SAUDI ARABIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF E-LEARNING QUALITY DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The quality of the E-learning education in Saudi Arabia has been a major concern by many academicians, especially, and people in general as this platform has not been a priority for education. Not until recently, the world has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which makes every education institution shifted to the online platform to continue the education for the students. Thus, many studies on the perceptions on the online learning have been carried out, and though many are focusing on the perceptions by the education institutions' faculty and administration, there is a lack in the amount of study performed to analyse the students' perceptions of online learning during the pandemic time. The current study is conducted by utilising qualitative methods in order to collect information and investigate the students' perception regarding online learning during the pandemic Covid-19, based on their individual experiences. A number of fifteen (15) students were selected as respondents for the study, in which structured interviews were conducted by using a convenient sampling technique for data collection. Through the discussion, all of the positive and negative perceptions of online learning, as well as the factors contributing to those perceptions were identified. The results of the study found that the positive perceptions were contributed based on the flexibility, cost-effectiveness, availability of the electronic research databases, and well-designed online classroom interfaces. For the negative perceptions from using online learning platforms, the respondents informed that they were contributed by the lecturer's delayed feedback, lack of technical support by lecturers, low in self-esteem and self-motivation, feel isolated, one-way of educational methods, and poorly-designed class materials. Through the findings, the school's administration and lecturers would be able to know the struggles experienced by the students, and eventually come out with better solutions to improve their teaching methods.

Keywords: Online learning; e-learning; perception; students, Saudi Arabia, covid19.

1. Introduction

Information technology has a profound influence in this new era, especially its role in the context of education which cannot be underestimated (Siron et al. 2020). In this present situation of the pandemic Covid-19, the importance of information technology is gaining prominence due to the closing of many educational institutions around the world, including in Saudi Arabia (Hoq, 2020). This situation hence causes difficulties to students' performance in class as they will not be able to attend the conventional way of learning by attending to the physical class (Almaiah et al. 2020). However, instead, they have to shift drastically to online learning in which has not been practised before by many educational institutions (Almekhlafy 2020). The information technology is a major contribution during this period as this system serves an alternation for the continuation of education despite the inability for students to attend school, through an innovative learning management system (Layali & Al-Shlowiy 2020; Razak et al., 2018). This technology has helped to provide an opportunity for educators to incorporate technological methods for the learning process, and assessment for the students' class materials(Alakrash & Razak 2020a).

The initiatives of many people, particularly educators, students and institutional management, are directed towards the effective utilisation of technologies and the for the success of a productive learning process (Khalil et al. 2020). The ultimate aim for the incorporation of modern technology is to provide a better learning process for both students and instructors, as well as to minimise the learning distance due to the quarantine. It has been reviewed that many members of educational institutions and students accepted and appreciated this new way of learning (Alqahtani & Rajkhan 2020). The primary

reasons that contribute to the acceptance are for its efficiency, learning flexibility and manageable settings (Alqahtani et al. 2020). Though, with its number of positive attributes from using the online platform for e-learning process, past studies have listed out some of the drawbacks from the utilisation of the online platform. Some of them including social isolation, no physical interaction between students and instructors, problems with connection, and many more (Almanthari et al. 2020). These limitations are of no surprise as e-learning has never been the first option for education before this pandemic Covid-19 took place, which resorts to the shift of the education process to online learning, utilising internet and digital technology (Sarwar et al. 2020; Alakrash et al., 2021).

Presently, during this pandemic crisis, many educational institutions are experimenting and exploring the e-learning platforms into the incorporation of their school's learning process in order to make it easier for students to explore and utilise the new norm (Hassounah et al. 2020). On top of that, many types of e-learning tools and software are being approached by instructors and educators to incorporate into their teaching to maximise the process of learning (Alshehri et al. 2020). Due to the early phase of the development of this new method of e-learning into teaching pedagogy, students and educators are actually still in the process of adapting to this new teaching method (Balhareth et al. 2020). In view of the prevailing circumstance of online learning and the establishment of the new norm teaching and learning approach, it becomes more important than ever to get to know students' opinion on this new online-based teaching methods, for example, their extent of tolerance and adjustment, whether they wish to recommend the same ideas or to oppose it all together (Sankar et al. 2020). In this context, the purpose of this study is to explore the students' perceptions of e-learning during the current Covid-19 era.

2. Literature Review

The study on students' perception and their e-learning expectations have recently become an interesting topic to be discussed on (Alshehri et al. 2019). This can be proved from the statistical data reported by the National Centre for Education Statistics, in which the reasons of the increase in the demand for e-learning platform is due to the increase in the number of its acceptance in education

pedagogy. Past research shows that most students who are using the online platform for learning are actually satisfied and content with this method (Alanazi & Alshaalan 2020). Nonetheless, many of the previous studies indicated that with the positive attributes contributed from the utilization of e-learning, though it comes with a series of factors that contribute to the adverse perceptions of using this online platform (Chavarría-Bolaños et al. 2020). Some of the factors that were taken into account to the negative perceptions of online learning are the students' age, gender, existing knowledge on computer literacy, and the students' learning styles (Ananga 2020). From there, some researchers conducted studies to discuss the theories on the acceptance of technology towards the students' perception (Diab & Elgahsh 2020). These studies show that many students are equipped with internet access and digital devices such as laptops and cell phones. These digital devices are used to connect the students to formal and informal online platforms, emails, blogs, and so on.

The current study is focusing on the students' experience, preferences and perceptions of online learning. Past related studies have been reviewed in order to gain a broader view on the issue, primarily in the context of participant's perceptions of the technological development. The diffusion of innovation's theory is by far the most relevant idea in the sense of the incorporation of technological means in the study of higher education (Min et al. 2019). Roger indicated that user's perception on the technological development would immensely affect the way they would perceive it. The perception of possible benefits, how far the technology is widely represented than the equivalent commodity, reliability, continuity with existing value, historical actions and knowledge of the users of the advancement, the scale of difficulties in the perception and implementation of the technology (Sasaki 2018).

According to the Technology Acceptance Model, the two main determinants for adopting innovations are the perceived value and satisfaction based on easy implementation and handling of the devices (Scherer et al. 2019). Through the analysis, the connections between course outline, class participation, instructor's participation, and the instructor's role in the teaching environment were analysed regarding how students perceived the quality and the satisfaction based on their understanding. This study is conducted to understand the relationship between the course structure and the students' perception of the e-learning platform. Based on the analysis, it is indicated that the students' perceptions

are not inclined to be affected most by the interaction among themselves (Alakrash & Razak 2020b). However, the difficulty of communicating/having the barrier of interaction between them and their instructors has a higher percentage of contributions to their negative perceptions. Though still, it is noted that the interactions among them did contribute to the perceptions; the data collected was not as significant as the instructor's involvement. The results also show that the involvement of the instructor impacts the performance and the students' satisfaction. The controlled aspect, the instructors' dedication, had controlled the effect on the students' performance based on the instructor's presence. It is also noted that the students' satisfaction, as well as the instructor's present, were based on the involvement of the students in the online class (Razak et al. 2018).

Although learning platform is still new especially it has not been a priority of learning method before the Covid-19 era, but the rapid growth of the implementation can be noticed mainly due to the fast-evolving of the technology. Online learning remains modern and increasingly advances across fast-changing innovations (Moawad 2020). All instructors are required to do significant preparations to make more tremendous efforts to combine teaching methods with technology to boost learning experiences for the students. In brief, online interfaces as networking practise may be of tremendous value to students through a medium for exchanging knowledge and critical thought within the existing online learning setting, but only if instructors consider how the mechanism will function and how they learn in an online environment (Ebaid 2020). Among the three areas of students' perceptions, the engagement method between the students and their instructors appeared to be the most noticeable factor that they would consider. The students' division's most successful engagement methods were the icebreaking session/introductory conversations and interactive work utilising online networking resources, while the submission of updates or e-mails and marking points for both activities were most advantageous for student-to-teacher categories (Alakrash & Razak, 2019). Therefore, we may infer that students' presence helps with the students' participation, enhances their desire to study, lowers the feeling of ''alienation' and boost students' success through the online course settings. These study findings have significant effects for online instructors, developers, and marketers involved in improving the overall involvement in online distance learning (Adarkwah, 2020, Razak et al., 2018).

This study analysis was carried out to explore students' perceptions of their stress regarding the academic while they are in this new online learning experience and how they cope with the situations by utilising their emotional intelligence techniques. The study results have shown that the concern regarding academic achievement and the students' virtual classes and home setting vary greatly. Quite a number of them have started participating in other online classes to help to acquire more diverse skills other than just for academic achievement. Thereby, students sought to manage the disappointing outcomes resulting from the outbreak condition in this emerging online education setting by utilising emotional intelligence and detaching them from loneliness and suicidal thoughts.

Though many recent studies have mentioned that many educational institutions around the world are now shifting and generally make it a common practice to deliver classes online, though many students in this study were giving feedback that they don't really enjoy the online class as much the physical class while listing out some drawbacks and complaining about how the online learning is not up to their need in acquiring knowledge (Alhumaid et al. 2020). This is due to their negative experiences while attending online classes before. This issue thus is making the researcher wonder, what are the factors that caused these negative perceptions? Is it because the students themselves don't enjoy the lessons, or is it because the class materials and the course structure aren't interesting enough? Or is the perceptions come from the instructors /instructors lack or inability to deliver good lessons? What is the students' perception of online education based on their past experiences? What are the factors that contributed to these positive/negative perceptions? All of these questions would be answered in this study in which structural interview sessions would be conducted in order to gain authentic and thorough feedback from the students based on their perceptions on the quality of the new era of online education.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study is designed as a qualitative study by incorporating structured interviews to the respondents participated in the study. Qualitative method would provide a better understanding on the whole situation or phenomenon that describes the event, instead of focusing just on the related cause and implications. Based on the

Technology Acceptance Model, the two most relevant priorities for the acceptance of technology are how useful the innovation would be for the users, and the easy handling of those devices.

Data Collection

Data in this study were collected by conducting a series of interview sessions. The researcher utilised various data sources to verify and do cross-checking based on the observations from several sources for data collection (Patton, 1990). At the early phase of the research, the researcher had formal structured interviews. The interview lasted about 45 minutes for each one of the respondents. Online interviews were performed with Google Meet platform according to the social distance guidelines. Unstructured interviews were then conducted with each of the respondents. The unstructured interviews were conducted in between 30-45 minutes. Apart from that, impulsive questions were also allocated for the respondents and researcher in order to allow more profound variation in the data collected for analysis. The list of questions for the interview was validated and verified by three expert professors in the area of computer science and e-learning study from a university in Saudi Arabia.

Respondents

The sample of this study was 15 Saudi Arabian undergraduate students from one government university. Convenience sampling was used in this study method. Five of the respondents were given the instructions through the Microsoft Teams platform while the rest of the respondents received the instructions through Google Meet.

Data Analysis

A central feature of a qualitative study is the analysis of data. The recorded interviews were transcribed to see if the initial transcripts are correct. Data analysis were done at the same time as the process of data collection. Researchers performed detailed transcription based on the interview sessions and observations. In order to evaluate qualitative data from various outlets over the period, the constant comparative approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was adopted. Data for each study question were structured, which referred to the interactions and the variables that influenced the students' perceptions while attending online classes. The details then complied within two main fields: the positive perceptions and the drawbacks from their experience taking part in online learning.

The following research questions were then answered based on the data collection and analysis of data:

(a) What are the students' experiences while attending the e-learning platform?
(b) What are the students' perceptions of online learning?
(c) What are the students' factors that contributed to their perceptions?
(d) In what ways the factors contributed to these perceptions?

Findings and Discussions

In the findings' section, the data collected from the interview sessions would be grouped into two categories, which are the positive perceptions and the negative perceptions based on the students' experiences on online learning. The positive perceptions are identified as flexibility, cost-effectiveness, availability of the electronic research databases, and well-designed online classroom interfaces. In contrast, the negative perceptions are: instructors' delayed feedback, lack of technical support by instructors, low in self-esteem and self-motivation, feel isolated, one-way of educational methods, and poorly-designed class materials. The factors that lead to the positive perceptions are due to the flexibility for the course participation and ability for self-paced learning, the availability of electronic resources in online libraries, a well-designed teaching structure, speedy Internet access, convenient online class interface interaction and smooth communication with the instructor. On the other hands, the factors leading to the students' negative perceptions are delayed responses from the lecturers, inaccessible technical support by the lecturers, lack in self-adjusting and less self-esteem, feeling isolated, a one way of teaching method, and poorly-designed course materials.

Positive Perceptions

Flexibility

Flexibility has been generally accepted as the most profound attribute of online learning. Flexible time for class participation was, by far, the most significant aspect that led to the students' positive perception. A number of six participants mentioned that flexibility of attending online classes is the major positive aspect that makes it convenient to participate in the lessons because they don't have to go through the hassle to wake up early and drives or take public transports just to attend the class. This makes them save more time and energy. Students are able

to just sit on the table and log in to the online class platform (e.g., Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.) whenever the lecturer/instructor asks them to and/or based on the scheduled time. The students commented: "The online classes make it easy for to log in and view the courses structures and assignment anytime whenever I wish to", "I don't have to rush to just go to the campus and follow the lecturer's time", "I love how this makes it easy to meet everyone because most of us are able to meet anywhere as long as we're being provided with the internet access and computer if for a physical class, usually we won't be able to gather all at one time and one place", "Usually it is hard for me to attend class fully because I'm also a mom", "I don't have to rush to the campus anymore after this!", "Everyone would never be too late to attend a class as from my experience, most of the lecturers won't care if you come in late to the online class! Better late than never".

One of the respondents were always needed to give excuses so the lecturer would understand how important his work is. Still, at the same time, he needed to finish his study and that this course would only provide physical classes. He expressed how he wishes the online courses before would be more available for someone who also is working like him. "I wish the faculty would take note and would by now understand how good and accessible online education is since all students now have to attend all our classes online. Only by this time, everyone understands how flexible this platform is, not just to someone who is working like me, but to others including those who is already married, or to students who are a full-time student but could make use of their available time more wisely to do something more beneficial."

Many of the respondents perceived online classes as somehow a more enjoyable learning experience for them as they don't get pressured by anyone while on online class. "If I have to attend physical class, sometimes it's annoying because some of my course mates just seem not to be able to mind their own business. I also don't feel pressured by lecturers who don't know better than to ask everyone questions every time we attend the class. This online learning makes it easy for me to take my time to understand better and learn on my own pace without feeling irritated by anyone that cross my lines."

Cost-effectiveness

The other positive perception claimed by the students from attending online education is that they won't have to

consider to use up extra money just to get themselves to school. "I go to campus by public transports, so all of the time I always have to allocate an amount of money to keep it for the transportations", "I drive to campus every day, and as all know gas can be a bit on a pricey side especially to a full-time student like me. By attending online classes now, I can see a significant increase in my pocket money! I can save more to get something more important for me, or perhaps for other online courses to gain more skills during this pandemic". Two students noted that they could find a better way to get online references, instead of always paying to get books. "All this time, I never really bothered about going on the internet and search for the references I need. Most of the time before, I would just pay and get the books. But since the pandemic forces us to attend class online and be on the computer most of the time, so I found a way that there is a lot of easier way to get good and reliable references online without spending any penny!"

Easy accessibility to the online library

The availability of the electronic research databases is the third most perceive positive perceptions by the students. The graduate students, mostly, are required to do a lot of research and publications. Hence, they always need to find good references for their research work. Though before, they stated that they could always get the books and articles on the library, or sometimes when they had any inquiries, they could just go and asked the librarian about it. They did not really use the university's library sites' technical support although it has long been available on the library websites. "I thought that it could be hard for me to get online references for my research since everyone now seems to work and attend classes from home, but actually it is way easier than I thought! Our library does provide an easy and fast access to the books or articles I need, which is easier than attending the library itself", "As far as academic assistance is concerned, our library has done a great job. We are able to use our online databases", "Everytime if I have any questions that I want to ask regarding the availability of some articles that I need, I would always find the answer from the librarian, even when the articles that I want is not available, I could use the library loan to access to the restricted articles online", "The repositories are always available to us to use whenever we need them."

Easy Internet Access

The fourth good perception in this analysis is the

convenience of access to the Internet. Easy access to devices and the Internet increases students' willingness to participate in their online classes regularly. They do not need to go to the college because they can access the Internet almost anywhere, they wish to, so this means that they could just stay at home, in the convenient of their room to attend the class. Some can obtain Internet connection incentives due to their need to participate in online courses. "I have access to the Internet at my residential college dorm, I can always access my curriculum whenever I want. Even the wifi is available in campus and the residential colleges and it is fast, so students don't have to worry for any lagging while attending the online classes."

Easy functionality of the online class interfaces

The online courses' structures and outlines make it easy for students to navigate and understand what they need to do for each class. One student mentioned that she finds it convenient how the course's proforma is straightforward, making it easy for her to understand what she would learn for each of the classes she attends and the marking criteria. Also, based on the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that two online interfaces have been utilised by the lecturers/instructors in the university, which are Black board, Microsoft Teams and Google meet. The students mentioned that these two platforms have widescreen interfaces. Whenever they attend online class, although there are many students in the class, these interfaces only would focus on the lessons by the instructor, whether making the screen wide on the instructor's interface, or focusing on the screen share by the instructor, or by anyone who is presenting. This is very crucial as it makes the learning process more manageable, without to navigate around the screen to choose which screen to focus on. "Every time someone is talking in the class, the screen would focus on the particular person, which makes it convenient to know who is talking and what is she talking about".

There is also the availability of automatic grading and scoring by the courseware. One student noted "Whenever I submitted my objective questions quizzes, I could receive back the marks seconds after that! I don't have to wait for days just to get feedback for my performance as I might forget about the questions already. So, this automictic grading is making everything way better to review my answers". However, some online software does not provide these services. Another student

complained that her class do not incorporate the same type of software as the first student mentioned above. "We use different courseware, and it is a bit hard for us to review our answers as even after a few days, the instructors didn't give feedback from the test we took—this impact my studies as I won't be able to review my answers straight away. I hope the lecturer would implement the same software that would be able to do automatic grading, so it is easier for all the students to revise faster".

Familiarity with lecturer

One other aspect that contributed to the positive perceptions and good experiences for the students attending online classes is their familiarity with the lecturer. Some students mentioned that they knew how the lecturer behaved before in class and that they are comfortable dealing and leaning with the lecturer, making them feel more easy-going and willing to spend their time listening to the lecture for few hours. "I like the lecturer because she knew how to make us feel comfortable and that her way of teaching is straightforward with swift methods", "I like how one of my lecturers always not take extra time to conduct a class. He would only allocate a good amount of time and made sure to deliver it in the approximate amount of time allocated, without telling stories which do not concern the class". One student mentioned that one of her lecturers could understand the struggle of an online class and that not everyone has a good internet connection. "She would always excuse those who have internet connectivity problem, and if there are any questions the students wanted to ask, she would always be available out of the class period to help us. This makes me feel super comfortable knowing how lovely she is to her students".

Negative Perceptions

Lecturers' delayed feedback

The lecturer's late feedback was seen as the central element influencing the student's negative perception with online learning success. The students would want to expect that the lecturers are able to help them by giving immediate feedback on their performance in class, whether it is class assignments or test marks. "I usually would not receive any feedback up to a week after I submitted my assignment. I would want to know my marks and comments so I can improve on what I'm learning.", "The lecturer should be able to give feedback for at least a few days after submission. This would help tremendously to

the competence of online learning since we cannot attend face to face, so giving faster feedback would at least make up the time that we won't be able to get direct communication with the lecturers and other students". Many of the students reported that some lecturers did not even reply to their emails and messages. "I know that we shouldn't discuss and text to their private numbers, but through emails and the online class discussion's board would be fine. The problem is many of my lecturers they don't even read their emails and reply to the messages sent to the online class", "Some of the lecturers would take up to four days to just reply to one single question, and what is the question is important and that we would need an immediate answer? If they reply after a few days, then it won't be a help at all". Many of the students are frustrated and commented that some lecturers actively reply to their questions only during the first two weeks of the semester. But after that, they don't keep up the pace as fast anymore. When the students did not get the lecturer's comments and feedback as per their wish, they became irritated, discouraged and less inspired. "It's always very easy to be upset when I encountered some question that I don't quite understand. "The lecturer is possibly occupied, spending all day at teaching many lessons. "This communication breakdown caused my enthusiasm to drop, and I almost drop out my class.". The respondent said many times during the discussion about the dissatisfaction he had faced because of delays or insufficient input from his mentor such as "I don't fancy this class, no reviews, no reaction." The respondents also mentioned that "the amount of time and reaction times is a detriment in all features of online education."

Lack of technical support by lecturers

Whenever the students experienced some problems regarding technological means, they would want to ask someone for help. The students would mostly go to their lecturer to ask for any misunderstanding or questions regarding the technical medium they are using. However, most of the time, the lecturers are not available to help them when they are in need. Therefore bad impressions are obtained if the technical assistance from the lecturer is not available. One student said she and her peers had little technical experience, "Many of us don't know how to navigate the computers appropriately, let alone the software and all the little buttons on the interface. So sometimes, we would need some assistance, but

unfortunately, none of our friends knows the solutions as they're also seeking help". She said "I've got to obtain advice from my course mates who are computer literate on how to submit and to compile messages. "A how-to mini-tutorial will be perfect, or some kind of lessons that could be conducted by the instructors of the university to give us a broader knowledge on how to use the technology correctly".

Low in self-esteem and self-motivation

Though online students appreciated the versatility and ease of online education, their obligation also needed to be considered. Because of the privilege and convenience of online classes, students are strongly predicted to be effective in self-esteem and self-motivation. If students cannot monitor something, the deadline or even the exams' schedules might be skipped. One of the students mentioned that he missed the deadline of his assignment. For another chance to take the exam, he had no other way but to email the lecturer. Even so, he could not reach the lecturer by sending emails, also due to this poor communication means, which triggered his unpleasant experience.

"I get easily distracted, and I always procrastinate. I can't seem to be able to do things accordingly and that I always do things last minute". They also mentioned that it used to be easier before that although it was stricter when in the conventional classes, but due to that, they were able to get information directly from lecturers from time to time about deadline and exam schedules. Friends also would keep on reminding about it so there is no way they could forget about it easily. "If I was on a campus, I would speak with peers, and we can recall when we should submit our assignments and when will exams be conducted".

Students spent their days doing household works, taking care of their younger siblings, and various other works or tasks. Since the class now is all online, they sometimes forgot that they need to attend class at a particular time. "Sometimes, I was into the activity I was doing until I lost track of time and forgot that I have assignments that need to be done. And when I remember, it was just a few hours before the due submission. This always made me feel so frustrated that I had to complete it fast and didn't really care about the quality of my work". Though, they all realised that they should be more aware of the situation and should always keep a journal, or install any apps on their phone that could remind them of their tasks. By this

way, all of their tasks could possibly be done at the right time, and they would not have to worry, making them feel better about themselves.

Feeling of Isolation

There is a range of factors that have provided the online students with a feeling of isolation. One explanation was the absence of interpersonal contact or engagement between the lecturers and their students. The respondents felt heavy loneliness during the online course, in which one of the students kept mentioning "I feel like I'm currently n nowhere and that I live alone in an isolated island." Mainly because there is no group discussing what they used to do when they're attending conventional classes, they feel so lonely because there is no one to share their activities and life with. "I don't even know how many students are in my online class. Even I don't know the lecturer's full name sometimes". This is no surprise as some students would not really care about others, but if they are in a conventional class, by any means they would always encounter everyone and at least would know most of them.

One-way of Educational methods

The one-way of educational methods utilised in the online class is another explanation of why there was a sense of isolation. In this study, two respondents suggested that the online class platform's discussion section was their lecturer's only form of contact and involvement. "We only had discussed through the discussion sections. The lecturer would not address our email request. Most of the time, it won't be answered. This makes most of us won't bother to even send a message on the discussion section as we all know it's just a waste of our efforts. The only way we could interact with our lecturers and ask questions or seek help with our study that would be while we're attending the online class". The one-way of educational methods involved lessons arranged for students by the lecturer. Only in the post-grad courses that written materials were included. "Everything provided for the class materials is printed notes—no video, no audio, but just solely texts. We wish lecturers would prepare other educational means so it would be more enjoyable for us".

Poorly-designed class materials

Well-designed class materials can improve students' use of class pages. However, a poorly designed course interface will make students lose in seeking information. "Many time, the other students and even the lecturer complain

about how the online interfaces structure. Sometimes, our lecturer would put a deadline, but once I want to submit, I can't submit anything, and this makes me submitted my assignment late. Hassle for me to have to email my lecturer and told her everything that happened", "There are classes that when I want to click on the link to get further details on the class structure outlines, but nothing comes out". The students also noted the irregular manner in which the archival data records were constructed. This disparity created disappointment and annoyance to students as they sought the appropriate details.

The overall standard rating of online learning among students revealed that they did not think they had a good and high-quality online instruction. Moreover, the online classes' performance did not reach the IHEP benchmarks. The benchmarks of IHEP state that: "Feedback on tasks and concerns of students is a helpful and timely manner. At beginning an online programme, students need to be informed with an adequate introduction. Additional course material on course goals, principles etc. is offered to students. Sufficient library services will be accessible for the students, including the virtual library. Help supports are offered to students, such as awareness programmes, professional specifications, formation, technical support, staff and a formal structured framework to address students' complaint".

4. Conclusion Remarks

This study aimed to examine the perception of students regarding online education. In order to accomplish this objective, qualitative research methods used in this study were well adapted. A level of knowledge that cannot be found through a quantitative analysis was the intensity of information obtained by evaluating interviews, observations and structured observations. As respondents attending online classes, they had quoted that they experienced positive and negative perceptions, even though their encounters appeared to be more positive. The respondents' positive experiences included flexibility, cost-effectiveness, availability of the electronic research databases, and well-designed online classroom interfaces. The students' negative experiences were: lecturer's delayed feedback, lack of technical support by lecturers, low in self-esteem and self-motivation, feel isolated, one-way of educational methods, and poorly-designed class materials. Most of the previous research findings examined in this study acknowledge the findings of this current study.

After the interview sessions, the respondents were asked to

rate the level of their online learning experiences. The answers were mostly moderate, which means that they are not fully satisfied with online education. There are many factors that could be fixed by the university administrations and lecturers, particularly since they do not think that what they learn through online classes of a high-quality level. The personality of the participants can have some influence on the way they feel as independent learners. Online students might need to adjust their own behaviours, like lack of self-motivation, time on the mobile phone or to be a productive learner without being active. Nevertheless, all factors, except the factors related to learning characteristics (lack of self-esteem or self-motivation) are linked to the online lecturer when their negative experiences were examined.

Through this study, it is concluded that the lecturer holds a significant role in ensuring online education quality. Not only because the trainer directly "confronts" the students, but because the lecturer carries more obligation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the university administration should not be involved in online education quality assurance. More than that, the administration should provide adequate assistance to make online teaching effective by giving out training, financial supports and sponsorship), recruit potential instructors for the faculty and motivate all educators. This study has extensively helped in the study field of online learning. It has also provided valuable information to students, who may provide more efficient online education for both web instructors and executives. This study revealed that every higher level of education should adopt IHEP benchmarks as an indicator of each institution's online programming. If online learning programs do not meet the criteria, students will not perceive their online classes as high quality. The study also showed that more study is required in the field of communications improvement and multimedia use in order to improve the students' online education experience in terms of both the content of the courses and social connections.

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