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Post-Covid World: Student's Readiness for The New Education Landscape

Introduction

The transitioning process to endemicity in Malaysia has paved the way for many sectors including the education sector to be resumed as normal with thorough and careful assessments following the national health protocols. This is the first time since the pandemic started that all schools will resume face-to-face learning across the country. For this reason, a dialogue concerning a student's readiness for education in a post-Covid setting must be held to identify and understand what aspects of readiness they need to have. This paper is expected to be a reference for parents, guardians, teachers, schools and stakeholders to be aware of the readiness in a context of student social relationships and mental well-being, student motivation and self-discipline, the student learning performance and competence, and student changes and adaptations, therefore, curative steps can be taken and information and solutions needed in relation to the readiness of students in learning are possible to be provided.

Social Relationships and Mental Well-Being (Mohamad Haikal Bin Sadri)

Each individual's life is intertwined with others through social relationships and that is one of the fundamental characteristics of human society. Solid scientific evidence reveals that social relationships affect a range of health outcomes, including health habits, mental health, physical health, and mortality risk (Amati et al., 2018). The magnitude of these effects either provides benefits or detrimental to one's life depending on that individual's effort to protect and secure their connection with others. Conversely, with the fact of the reduction in the physical availability of social connections during the pandemic, many school students have been deprived of regular social interactions with the outside world and the opportunity to grow their social skills which ultimately leads them to the prevalence of anxiety and depression. During the quarantine period, many students face social challenges and are looking for social support and support with social skills to mitigate their problems and anxieties (Li et al., 2021). The potential causes can be attributed to many sources, for example, the subsequent transition to distance learning, the added stress in many homes and the collective trauma they have all been experiencing. All of these issues may have been influenced by the regulation and communication barriers that many students seem to be experiencing at that moment. When social interaction plays a prominent role ensuring students' success academically and

extracurricularly, but, virtual learning is clearly deficient in offering opportunities for meaningful and sustained social interactions. Although some online platforms do have breakout rooms feature for students to have a small group discussion, yet it does not seem to be that helpful for forming an effective social interaction. For instance, a ninth-grader at Don Lugo, Baylin Polite has explained that he does not receive many chances to have conversations with his classmates on Zoom, and although being assigned to a small group discussion, it is hard to make a connection as not many of his friends will engage the during discussion (Robinson, 2020). Without an interactive and effective group discussion, students are unable to reflect on their understanding, organize their thoughts, and find gaps in their reasoning. Moreover, the absence of social interaction defers practical learning to be carried out due to the incapacity of online learning. Practical learning is best to be delivered in a face-to-face learning environment as it relies on personal experience. For example, Agriculture, Science, and Architecture are the courses that require students to do field and lab work; and, as the pandemic gained momentum, many practical and final year students have to postpone their field research or do it from home (Pennisi, 2020). Some courses may have addressed this through video-based learning to acquire skills and gain knowledge; however, this method cannot satisfy all educational needs and goals. Now, with the schools' aim to welcome back their students again, it can be a means to improve the student's social skills. While some students have been eager to return and want to have a conventional learning mode, there are some groups of students who are insufficiently ready. In addition, many have experienced a massive degree of stress while returning to normal educational environments. Students may experience nervousness or reluctance upon returning to school, particularly when they've been studying at home for many months, and they may find it challenging to socially interact with their instructors and peers at school (Unicef, 2021). Therefore, it is primarily the parents, teachers and school who must assist the students in overcoming those anxieties and regaining their footing again so they are ready to face a new normal education in the post-Covid 19 environments.

Motivation and Self-Regulation (Durratul Ain Binti Faisal)

The Covid-19 outbreak has caused significant impacts on students' motivation and self-regulation as the rules and regulations for schooling have been altered in response to the critical situation. In spite of that, towards the post-pandemic phase, major changes are

evidently seen among students, especially in the context of motivation. Having to force being isolated in the blink of an eye has caused a decline in students' motivation to keep on studying. Furthermore, students usually prefer having a companion for a certain occasion like studying as it will likely result in a positive outcome for a student's motivation. According to Hensley, Iaconelli & Wolters (2021) in a study they had conducted, students are prone to elevate their motivations as long as there is an existence of companion presence, namely friends, and study companions which can affect their motivation to perform academically. Some students voiced out that studying at home is rather distracting and not suitable for a learning environment. It is rather challenging since schools are provided with suitable facilities for study purposes such as classrooms, libraries, or an area that is specifically built only for the learning environment (Hensley, Iaconelli & Wolters, 2021). Furthermore, connecting virtually is harder and motivationally challenging, especially for those who are used to seeking help before the emergency remote learning is enforced. Hensley, Iaconelli & Wolters (2021) stated the shifting on remote learning caused a decrease in motivation as students claim to endure the feeling of a lost sense of connection with their educators. Though online learning is available to be used as a platform for communication; however, it may have diminished students' desire to reconnect academically.

Self-regulation in academics is important, and it is the thing that students need to have to keep going on during the pandemic phases. Due to the sudden shifting towards emergency remote learning, students often have to deal with obstacles that could interrupt their self-regulation in studying. As a result, it may cause significant negative interference for students once the school re-opens. Despite being at home, students who opt to do self-regulation in learning which demands self-discipline to study at home would never be an easy job. This is because they are frequently impacted by the surroundings of both external and internal disruptions (Muksin & Makhsin, 2020). Students who tend to procrastinate their work during online learning might lead to a prolonged behaviour of procrastination. This behaviour will cause them to be unable to control their self-regulation once the school re-opens again. For instance, procrastinators are less likely to engage during class hours, especially in asynchronous sessions. In this context, students see the offline mode option as an opportunity for them to view the class recording later, which could result in the inability to complete the task given by their instructors (Melgaard et al., 2021). Though online learning is a form of flexibility in learning and is considered an effective form of learning alternatives. It still tests students' capabilities in applying self-directed learning. In the account of enforcing

online learning, one's self-regulation heavily depends on the support and connection which was lost during emergency remote education. Hence, experts believe that students especially need to increase self-regulation and need to follow beneficial solutions to refrain from any disruption (Hensley, Iaconelli & Wolters, 2021).

Learning Performance and Competence (Amirah Binti Mohd Zakuan)

Covid-19 has affected the learning performance of the students because of the differences in teaching and learning process before and after the outbreak occurs. This also resulted in the student's competence where the students develop new skills during the outbreak. Due to Covid-19, students were unable to go to school. This resulted in difficulty in coping with the teacher delivery method before and after the post-pandemic era for all the students. Most students, especially Malaysian students have lost significant educational progress due to school cancellations lasting more than 40 weeks. Because of a lack of digital devices or internet access, up to 40% of students have been unable to engage in online classes. Children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children living in remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak, children from indigenous communities, stateless children, refugees, and children in detention centres are those who are at risk of poor educational achievements (Singh, A., Hoon, O. P., Raja, G., Ganapathy, S., Thin, N. L., & San, Y.,2022). Following the Malaysian government's MCO declaration, the Ministry of Education has ordered that all schools be closed, with classes held online. The abrupt shift from a situation where online learning platforms were only used in part as teaching aids to one where online learning platforms are used for all learning materials and activities.(MOE, 2020a). Besides that, before the post-pandemic era, the government implemented a rotation system where only 50% of total enrollment can come to school at one time. With this being said, some students are going to classes and some of them need to go to online classes. The students with internet connection problems will be left behind and this makes them feel difficult to cope with their studies. The rotation system took place in order to avoid the covid-19 outbreak spreading widely among the students. Thus, only half the amount of students will go to school at one time. The Education Ministry (MOE) had stated that weekly rotational face-to-face classes will be able to minimise the number of children in each classroom and lower the danger of Covid-19 infection in schools.

Beside that, students develop a wide range of competencies and skills both in and out of school. The sudden shift to fully online teaching and learning forces both teachers and students to adapt to novel situations. In traditional education, where students must regularly attend school to participate in traditional classroom teaching and learning, there are few realistic implementation choices for large-scale online education. Online resources and technologies were once used as instructional aids to enhance the delivery of material (Chen, 2008), but now everything is done online (Zhou et al., 2020). As blended learning becomes popular, students will be urged to manage their own education, which could improve both their communication and intellectual skills. According to Albert Chai (2021), class time can then be transformed into a workshop where students can seek clarification on the subject of the lecture they just attended or collaborate with friends on an assignment while their teacher watches over them. Thus, the students are able to develop a wide range of competencies and skills both in and out of school.

Changes and Adaptation (Norshalin Binti Samat)

The disruption of Covid-19 has brought significant changes in education sectors that have influenced educators and learners significantly. During this time, distance-learning options were adopted to assure the continuity of education and the present discussion shows how the students learned during school closures. However, despite the fact that this potential learning loss may only be temporary, the absence of traditional schooling does bring about a number of other factors that will have a long-term impact on students' academic performance. These factors include the increase in students' resilience, decreased educational goals, and disengagement from the educational system. The response to this issue requires both academics to adopt the new learning norm for a better future education.

According to Pearlman and Barney (2000), adaptability is a trait that is needed for an individual to possess in order to deal with ambiguity, unreliability, and stress, as well as to work beyond the standards. The school reopening announcement has enforced students' resilience after the pandemic academically. Academic-resilience is defined as the dynamic process and interaction between an academic and their ever-changing environment, which makes use of available internal and external resources to achieve beneficial outcomes in response to diverse contextual factors and circumstances (De Los Reyes, Blannin, Cohrsen & Mahat, 2021). During the school closure due to the pandemic, the students faced the

challenge of switching learning from dependent to independent learning, where they needed to be more mentally and physically ready due to virtual learning that required them to be more concerned during the class. The drastic change has prompted considerable anxiety among students regarding the impact on their ability to learn and their mental health (UNICEF, 2020). Besides, the change in how education is delivered also results in differences between education levels and schools in terms of access to resources and the readiness of instructional materials that are necessary for learning. The online platform raised student concerns, such as information delivery, sharing, and assessment.

The understanding of the learner profiles and making use of information regarding cognitive, psychological, social, and motivational factors are also required by virtual learning environments in order to negotiate solutions to challenges in a way that is both collaborative and constructive (Bjorke, 2017). However, the virtual learning that happened during that period increased students' learning loss. According to Asian Development Bank, in 2021, one of the Asian developing nations that have seen one of the largest learning losses is Malaysia where it surpasses that of all other Asian members combined with school closures for more than 40 weeks, and the participation of the students in classes has been severely limited as many as 40%. According to the findings of research conducted by UNICEF in Malaysia's urban areas, 20% of youngsters living in these areas have lost interest in attending school and do not intend to do so in the foreseeable future. According to a study that was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States (PNAS), there was conclusive proof that children learned significantly less under lockdown situations than they would during a usual school year. As stated in a research that was conducted on school children in the Netherlands, students' average scores declined by three percentile points in reading, mathematics, and spelling after only eight weeks away from school. The fact that schools in Malaysia have been physically shuttered for more than 40 weeks suggests that the consequences on our pupils who are from Malaysia will be significantly more severe. This situation will influence students' behaviours to adapt to the school environment after the Covid-19 disruptions. This situation counted difficulties faced among students due to changes in the study environment, the teaching and learning delivery method and the assessment conducted.

Therefore, school reopening has influenced students' efficiency, including performance and achievement. This has been disturbed by long-term school closures, which

have had negative consequences on academic capability and personal development. In this context, the student's readiness to complete assessments and tasks might be challenging as the changing mode of teaching and learning also requires passing the subjects. Recent COVID-19 research shows concern about increased absenteeism, low literacy and mathematics outcomes, and the possibility of long-term educational disengagement, dropout, and lifelong decreases in educational and vocational performance for kids living and studying in vulnerable situations with the shifting of teaching delivery methods, the student's capability during the learning process might be affected. It is believed that every student has a different learning style, and the covid-19 has forced them to shift their learning method, which will affect their educational achievement. The learning style has a huge impact on students since it is the preferred method of processing new information for effective learning. In accordance with the Oxford Group (2013), approximately 16% of learners had negative attitudes toward blended learning, and 26% were afraid that blended learners would not complete their coursework. Due to the closure of educational institutions, there are negative changes in students' performance through completing the assessment and the decision to reopen it back will bring changes to their academic performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has covered students' external and internal learning readiness in the context of student social relationships and mental well-being, student motivation and self-discipline, student learning performance and competence, and student changes and adaptations. To preserve the consistency of student learning readiness, the writers feel that the descriptions of characteristics of learning readiness that every student must possess before returning to school must be investigated in more depth. According to Satrianta (2022), willingness to learn is necessary for effective information acquisition and dissemination-driven learning. In response to the highlighted problems, some possible solutions to rest the problem is providing ongoing assistance to assist pupils in readjusting and catching up following the pandemic. This solution was also mentioned before in The World Bank (2021) that stated after the pandemic, pupils will require individualised and ongoing assistance to help them adjust and catch up. This is because the majority of pupils have lost significant instructional time and may not be prepared for age- and grade-appropriate courses prior to the pandemic. This is a clear statement that the students require remedial instruction to get back on track. In the Survey on National Education

Responses to COVID-19 School Closings, UNESCO-UNICEF also mentioned providing comprehensive assistance to recoup lost learning. For students who may have difficulties in coping with their own self-regulation; teachers can opt to produce systematic pedagogical strategies to regain students' self-regulation in learning. One of the choices that can be adapted by teachers is by incorporating social support or encouragement to improve one's self-regulation. For instance, it is common to use social support in a form of providing feedback for students since it is vital for teachers to monitor their development in the classroom (Tadlock, Roberts & Zumbrunn, 2011). To add more, teachers could also continuously use guides and independent practice to recover students' self-regulation after being separated from traditional learning. For example, when a student is working on their written task during a lesson, teachers need to always monitor while only offering to help only when students are in need, this is because it is one of the ways to promote an independent practice which is useful for their future skills (Tadlock, Roberts & Zumbrunn, 2011).

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