

## Online Teaching and Learning: A Study On Students' Perception On Interpersonal Communication Course

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: July 02, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: February 04, 2022</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Interpersonal Communication, Online Learning, Perception</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.5973043</p>	<p><i>The integration and implementation of technology in education and learning will move from classroom teaching to online learning that meets the skill needs of today's 21st century. Educators can help ensure that the content is fully interactive and useful in the learning process. A variety of tools are integrated to accelerate the teaching and learning method and immerse students in the world of virtual learning. This study aims to examine students' perceptions of online courses in interpersonal communication. The survey was conducted with the participation of respondents at the Faculty of Language and Communication, a public university based in Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia (N = 60). In this survey, we used a quantitative analysis that participants had to fill out a questionnaire generated by a Google Form. Results are displayed in percentage format based on the answers to each cognitive question for students studying the PBK1013 Interpersonal Communication Course online. The results show that students are aware of online learning in terms of interpersonal communication skills.</i></p>

### Introduction

Over the years, the world of education has gradually changed from traditional education to digitized education. Face-to-face education has replaced online education, and chalk and felt-tip pens have been replaced by ebooks and printed matter (Di Vaio, Boccia, Landriani, and Palladino, 2020). These changes have made information and communication technology (ICT) an important aspect of the education sector. They changed the process of education and learning in many ways (Alom & Courtney, 2018). In addition, e-learning improves the effectiveness of HOTS skills, problem solving, education and learning (Abdelmalak, 2015). Recognition of online learning in interpersonal communication, especially in linguistic and nonverbal communication. (All Hassan & Shukri, 2017). In addition, literature that uses a computer-based learning unit called online learning can develop communication skills and create a positive learning environment (Danesh, Bailey & Whisenand, 2015).

Digitized online education is integrated into a strategic and innovative process that integrates various tools such as podcasts, learning management systems, and blogs to facilitate learning for students and teachers in a structured way. Allows students to create great creative content (Chiaha, Eze & Ezeudu, 2013). Several sectors, including education, have been hit hard by the COVID 19 pandemic. As an outcome of the surge in COVID19 positive cases across Malaysia, the Malaysian government has begun a complete blockade, suspending all public and private universities from teaching and classroom education from March 2020. Both educators and students were suddenly encouraged to switch to online teaching and learn from traditional face-to-face and physical teaching and learning methods. This transition from traditional educational environments to remote and virtual learning could not be achieved overnight (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Online learning is not a new teaching method, but it does exist in the form of distance learning. One study has shown that the development of educational technology improves the transfer of knowledge in online learning (Govindaraju & Kunachagaran, 2021). Still, Malaysian universities strive to offer courses using a variety of technology platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, Google Class, and Microsoft Teams. This was important for continuing education and learning, even as the medium of communication and acceptance changed. Despite these efforts, students do not necessarily share the same thing about online learning.

These students preferred traditional face-to-face education and learning because of internet connectivity issues in their online lives. Another aspect of online learning is traditional classroom socialization. Students only communicate digitally with fellow students and never meet in person. Therefore, in the world of digital learning, ideas, knowledge and information cannot be exchanged in real time (Britt, 2006). Students are taught face-to-face and the transition to virtual learning significantly limits both students and teachers from gaining hands-on teaching and learning experience. Against this background, universities and their teachers continue to ensure that education and learning offerings are tailored to their needs. Literature students' grades depend on self-study,

online participation, homework, and online exams, and there is no doubt that some students do their homework (Broadbent & Poon, 2015).

### **Objective**

This study aims to examine students' perceptions of online courses in interpersonal communication.

### **Literature Review**

Many researchers have conducted various studies on online courses and the importance of education and learning. Researchers from diverse portions of the world and disciplines shared the findings and surveyed the efficiency of online education and learning. The results students attract in an online environment depend on the size of the survey. ELearning ideas come from several combinations. It lies in the use of information technology to integrate into the education system. Online learning is built into operating systems, MS Office, and other learning applications using tablets, desktops, or hardware consisting of laptops and software. These tools are installed in either the classroom or online courses. This maximizes interaction with the faculty. The concept of online learning can be presented as learning through innovation and other educational models based on electronic media and tools. Ultimately, it helps improve interactions and training that contribute to knowledge building (Sangrà, Vlachopoulos & Cabrera, 2012). However, several other studies have shown sophisticated online learning as an experience of engaging in synchronous and asynchronous environments through the integration of multiple intelligent devices that students can access during the learning process.

### **Online Learning and Participation**

To develop an online learning theory as an online learner, you need to have a complete understanding of what an online learner really is. Wenger (1998) defines participation as "the process of participation and the process of relationships with others that reflects that process." It's a composite procedure that connects what you do, what you talk about, what you think, what you feel, and what you belong to. Participation involves action. B. Talk to someone and connect. For example, B. Participation. The importance of participating in online learning has long been emphasized in traditional education (Pratton & Hales1986). This is especially true if such education is stimulated by constructivist and social learning theories. Distance educators have traditionally learned more individually due to practical boundaries. Nevertheless, much attention has been paid to participation since the advent of online education (Harasim1989).

Literature reviews show that online student involvement is theorized in dissimilar ways. The concept of online participation level describes participation as "simple". This is easy to measure quantitatively. B. The quantity of times the learner has accessed the learning atmosphere (Davies & Graff 2005) and the total of people who read the message. Includes research needs (Lipponen et al. 2003). Elevated concepts of participation in online learning include low-level concepts, but emphasize that involvement is a difficult occurrence. Such a concept, inspired from the perspective of social learning, recognizes that learners cannot switch participation on and off (Wenger 1998). For example, learners do more than just participate in writing and reading messages. From this point of view, it can be discussed that learner awareness is important for understanding online participation. The following definition is related to the definition of participation in Wenger (1998), which forms the basis of this paper, and recognizes the complexity of online learner participation.

### **Theoretical Application**

A theory is defined as a set of statements, philosophies or ideas related to a particular subject. Theories generally explain, explain, and predict phenomena. Theoretical definitions vary across disciplines, especially with respect to terminology modeling. As Graham, Henrie and Gibbons (2013) have pointed out, the two terms are used interchangeably and often refer to the same concept. However, models are often visual representations of reality or concepts. In this discussion, the term theory and model are used interchangeably. The purpose of a theory or model is to provide answers to fundamental questions related to a phenomenon. Graham, Henrie and Gibbons (2013) examined this topic in the context of educational technology and proposed the three-part classification method originally proposed by Gibbons and Bunderson (2005).

- i. **Explore:** "What exists?" and attempts to define [describe] and categorize;
- ii. **Explain:** "Why does this happen?" and looks for causality and correlation, and work with variables and relationships.
- iii. **Design:** "How do I achieve this outcome?" and describes interventions for reaching targeted outcomes and operational principles (Graham, Henrie and Gibbons, 2013, p. 13).

### **Behaviour and Online Learning**

As the name suggests, activism focuses on people's behavior. It was born out of a positivist worldview of causality. Simply put, behavior creates a response. In education, activism examines how students behave while learning. Online courses have grown in popularity over the past few decades. With the growing demand for online learning as well as higher education institutions, it continues to grow as a viable way to increase accessibility to more students. E-learning is used to refer to online training, e-learning, distributed learning, e-learning, e-teaching or e-learning (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). So, as e-learning changes students' learning habits and replaces traditional physics teaching methods, e-learning has become a hot topic. Specifically, positivism focuses on observing how students respond to specific stimuli.

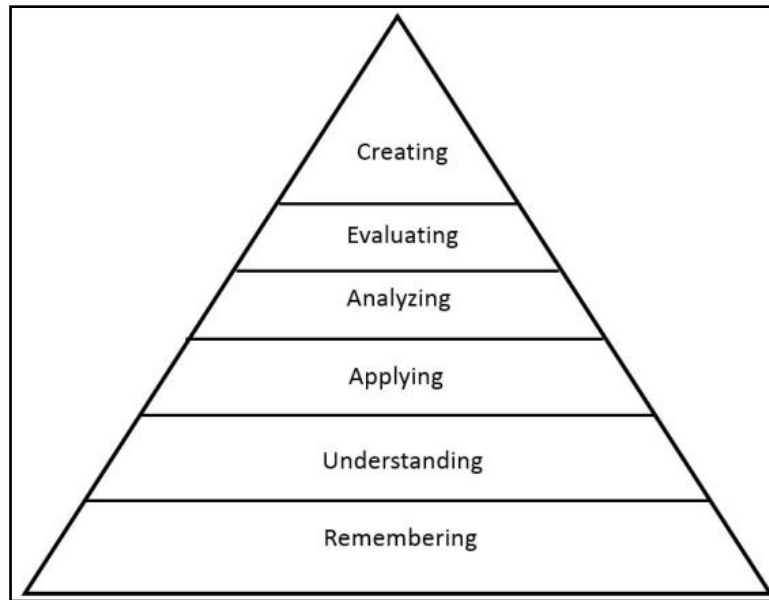
Online education is rapidly becoming an important teaching method for different educational contexts (Ku & Lohr, 2003). Computers were designed for educational purposes and the Internet has completely changed school education, especially at the lower secondary level (Liaw & Huang, 2011). Learners' attitudes towards online teaching are very positive and supportive (Chang, 2000). E-learning provides multiple learners with a variety of educational environments through smartphones during computer-based learning. This can lead to many different problems and attitudes. According to a study by Rainer and Miller (1996), learners' attitude is the most important factor affecting computer use. When it comes to online learning, a number of factors can interact and influence learning. However, some have received only limited discussion in the medical education literature while others have had relatively little empirical testing. Although several studies have investigated the impact of learning design on learner approaches, efforts, and motivation, the impact of learning design on self-regulation remains largely unexplored. Furthermore, it can be assumed that students in the context of online learning may express different conceptions of learning, as studies have shown that the concept of learning is a construct that depends on the context of the language, context and may vary depending on the field of study or the surrounding context (Chiu et al., 2016; Tsai & Tsai, 2014).

### **Cognitivism**

Cognitivism has been viewed as a response to activists' "strict" focus on predictive stimuli and responses (Harasim, 2012). Cognitive theorists promoted the notion that the mind plays an important role in learning and sought to focus on what happened between exposure to environmental stimuli and student responses. They viewed mental cognitive processes such as motivation and imagination as an important element of learning that links environmental stimuli to student responses. For example, Noam Chomsky (1959) wrote a critical review of Skinner's activist studies. So he emphasized the importance of creative spiritual processes that cannot be observed in the real world. Written primarily from the perspective of a linguist, Chomsky became known in other fields, including psychology.

Cognitive science is interdisciplinary and uses psychology, biology, neuroscience, computer science, and philosophy to describe brain function and levels of cognitive development that support learning and knowledge acquisition. As a result, epistemology has become one of the most important learning theories. The future of cognitivism will be especially exciting as increasingly complex online software evolves into adaptive tutoring apps that bring artificial intelligence and learning analytics into the classroom. Activism has emphasized the study and evaluation of several stages of the learning process and has led to the development of learning categories. Benjamin Bloom (1956) was one of the first psychologists to establish a taxonomy regarding the development of intellectual abilities, emphasizing the importance of problem solving as a higher skill. Bloom's Handbook of the Classification of Educational Objectives: The Cognitive Domain (1956) is a fundamental handbook and should be read in the educational community. The Bloom taxonomy is based on six main components (see Figure 1)

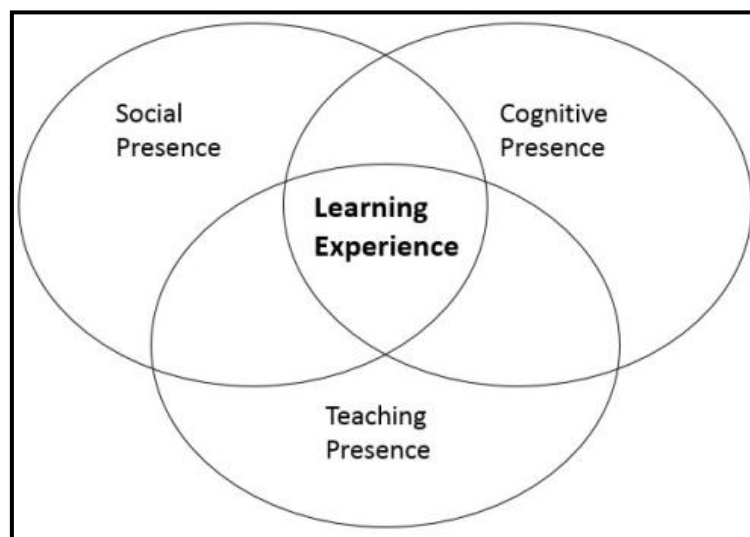
- Creation: Bringing together elements to form a unified whole or function, and reorganizing the elements into a new pattern or a new structure by generation, planning or production.
- Evaluation: Make judgments based on criteria and standards by examining and criticizing.
- Analysis: breaking down matter into its constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to each other and to an overall structure or purpose by distinguishing, organizing and referring.
- Apply: execute or use a procedure by executing or implementing it.
- Comprehension: Build meaning from oral, written, and graphical messages by paraphrasing, illustrating, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
- Remember: Retrieve, record, and recall relevant knowledge from long-term memory.



**Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy**

Bloom made an important contribution to the direction of learning theories towards cognitive and developmental psychology through the development of classification methods. Twenty years later, educational psychologist Robert Gagné developed another taxonomy (classroom facts) based on Bloom, which forms the basis for cognitive classroom design (Harasim, 2012). This also applies to online teaching, but also the emergence of a unified learning theory in general education. Many theories have been developed, but most of them are derived from the good learning theories mentioned above. This section describes various theories of relevance for the online environment. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2001) developed a "research community" model of an online learning environment based on three different "being" concepts: cognitive, social, and educational (Figure 2).

The relationship between the three components suggests further study of each component (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison & Archer, 2001). Their model supports the design of hybrid and online courses as an active learning environment or community based on the exchange of ideas, information, and insights from faculty and students. It should be emphasized that "existence" is a social phenomenon and manifests itself through the interaction between students and teachers. The Claim Community has become one of the most popular models for online and hybrid courses. These models are highly interactive with discussion forums, blogs, wikis, and video conferencing for students and teachers.



**Figure 2: Community of Inquiry (Garrison, Anderson, Garrison and Archer, 2000)**

### Methodology

The method used is quantitative. The online survey was created with a Google Form. A total of 60 students participated in this study, all of whom were students of the Faculty of Language and Communication at the University of Malaysia, Sarawak. Participants in this study are first-year students of the Strategic Communication Program of the Faculty of Language and Communication (UNIMAS), University Malaysia Sarawak. Respondents are 18 to 24 years old. The ages of participants in this study are 2022 (95%) and 2224 (5%). The gender distribution of participants in this study was 76.7% female and 23.3% male. In terms of educational background, 83.3% of students have completed STPM, 11.7% have registered and 3.3% have a diploma.

The survey was distributed via a Google Forms link. Respondents completed the survey via the above platform. There are 15 questions that respondents should answer. The questions consist of sections on demographics, online platforms (applications), and measuring student perceptions of the PBK1013 interpersonal communication through online learning. Participant answers are categorized using a 5-point Linkert scale. The data collected is descriptively evaluated, displayed as a percentage, and displayed in this survey.

**Table 1. Demographic Background**

		Total	%
Gender	Male	14	23.3
	Female	46	76.7
Age	20-22	57	95.0
	22-24	3	5.0
Qualification	STPM	51	85.0
	Matriculation	7	11.7
	Diploma	2	2.0

**Table 2. Online Use in Online Learning**

Online platform	Application in Online Learning (%)
Webex	71.1
Zoom Meeting	11.7
WhatsApp Group	10.0
Telegram	5.0
FaceTime	1.7
Google Classroom	0
Google Meet	0
Email	0
YouTube	0
Google Form	0
Facebook	0
Skype	0

**Table 3. Perception of the students on PBK1013 Interpersonal Communication via online learning**

Question	None Satisfied (%)	Slightly Unsatisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Somehow Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)
1. Lecturer has explained and demonstrated the course contents clearly	0	0	18.3	43.3	38.3
2. Lecturer provided lecture materials which was assessed asynchronously on e-LEAP	0	1.7	23.7	30.5	44.1
3. Lecturer was very understanding throughout the online classes.	0	0	18.8	41.7	40.0
4. I need more synchronous class to understand selected topics covered	0	3.3	36.7	40.0	20.0
5. I comfortable asynchronous session than synchronous session	0	5.0	41.7	35.0	18.3
6. It is easier to understand and follow lectures online	0	8.3	50.0	30.0	11.7

7. It's easier for me to communicate with my lecture via online learning	1.7	8.5	45.8	32.2	11.9
8. The lecture notes and assessment instructions uploaded on e-LEAP is clear and easy to understand.		1.7	27.1	44.1	27.1
9. Interpersonal Communication Skills- Verbal Communication: Greet each other, Language that easily understand, Clear information & Supportive and encouraging talk	0	0	21.7	38.3	40
10. Interpersonal Communication Skills- Non Verbal Communication : Body language and gesture, Eye contact & Tone of voice	6.7	0	0	0	93.3
11. Perception on Interpersonal Communication Skills in Online Learning	0	1.7	31.7	40.0	26.7

### Results and Findings

A questionnaire has been created to measure how students perceive online education, and a results table to answer the questions is provided below. To further elucidate the recognition rate of interpersonal communication by category, we analysed the data descriptively in tabular form. The summary is based on student responses on a 5-point Likert scale. That is, no satisfaction, some dissatisfaction, neutrality, some satisfaction, satisfaction, percentage. Table 3 provides teachers with materials that are evaluated asynchronously with the e-Learning Enrichment and Advancement Platform (e-LEAP), the recognition categories of student questions in online instruction, how teachers clearly explain and demonstrate course content. Shows how to do it, and the teacher's performance. Specifies whether to evaluate. It shows that he understood very well in the online class. More synchronized lessons to understand selected topics, asynchronous sessions that are more convenient for students than synchronized sessions, easy to understand and follow online lectures, communication with online learning lectures uploaded to e-LEAP scripts Is required. Easy and simple. Clear evaluation process, easy-to-understand interpersonal communication skills and others, easy-to-understand languages, clear information, supportive and encouraging conversations, interpersonal communication skills Nonverbal communication: language and gestures, eye contact learning and voice tones, general Recognition of online interpersonal communication skills. This shows that most students agree that online learning drives innovation and promotes learning at their own pace.

### Discussion

The majority of college students surveyed have reservations for online learning. The sudden transition from traditional classroom and face-to-face learning to online learning has given students a completely different learning experience. This survey is needed to answer important survey questions to measure students' perceptions of online education in the communication courses offered. The results show that the accessibility of lecture materials, which are evaluated asynchronously by students, conveys a positive perception of students. This statement is consistent with previous studies showing that users of enrolled online courses see accessibility as an advantage of student e-learning (AIDosari, 2011). In addition, the scripts and evaluation procedures uploaded to e-LEAP are clear and easy to understand.

As scholars have said, we will study online and make assessments that develop student creativity into something more creative and original (Badali, Mazraeh, Farokhi, and Herfehdoost, 2014). In addition, the students agreed that online learning would facilitate communication with the lecture. According to a similar survey, participants in Skype-based courses had an advantage in understanding speaking and listening. In addition, students agreed that online courses would improve participation and communication (Cuestas, 2013). This statement shows that students are actively attending online classes. Even shy students improve their communication skills in class. This result can be linked to previous studies showing that online courses improve interaction with fellow students and teachers and improve communication skills (Mudenda, Choga & Chigamba, 2014).

In summary, the results show that online courses improve interpersonal communication skills. Oral communication: greeting each other, easy-to-understand languages, clear information, collaborative and encouraging conversations. In addition, interpersonal communication skills. Nonverbal Communication: Body language and gestures, eye contact and voice tones. This statement is consistent with research that allows introversion to interact effectively through an e-learning platform. The results also show that most students are aware of the interpersonal communication skills involved in online learning and are positively assessing their awareness and experience of online courses in relation to their communication skills.

Nonetheless, the results of this study show that most students positively value the perception and experience of online courses in terms of communication skills. This shows that the students are positive, especially with less fear of communication and expression. This statement is also related to studies that use online courses to create joy and reduce anxiety (Loderer, Pekrun, and Lester, 2020). Flexibility and accessibility can increase student participation. This is somehow related to the results of this study. Based on the results, universities are encouraged to widely promote and implement the online class system. Ultimately, this facilitates and improves collaboration of technology skills in the teaching and learning process. By interacting with more interactive tools in online courses, students can think broader and engage in engaging learning styles. This is consistent with previous studies (Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018).

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### Conclusion

Communication is the process of connection and interaction between people (individuals or groups) characterized by the exchange of activities, information, experiences, skills and abilities. Due to the process of digitization and internationalization of modern society, virtual communication occupies a special place in all types of communication. However, interpersonal or virtual communication skills play a major role no matter what communication the participants in the educational process are involved in. They are especially important in interpersonal communication where information is exchanged verbally and non-verbally. For this reason, researchers are trying to find new and effective ways in the field of online education to acquire universal communication skills. The absence of time and space limits in online education contributes to the operational involvement of all participants of the educational process into the system of virtual and interpersonal communication.

### Acknowledgments

Authors would like to share their action research experience which was part Teaching Practicum in Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching and Learning. Authors conducted action research and publishing article. The cost for the publication will be bared by the authors.

### Authors' Contributions

Dr Vimala Govindaraju, the main author for this article based from Human Communication background. Her field of expertise was on interpersonal communication since her doctoral dissertation focused on Interpersonal Communication skills in doctors and patients' communication.

Dr Nur Qasdina Jeeta Abdullah, the Co-author for this article is a lecturer in the Drama and Theatre Programme, University Malaysia Sarawak. Her areas of expertise and interest include theatre in education, scenic design and theatre history.

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