Understanding Students' Online Learning Readiness towards Skill-based Hospitality Courses

Faliza Mahamed Ali[1*], Noraida Abdul Karim[2], Azlina Samsudin[3], Munirah Hamid[4] and Mohd Izwan Mohd Zaki[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia*
Corresponding author: [1]faliz719@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate students' online learning readiness for the skills-based courses in the hospitality higher institution in Terengganu, Malaysia. A 20 items online questionnaire from the five dimensions of the Online Learning Readiness Scale: self-directed learning, computer/internet self-efficacy, motivation for learning, online communication self-efficacy, and learner control was adopted. Five hundred online surveys were distributed, and 482 respondents have been selected as the final sample size. A quantitative research method with convenience sampling and descriptive statistics was adopted to analyze the results using SPSS statistical software. The results revealed that computer and internet self-efficacy are students' highest average mean score, followed by online communication self-efficacy, motivation for learning, self-directed learning, and the lowest average mean score is learner control. Thus, overall scores indicated that students' online readiness for skills-based courses is at a medium level. Based on the statistical results, the study helps educators in hospitality higher learning institutions to engineered appropriate content and delivery methods for skill-based online learning courses. The study concluded by offering suggestions for future research to improve students' readiness towards skill-based online learning courses.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the internet has significantly changed the way we live our lives, online learning is becoming a norm for students ranging from elementary school to post-secondary education. It is commonly conducted in both synchronous and asynchronous environments (Jolliffe et al., 2012). When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, UNESCO (2020) reported that preschools, schools, and higher educational institutions had been closed in 172 countries, which affected 98.5% of the world's student population. In Malaysia, the government enforced Movement Control Order to increase social distancing and slow down the spread of the virus among the public. The pandemic has altered the educational plan in Malaysia. Students were instructed to return to their own homes as schools and universities were closed. To reduce close contact and mass gathering, the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia urged all higher education institutions to conduct online teaching (Malay Mail, 2020). Thus, most universities and colleges have turned to online learning to replace the conventional face-to-face learning system to maintain students' educational progress. This includes skill-based courses such as housekeeping, front office, and cooking. Although online learning seems a better option, educators have argued whether the approach is appropriate for practical-based courses. Concerns are raised about the course appraisals of the students' skills execution, such as the cooked food presentation, correctly utilizing a knife, and the foremost crucial part, the final product's standard taste (Rahmawati, 2021; Amin et al., 2021).

Previous studies have investigated the impacts of online learning on hospitality and tourism students. Mocanu and Deaconu (2017) examined 110 Hotel Management students in Pune, India, and found that online learning is ineffective for a practical-based course such as Hotel Management. Most of the students prefer face-to-face and hands-on practice during practical classes. On another hand, Baker and Unni (2019), in their cross-cultural study on the effectiveness of online courses in improving Asia and United States hospitality students' grades, stated that there was no significant difference in the efficacy between face-to-face and distance learning education. They argued that if online distance learning is the only option available, it can successfully replace the conventional face-to-face learning method. However, the students' online courses, either solely theory-based or combined with practical-based classes, were not clearly stated. Thus, a longitudinal study conducted by Hsu et al. (2017) explored the future directions of hospitality education and reiterated that students appreciated and preferred the current learning style through interactive classroom and community learning in the hospitality course offered. They reported that the lack of empirical studies on the program's curriculum design, the isolation of the program course and designers, and the highest conventional and limited teaching materials are among the weaknesses and opportunities in hospitality and tourism education that should be addressed accordingly (Maumbe, 2014; Murphy & Jongh, 2011; Weber et al., 2010).

Based on the above discussion, it is crucial that educators investigate whether their students are ready for skill-based online learning. The study is inspired by the work of Chung et al. (2020a, 2020b) who used 18 online learning student readiness (OLRS) items to examine online readiness among undergraduate students in Malaysia. The OLRS has five dimensions composed of computer/internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, motivation for learning, and online communication self-efficacy. The respondents were students undergoing open distance learning and enrolled in at least two online courses. However, there was no specification on the courses selected for the study. The results were based on students' views and experiences while undergoing a human resource course for degree students and an economics course for diploma students. Since studies concerning students' readiness for skill-

based online learning are limited, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Have the students enrolled in any online courses, currently or in the past?

2. What is the university student's readiness for the online skills-based courses?

3. What is the highest dimension score in OLRS among hospitality students taking skills-based online courses?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Hospitality Educational Programme

Many hospitality institutions have been established as demand arises from the hospitality industry with the core hospitality skilled graduates. In 1910, Westminster Technical College was established, followed by the opening of Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration in the US (Scott et al., 2008), the hospitality courses in Australian universities in the mid-1970s (King et al., 2003), and thousands of other hospitality institutions around the world. The trend is also evident in Malaysian as there is a significant growth of higher learning institutions' related to tourism and hospitality management programs (Nair & Whitelaw, 2008). As the number of these hospitality educational institutions increases, educators must understand the nature and the design of the hospitality curriculum. Researchers realized the importance of curriculum standards in hospitality education as they acquire a set of competencies and skills to prepare students to enter the workforce (Min et al., 2016; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). In many countries, hospitality programs must meet and comply with the standards accredited by a qualified agency or professional body. There are many hospitality educational institutions worldwide, and several hospitality program standards were formed to guide the curriculum design in different countries. For example, the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) in Malaysia was revised by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to ensure that the hospitality programs offered by Higher Education Providers (HEPs) in Malaysia met an acceptable level of quality (MQA, 2019).

There are numerous degree programs offered by colleges and universities designed to serve the hospitality industry. A degree program in hospitality and tourism colleges is designed to offer job opportunities in many hospitality and tourism industries. There are hospitality skills-based courses under the technical and vocational education (TVE) that cater to hands-on teaching methods in providing students with specific technical skills. The vocational system refers to an organization's efforts to produce students with the knowledge and fundamental skills and prepare them to become skilled workers in the future (Laugho & Lillis, 1988). In the conventional culinary arts teaching method, instructors demonstrate skills, and students then practice the demonstrated skill in class. The chef-instructor provides feedback on the students' command of the practiced skill (Noe, 2005). As they emphasize technical skills and knowledge, these courses are distinctively TVE from the general education system. It is essential to create a collaboration between hospitality and tourism education and the needs of the hospitality and tourism industry to ensure the student employee transition works smoothly between these two stakeholders and prepare a successful intellectual workforce for the hospitality and tourism industry (Millar et al., 2010; Min et al., 2016). Therefore, the program's accountability, credibility, and effectiveness should be a concern among the stakeholders such as education providers, government, and students.

2.2 Measuring Online Learning Readiness Scale

The concept of OLRS was first proposed in the Australian vocational education and training sector (Warner et al., 1998). Since then, many researchers (McVay, 2000, 2001; Hung et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2003) have studied this concept, and various dimensions of this online learning readiness have been illustrated and validated. From the fundamental aspects of the ability to learn independently, confidence and capability in using the technological tools and face-to-face learning instructions (Tang & Lim, 2013), the assessment tools have been upgraded to evaluate the individual's technical experience and competency in using computers (Guglielmino and Guglielmino, 2003). Hung et al. (2010) expanded the McVay (2001) readiness study to the new dimensions of OLRS: self-directed learning (SDL), computer/Internet self-efficacy (CIS), motivation for learning (ML), online communication self-efficacy (OCS), and learner control (LC).

The learning domains are experiencing significant changes as higher-education institutions rapidly adopt the concepts and practices of e-learning (Hung et al., 2010). Nowadays, numerous universities, including Malaysia, offer web-based courses that complement classroom-based courses. Online courses give learners an array of benefits such as adaptability (Chizmar & Walbert, 1999), openings to work collaboratively and closely with instructors and other students from distinctive schools or across the world (Chen & Yang, 2014), and flexibility (Poole, 2000). These are some reasons why students need to be ready to learn online. According to Guglielmino and Guglielmino (2003), students' readiness to learn online can be evaluated through the individual's technical experience and internet and computer literacy (Schreurs et al., 2008). In this manner, it is imperative to know the student's involvement in online learning course enrolment before a conclusion can be distinguished on online learning students' readiness, particularly for the skills-based courses.

2.2.1 Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning refers to the learner's initiative with the responsibility to plan, implement and evaluate the learner's own effort (Premkumar et al., 2013). Benson (2011) has described how SDL has been used as a model to promote self-control in the learning process while allowing students to reach the learning goal by interacting with peers outside the classroom. In an online learning setting, educators must be proactive in guiding potential students to determine whether they are ready to take an online course. Lin and Hsieh (2001) found that successful online learners know what to decide best when taking the online course and efficiently follow the class based on their own pace and readiness for existing knowledge and goals. Lin and Hsieh (2001) reported that self-directed learners are usually more active in learning tasks such as completing classroom tasks, reading online learning material, planning, and evaluating learning milestones. Chung et al. (2020a) employed SDL to examine students' ability to plan their studies, seek assistance when faced with problems, manage time, and set up learning goals and expectations towards learning goals and expectations performance. They revealed that students would only seek assistance when facing problems while learning online and know how to manage their time well. However, it was also stated that students could not set up online learning goals. A study conducted by Samsuri et al. (2014) on the students of three schools in Shah Alam, Selangor has revealed that students enjoy online learning compared to traditional face-to-face learning because of the flexibility in planning and selecting the courses either guided by the instructor or through self-study. Thus, they also responded that e-learning had given them the flexibility to learn at their own time and wherever they wanted.

2.2.2 Computer and Internet Self-Efficacy

Computer and internet self-efficacy are related to technical skills involving computers and the internet (Peng et al., 2006; Keramati et al., 2011). Chung et al. (2020b) reported that a lack of technical skills such as managing software for online learning is among the main challenges students face online. Since online lessons are delivered via technology-enhanced devices, students must be competent and ready to deal with computers and the internet. Hong and Kim (2018) stated that the students' technology-related skills, knowledge, competencies, and attitudes using the technological concepts are the OLRS dimensions used to meet the course learning goals and outcomes.

2.2.3 Motivation for Learning

Motivation has substantially impacted learners' attitudes and learning behaviors in educational research and practice (Fairchild et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation for learning can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation is a critical element in the social, physical, and cognitive development of inherent interests that grow in knowledge and skills. It is commonly associated with higher-quality learning, better learning strategies, a lower dropout rate, and greater school enjoyment (Czubaj, 2004). On the other hand, Ryan and Deci (2000) refer to extrinsic motivation as a behavior to achieve a specific reward, such as getting a higher grade on exams and earning awards and prizes. They identified that learners in an online setting had significant freedom to determine their learning path, which might benefit learners with intrinsic motivation. Yang et al. (2006) found evidence that motivation is positively related to how learners perceive each other's presence in online courses. Saadé et al. (2007) noted that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation played an essential role in the success or failure of online learning. Mocanu and Deaconu (2017) stated that students' motivation increased as the internet created an opportunity to see what is happening in different parts of the world. As Singh (2014) described, students' characteristics like motivation and self-discipline are significant contributors to online learning effectiveness. Hung et al. (2010) proposed that the ML dimension includes students' openness to new ideas, motivation to learn, self-improvement, and sharing ideas with peers and instructors. This has been adopted by Chung et al. (2020a), who found that undergraduates in a Malaysian university agreed that they are open to new ideas when learning online, motivated to learn online, learn from their mistakes, and are willing to share ideas with others.

2.2.4 Online Communication Self-Efficacy

Since there is no face-to-face interaction between lecturers and students, online communication has become the only way for students to communicate with their lecturers and other classmates (McVay, 2000). Thus, the author also stated that lecturers should provide interactions and communication opportunities in web-based learning to reflect and internalize what students have learned by posting questions and sharing their opinions and emotions between instructors and peers. Similarly, Roper (2007) suggested that successful students fully utilize online activities, engage with students and instructors, work with other online students, ask questions, and use feedback and encouragement to stay motivated. Hung et al. (2010) proposed the online communication self-efficacy dimension, encompassing idea delivery, student confidence level, and participation in online discussion as crucial for students' online readiness level.

2.2.5 Learner Control

Learner control includes the degree to which learners can select what, when, where, and how to learn (Kraiger & Jerden, 2007). Conventionally, students' learning settings are straightforward and mainly focus on hands-on instructional skills or using textbooks. However, web-based environments allow the study materials to be more flexible and accessible in online learning. Shyu and Brown (1992) stated that learner control in online learning would enable students to coordinate and choose their learning, process, experience, learning pace, and amount of content with maximum freedom. This learner's dimension is an essential part of skills-based courses as students can watch, learn, and practice the lecturers' lessons repeatedly based on the student's own time. As supported by previous studies, learners' control dimension becomes an integral part of students' readiness (Stansfield et al., 2004; Hsu & Shiue, 2005). In this study, learner control incorporates directing their learning progress, controlling, keeping up learning without being diverted by other online activities, and repeating online material based on their learning needs.

3. METHOD

The study employed a quantitative approach to investigate students' online learning readiness for skills-based courses. The survey instrument, Online Learning Readiness Scale, was adopted from the work of Hung et al. (2010). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A, the demographic factor consisted of gender, age, programme, and part. In section B, the 20 items from five dimensions of OLRS: self-directed learning (5 items), computer/internet self-efficacy (3 items), motivation for learning (4 items), online communication self-efficacy (3 items), and learner control (5 items). The close-ended question of 'Yes' and 'No' answers was used in section A, and the Likert scale was used in section B based on the level of agreement where; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The study was conducted at one of the higher institutions in Terengganu with a total population of 1066 students. Based on Raosoft Sampling Calculator, the recommended sample size for the stated size population is 283. This is in line with the minimal sample size of 278 to 285 people for a population of 1000 to 1100 people suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2016). To account for the possibility of a high non-response rate for an online survey, the sample size was set higher at 500. A convenience sampling was applied for a three-week data collection period that yielded 482 valid responses. A descriptive statistic with the mean and standard deviation analysis was used to assess the hospitality students' online learning readiness for skills-based courses.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The OLRS measurement model was evaluated by examining the composite reliability for the five dimensions. Hulin et al. (2001) suggested that 0.6-0.7 is an acceptable level of reliability construct, and 0.8 or greater is an excellent level. Studies conducted by Hung et al. (2010) represented 0.727 to 0.871 reliability scale and Chung et al. (2020a) further confirmed the result between 0.841 to 0.911 and 0.781 to 0.883 (Chung et al., 2020b). It is essential to measure the composite reliability for OLRS first before any analyses are conducted. Table 1 shows the value of composite reliability between 0.664 to 0.896 for the five dimensions.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Constructs	Items	Composite Reliability
Self-directed learning	5	0.896
Computer/internet self-efficacy	3	0.793
Motivation for learning	5	0.834
Online communication self-efficacy	3	0.664
Learner control	6	0.842

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Background

The results indicate that there are more female respondents than their male counterparts, with 359 female respondents (74.5 %) and only 123 male respondents (25.5%). Table 2 shows that 229 (47.5%) participants are enrolled in the Diploma in Culinary Arts programme. In comparison, 115 (23.9%) participants are enrolled in the Diploma in Hotel Management programme, followed by 74 (15.4%) participants enrolled in the Diploma in Foodservice Management. Meanwhile, 36 (7.5%) participants are enrolled in the Bachelor Sc. Hons in Foodservice Management programme, while 28 (5.8%) participants are enrolled in the Bachelor Sc. Hons in Hotel Management. The first study objective is to identify the students' enrolment in any online learning courses, currently or in the past. The results showed that 55.8% of the respondents answered 'yes' while 45.2% responded otherwise. The authors aimed to identify if having online learning experiences will make them more prepared and ready to undergo skills-based courses as they have already been exposed to them. Thus, they would know what to expect when attending online skills-based courses. This study intends to identify the impact of students who have previously taken online learning courses on hospitality students' readiness stage and performance in online skills-based courses. Wojciechowski and Palmer (2005) stated that students' characteristics predict the community college student's success in online classes in Michigan. The finding shows a positive and significant relationship between previous online courses and a better grade in the study. The results align with previous research findings related to online learning education's success for students with experience participating in online learning classes (Eisenberg & Dowsett, 1990; Moore & Kearsley, 2011).

Table 2. Student Enrolment in Online Learning Courses

Program Code	Yes	No	Total	%
HM110	64	51	115	23.9
HM115	119	110	229	47.5
HM112	50	24	74	15.4
HM240	19	9	28	5.8
HM242	25	11	36	7.5
Total	277	205	482	100.0

4.3 Respondents' Readiness for Online Learning in the Five Dimensions

The second objective of this study is to identify the students' readiness for the online skills-based courses in hospitality institutions in Terengganu, Malaysia. As presented in Table 3, the mean scores and standard deviation for all the items under the five dimensions of OLRS. Based on the results, the composite mean score for each dimension is between (M=3.27) to (M=3.58) on a 5-point Likert scale. The findings on the first dimension of OLRS of Computer/Internet Self-efficacy indicate that the students were moderately confident in their internet skills (3.80). The mean score for "using the basic function of computer software programs" was 3.53 and managing software or application for online learning classes (M=3.41). The results contradicted the findings by Chung et al. (2020a), in which the overall mean score for computer/internet self-efficacy was 4.23, followed by the highest mean score of 4.46 for students' confidence level using the internet to find information. However, the results presented in this study confirmed that the computer/internet skills required were acceptable enough for students' readiness and knowledge to undergo online learning courses. Al-Hariri and Al-Hattami (2017) stated that the education system nowadays requires smartphones, software, and internet availability to introduce a new degree of responsiveness and flexibility in the learning process.

The Online Communication Self-Efficacy results show that students have participated moderately in online learning activities. They randomly expressed their views through online text messages/posting comments on various online platforms and were relatively confident communicating with lecturers and peers over them (M=3.48). Furthermore, they frequently post questions during online learning whenever they have queries (M=3.23), which is similar to the findings made by Chung et al. (2020a). It is also supported by Hung et al. (2010), McVay (2000, 2001), and Roper (2007) that students who can communicate during online learning have better results in communication self-efficacy, and they are most comfortable in expressing themselves by posting and asking questions. The average mean score for online communication self-efficacy in this study suggested that the students are ready to communicate with their lecturers and peers during online learning. To improve student participation, lecturers need to develop different communication skills through a private communication channel to encourage students' computer competencies, participation, and active communication in online learning (Blythe, 2001; Saadé et al., 2007).

The Motivation for Learning dimension results indicate that students were 'moderately keen' to learn new knowledge and ready to improve mistakes from previous studies when engaging in online learning (M=3.44). Thus, they like to share ideas with others while participating in forums/discussions online (M=3.38). Generally, the students rated (M=3.10) as moderately agreed on their readiness level for motivation to learn. The result is in line with a study conducted by Chung et al. (2020b), where respondents mainly agreed and were open to learning new ideas and sharing ideas with others in online learning (ML overall mean score of 3.79). The results slightly contradict Chung et al.'s (2020a) study when respondents' mean score of 3.71 shows that they are 'somewhat motivated' to undergo online learning courses. It attests that the students have low motivation when they must learn practical or technical subjects through online learning. These findings are aligned with the current study. The researchers remarked that the students with high motivation and good learning behavior have an increased tendency to attain the required skills competency (Tokan & Imakulata, 2019).

Table 3. Students' Perception toward Online Learning for Skills-Based Subjects

Items	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Self-Directed Learning		
I seek assistance when facing learning difficulties	3.67	0.748
I manage my time well while learning online	3.13	0.860
I set up my online learning goals	3.28	0.775
I have a high expectation for my learning performance	3.34	0.816
I carry out my study plan while learning online	3.28	0.722
Computer/Internet Self-Efficacy		
I feel confident in performing the basic function of Microsoft Office programs (M.S. Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint)	3.53	0.724
I feel confident in my knowledge and skill of managing software/apps for online learning.	3.41	0.724
I feel confident in using the internet to find the information and learning resource	3.80	0.766
Motivation for Learning		
I like to share my ideas with others while learning online in forum/discussion session	3.38	0.696
While learning online, I improve from my previous mistakes	3.44	0.796
I am open to a new idea when learning online	3.44	0.747
I have the motivation to do online learning for my skill-based subject	3.10	0.840
Online Communication Self Efficacy		
I post questions in online discussion	3.23	0.723
I express my thought through online text messages/posting comments	3.48	0.749
I feel confident in using online tools to communicate with others	3.48	0.806
Learner Control		
I can take notes while watching a video on the computer/laptop	3.53	0.790
In my studies, I am self-disciplined and find it easy to set aside and homework time	3.16	0.768
I am not distracted by other online activities (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook) while learning online,	2.65	0.867
I can relate the content of short video clips (1-3 minutes typically) to the material I have read in books	3.43	0.698
I repeated the online learning materials based on my needs and time.	3.57	0.727

Note. For observed means, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Natural, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.
Reference: Output from the IBM SPSS

For Learner Control dimension, the results revealed that students take control while undergoing online learning as they can repeatedly watch and read the learning materials provided at any time (M=3.57). Thus, they also took notes while watching video clips on their computers (M=3.53), and they know how to relate the reading materials with the short video provided (M=3.43). However, when asked about self-discipline while learning online, students indicated that they have problems completing homework on their own (M=3.16), and at worse, they can be easily distracted by other online activities (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram)

(M=2.65). The result is in line with Chung et al. (2020a), which reported the lowest mean score of 2.63 for distraction by online and social media activities while students are learning online. As Purvis et al. (2016) stated, social media is often a distraction. This platform has so much content linked to so many different connections that it quickly distracts users from their original purpose of visiting or taking them into several unfruitful channels. Thus, Purvis et al. (2016) also added the concern of tutors regarding the students' focus issues that as soon as students were asked to download these online services, they will rapidly get hooked into following the latest 'trending' topic and be distracted from their learning activities. Winter et al. (2010) also reported that younger students enjoyed social media applications such as Messenger and Facebook during online learning. They use the same gadget for online classes and non-learning activities. Therefore, it enables them to switch between learning and non-learning activities.

Lastly, for the dimension of Self-Directed Learning, the respondents showed that they were moderately trying to seek assistance when facing problems during online learning (M=3.67). Thus, they are also 'somewhat enthusiastic' in carrying out their study plan (M=3.28), moderately expect while learning online (M=3.34) and setting up the online learning goals (M=3.28). However, the results from item four (4) SDL, "I manage my time well while learning online" (M=3.13), show that students find it 'moderately hard' to manage their time independently while learning online. Conversely, in the study by Chung et al. (2020a), respondents rated a high mean score of 4.31 on the same item. Thus, it shows that respondents could manage and utilise their time well while learning online. As Hart (2012) suggested, students who exhibit good time management skills and establish good relationships with other learners are more likely to succeed in their studies than those who do not.

In conclusion, the average mean score between 3.27 to 3.58 on a 5-point Likert scale indicated that the students are in medium readiness to do online learning for the skills-based courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding is slightly lower than the study conducted by Chung et al. (2020a). Students' online learning readiness for the Chemistry, Accounting, and Office System Management courses is above the average mean score between 3.49 – 4.23 (Chung et al., 2020a). Thus, in the second study conducted by Chung et al. (2020b), the findings also revealed that the average mean score was between 3.99 – 4.06, indicating that both the degree and diploma students' levels of readiness are above the medium to undergo Economics and Human Resource online learning courses. Consequently, in a study by Hung et al. (2010) on students' readiness for the five online courses (Calculus, Introduction to Environmental Protections, Taiwan Ecology and Life Chemistry) in Taiwan, students exhibited above medium levels of readiness to undergo online learning (M=3.75 to M=4.37).

4.4 The Overall Dimension Scores for Online Learning Readiness

The last objective of the study is to find the highest dimension score among the five OLRS dimensions for students' readiness level to undergo online learning hospitality skills-based courses. Overall, the results presented in Table 4 show that the highest dimension score of students' readiness to go through skill-based courses is from the Computer/Internet Self-efficacy, with an average mean score of (M=3.58). Followed by Online Communication Self-efficacy (M=3.40), Motivation for Learning, and Self-Directed Learning represented the same level of readiness (M=3.34). The lowest dimension score is Learner Control (M=3.24). The highest dimension score of students' readiness to enroll in skill-based courses is from the Computer/Internet Self-efficacy with the average mean score of (M=3.58), and the lowest average dimension means the score is the Learner Control (M=3.27).

Table 4. Mean for Online Learning Readiness Dimensions

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-directed learning	3.34	0.605
Computer/internet self-efficacy	3.58	0.615
Motivation for learning	3.34	0.592
Online communication self-efficacy	3.40	0.623
Learner control	3.27	0.543

The results indicate that respondents 'moderately agreed' that they are confident in using the internet to find information and learning resources (M=3.80 highest medium mean score for SDL). Plus, they disagreed that they are not easily distracted by other online activities while learning online (M=2.65, lowest mean score LC). These findings confirm the studies conducted by Chung et al. (2020a, 2020b) and Hung et al. (2010), which also found similar highest and lowest dimension outcomes on students' online readiness levels.

5. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic had interrupted the ongoing education systems when schools and universities were forced to shut down. This situation poses significant challenges to our students and educators. Based on the findings and discussions above, it can be concluded that not all hospitality courses are suitable to be conducted via an online learning platform. Rahmawati (2021) stated that students view virtual learning as inconvenient and ineffective for practical-based courses commonly found in the Hotel Management program. They prefer the traditional face-to-face and hands-on practical classes. However, for safety reasons, due to the movement restriction order and the closure of educational institutions imposed by the government, everyone had to obey and follow the instructions given. Therefore, using the five dimensions of OLRS, educators can help students be more ready to participate in online learning, especially for skills-based courses. The focus should be on enhancing students' ability to control distractions and planning for self-directed online learning. Lecturers may need to improve their course structure, syllabus, and learning materials before students can direct themselves toward taking complete control of their learning. Thus, lecturers can help students establish their own time and information management skills and ensure adequate class participation. In addition, the instructors should create educational learning videos covering all the topics outlined in the syllabus. Also, additional pre-learning activities such as real-life, hands-on skills training should be included.

Educators can provide students with a pre-test to check their online learning ability before the class starts when dealing with relatively low learner control students. Next, instructors can instruct them to identify the learning and learning processes to meet their learning needs. Finally, lecturers can create a learning community through group discussions, experience sharing, and instant feedback to keep students interested. If students in their first year cannot manage their learning by themselves or are not able to learn if there is no direct (face-to-face) guidance from instructors, instructors are advised to organize and adequately re-design the course. Students may receive frequent reminders about the deadlines, requirements, and tests through emails or instant messages over cell phones. The students should be encouraged to seek assistance from lecturers during the learning process. While learning, instructors with students who seem easily distracted by other online activities are recommended to break down long

lessons into several online sessions, with short breaks in between. Another method is to incorporate a quick quiz at the end of each online learning session. This quiz needs to be made known to the students at the beginning of an online learning lesson to ensure students are more disciplined and focused.

6. CONCLUSION

Although the study has extended our current knowledge of practical-based online learning, several limitations should be addressed. Through a series of research conducted by scholars on online learning, it is understood that internet data and connectivity have become significant challenges for students to learn online, especially in rural areas. Therefore, further studies on online skills-based course challenges need to be conducted. Other aspects of online learning, such as the relationship of variables towards online learning efficiency, students' assessments, and performance, should also be examined. Moreover, future researchers are encouraged to investigate students and instructors in different states or countries to generalize the findings to the broader community. It would be more noteworthy if future studies could conduct a cross-comparison study between the various online learning platforms available such as Google Classroom and the Microsoft Teams. Other than that, a sequential pre- and post-study should be carried out before and after an online learning practical-based course. This could enhance our understanding about the effects of students' online learning readiness on their performance, or the efficiency of teaching methods and materials provided to the students for skill-based online learning courses.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

FMA and NAK wrote the introduction, literature review, conclusion, and recommendation sections. AS, MH and MIMZ wrote the data methodology section, collected, and refined the data, and performed the data analysis using SPSS statistical software. FMA and AS wrote the result and discussion sections. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Al-Hariri, M. T. & Al-Hattami, A. A. (2017). Impact of students' use of technology on their learning achievements in physiology courses at the University of Dammam. *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences,* 12(1), 82–85.

Amin, U. U., Nordin, N., & Hasbullah, S. A. (2021). Assessment of culinary class demonstration methods on students' performance: Video versus live streaming. *Journal of Event, Tourism and Hospitality Studies, 1*(1), 71-94.

Baker, D. & Unni, R. (2019). Can online courses improve my G.P.A.? A case of Hospitality & Tourism students in Asia and the United States. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts, 11*(1), 45-64.

Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning (2nd ed.).* Harlow: Longman.

Blythe, S. (2001). Designing online courses: User-centered practices. *Computers and Composition*, *18*(4), 329-346.

Chen, J. J., & Yang, S. C. (2014). Fostering foreign language learning through technology-enhanced intercultural projects. *Language Learning & Technology*, 18(1), 57-75.

Chizmar, J. F., & Walbert, M. S. (1999). Web-based learning environments guided by principles of good teaching practice. *Journal of Economic Education*, 30(3), 248–264.

Chung, E., Noor, N. M., & Vloreen Nity Mathew. (2020a). Are You Ready? An Assessment of Online Learning Readiness among University Students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *9*(1), 301–317.

Chung, E., Subramaniam, G., & Christ Dass, L. (2020b). Online Learning Readiness Among University Students in Malaysia Amidst Covid-19. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 16(2), 45-58. doi:10.24191/ajue.v16i2.10294.

Czubaj, C. A. (2004). Literature review: reported educator concerns regarding cyberspace curricula. *Education*, 124(4), 676–683.

Eisenberg, E., & Dowsett, T. (1990). Student dropout from a distance education project course: A new method analysis. *Distance Education, 11* (2), 231–253.

Fairchild, A. J., Jeanne Horst, S., Finney, S. J., & Barron, K. E. (2005). Evaluating existing and new validity evidence for the academic motivation scale. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(3), 331–358.

Guglielmino, P. & Guglielmino, L. (2003). *Are your learners ready for e-learning?* In G. Piskurich (Ed.), The A.M.A. handbook of e-learning. New York: American Management Association.

Hart, C. (2012). Factors associated with student persistence in an online program of study: A review of the literature. *In Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 11(1), (pp. 19-42).

Hong, A. J., & Kim, H. J. (2018). College Students' Digital Readiness for Academic Engagement (DRAE) Scale: Scale development and validation. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 27(4), (303–312). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-018-0387-0.

Hsu, C.H.C., Xiao, H. and Chen, N. (2017), "Hospitality and tourism education research from 2005 to 2014: "Is the past a prologue to the future?", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 141-160. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2015-0450.

Hsu, Y. C., & Shiue, Y. M. (2005). The effect of self-directed learning readiness on achievement comparing face-to-face and two-way distance learning instruction. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 32(2), 143–156.

Hulin, C., Netemeyer, R., and Cudeck, R. (2001). Can a Reliability Coefficient Be Too High? *Journal of Consumer Psychology, Vol. 10, Nr. 1,*55-58.

Hung, M. L., Chou, C., Chen, C. H., & Own, Z. Y. (2010). Learner readiness for online learning: Scale development and student perceptions. *Computers & Education*, 55(3), 1080-1090.

Jolliffe, A., Ritter, J., & Stevens, D. (2012). *The online learning handbook: Developing and using web-based learning*. Routledge.

Keramati, A., Afshari-Mofrad, M., & Kamrani, A. (2011). The role of readiness factors in Elearning outcomes: An empirical study. *Computers & Education*, 57(1919–1929)

King, B., McKercher, B., & Waryszak, R. (2003). A comparative study of hospitality and tourism graduates in Australia and Hong Kong. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *5*(6), 409-420.

Kraiger, K., & Jerden, E. (2007). *A meta-analytic investigation of learner control: Old findings and new directions*. In S. M. Fiore & E. Salas (Eds.), *Toward a science of distributed learning*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lauglo, J., & Lillis, K. (1988). Vocationalizing education: An international perspective. Pergamon Press, Oxford, GB.

Lin, B., & Hsieh, C. T. (2001). Web-based teaching and learner control: a research review. *Computers & Education*, 37(4), 377–386.

M.Q.A. (2019). *Programme Standards: Hospitality and Tourism* (2nd ed.). Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

Malay Mail (2020). *Higher Education Ministry gives the go-ahead for e-learning*. Retrieved from https:// https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/20/higher-education-ministry-gives-go-ahead-for-e-learning/1848557 www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/20/higher-education-ministry-gives-go-ahead-for-e-learning/1848557 accessed on 28 January 2021.

Maumbe, K. (2014), "Teaching and learning in recreation and tourism: a comparison of three instructional methods", *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 365-385.

McVay, M. (2000). Developing a web-based distance student orientation to enhance student success in an online bachelor's degree completion program. Unpublished practicum.

McVay, M. (2001). *How to be a successful distance learning student: Learning on the internet*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Millar, M., Mao, Z., & Moreo, P. (2010). Hospitality & tourism educators vs. the industry: A competency assessment. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *22*(2), 38-50.

Min, H., Swanger, N., & Gursoy, D. (2016). A Longitudinal Investigation of the Importance of Course Subjects in the Hospitality Curriculum: An Industry Perspective. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *28*(1), 10–20.

Mocanu, E. M., & Deaconu, A. (2017). The Use of Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T.) as a Teaching Method in Vocational Education and Training in Tourism. *Acta Didactica Napocensia,* 10(3), 19-34.

Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2011). *Distance education: A systems view of online learning*. Cengage Learning.

Tokan, M. K., & Imakulata, M. M. (2019). The effect of motivation and learning behaviour on student achievement. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*(1).

Murphy, H. and Jongh, H. (2011), "Student perceptions of information system subject learning in hospitality management degree programmes", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 393-409.

Nair, V., & Whitelaw, P. A. (2008). Hospitality & Tourism Vocation: Program Selection in a Private Institution of Higher Learning in Malaysia. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *20*(3), 30–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2008.10696920.

Noe, R.A. (2005). Employee training and development (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Peng, H., Tsai, C.-C, & Wu, Y.-T. (2006). University students' self-efficacy and attitudes toward the internet: the role of student's perceptions of the internet. *Educational Studies*, *32*(1), 73-86.

Poole, D. M. (2000). Student participation in a discussion-oriented online course: a case study. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education, 33*(2), 162–177. A report presented to the Ed.D. Program. Florida: Nova Southeastern University.

Premkumar, K., Pahwa, P., Banerjee, A., Baptiste, K., Bhatt, H., & Lim, H. J. (2013). Does Medical Training Promote or Deter Self-Directed Learning? A Longitudinal Mixed-Methods Study. *Academic Medicine*, *88*(11), 1754–1764. https://doi.org/10.1097/acm.0b013e3182a9262d

Purvis, A., Rodger, H., & Beckingham, S. (2016). Engagement or distraction: The use of social media for learning in higher education. *Student Engagement and Experience Journal*, 5(1).

Rahmawati, P. I. (2021). The Impact of Pandemic COVID-19 on Tourism and Hospitality Education. In *5th Asian Education Symposium 2020 (A.E.S. 2020)* (pp. 125-129). Atlantis Press.

Raybould, M., & Wilkins, H. (2005). Overqualified and under-experienced: Turning graduates into hospitality managers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(3), 203–216.

Roper, A. R. (2007). How students develop online learning skills. *Educause Quarterly*, 30(1), 62–64.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54–67.

Saadé, R. G., He, X., & Kira, D. (2007). Exploring dimensions to online learning. *Computers in human behaviour, 23*(4), 1721-1739.

Samsuri, N. N., Nadzri, F. A., & Rom, K. B. M. (2014). A study on the student's perspective on the effectiveness of using e-learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *123*, 139-144.

Schreurs, J., Sammour, G., & Ehlers, U. (2008). E-learning Readiness Analysis (E.R.A.): an e-health case study of e-learning Readiness. *Int. J. Knowledge and Learning*, 4(5), 496-508.

Scott, N. M., A. Puleo, V., & Crotts, J. C. (2008). An analysis of curriculum requirements among hospitality and tourism management programs in AACSB colleges of business in the United States. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 7(4), 71–83.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach.* John Wiley & Sons.

Shyu, H. Y., & Brown, S. W. (1992). Learner control versus program control in interactive video disc instruction: what are the effects in procedural learning? *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 19(2), 85–95.

Singh, R. (2014). E-Learning: a virtual boon and the challenges in Tourism Higher Education. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, *3*(1).

Smith, P. J., Murphy, K. L., & Mahoney, S. E. (2003). Towards identifying factors underlying readiness for online learning: an exploratory study. *Distance Education*, 24(1), 57–67.

Stansfield, M., McLellan, E., & Connolly, T. M. (2004). Enhancing student performance in online learning and traditional face-to-face class delivery. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, 3, 173–188.

Tang, S. F. & Lim, C. L. (2013). Undergraduate Students' Readiness In E-Learning: A Study at The Business School in a Malaysian Private University. *International Journal of Management & Information Technology*, 4 (2)198-204.

UNESCO (2020). *"Covid-19 impact on education".* Global Education Coalition, August 4, 2020, https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse (accessed 4 August 2020),

Warner, D., Christie, G. & Choy, S. (1998). *Readiness of V.E.T. clients for flexible delivery, including online learning.* Brisbane: Australian National Training Authority.

Weber, M., Chandler, J. and Finley, D. (2010), "Assessing teaching effectiveness in a basic food laboratory setting", *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 59-74.

Winter, J., Cotton, D., Gavin, J & Yorke, J.D. (2010). Effective e-learning? Multi-tasking, distractions and boundary management by graduate students in an online environment. *Research in Learning Technology*, *18*(1), 71-83.

Wojciechowski, A., & Palmer, L. B. (2005). Individual student characteristics: Can any be predictors of success in online classes. *Online journal of distance learning administration*, *8*(2), 13.

Yang, C. C., Tsai, I. C., Kim, B., Cho, M.-H., & Laffey, J. M. (2006). Exploring the relationships between students' academic motivation and social ability in online learning environments. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 9(4), 277–286.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Faliza Mahamed Ali is a Senior Lecturer of the Hotel Management Department at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia. She has co-authored over 26 journal articles and proceeding papers on various hospitality management topics. Her research interests include hotel operation and management and tourism and hospitality management.

Noraida Abdul Karim is a Senior Lecturer in the Culinary Arts Department at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia. She has co-authored over 22 articles and proceeding papers on varied gastronomy and hospitality education topics. Her research interests include food product development, gastronomy heritage, tourism, and hospitality management.

Azlina Samsudin is a Senior Lecturer in the Hotel Management Department at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia. She completed her Master Degree in Hospitality Management at Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor. She has published many papers in refereed journals and chapters in books, with areas of interest including restaurant service, food and beverage fields, and hospitality management.

Munirah Hamid is a lecturer in the Foodservice Management Department at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia. She has co-authored over ten articles in journals and proceeding papers on various hospitality and foodservice management topics.

Mohd Izwan Mohd Zaki is a lecturer in the Culinary Arts Department at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia. He has published many papers in refereed journals and chapters in books, with areas of interest including culinary assessment, food product development, and gastronomy heritage.