

# **Malaysian Tertiary Students' Intention to Engage in E-Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Conceptual Framework**

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The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia has affected all industries, including education. Due to the implementation of Movement Control Order (MCO) Phase 1 on 18 March 2020, the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) in Malaysia were closed to stop the spreading of the disease. The teaching and learning process have been forced to face a transition from face-to-face classes to online learning, either to be conducted in a synchronous (online) or asynchronous (offline) method. With this unexpected transition, the educators and students had to rapidly adapt to online learning. Online learning or e-Learning is generally referred to as the use of electronic media or devices for the purposes of education in teaching and learning. Online learning started to be implemented in few Malaysian HEIs as early as the year 2000, but it was underutilized in the past. With the closure of HEI's during Covid-19 pandemic, the education industry was forced to conduct courses through online portals with the digital video conferencing platform such as ZOOM, Google Classroom, Microsoft platform and the WebEx Blackboard. The implementation of online learning has shifted the teacher-centred pedagogy to student-centred pedagogy, hence students are required to be more independent in the online learning process. However, as this is an unexpected transition among students, certain groups of students might have culture shock which might influence their study. Studies are required to examine their perceptions in this aspect. This study aims to investigate the students' perceptions, in terms of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU) on the intention to engage in e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the main underlying theory, this research created a research framework to study the students' intention to engage in e-learning during COVID-19 Pandemic. The variables included in this study are stress, perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), internet connectivity, and self-efficacy to predict the students' intention to engage in e-learning. The internet connectivity and self-efficacy are moderators to moderate the relationship between PU and intention as well as between PEOU and intention. This study will adopt the quantitative approach to investigate the

research framework. Using survey approach, questionnaires with reliable instruments will be adopted and adapted to collect data from students in the local public and private universities. This study is expected to collect 350 samples from the students. Data collected is analyzed with Structural Equation Modelling approach by using the SmartPLS software. From a theoretical perspective, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to understanding the Malaysian students' intention to engage in e-learning during Covid-19 pandemic. Also, the insight from this study would be able to bring implication to the educators in designing a better teaching mechanism through considering the factors that might bring positive determinants in e-learning.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, E-learning, Stress, Students' Perception, Technology Acceptance Model*