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Online Distance Learning Challenges and Job Performance During Covid-19 Pandemic: Experience of Primary School Teachers in Dungun, Terengganu

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ABSTRACT

The global crisis sparked by the coronavirus epidemic has had a significant influence on global health, social interaction, and economic growth, and Malaysia is no exception. During the COVID-19 pandemic season, the government has mandated that schools remain closed and that all learning be done online. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online transactions, and interactions, as well as e-learning, have become the standard, and Internet connectivity is no longer an option, but rather a requirement. This study aims to examine the relationship between teachers' performance and the challenges they faced with online distance learning. Four primary schools in both urban and rural areas in Dungun were involved in the study. The online survey questionnaire was distributed to 111 primary school teachers in selected schools. Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze the relationship between independent variables (new technology, teaching skills, working environment and students' acceptance) and dependent variable (job performance). The results demonstrated a moderately positive link between the job performance of the teachers and all independent variables. The relationship between the working environment and job performance was the strongest. While there was little association between students' acceptance and job performance. More study is needed to include additional elements that may also have an impact on work performance besides filling the knowledge gaps in this overall grasp of the obstacles of online distance learning.

Keywords: *job performance, new technology, students' acceptance, teaching skills, working environment*

INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial to the development of social and economic capital. It promotes creativity and innovation, provides young people with the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce, and is a key engine of economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on Malaysians' lives, though in different ways. The world was not prepared for what happened next when the COVID-19 virus was first exposed in December 2019. The virus had spread to Asia, Europe, and America by the end of January 2020, turning into a global pandemic. Governments all around the world are still rushing

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to adapt to and adopt conditions that are leading to a new normal in their country, as Covid-19 virus infections continue to rise. Since then, the modern socio-economic ecosystem has been driven into a prolonged shutdown, with short-medium, and long-term consequences for healthcare, education, culture, and society (Azman & Abdullah, 2021). The global impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on education has been remarkable. This worldwide pandemic has driven us further into a digital environment, and behavioral changes are likely to have long-term consequences once the economy recovers. However, not everyone is ready to embrace a more digital way of life. This issue has also highlighted the widening divide between connected and unconnected people, exposing how far behind many people are in terms of digital reception.

Many people hope that their life will return to normal as quickly as possible, and for parents it involves resuming their children's schools. Since mid-March 2020, 4.9 million pupils in pre, primary, and secondary schools across the country have been unable to participate in formal classroom learning (Berita Sunway, 2020). The vast school closures due to the COVID-19 crisis result in various adverse consequences on education and pose serious concerns (Shin & Hickey, 2020). Through required remote learning, the pandemic came to light the close link between education and technology connectivity, and, with it, the link between connectivity and social justice. Schools will open and close as COVID-19 cases increase or decrease. However, remote learning has become permanent in some form. It will always be a part of the educational landscape. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online transactions, and interactions, as well as e-learning, have become the standard. Since the advent of online education, the teaching and learning environment has altered tremendously. Teaching activities shifted from typical classroom meetings to online or offline remote learning using electronic tools. Teachers had to adapt to online teaching, which required them to use a variety of digital tools and resources to address problems and adopt new teaching and learning strategies (Eickelmann & Gerick 2020).

Except for the first few days of the Movement Control Order (MCO) (when teaching and learning were disrupted), Education Minister Dr Mohd Radzi Md Jidin stated that learning activities have continued as usual, with teachers being advised to find the best alternative ways to deliver lessons (Sunway.com, 2021). However, the reality differs significantly from the regular school day, where students, parents, and teachers continue to struggle with e-learning. Inadequate equipment and hostile settings make it even more difficult for teachers and students to adopt home-based e-learning. Due to the lack of a personal connection in an online class, student motivation, interaction, and the educator's capacity to alter course materials and presentations are all lost. On the other hand, technological concerns, distraction, time management, staying motivated, comprehending course expectations, the lack of in-person connection, adapting to foreign technology, and uncertainty about the future are all challenges with online learning.

In terms of assistance for home learning, there is also a family divide across socioeconomic categories as claimed by Goh Sui Hui, a science teacher in a Chinese primary school in Johor, not to mention the fact that the teachers must create all their own classwork because the education department has nothing for them to use. It would have been beneficial if teachers had had prior training on how to conduct classes online. Another example is Marlina Azhar, a 29-year-old Malay language teacher at a Kuala Lumpur national elementary school, agreed that extra training would be beneficial. She further added that, as difficult as it is for the pupils, it is also difficult for the teachers. They must create their own coursework and determine how to best communicate it to students (Kayankumari, 2020).

According to a study in 2020 undertaken by UKM's Faculty of Education and coordinated by Associate Prof. Dr. Azlin Norhaini Mansor, 50-60% of teachers are hesitant to use online instruction, and 50-60% of teachers only use PdPR for one to two hours. Teachers' ability to use IT equipment is only about 50-60%. Only 40-50 percent of teachers can adapt their instruction to the internet setting. Although the move to remote learning was rather successful in urban areas, it did not prove to be the panacea for children in rural areas and distant indigenous villages during the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, several parents were said to find online schooling difficult or tedious and were unable to support their children's

learning at home. In a survey conducted by MCII, 25% of 550 parents claimed that online learning was not significant, compared to 65% who thought it was. Parents who were illiterate or had a restricted education had a difficult time supervising and assisting their children. According to NGOs, the urban poor thought that the lockdown caused their children to fall behind in their education. Even when schools reopened in phases in June 2020, four months later under Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), not all students returned. Some unemployed parents, for example, could no longer pay the school bus fare. Others simply seemed uninterested in returning to school when it resumed (Kayankumari, 2020). While these issues have been thoroughly researched on a global scale, research on online distance learning obstacles among Malaysian school teachers, particularly in primary schools, has remained new and limited. Subsequently, the primary goal of this research is to look at the relationship between online distance learning challenges and teachers' job performance in a primary school in Dungun, Terengganu.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School Closure and Reopening Timeline

On March 18, 2020, schools in Malaysia were shuttered, which interfered with five million pupils' ability to learn. The Ministry of Education introduced a national online teaching and learning platform to keep children learning. As part of the country's strategy to combine face-to-face and online learning, the national platform has kept three million children learning throughout school closures and will continue to play a significant role after gradual school reopening beginning on 24 June 2020.

Table 1 displays the timeline of Malaysian school closures and reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic between January 2020 and March 2021.

Table 1: Timeline of school closures and reopening in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic

2020	
30 January 2020	The COVID-19 outbreak has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the WHO
11 March 2020	COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).
18 March 2020	The first MCO is launched
Mid July 2020 onwards	As the case number was reduced, the school reopened in stages.
14 October 2020	Due to an increase in infection, schools in Selangor, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, and Putrajaya have been closed once more
9 November 2020	The nationwide school shutdown has been extended till the conclusion of the school year
2021	
11 January 2021	The second MCO has begun
20 January 2021	Physical education classes began for individuals taking school-leaving exams
March 2021	Malaysian students return to school in stages

Source: Coleman (2021)

The theoretical framework of the study is depicted in Figure 1. Teaching skills, new technology, student acceptance, and the workplace environment are included in the independent factors. While teachers' job performance was the dependent variable.

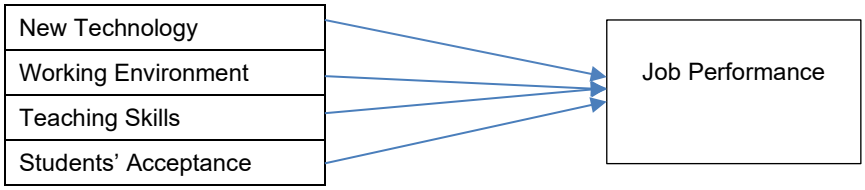

Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

New Technology

For people in all communities, school closures have significant social and economic consequences. The consequent disruptions increase previously existing inequalities not only in the educational system, but also in other aspects of their life. Teachers, students, and parents were all faced with a brand-new predicament as a result of the school lockout (Huber & Helm, 2020). Teachers are overwhelmed and upset due to a lack of training and expertise with online lessons. They must come up with a method on their own that works for each class, if not each student to maintain social distance during encounters between instructors and students and throughout learning processes, the COVID-19 epidemic forced a substantial dependence on technology.

Today's education is heavily influenced by technology. Using technology in education has many benefits, including making it simple to access diverse web resources, enabling engagement, and changing the passive learning environment into an active one (Kale & Akcaoglu, 2018). Schools are required to employ technology to improve their student's education, but there are some obstacles to overcome (Johnson et al. 2016). Support and aid at school are also crucial. More than 1.5 billion students had to take online classes from their homes, and more than 60 million teachers had to use digital tools to deliver their lessons (United Nation, 2020). The transition to online teaching and learning, however, was not fully embraced by all educational institutions and teachers (European Commission, 2020). Most teachers lacked adequate digital skills and experience with online instruction and learning (Nguyen et al. 2020). When teaching online, teachers must adjust to new pedagogical concepts and teaching methods for which they have not received training (Schlichter, 2020). Teachers need to know when and how to use technology, which, when used appropriately, can be a useful tool in the classroom (Hollebrands 2020). Teachers had to adapt to online teaching, which required them to use a variety of digital tools and resources to address problems and adopt new teaching and learning strategies (Eickelmann & Gerick 2020).

Apart from that, according to the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018), conducted by John and Ralph (2018), 40% of teachers needed professional development in employing technology, while nearly 20% of teachers identified a serious need for extra training. It was found that teachers who had had in-service training and were younger used technology more frequently than older teachers. Most teachers preferred using technology, but the biggest barrier, according to the National Literacy Trust, was a lack of training. Nearly a quarter (23.3%) of teachers said they had not been trained in using technology to teach reading (Picton 2019).

Working Environment

The sort of workplace a company effects the caliber of employees that are drawn in, how they act, how well they perform, and how long they stay in the company (Nzewi et al., 2018). Before starting work, it is crucial to confirm that the setting is suitable because this can have a significant impact on job satisfaction. The office setting affects employees in some way because they spend a large percentage of their time there. In a favorable work atmosphere, staff members perform better because they feel

secure and at ease. Since the workplace environment affects employees' emotions, if an employee appreciates their workplace, they will feel at ease at work and perform their tasks quickly (Hafeez et. al., 2019).

When it comes to teachers and the workplace, working from home frequently while juggling conflicting family obligations, such as the need to keep an eye on their kids, was a particular challenge for teachers in the COVID-19 working environment. Teachers were worried that they wouldn't have enough time to respond to distance learning properly (Berry et. al., 2020).

Teaching Skills

Teaching skill refers to some specific qualities that teachers must possess to uphold the demanding standards of their profession, building on the notion of teacher competence. It is divided into two sections: the psychological side and the motivational side (Benali et al., 2018). Many studies have focused on teachers' perceptions about the cognitive elements of their competence as well as their knowledge, such as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and technical pedagogical knowledge (TPK) (Perifanou et al. 2019). The basis of an instructor's motivational skill is composed of self-efficacy (Tondeur et. al., 2017) and teacher passion (Tondeur et. al., 2019). It has a considerable impact on teachers' professional development (Fraillon et. al., 2019) and is much more relevant to students' academic success (Winthrop, 2020) from the standpoint of the cognitive components of teacher competence.

Despite having an optimistic and encouraging outlook toward online education, several teachers believed that they could be taught more effectively in conventional teaching due to inadequate preparation and efficiency in virtual teaching. (Sareen & Nangia, 2020). Huma et al. (2021) state that paying attention to teachers' training in subject matter knowledge aids in maintaining student learning outcomes and aids learners in comprehending pertinent concepts encountered during the learning process. During the COVID-19 epidemic, which has tougher standards for teacher competency, particularly their technology pedagogical content proficiency, teachers and students were forced to adopt online learning and teaching (TPCK). Prior studies have focused on how ICT enhances online learning for students as well as how teachers employ technology tools to deliver online instruction (Eickelmann & Gerick, 2020). Consequently, teachers' TPCK has a big impact on how well students learn.

It is now clear how important it is for all instructors to have digital skills (European Commission, 2020). Supporting teachers' initial education and ongoing professional development in digital skills and cutting-edge pedagogies is one of the EU's key goals. Providing teachers with a high-quality initial education and encouraging their ongoing professional development and collaboration can boost their effectiveness as teachers.

Students' Acceptance

The transition from face-to-face to entirely virtual instruction has had an impact on pupils. This has caused a significant adjustment for them and is likely to increase stress levels and have effects on their mental health. Malaysia Education Minister, Dr. Mohd Radzi Md Jidin urged that no pupils drop out of learning during the school closure. Schools need to ensure that all students can follow the home learning and teaching (PdPR) based on their needs and readiness. So that students may master the material of the mandated subjects, teachers must discover acceptable PdPR approaches. The main issue that he wants to raise is related to the presence of students who follow PdPR. The Home Learning and Teaching (PdPR) system adopted by the national school system to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, is seen to indirectly trigger the issue of 'learning burnout' or loss of motivation to learn and read among students, especially primary school students. This issue is thought to be contributing to an increase in the rate of learning retardation, with six out of ten kids losing enthusiasm to follow PdPR,

according to a study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the B40 group in apartment communities near Kuala Lumpur.

As supported by a lecturer at Pusat Kajian Pendidikan and Kesejahteraan Komuniti, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Dr. Anuar Ahmad, to avoid more students falling behind in their studies and thereby creating a "lost generation," the issue of learning dropout and "learning fatigue" must be addressed urgently. He further added that according to statistics provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE) on October 11, 2020, the primary school dropout rate grew to 0.13 percent from 0.12 percent in 2019, while the secondary school dropout rate jumped from 1.14 percent to 1.26 percent during the same period. According to a study conducted by the Faculty of Education, UKM and led by Associate Prof Dr. Azlin Norhaini Mansor for the year 2020, 70 to 80 percent of teachers said that getting students' attention and focus was one of the main challenges in implementing PdPR, and the attendance rate did not reach 80 percent. The low attendance rate of less than 80 percent can be considered a major problem for the PdPR process. According to the study, the student's concentration problems are associated with an unconducive home environment (Berita Harian, 2021). This is also supported by an article reported in Berita Harian, a total of 7,629 people or four percent of the 174,510 students from the B40 group in Terengganu were categorized as dropping out or not attending any Home Teaching and Learning (PdPR) sessions while schools were closed (Zatul & Baharom, 2021).

As mentioned by Dipti Kumar, Chief Executive of the Malaysian Collective Impact Initiative (MCII), a non-governmental organization (NGO) focused on education in Malaysia, the technology side of the problem was just connectivity and access to hardware. Other barriers keep students from the bottom 40% of households back (B40). For many of them, the lack of a suitable learning environment is a significant disadvantage. Many of the B40 groups live in cramped quarters, with an average of six persons per household. For the student to completely participate in online learning, this might be distracting and distressing. Students who are cut off from their peers in the same learning group must adjust to variations in learning styles and become more self-reliant. MYReaders Resources' head of program and training, Rachael Francis, confers the problems that B40 pupils face in an article that appeared in Edge Malaysia. Only a quarter of the students were responsive to courses or assignments assigned using low-tech platforms like WhatsApp. Some even teach at night because it is the only time when the family's only device is available. Siblings are frequently needed to share a single gadget for a limited period. Students, on the other hand, are dealing with new mental health difficulties because of the school closures.

Job Performance

The degree to which one satisfies the formal requirements of a job and completes the given obligations is known as job performance (Shin & Hyun, 2019). The employment demands of the business can have an impact on job performance, employee dedication, and ultimately job contentment (Bonhak et al., 2020). The business's employment requirements can affect employee commitment, job performance, and, ultimately, job satisfaction. Setting up a home office, creating new structures with coworkers, and managing the work-life balance are just a few of the challenges. Many parents cared for their children during school hours, and kindergartens were closed.

However, COVID-19 issues, such as demands resulting from the haziness of the work-family boundary, are predicted to continue to present challenges to employees' ability to do their jobs. When working from home during the epidemic, many employees claimed to be less productive, supporting this idea (Shao et al, 2021). According to a study conducted by Agus et al. (2020), losing motivation for work is one of the drawbacks of working from home that can affect job performance. The causes are extremely many, including the fact that the working environment is not what one would expect and that the ambiance at home is not like that of an office.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

The challenges of online distance learning and teachers' job performance are examined in this study. Primary school teachers in Dungun, Terengganu, both in urban and rural areas, were the study's target group. Two primary schools in Dungun's urban region and two schools in its rural area were chosen as the sampling frame, totaling 111 teachers. The District Education Office in Dungun, Terengganu has provided the list. Table 2 displays the sampling frame of the study.

Table 2: Sampling Frame Table

Name of School	Area	Total Number of Teachers
Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Dungun	Urban	32
Sekolah Kebangsaaan Kuala Dungun		54
Sekolah Kebangsaan Kampung Shukor	Rural	12
Sekolah Kebangsaan Minda Talong		13
	TOTAL	**111**

Items and Measurement

In this study, a quantitative sample survey method was employed. Information was gathered using a structured Google Forms questionnaire. Six parts made up the questionnaire. Section A gathers information on the instructors' demographic profiles such as their place of employment, gender, age, pay, length of service, and marital status. While parts B through F contain ten elements covering educational techniques, new technologies, student acceptance, the workplace, and job performance. Using a five-point Likert scale, teachers' opinions about the challenges of online distance learning were acquired. The scales were as follows: (1) "Strongly Disagree," (2) "Disagree," (3) "Neutral," (4) "Agree," and (5) "Strongly Agree." Additionally, the surveys were created in bilingual, Bahasa Malaysia and English so that the teachers could comprehend and respond to them more easily.

Hypotheses Development

H^1 There is a positive relationship between teaching skills and job performance among primary school teachers.

H^2 There is a positive relationship between new technology and job performance among primary school teachers.

H^3 There is a positive relationship between students' acceptance and job performance among primary school teachers.

H^4 There is a positive relationship between the working environment and job performance among primary school teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Analysis

The respondents' demographic data was shown in table 3. More than half of the respondents were female (69.4%) and the rest were male (30.6%). More than half (54) of the respondents were a teacher at SK Kuala Dungun, followed by 32 (28.8%) from SK Bandar Dungun. The rest were from SK Minda Talong (13) and SK Shukor (12). Almost half of the respondents were from the age group of 31-40 while the least was 9.9% within the age group of 51-60. Apart from that, 36 (32.4%) of the respondents obtained a salary range from RM5,001 - RM6,000>, followed by 23 (20.7%) of the respondents attained salary of RM4,001 - RM5,000 while the least was 6 (5.4%) of the respondents

obtained salary of <RM2,000 - RM2,500. In term of years of service, 35 (31.5%) of the respondents having 6-10 years teaching experience, 25 (22.5%) with <2-5 years, 19 (17.1%) with 11-15 years, 15 (13.5%) with 21-25 years, 9 (8.1%) with 16-20 years and 8 (2.7%) with 26-30> years' experience. The majority of the respondents were married 88 (79.3%) while 20 (18%) were single.

Table 3: Demographics of Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	34	30.6
Female	77	69.4
Workplace		
SK Bandar Dungun	32	28.8
SK Shukor	12	10.8
SK Kuala Dungun	54	48.6
SK Minda Talong	13	11.7
Age (year)		
20-30	21	18.9
31-40	52	46.8
41-50	27	24.3
51-60	11	9.9
Salary		
<RM2,000 - RM2,500	6	5.4
RM2,500 - RM3,000	10	9
RM3,001 - RM3,500	17	15.3
RM3,501 - RM4,000	19	17.1
RM4,001 - RM5,000	23	20.7
RM5,001 - RM6,000>	36	32.4
Years of Service		
<2-5 years	25	22.5
6-10 years	35	31.5
11-15 years	19	17.1
16-20 years	9	8.1
21-25 years	15	13.5
26-30> years	8	7.2
Marital Status		
Single	20	18
Married	88	79.3
Others	3	2.7

Reliability Analysis

A reliability study has been carried out to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire's items. The range of the Alpha Coefficient and the degree of connection are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha

Alpha Coefficient Range	Strength of Association
< 0.6	Poor
0.7 to < 0.8	Good
0.8 to < 0.9	Very Good
0.9	Excellent

Table 5: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Teaching skills	.947	10
New Technology	.986	10
Students' Acceptance	.961	10
Working Environment	.976	10
Job Performance	.980	10

The reliability analysis of the independent variables consists of teaching abilities, new technology, student acceptance, and workplace environment and the dependent variable which is job performance is shown in Table 5. For all independent factors and the dependent variable, Cronbach's alpha revealed a strong and excellent level of connection.

Correlation Analysis

Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Teaching Skills, New technology, Students' Acceptance, Working Environment and Job Performance

Variables	N	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation
Teaching skills	111	0.00*	.536
New technology	111	0.00*	.523
Students' acceptance	111	0.00*	.378
Working environment	111	0.00*	.585

According to Table 6, there is a relationship between teaching skills, new technology, student acceptance, and working environment toward job performance. The results of the correlation suggest that three independent variables; teaching skills (r = 0.536, p 0.05), new technology (r = 0.523, p 0.05), and working environment (r = 0.585, p 0.05) have positive and moderate correlations with the dependent variable. While there is a weak positive link between students' acceptance (r = 0.378, p 0.05) and job performance.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the relationship between the independent factors and the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: Relationship between Teaching skills, New technology, Students' acceptance and Working environment on Job performance

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient
Teaching skills	0.246
New technology	0.172
Students' acceptance	-0.145
Working environment	0.411
R^2	0.407
Sig. value	p < 0.000

The strength of each independent variable to job performance is shown in Table 7. β is the regression equation values in forecasting the dependent variable from independent variables. Results show that teaching skills, new technology, students' acceptance, and the working environment accounted for 40.7% (R2 = 0.407) of the variance in job performance. Other factors account for the model's residual of 59.3%. When referring to the individual contribution dimension is shown in table 6, which represents teaching skills (= 0.246, p 0.000), new technology (= 0.172, p 0.000), and working environment (= 0.411, p 0.000), respectively. The findings highlighted the positive relationship between teaching skills, new technology, and the working environment toward job performance. The student's acceptance, however, shows a negative correlation with employment performance (= -0.145, p 0.000).

As a result, this study accepted all three proposed hypotheses which are teaching skills, new technology, and working environment have a positive relationship with job performance. The findings however rejected hypothesis 4 of this study since students' acceptance has a negative relationship with job performance.

Results show a moderately positive association between the working environment, new technology, and job performance while a negative relationship between students' acceptance and job performance. The working environment appears to be the primary determinant of job performance. As mentioned by Hafeez et al. (2019), employees spend a large segment of their working lives in their places of employment, and as a result, the working environment has a huge impact on them. a comfortable and safe work environment makes it possible for people to perform at their best. Aziz et. al. (2015) further strengthened that the workplace is a setting where employees do daily tasks and since then a comfortable and safe work environment makes it possible for people to perform at their best. Working from home during a school closure poses its own set of issues for teachers because many teachers are also parents. Results showed that the working environment had a moderate positive impact on job performance. Some teachers could find their workplace comfortable, while others might not. On the other hand, there are both advantages and disadvantages to online distance learning. Positively, this situation gives teachers the chance to use their imagination when delivering remote teaching and learning. Some teachers believe that finishing work at home allows for greater flexibility. A role can be more easily divided with the work-from-home policy. Some of the teachers believe that they may create a more safe, more comfortable, and more welcoming environment when they teach from home.

While there is also a positive moderate link between teaching skills and new technology towards job performance, these two aspects also need to be examined. Teachers need a variety of skills to be successful, especially when working from home. As said by Alamgir et. al. (2017), an effective teacher has to have good communication skills, including good classroom management, updated knowledge, and retaining personality. On the other side, new technology has made it possible for students to be involved and learn in ways that they have never done in a classroom setting before (Jennifer et. al., 2016). According to Raja and Nagasubramani (2018), a crucial element in the successful integration of ICT in education is teachers' attitudes toward computers and technology.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic breaks the global educational system and community social life, including teachers. Due to the guidelines of preserving social and physical distance to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the practice of face-to-face instruction and learning in informal schools was temporarily outlawed. The current study looked at the challenges that teachers faced when attempting online distance learning during the COVID-19 outbreak and school closure. The findings of this study revealed that there is a moderate to low link between aspects of online distance learning challenges and job performance. The working environment appears to be the main determinant of teachers' job performance while students' acceptance seems to have no relationship with teachers' job performance. The working conditions of teachers are crucial since they directly affect students' learning and acceptance, and a problem-free teaching environment also makes for a comfortable learning environment. Likewise, the findings of this study would convince educational institutions and policymakers to improve the quality of online teaching with the most up-to-date teaching methodology combined with government support for upgrading fundamental infrastructure. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on providing teachers with enough technology training on how to conduct virtual classes. It is essential to consider that learning strategies must adapt throughout an epidemic. Additionally, the instructional program needs to be modified if the school needs to be closed again in the future. The effectiveness of online instruction between teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic was not examined in this study. In addition, in Malaysia's remote, small-island schools, where there are no internet connections, studies on how digital divides affect students' participation and performance also need to take into consideration

for future research. Thus, more research is required to fully understand the effect of COVID-19 on social and educational issues in Malaysia.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Omar Ali, S.R directed the study and lead in writing the manuscript. Zulmad, F. performed the data analysis and findings. While Mohd Said, N.S wrote the manuscript with the support of Amin, K., and Mansor, F.A. The research, analysis, and article were improved by all writers, who also offered constructive criticism.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

I/We attest that the authors' and co-authors' work on the article is entirely original. The article has not been published before and is not being considered for publication elsewhere. This study/manuscript has not been submitted for publication or had any part (s) published elsewhere. We attest that every Author made a major contribution to the study, the accuracy and authenticity of the data, and its interpretation for submission to Jurnal Intelek.

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