THE LEVEL OF QUALITY CONTROL ON ONLINE TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED BY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

A large number of public and private colleges and universities in Malaysia are undergoing a transition process from face to face classes into fully online, blended or web-facilitated courses. This is partly due to the need of maintaining a competitive edge and making classes more accessible to growing and diverse student population. In order to ensure the online learning process remain competitive, various types of online pedagogy or teaching method were introduced. This paper aim to examine the level of quality control on online pedagogy provided by 80 higher education institutes in Malaysia that provide various types of online courses. ISQC framework which is used by the auditor to measure the quality of audit work were used as an approach to measure the level of pedagogy quality control. There are seven dimensions in the ISQC framework were used as a measurement. The result shows only one of the dimension which is the control on documentation were fully emphasized by the institutes and also the lecturers. In conclusion, this study suggest that the online classes will be effective if the quality of pedagogy were properly maintain.

Key words: Online teaching material, quality control, ISQC

INTRODUCTION

Online education or online learning has becoming the fastest growing trends in education world. In the era of internet-based technology, where no specific classroom or professional instructors needed, many public and private universities have turned the education profession into a profit making business. They were rushing to provide as much as possible education courses or program in order to make money (Balci, Deater-Deckard, & Norton, 2013). The online education removes the traditional boundaries of time and location for the interactions between the instructors and students to be done (Herrington, Herrington, Oliver, Stoney, & Willis, 2001). The educators will provide their instructions or education materials on the course website for the students to access.

The main objectives when delivering the education is to ensure students able to access, understand and apply the knowledge (Skagen, Torras, Kavli, & Mikki, 2009). Among online popular pedagogical or teaching method used by the educators are by creating a virtual classroom thru blended learning such as Learning Management System (LMS) or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (Balci et al., 2013). According to Allen and Seamen (2010), 19% of the institution that offered the online program did not provide a formal teaching online training to their educators and more than 56% of the online educator received informal training not from their institution.

Based on Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015), stated that since Malaysia ranked as seventh place in Asia for internet penetration, therefore in the education paradigm shift number nine, the government emphasized it is good for Malaysia to be an online education hub (Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi, 2015) to deliver a high quality education content for teaching and learning process. In order to achieve the online learning vision, the education institute should provide a good quality control system on every pedagogical and also on the content uploaded in the pedagogy. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the extent level of
quality control carried out by the educational institutions towards their online programs offered.

ONLINE QUALITY THEORY
The role of online educators is to act as a coach rather than an instructor. Educators assist students to solve problems rather than giving solution to the problems. The quality of knowledge deliver depends on the level students understandable and applicable. Herrington et al. (2001) emphasized in their online quality model, there are three main aspect in online learning that need to be control; pedagogies, resources and delivery strategies. In *pedagogical aspect*, there are three checklists to be done on the task and assessment – based on the learners’ work place environment, learners able to collaborate with their office management or their peers and finally as a motivation to improve their knowledge. In *resources aspect*, they focus on the learner’s accessibility to get the information, resources is currency which means is updated, each of the content material deliver has an objectives and is transparent. Lastly in the *delivery strategies*, techniques or method delivery the content or education material must be reliable, objectivity, appropriate, easy to access and communicate. If the quality control level on these three aspects is high, the students’ output will be more valuable and knowledgeable.

Learners offered money in exchange of the education. We must supply the education as quality as the value they pay. Ntim (2014) stressed that online education activity is a process that required an input. The input should be utilized from the resources in order to produce a quality output. Quality control need to be done at the input and resources stages. The increased of control on online content depends on the tools used, location and knowledge of the educators. Low quality output when the level of quality control towards content material and educator’s background was neglected.

Peltier, Schibrowsky and Drago (2007) in their quality model highlights on six education empowerment dimensions namely (a) student and student interaction; (b) students and educators interaction; (c) educators support and mentoring; (d) delivery strategies; (e) course content and (f) course structure. If all the dimensions were controlled, it will give a positive impact to the students.

In order to ensure the students satisfactions continuously towards their online courses, this study used the Internal Service Quality Control 1 (ISQC 1) which was used to measure the audit services as an approach to measure the level of online quality control towards the courses offered. The objectives of ISQC is to deal with firm’s responsibilities for its system of quality control for audit and reviews of financial statements, and other assurance and related services engagements (Malaysian Institute of Accountants, 2009). There are seven elements used to form an internal quality control. These elements are leadership, relevant ethical requirement, acceptance and continuity of client relationship, human resources, engagement performance, monitoring and documentation. As mention by Ntim (2014) earlier that the online education is a process of input, therefore the approach for each elements in ISQC were modified by adapting from (Herrington et al., 2001); (Balci et al., 2013) & (Ntim, 2014).

Leadership has been described as hardworking in achieving good results (Chen, Wu, Yang, & Tsou, 2008), visionary and skillful, other words referring to competency (Ashbaugh, 2012). The quality of course design depends on the students’ ability responding to the challenges (Balci et al., 2013). Therefore, the quality control on
leadership will depend on the more tasks completed without the help of the educators, the higher the level of leadership control.

Second element is the relevant ethical requirement. In auditing, ethical requirement referring to the unbiased evidence, no familiarity of evidence and the independency of the evidence (Malaysian Institute of Accountants, 2009). Even though students are given freedom to access their online courses at their own pace, however, educators need to planned their content in advance and made it available to students at the beginning of the course (Peltier et al., 2007). Due to limited content delivery approach (Leh & Jobin, 2003), educators need to be creative in order to ensure the originality of their content. Each of the content should have a reference; therefore, the quality control on the ethical issues is to ensure the content uploaded is original and reliable.

Quality control is important especially to a new online course introduced. A good quality control will facilitate the external team review easily in analyzing the success of students’ performance (Westerfelt, 2011). Therefore, the higher the level of quality control, the higher quality of online learning activities produced.

FINDINGS

This exploratory study used a questionnaire which was given to all public and private institutions that provide an online education program from degree level until PhD level in multiple disciplines. There were seven elements of quality control were measured towards the quality of course content material. The findings show that documentation and ethical elements were strongly emphasized by the institutes and the educators. All the teaching material was properly keep either as hardcopy or softcopy. All the information regarding dos and don’ts were continuously reminded.

In terms of human resources elements, majority of the educators do not have expertise in conducting the online tools but they were expert in their field of education. Findings on engagement performance elements found that none of the educators interview or know their learners background very well. Monitoring element showed that only ten percent of the educators seek their peer or mentor to observe their online content and teaching delivery. Acceptance and continuance elements need an involvement of the entire university when they intend to introduce the online courses or programs; only 25 percent of the respondents agreed that their institutions did not give full commitment in the online courses.

CONCLUSION

Many academic institutions especially the private institutions were rushing to provide an online education programme for the purpose of maximizing profit. During the ‘rush’, the quality and education integrity factors were taken for granted. This study highlights the importance of quality control over the online teaching material in order to ensure the online program offered were high quality and similar to on-campus program.

Students willing to pay a high amount of money in order to get an online knowledge education. Therefore, it is recommended that the education institution to invest some money to develop a good quality control systems on delivering the teaching materials by taking into consideration the education integrity and quality. According to Balci, Deater-Deckard and Norton (2013), IT support on delivering the course content should not be performed at the ad hoc level only, it must be done thoroughly and continuously.
REFERENCES


