

A student can find all the resources they need in one convenient location, including lectures, materials, forums to discuss the course material with peers, and more, due in part towards an online learning platform, which is an interconnected network of online services designed to help educators deliver and manage instruction. It's a great tool for both students and educators to track development over time (Litmos, 2022). At UPNM, several online learning platforms have been used which are Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meet. They were fully used by the students and lecturers for their daily classes.

As a component of Microsoft 365 and Office 365, Microsoft Teams is cloud-based team communication software. Microsoft Teams' primary features include business chat, phone calls,

video conferences, and file sharing. Microsoft Teams is suitable for businesses of any size. Since it allows distant teams to remain in constant contact with one another, Microsoft Teams is an excellent tool for facilitating remote communication. Activities across the world have been using Microsoft Teams more and more since the COVID-19 pandemic (O'Neill, 2021). As a result, the UPM administration has adopted Microsoft Teams as the official platform for online education.

Zoom is a platform teleconferencing service that allows you to connect online with others, either via video or audio only, or both while engaging in live discussions, and it also allows you to record such meetings to watch later. The following terms are frequently used when discussing Zoom: Zoom Conferencing and the Zoom Conference Room. A Zoom Meeting is a conference held through Zoom's software packages. You may participate in these conferences with a phone or a webcam. On the other hand, a Zoom Room is a real hardware installation that allows businesses to host Zoom Meetings in pre-existing conference rooms (Tillman, 2022). Because some teachers choose Zoom over other platforms, it sees heavy use among students and professors alike.

Google Meet is Google's conferencing service. In terms of audio and video conferencing, it's a fantastic option for both people and companies. It has its roots in Google Hangouts but also has several features that set it apart. Google Meet is also able to silence any non-speech background noise. It also offers a trustworthy and wonderful accessibility live commentary function, which immediately live comments on what people are saying (Keeley, 2020). Some lecturers already have a Google account, so they use Google Meet because it saves time and makes things easier.

Previous research state that the internet has become a medium used not only to get information but also to spend free time (Boyd & Alison, 2019). There is also research concludes that social media is the cause of plagiarism among students (Granitz & Loewy, 2007). This has made the development of students to be of poor quality. They only hope for answers from the internet when answering questions or exercises. It is a "real lack of knowledge as one of the grounds for copying," as (Chan et al., n.d.) puts it. As a result, students' growth is subpar. When asked to complete an assignment or quiz, they will exclusively rely on information found online. College students either don't care about being honest or don't know what it means to be academically dishonest, therefore they have a shallow understanding of the topic. The benefits of using social media tools like Facebook in the classroom are also discussed in a study by Roblyer et al. (2010). Students are more likely to utilize Facebook applications, and they are significantly more receptive to the idea of utilizing Facebook and similar technologies to assist work and assignments in the lecture hall than their professors are. Therefore, social media related to the tendency to increase young people especially university students to perform various tasks and fully depend on digital technology in their daily activities as well as the commitment of the students themselves (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2013).

Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative method explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics (Timans et al., 2019). A qualitative study can frequently be based in part on the researcher's personal views on subjects, and a quantitative method which is the interview used in this research can assist to iron out the flaws in the data, making it more authentic (Bhandari, 2020). The combination technique utilized in this study will be able to draw any conclusions because each respondent will be able to provide different inputs to improve the validity and authenticity of this research. This methodology is

indeed very realistic since it allows the researcher to approach a topic with data and words while employing the most comfortable ways for this research.

Sample and Data Collection

The convenience sampling method is being used and this method is known as a type of non-probability method which is based on the data collection from the population of students who have participated in this study. A total of 250 cadet officers participated in completing the questionnaires for the study. Five cadet officers were involved in face-to-face interviews.

The questionnaire was adapted from Adeyeye, Ojih, Bello, Adesina, Yartey, Ben-Enukora, & Adeyeye (2022). It consisted of four sections, namely, i) demographic information ii) attitudes of cadet officers on online learning platforms, iii) usage of online learning platforms, and iv) effects of online learning platforms on academic performance.

Analyzing of Data

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed and tabulated into frequency and percentage tables. Meanwhile, for the interview, the feedback was manually transcribed verbatim and used to support the quantitative data.

Findings / Results

The data collected were analysed and presented in the tables below. The analyses were based on 250 responses from cadet officers of UPNM.

Table 1. Cadet Officers' Attitude Toward Online Learning Platforms Usage

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	I have heard of online learning platforms (e.g: Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet) before the online classes started during COVID-19 pandemic.	204 (81.6%)	46 (18.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)
2.	I have used online learning platforms for other activities before the online classes started during COVID-19 pandemic.	135 (54%)	115 (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)
3.	I effectively used the online learning platforms before online learning session.	160 (64%)	89 (35.6%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)
4.	During online learning, I effectively used the online learning platforms.	133 (53.2%)	117 (46.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)

Table 1 shows the respondents' attitudes toward online learning platforms usage. All 250 (100%) respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have heard of online learning platforms, have used online learning platforms before the pandemic, and have effectively used online learning platforms during online classes. However, out of 250 respondents, only one (0.4%), disagreed that online learning platforms had been effectively used before the pandemic. The other 249 (99%) respondents agreed that they had effectively used online learning platforms prior to the pandemic.

Table 2. Effects of Online Learning Platforms on Respondents' Academic Performance.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	The use of online learning platforms affected my academic performance positively during COVID-19 online learning.	137 (54.8%)	46 (18.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)
2.	The use of online learning platforms affected my academic performance negatively during COVID-19 online learning.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	97 (38.8%)	153 (61.2%)	100 (100%)
3.	The use of online learning platforms did not affect my academic performance positively or negatively during COVID-19 online learning	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	106 (42.4%)	144 (57.6%)	100 (100%)
4.	I had challenges using online learning platforms for online classes.	45 (18%)	205 (82%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)

Table 2 shows the effects of online learning platforms on cadet officers' academic performance. All 250 (100%) respondents agreed that online learning platforms have affected their academic performance positively. In addition, the respondents (100%) agreed that online learning platforms do not affect them negatively nor have no effect on their academic performance. However, it can be seen that all of the respondents (100%) agreed that they faced challenges using online learning platforms for their online classes.

Discussion

From the findings, it can be seen that cadet officers are already being exposed to various online learning platforms. Based on the interviews, cadet officers stated that;

"Before this I'm using a few platforms for my learning. As I remembered, it were Moodle and Kahoot."

-cadet officer 1

"I had used google meet before, it was during my foundation at UPNM"
-cadet officer 2

"Google meet, Moodle, Zoom. I think that's what I used before this"
-cadet officer 3

Since they are already familiar with the concept of online learning, this could lead to their readiness to use online learning platforms during the pandemic. As mentioned by Al-Kumaim, et.al, (2021), the familiarity that users of an online learning platform have with using particular tasks, materials, or applications is among the factors of high usage of online learning platform.

The cadets are also aware of the effects of online learning platforms on their academic performance during online learning session. They were able to learn during online classes as much as they would when they had face-to-face classes. One mentioned by the cadets;

"That's for sure because what my lecturer had teach me during face-to-face still the same with what they teach me during online session".
-cadet officer 4

"For me, I feel the same during online class or face-to-face class, I learned as much as I learned in both."
-cadet officer 2

These findings are similar to the studies done by Adeyeye, Ojih, Bello, Adesina, Yartey, Ben-Enukora, & Adeyeye (2022); Elhaty & Elhadary (2020); and Makruf, Rifa'i, & Triana (2022). In their studies, students were able to learn as much as they could during physical classes using online learning platforms.

Sometimes, when the students are aware about the issues and problems around them, there are less possibilities for a problem to occur. However, to ensure themselves for being exposed to negative things through online learning platforms, students can also ask for their parents to monitor their daily activities.

Conclusion

The study highlighted that online learning platforms influence academic performance among cadet officers in both good and bad ways towards an individual which might bring any positive or negative effects on their life. UPNM students also can increase and improve their knowledge about their study style. Based on this research, online learning brings a huge impact on cadet officers who tend to learn in an online environment and in addition to the training conducted. They understand the causes and the effects of misusing online learning platforms.

The use of online learning platforms during online learning sessions had influenced the cadet officer's academic performance since they were having the online session for a long period of time. They are aware of the fact that online learning platforms made their grades become much better. Since they are familiar with the use of online learning platforms, can be seen that they have a good perspective towards online learning platforms. On the other, it was also revealed that cadet officers also faced challenges when it comes to online learning platforms. Hence, online learning session can be a good system but also come with disadvantages.

Recommendations

COVID-19 pandemic has made online learning as an important platform for students to complete their education despite the readiness of the users and readability of facilities. This study has highlighted the positive effects of using online learning platforms on cadet officers' academic performance. However, the study only focused on cadet officers, while in UPNM, there are also civilian students. It is important to discover their perspective on the same matter. Other than that, as revealed in the study cadet officers faced challenges using online learning platforms for their classes, it is also important for future research to dive deeper and discover what are the challenges faced by those involved in online teaching and learning.

Limitations

There are some limitations that researchers have encountered in this research's journey while conducting this research. This research only focuses on a small scope of academic performance, focusing only on the Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia. Besides, the study also targets how online learning platforms influence academic performance during online learning sessions. In view of these difficulties, they are finding positively contributed towards achieving the objectives. At the end of this research, the researcher focuses more on cadet officers' perspectives towards online learning platforms and on the relationship and the influence of online learning platforms on their academic performance.

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