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**STUDENTS READINESS FOR ONLINE LEARNING: CASE  
STUDY ON COMMERCE DEPARTMENT'S STUDENTS  
POLITEKNIK KUCHING SARAWAK**

Hartyni Mastor<sup>1\*</sup>, Hasimah Salleh<sup>2</sup>, Khatijah Ibrahim<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Commerce Department, Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, Malaysia  
E-mail: [hartyni@poliku.edu.my](mailto:hartyni@poliku.edu.my)

<sup>2</sup> Commerce Department, Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, Malaysia  
E-mail: [hasimah@poliku.edu.my](mailto:hasimah@poliku.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup> Commerce Department, Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, Malaysia  
E-mail: [khatijah.i@poliku.edu.my](mailto:khatijah.i@poliku.edu.my)

\* Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the country's education system. Regardless of the administrator and the teaching staff, the students are also affected by this situation. The Ministry of Higher Education has decided that the Online Teaching and Learning method (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Dalam Talian, PdPDT) will be implemented at the Polytechnic level, especially for the June 2020 session. The main purpose of this study is to identify the level of readiness and motivation of students of the Commerce Department Polytechnic Kuching Sarawak on the implementation of PdPDT. The study also examined the relationship between motivation and the level of readiness of students to follow online learning. Quantitative data is collected through a questionnaire distributed online to all active students of the Commerce Department who will attend lectures in the June 2020 session (excluding students who are undergoing Industrial Training and semester 1 students intake June 2020). A pilot study conducted found that the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.970 and it showed a high level of reliability for the items tested. The scope of this study leads to the level of readiness and level of motivation of students only. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Overall, the level of readiness (mean score: 3.40) and level of motivation (mean score: 3.32) of students of the Commerce Department on the implementation of online learning is at a moderate level. Respondents responded positively to PdPDT in assisting the new normal teaching and learning process.

**Keywords:**

Online Learning, E-Learning, Readiness, Motivation, PdPDT

## Introduction

The world is shocked by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic that causes various things to change in the daily routine. Starting with the emphasis on hygiene up to the Movement Control Order (MCO) which is enforced by most countries in the world including Malaysia. The Malaysian Government has implemented MCO from March 18 to March 31, 2020 for PKP Phase 1, PKP Phase 2 from 1 to 14 April 2020, extended to PKP Phase 3 from 15 to 28 April and then PKP Phase 4 from 29 April until May 12.

On May 1, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin in his special speech in conjunction with Labor Day introduced the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), which is the relaxation of certain PKP conditions to reopen the country's economy in a controlled manner scheduled from May 4. On 7 June 2020, the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin has announced that on 10 June, the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) will be replaced with the Restoration Movement Control Order (RMCO) which is the recovery phase from the implementation of PKP and PKPB starting on 10 June until 31 August 2020.

**Table 1: Phases of Preventive Measure in Malaysia**

<b>PHASE 1</b>	MCO: 18 <sup>th</sup> March – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020
<b>PHASE 2</b>	MCO: 1 <sup>st</sup> April – 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
<b>PHASE 3</b>	MCO: 15 <sup>th</sup> April – 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
<b>PHASE 4</b>	MCO: 29 <sup>th</sup> May – 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2020
<b>PHASE 5</b>	CMCO: 4 <sup>th</sup> May – 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>PHASE 6</b>	CMCO: 12 <sup>th</sup> May – 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
<b>PHASE 7</b>	RMCO: 10 <sup>th</sup> June – 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2020

The education sector is also no exception when all schools and higher learning institutions are in the process of closing and implementing the teaching and learning process online. As a result, the conventional face-to-face teaching and learning process had to be stopped during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period. The question now is about the implementation of current and post-Covid-19 towards national education. The community will definitely need to be prepared for the new norms of different educational practices. Students of higher education institutions are instructed not to attend campus; the authorities need to think of other approaches to ensure learning sessions can be implemented during this MCO period. Not only the practice of education, but the direction of education as a whole and needs to be revisited, so as not to stray from the National Philosophy of Education which aims for holistic student development. The Ministry of Higher Education has decided that the methods of online teaching and learning will be implemented at the Polytechnic level especially for the June 2020 session.

There are several issues that arise when trying to implement online learning method. Among it how is the readiness of students to face this new learning norm. This is because there are some students that do not have gadgets or personal smartphones and some do not have enough internet data while others do not have direct internet access. For educators, there is doubt as to which platform is suitable for online learning and most of them use the method of trial and error, to see and find the perfect platform that is suitable for online learning

Internet accessibility is one of the important things in conducting online classes (Ehwan, 2020). Efforts to identify the level of internet accessibility for each student can help teachers

to determine the appropriate method to enable online classes to be conducted well. However, students that are living in area where there is low internet coverage have some constraints. Therefore, these students need to be reached by contacting them through more suitable platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram or Messenger applications. If these students can't be contacted through these applications, then the conventional method is the last option by posting or sending teaching materials to students. This is crucial to prevent students from missing out on learning sessions, simultaneously it can stimulate the students' cognitive system continuously.

However, the General Director of Ministry of Education, Dr Habibah Abdul Rahim said face-to-face learning is more effective because teachers can provide assistance directly to students. This is because the results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, between 3% to 10% of students only have equipment such as computers, notebooks or tablets.

"On average, they have access to mobile phones which is 34% to 48% but it all depends on the urban or rural areas", he said in the Mind Talk session, Sinar Harian Online, July 6, 2020. In this regard, Dr Habibah explained online learning at home has disadvantages and it is difficult to see the effectiveness on students.

How effective is online learning for students of higher learning institutions especially to polytechnic students? Student readiness is something that needs to be considered because students are the main subject of knowledge to be conveyed. Referring to the Guidelines for the Management of Operations of Polytechnics and Community Colleges during and after the Movement Control Order (MCO). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, dated 30 June 2020, that the Implementation of Online Teaching and Learning @ Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Dalam Talian (PdPDT) refers to a Synchronous (Sync - Realtime) or Asynchronous (Non-Sync - Non-Real time).

### **Research Objective**

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Identify the level of readiness of students to follow PdPDT
- ii. Identify the level of motivation of students to follow PdPDT.
- iii. Identify the relationship between motivation and the level of readiness of students to follow PdPDT

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows:

- i. To what extent are students' readiness to follow PdPDT?
- ii. To what extent are students motivated to follow PdPDT?
- iii. Does the level of readiness of students have a relationship with the level of motivation of students to follow PdPDT?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is able to help lecturers to formulate appropriate strategies and methods to implement PdPDT more smoothly.

## Literature Review

Online learning is a form of teaching and learning delivered through the use of digital technology. The material presented has visual graphics, words, animation, video or audio. This learning process allows it to be implemented regardless of the distance and number of members who browse it. Online learning is also interpreted as an interpretation according to the mold of the organization and the institution itself and is an innovation in the Education system (Omar & Ahmad, 2010). However, Amin (2010) defines online learning as a complement to teaching and learning that is implemented face-to-face or conventionally.

Students' self-esteem is seen to play an important role in the effectiveness of the implementation of online learning (Hazwan et al., 2017). Students need to have a high level of readiness to ensure that learning can run smoothly. Willingness is an adjective that describes readiness, preparedness, disposition, inclination, will, wish or desire. So, student readiness here means the internal state of the individual who is always ready and able to learn online with the aim of acquiring a new learning experience.

In addition, the level of motivation can also affect the effectiveness of online learning. Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2020) define motivation as the reason why somebody does something or behave in a particular way. Online learning requires students to learn more effectively and this is able to motivate students to learn. Student motivation both regularly and naturally has to do with the student's desire to participate in the learning process. Reasons or aim that sustain their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities reflects the level of motivation (Lumsden, 1994). When comparing online classroom and traditional classroom, greater initiative, tenacity, and self-discipline are needed to take courses in the online environment (Mandernach, et al., 2006).

## Research Methodology

This study is a survey study conducted using quantitative methods. The research technique is through surveys through the use of questionnaires. Survey studies are very suitable to measure opinions, attitudes and behaviors (Fullan, 1991). Majid (2000) agreed that the use of questionnaires is a measuring tool used to obtain accurate information about facts, beliefs, feelings, desires and so on. The questionnaire was distributed online. Vasantha & Harinarayana (2016) in their study wrote that online survey has become more important as the cost is lesser, reaching unique population easily, free availability of the tools and automatic recording of user response. This research instrument was developed based on the findings of previous studies. In this study, the questionnaire used includes the following aspects: (1) Part A: Demographic information, (2) Part B: Students' willingness to participate in e-learning and (3) Part C: Level of student motivation towards the use of e-learning

The questionnaire used consisted of a 5 scale Likert type format (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). To test the level of reliability of the reliability test instrument (reliability test) first held. This test is to ensure that each survey question used is reliable and understood by the respondents to answer (Fullan, 1991). The method used is through internal consistency-alpha Cronbach. According to Sekaran (2005) acceptable and good Cronbach's alpha values range is from 0.6 - 0.9. The results of the reliability test that has been made for this study are as in Table 1.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Number of Question (N of items)</b>
.970	21

The study population consists of all active students of the Department of Commerce who will register in the June 2020 session which is a total of 769 people (excluding industrial Training students and semester 1 students June 2020). Of the total, only 79.6% or 612 students answered the questionnaire.

Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics i.e. the minimum range is used to describe the level of readiness and level of motivation of students to follow online learning. Table 2 is the interpretation of mean score and level of assessment of mean score.

**Table 2: Mean Interpretation**

<b>Range</b>	<b>Interprets</b>
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Moderate
3.68 – 5.00	High

Source: Pallant.J (2007)

The data analysis method used is the Pearson's Correlation method. Pearson correlation is used to measure strength and direction of a liner relationship between two variables. Sekaran (2005) in his book said, theoretically the correlation between the two variables could be a positive or negative correlation. Correlation also consists of three types of relationships that may exist between variables whether positive linear correlation, negative linear correlation or no correlation (Yoon & Chwee,2009). Table 3 demonstrates how to interpret the strength of the correlation coefficient

**Table 3: Strength of the Relationship Between Two Variables**

<b>Pearson's Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
0.00 to 0.30 (0.00 to -0.30)	Negligible Relationship
0.30 to 0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50)	Weak Positive (negative) Relationship
0.50 to 0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70)	Moderate Positive (negative) Relationship
0.70 to 0.90 (-0.70 to -0.90)	Strong Positive (negative) Relationship
0.90 to 1.00 (-0.90 to -1.00)	Very Strong Positive (negative) Relationship

Source: Parvez Ahammad

## **Findings and Discussion**

The overall data obtained was analyzed to obtain the results of the study. The results of the study were divided into 3 parts, namely the demographics of the respondents, the results of descriptive studies and the results of correlation analysis.

### ***Demographics of Respondents***

A total of 117 male students and 495 female students provided feedback for this study. There are 2 programs offered at the Commerce Department Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, namely

Diploma in Accountancy (DAT) and Diploma in Business Studies (DPM). For this study, a total of 251 respondents are DAT students and 373 respondents are DPM students.

**Table 4: Demographics of Respondents**

Item	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender:		
	Male	117	19.1%
	Female	495	80.9%
2	Course Programme:		
	Diploma in	251	41%
	Accountancy	361	59%
	Diploma in Business Studies		

### Descriptive Study Results

#### *Level of Readiness of Students to Follow Learning and Teaching Online (PdPDT)*

Table 5 shows the minimum score for the level of readiness of students to follow PdPDT in the next semester of study (June 2020). From the table it is found that 10 out of 12 items are at a moderate level and 2 items are at a high level. The overall mean value of the level of readiness of students to follow PdPDT is 3.40 which is at a moderate level. Items QA2 and QA12 were at high levels with mean scores of 3.78 and 3.86. Item QA4 is the lowest mean value of 2.99 but still at a moderate level. Overallly the level of readiness of students to follow PdPDT is moderate. However, students are seen to understand what e-learning is and students believe that self-discipline is important to ensure the effectiveness of e-learning. The level of readiness of students shows that all items get a moderate response. Students are seen ready to follow online learning but the level of readiness of students is still moderate. Based on the questionnaire made for the question "are you ready for online class?", Only 59.7% of students agreed that they were ready and the remaining 40.3% said they were not ready.

This contradicts the findings in a study by Sumarni Lapammu & Zamri (2018), stated that students' level of readiness for virtual learning is very positive and at a high level. The findings of this study may be different because some students inform that they prefer face-to-face learning, internet line factor, lack of facilities to learn online and face financial problems.

**Table 5: Mean Score of the Level of Student's Readiness Towards Online Teaching and Learning (PdPDT)**

No.	Item	Mean	Mean Interpretation
QA1	I intend to implement PdPDT at any time	3.41	Moderate
QA2	I understand what is PdPDT	3.78	High
QA3	I always learned how to using PdPDT	3.47	Moderate
QA4	A can learned well when the lecturer teaches using The PdPDT	2.99	Moderate
QA5	I am good at using the application used during the implementation of PdPDT	3.29	Moderate
QA6	I am ready to face challenges in the use of PdPDT	3.29	Moderate
QA7	I often encourage friends to use PdPDT	3.11	Moderate

QA8	Lecturer and I can communicate well through PdPDT	3.15	Moderate
QA9	I often use PdPDT to get reference for learning material	3.65	Moderate
QA10	I have good physical disability (smartphone/personal computer/gadget) for following PdPDT	3.65	Moderate
QA11	I have a good internet network (within and outside) to follow PdPDT	3.13	Moderate
QA12	I believe self-discipline is important to ensure the effectiveness of PdPDT	3.86	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.40</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

### *Level of Student Motivation Towards the Implementation of Online Teaching and Learning (PdPDT)*

Table 6 shows the mean scores for the level of students' motivation towards the implementation of Online Teaching and Learning (PdPDT). The overall mean is at a moderate level with a score of 3.32. The highest mean score was on item QB5 with a score of 3.66 and the lowest mean score was 3.10 on items QB2 and QB3. Based on the overall mean, it is found that students think they will be left behind if they do not follow online learning and they also know that knowledge is very easy to obtain with PdPDT.

**Table 6: Mean Score of Level of Motivation Towards the Implementing of PdPDT**

No	Item	Mean	Mean Interpretation
QB1	PdPDT increased my understanding of the course	3.33	Moderate
QB2	PdPDT increased my readiness to attend lecture	3.10	Moderate
QB3	PdPDT increased my focus while attending lecture	3.10	Moderate
QB4	PdPDT increase my self-confidence	3.21	Moderate
QB5	I understand that if I do not use PdPDTI will lag	3.66	Moderate
QB6	I know if using PdPDT learning material can be obtained easily	3.58	Moderate
QB7	I can use PdPDT for all courses I take	3.30	Moderate
QB8	I am confident while using PdPDT	3.20	Moderate
QB9	PdPDT gives me the freedom to manage my learning	3.42	Moderate
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.32</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

### *Correlation Test Analysis*

Table 7 shows the correlation coefficient between level of student readiness and level of student motivation. Findings show that student readiness and motivation level have high positive correlation (0.802). This positive correlation relationship means that if the level of student motivation for the implementation of PdPDT is high, then the level of student readiness for the implementation of PdPDT is also high and both variables move in the same direction. This is supported by studies done from Noraini (2010) that state that a positive correlation relationship means that if one variable has a high value, then the other variable is also high and vice versa for a negative correlation relationship, if one variable does not have a high value then the other variable will have a low value. This result also explains the strength of associate ( $R^2$ ) is  $(0.802)^2$ , which is equal to 0.643. It means that if level of motivation increase, it will affect the level of readiness to increase to 64.3%.

**Table 7: Correlation Between the Level of Student's Readiness and The Level of Student's Motivation Towards Pdpdt**

		Level of Student's Readiness	Level of Student's Motivation
Level of Student's Readiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.802***
	Sig. (2 -tailed)		.000
	N	613	613
Level of Student's Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.802***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	613	613

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that the level of students' readiness for the implementation of online teaching and learning is moderate and it is influenced by the student's motivation being at a moderate level. Students are seen to show positive attitudes towards PdPDT and this method still needs improvements to achieve its goal. In this case, student's self-awareness will play an important role to ensure that the PdPDT that will be implemented would achieve the set goals. Furthermore, students stated that location is also the factor that caused the readiness level of students to be moderate. There is limitation in this study that should be looked into to find the level of readiness of students. This study only involved the students of the Commerce Department. The results of this study may vary depending on the sample of students if they are taken from other departments at Polytechnic Kuching Sarawak or from other educational institutions. This study is expected to give a clear picture to the lecturers on the readiness of students so that the lecturers can plan their lessons well and effectively. Moreover, this study can help lecturers to choose the appropriate approach to conduct the lesson. The readiness of students will help to increase the effectiveness of PdPDT which will be the main catalyst for the education of this country in the future

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