

A QUICK REVIEW ON THE CAUSES AND THE IMPACTS OF PDPR ON PUPILS EMOTION, PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES DURING LOCKDOWN IN MALAYSIA

Rafiza Binti Kasbun

Faculty of Science and Information Technology
Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor
rafiza@kuis.edu.my

Mohd Khairul Mustakim bin Mustapa Kamal

Faculty of Science and Information Technology
Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor
khairulmustakim@kuis.edu.my

Helyawati Binti Baharudin

Faculty of Science and Information Technology
Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor
helyawati@kuis.edu.my

Abstract

Human body and mind especially students age 8 to 18 years old is still in the process of evolution. Lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic forced people to stay indoors. This has led children to depend on gadgets for online classes and even curriculum activities. In view of this, study was taken to assess the effects of PdPR on pupils emotion, psychology and physical health. About 30 to 40 pupils aged between 10 to 18 years of both sexes volunteered to respond to casual interview session and online survey covering problems encountered by them in PdPR. This interview sessions were conducted 60 days after the first day of second lockdown in Malaysia around April 2021. Pupils spent longer hours on gadgets for games, school syllabus, school curriculum, and social content on the internet. Study revealed that these pupils were aware of the negative effects of PdPR to their mind, body and soul. Findings in this review been splitted into three categories; how PdPR affects the pupils emotionally, psychologically, and physically. The conclusion from this review can be stated that the PdPR class is still not suitable to be fully implemented and certainly not in the long run as it has a detrimental effect on the emotional, psychological and physical well being of the pupils.

Keyword: *PdPR, pupils, Emotion, Psychology, Physical, Health, Online*

1. Introduction

Life are stressed and strained by COVID-19 worldwide. This includes the transformation role in education. Home-based teaching and learning (PdPR) was introduced in March last year when schools were ordered to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It involves teaching and learning methods beyond online learning platforms. School closures in Malaysia were intended to keep pupils safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, but without realizing it ushered several types of dangers like mental health and other serious health conditions. When PdPR was resumed on April 2021, the community, especially parents, began to worry about children dropouts. In fact, some teachers come forward to make adjustments and modifications to the design of PdPR solely to meet the learning needs of each student in the context of a community and accessibility. However, every day

the involvement of pupils in PdPR sessions is declining due to lack of self enthusiasm. Parents without specific knowledge of the curriculum and teaching strategies and even no support services are urged to assist teachers and schools in guiding their children to conduct this PdPR session. This will cause stress to the parents and it will indirectly have a negative impact on the child. Poor pupils attendance, data and device constraints, family problems, financial issues, home environment and school demands are among the contributing factors that leads to emotion, psychology and physical health issues among them.

Online learning platforms have been put into use to make sure the continuity and the success of delivering knowledge and education. A virtual classroom is the tool for pupils to interact and fulfill the learning outcomes of the curriculum remotely. Platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, YouTube Live and any Learning Management System have been deployed to deliver the content to the pupils. Teachers and pupils have been challenged to make themselves familiar with new methods of teaching and learning. Even some would say that the increased screen time of online instruction and the lack of face-to-face interaction have affected pupils mental and physical health. Like what Katie Lear (2020) in The Daily Orange said, that the increased screen time has been linked to anxiety, depression and perceived attention problems. Information technology experts and those who are obsessed with technology may feel that online learning is the best approach to impart knowledge to pupils during these tense times, but from the perception of the emotional, mental and physical health of these growing children it is much worse the effect.

2. The Purpose of Review

The aim of this paper review is to discuss the causes and the impacts of PdPR on pupils emotion, psychology and physical health issues during lockdown in Malaysia. Basically in this paper it highlights causes of health issues encountered by pupils during PdPR in Malaysia and a bit of discussion on how it affects them negatively.

Pupils have adapted to this learning environments since first lockdown in Malaysia last March 2020, but many have had difficulties adjusting to it until today. There are many obstacles, issues, elements that need to be considered to make PdPR success among the Z generation. No one knows how long the pandemic will last, but Ministry of Education and the schools should consider changing the way they deliver knowledge and the method of assessment during this difficult time to take into account of the three main health issues as mentioned.

3. Methodology

This paper review documents the findings from non official interview surveys conducted online and offline among the pupils. The review utilizes a qualitative design whereby through a literature review approach. An unofficial interview survey done with the purpose of assessing the participants mental health status. Participants were of around 30 to 40 pupils age 10 to 18 years old. All interviews were conducted via casual chat at the playground of Taman Kajang Impian and few places around. Other than that, researcher interviewed some pupils through few parents Whatsapp group by having a brief and unofficial discussion. Researcher elicited the survey into three categories; emotionally, psychologically, and physically. Most interviews were conducted about 2 months after the PKP order in around April 2021.

4. Problem Statement

While most of the countries are striving to adapt with the online learning method to ensure it is carried out as usual, some of the pupils and teachers faces mental health issues. Shahzad (2020),

said that the pandemic gives a very high impact to the education system where every countries had to adapt with the new teaching and learning method without choice.

There are massives setbacks in PDPR and online learning method although it is undeniable that it is considered the best solution to ensure consistency of learning in the current era. There are more causes and negative impacts either emotionally or physically discussed. The PDPR and online learning method is taking a heavy toll, much of which has not been recorded. New Straits Time (August 2021) said that statistics from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) in 2019 found that almost half a million Malaysians suffer from stress and depression. The same study also found that 424,000 children had mental health problems. It is of great concern if the problems faced throughout PdPR are contributing to these statistics.

Alongside the lack of social interaction, online class structure can affect teens and adolescents in a number of ways: They may feel heightened anxiety about keeping up to date with their school work. Other teens may experience difficulty concentrating or staying focused while at home. Others may have problems with lack of gadgets and connectivity.

There are quite numbers of studies that shows how social isolation may cause negative outcomes for mental and physical health of an individuals. Lack of social interaction may increase feelings of social anxiety and pressures among kids and teenagers . They may feel heightened anxiety about keeping up to date with their school work and online class struture. Teens may experience difficulty concentrating or staying focused while at home. Other than that, for some, being in front of others on video can lead to its own anxieties. Spending a significant amount of time online can fatigue both pupils and their teachers. This referred to as “Zoom fatigue”.

5. Review Findings & Discussion

Results for this review are divided to three categories, emotionally, phsycologically and physically. In each category, researchers describe and discuss the results of the review. Some of the major findings from the study include the realization that there has been an increase in mental health concerns among the pupils. This aspect is due to the isolation from friends and teachers, the lack of guidance and counseling and the difficulty and distractions associated with the the online platforms.

Emotionally, online learning has generated immense disruption both among the parents and pupils. President of the National Union of Teaching Professions (NUTP), Aminuddin Awang, said the burden of the PdPR was admittedly more focused on parents and pupils, compared to teachers and schools. He said, in certain circumstances, teachers can accept PdPR, but not for parents. In order to ensure that the pupils follows the prescribed learning process PdPR, it requires a high-level parental monitoring system. Yet, unknowingly, in an effort to ensure it is successfully implemented, the indifference of the children, the lack of cooperation of family members, and the bad atmosphere of the home provoke feelings of anger, and tiredness of the parents.

Some of the non technical setbacks in PDPR are such as loss of human presence, detecting the incomprehension of pupils by facial gestures, cracking small jokes to light up the mood, student participation and communication that can be achieved more effectively in class (Khalid & Quick, 2016). One of the student said “I cannot focus on class when it’s online. Through the classes, I don't think there's a lot of interactiveness to make people engaged. Although I know my teachers had tried her best to do so.” Radha (2020) said that essentially, the study showed that pupils using online

learning were experiencing peer-related burnout, an aspect which was linked to the inability of the pupils connect on a personal level with their friends. In the interview session, some pupils would say that they feel quite stress and fed-up when parents were constantly reminded about PdPR. They felt it was suffocating whilst the pupils had no enthusiasm to learn online.

There are few interview listed here. “It becomes a challenge to us when kids learn online at home. The monitoring is difficult for us to concentrate on, especially there are youths or teenagers who learn this defiantly.” Other pupils did mentioned that they are more keen to go for online games and other entertainment stuffs whenever they held a gadget. They don’t have the urgency to go through text or exercise books eventhough parents and teachers did remind them several times to do so. This is the biggest distraction issues when gadgets “hypnotized” pupils mind to not to bother with the PdPR session eventhough they were monitored by their parents.

PdPR causes the burden of working parents and work from home parents to increase. The clash of tasks of monitoring children facing PdPR and the essential tasks set by the employer makes a person more stressed. Unconsciously it can affect children who will face parental anger and depression. Aside from parental conflict with PdPR, parental conflict with spouse, kids fight, household needs that need to be taken care of, and instruction from the workplace contribute to these unhealthy emotions.

Utusan Malaysia dated 24th August 2021 said that statistics from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) in 2019 found that almost half a million Malaysians suffer from stress and depression during MCO. Surprisingly, the same study found 424,000 children also had mental health problems. It is of great concern that the pressures faced during the PdPR contribute to this statistics.

Phsycologically, specifically youngsters in the age group of 15 to 18 years, were more anxious with PdPR compared to the younger ones. These youngsters are constantly on social media and the information shared on social media could have played a pivotal role in increasing the anxiety level of the pupils. Although social media gives easy access to information, which can be essential during the lockdowns, the “always-on” facet of social media can be exhausting and may take a toll on pupils’ mental health (Sheela, 2020). Too much Internet contents and overload of information and images trigger the negativity affects to their phsychological thinking.

The flow of risk-elevating messages on social media that are portrayed in a very negative manner could trigger anxiety. In the interview session, a female student also said that she always imagine a video related to a psychopath who likes to abuse his partner which appears in her memory repeatedly. She is now trying to forget it by distracting her mind with some other positive elements. This is one of the effects that unknowingly disturbs the minds of pupils throughout the use of gadgets that were initially intended to attend PdPR at the first time but this video came across the screen.

According to Lee (2020) more than 80% of students in higher education level surveyed, experienced psychological stress due to e-learning crack-up while a further, 26% suffered from the lack of guidance and counseling. Unlike the traditional form of learning, the online learning approach is devoid of the guidance associated with counseling which has always been integral for the handling of psychological and emotional issues among students in at all educational levels (Elsalem et al., 2020). The lack of counseling and other forms of guidance, in this case, implies that the stress and other challenges experienced by the pupils end up not being addressed; an aspect that will proved detrimental in the long term to pupils’ mental health.

The most commonly highlighted stressors were predominantly financial constraints, remote online classes, and uncertainty about the future due to COVID-19 and lockdowns (Sheela, 2020). The second contributor to anxiety and stress level after the financial constraints was the sudden move to online classes, known as PdPR in Malaysia. In addition, the overwhelming expectations from their teachers and parents, with multiple videos, homeworks, attendance taking sessions, curriculum activities, filling up surveys form from the school and teachers and others with no flexible deadlines, added to the pupils' anxiety. The need to juggle household chores and take care of siblings fights while concurrently attending online classes had a huge impact on their anxiety levels. Although it may seem trivial, but the fact is that, it greatly affects the thoughts and emotions of these pupils.

Physically, the surge in telecommunication led people to spend more time facing screens, tablets, and smart phones. Previously, the increase in exposure to smart devices and screens has been reported to increase stress and burnout levels. It is often contended that exposure to computer and smartphone screens is associated with a plethora of stress-related symptoms (Lemola, 2015). A number of developing countries have not fully embraced the use of online learning as an alternative to traditional learning approaches (Dhawan, 2020).

In few interview session, pupils mentions that they face heavy tasks in terms of technological infrastructure, especially poor internet connections and computer equipment that is deficient in terms of hardware and software. As a result, pupils spend more time finding the root cause of gadget problems and solving them than paying attention to PdPR sessions. Being in a classroom with a teacher means there is always available to answer questions or solve problems. However, the online environment inhibits one-on-one interactions. This changes in instructions given leads to unconscious mind stress among pupils. D.Surani & Hamidah (2020) in their study said 32% of their respondents stated they encountered difficulties while pursuing online learning. The hardest part is to understand the learning content.

It is also appalling to note that some pupils attended 6 to 8 hours of daily online classes using their mobile phones, which further contributed to insurmountable stress and health issues. Digital eye strain is an emerging public health issue that results from the continuous use of digital devices. Altered blinking patterns, excessive exposure to intense light, closer working distance, and smaller font size are factors associated with telecommunication through tablets and digital screens that can lead to eye strain and its subsequent effects. Maintaining a normal blinking rate and using artificial tears can help in the management of digital eye strain. Thus, number of pupils need to have new spectacles and upgrading it increase (Maj 2020). In one of the interview session, a student said that he felt seriously tired whenever looking at the screen. So he just shut the screen off but listened to the teachers instead.

Aguilera (2020) said in general, pupils have a limited ability to absorb information, and the possible combination of learning methods can cause cognitive fatigue, which can reduce the ability to learn new information. One of the cause of the fatigueness is as there are no readymade gadgets and furniture to suit the pupils ergonomically. COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to stay indoors. Schools, colleges and other educational institutions were shut down. This has led to a dependency on online classes, training and meetings. Thus, children were spending more time on androids, laptops, desktops and other devices. However, neither the children nor parents and teachers were aware of the problems associated with acquired incorrect postures, Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs) and MSD's (musculoskeletal disorders). These disorders

can result in pain and functional impairment affecting many body parts such as the neck, upper and lower back, shoulders, elbows, wrists, and hands (Maj 2020).

Switching to online classes has negatively altered pupils' sleeping patterns, and many pupils have fallen into unhealthy sleep habits. In the interview session, there were some pupils who made the confession that their sleep time had changed. They stay up more often at night and this makes it quite difficult for them to get up during the day to attend PdPR classes. Although parents have made rules, but some of them still sneak around to surf the Internet after midnight. From this, we can conclude that they will not focus on PdPR the next day due to exhaustion. A loss of school enthusiasm was noted amongst a great chunk of the respondents suggesting sleep deprivation.

8. Conclusion and Future Recommendation

The ongoing pandemic and stay-at-home orders has utterly disrupted pupils' education, impacting the mental and physical health of countless pupils. The findings of our review highlight the common problem occurred in three categories discussed and how it affects the pupils mind, body and soul. With that, an intervention in the education system need to be identified to make sure it gets along with the pupils healthily. Practically, this review will at least help pupils, parents, teachers, schools, and the ministry to take more appropriate action to address these issues. Majority numbers of pupils, or even students in higher level of education were not fully prepared for a full online learning. At least not in the near future.

References

Enba J. Thandavaraj, N. Azizah N. Gani, M. Khalid M. Nasir* (2021). A Review of Psychological Impact on Students Online Learning during Covid-19 in Malaysia. Scientific Research. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi, Malaysia.

Jenna W. (2020). Online Classes Cause Mental Health Struggles For Students. Column. The Daily Orange.

High Focus Centers. (2020). The Effects of Online Learning On A Teen's Mental health. <https://highfocuscenters.pyramidhealthcarepa.com/the-effects-of-online-learning-on-a-teens-mental-health/>

Thandavaraj, E. , Gani, N. and Nasir, M. (2021) A Review of Psychological Impact on Students Online Learning during Covid-19 in Malaysia. *Creative Education*, 12, 1296-1306. doi: 10.4236/ce.2021.126097.

Akpinar. E., (2021). The Effects of Online Learning On Tertiary Level Students Mental Health Duting Covid—19 Lockdown. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioral Science*. Volume 30. Issue 1. 10.15405/ejsbs.288

M. N. Parzi. (2020). Kejayaan PdPR Bergantung Pada Ibubapa, Murid. <https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/nasional/2021/05/818379/kejayaan-PdPR-bergantung-kepada-ibu-bapa-murid>

Radha, R., Mahalakshmi, K., Kumar, V. S., & Saravanakumar, A. R. (2020). E-Learning during lockdown of covid-19 pandemic: a global perspective. *International journal of control and automation*, 13(4), 1088-1099.

M.N.M.Yatim. (2021). Bimbang PdPR Penyebab Ibubapa Alami Tekanan Mental. <https://www.utusan.com.my/rencana/forum/2021/08/bimbang-PdPR-penyebab-ibu-bapa-alami-tekanan-mental/>

N.F. Ali. (2021). Segelintir Ibubapa Tetekan PdPR Tidak Mampu Pantau Terpaksa Bekerja. <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/segelintir-ibu-bapa-tertekan-PdPR-tidak-mampu-pantau-terpaksa-bekerja-278300>

Sheela Sundarassen 1 , Karuthan Chinna 2,* , Kamilah Kamaludin 1 , Mohammad Nurunnabi 1 , Gul Mohammad Baloch 2 , Heba Bakr Khoshaim 3 , Syed Far Abid Hossain 4 and Areej Sukayt 1, Psychological Impact of COVID-19 and Lockdown among University Students in Malaysia: Implications and Policy Recommendations, *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17(17), 6206 <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/17/6206/pdf>

Lee J. Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. 2020;4(6):421. doi: 10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30109-7.

Coles-Brennan C, Sulley A, Young G. Management of digital eye strain. *Clin Exp Optom*. (2019) 102:18–29. doi: 10.1111/cxo.12798.

Nour. M., Mohammad. Y.F., Jawad., F. (2020). Coping With Stress And Burnout Associated With Telecommunications and Online Learning. *Front. Public Health*, 11 November 2020.

Siti.A, Suzana.Z.A., & Zulkurnain.H., (2020). Keberkesanan Pembelajaran Dan Pengajaran Dalam Talian (Epembelajaran) Terhadap Pembelajaran Pelajar Di Kolej Komuniti Hulu Langat. *International Journal of Humanities Technology and Civilization (IJHTC)* CopyrightUniversiti Malaysia Pahang PressISSN: 2289-7216 (PRINT), e-ISSN: 2600-8815 (ONLINE) IJHTC Issue 10, Vol 2 March 2021. pp 1-14.

Maj S Bakhtiar Choudhary (Retd)1* , Ashad Bakhtiar Choudary2 , Sahera Jamal3 , Rajesh Kumar4 , Sanaa Jamal5, (2020). The Impact of Ergonomics on Children Studying Online During COVID-19 Lockdown. *Journal of Advances in Sports and Physical Education*. https://saudijournals.com/media/articles/JASPE_38_117-120_c.pdf

Son C, Hegde S, Smith A, Wang X, Sasangohar F Effects of COVID-19 on College Students' Mental Health in the United States: Interview Survey Study *J Med Internet Res* 2020;22(9):e21279 (2020).

Sklar. J., (2020). Zoom Fatigue Is Taxing The Brain, Here's Why That Happen. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/coronavirus-zoom-fatigue-is-taxing-the-brain-here-is-why-that-happens>

<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2021/08/720247/parental-support-key-PdPR-success>