Article

Business Continuity Plan in the Higher Education Industry: University Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Academic Continuity Plans during Covid-19 Pandemic

Ratneswary Rasiah [1,*], Harpaljit Kaur [1] and Vinitha Guptan [2]

[1] School of Accounting and Finance, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya 47500, Malaysia; harpaljitkaur.pritamsingh@taylors.edu.my
[2] Vice Chancellor's Office, Saito University College, Petaling Jaya 46200, Malaysia; vinitha@saito.edu.my
[*] Correspondence: Ratneswary.RASIAH@taylors.edu.my; Tel.: +603-56295663

Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most disruptive, life-changing events that had brought the world to a perpetual standstill in 2020. Schools and institutions of higher education were impacted badly, resulting from the lockdowns and movement restrictions imposed by the governments of numerous countries. Students and faculty found themselves in virtual classrooms, with many caught unaware of what they needed to do, having to learn new things at lightning speed and feeling a sense of despair. While many online learners had frustrations and concerns regarding their online learning experience, there were those who had a good learning experience. The students' observations and perceptions of the difficulties and opportunities they encountered in their online learning experience were assessed through grounded theory using textual thematic qualitative analysis of their reflective feedback. The findings reveal that most students had a good online learning experience and found that the academic continuity plans implemented by the universities were effective. The concerns that some students had with online learning were related to technological drawbacks such as poor internet connections, and personal concerns about academic ability and time management skills, among others. This study concludes by offering insights and recommendations to institutions, faculty, and students on how best to conduct online learning and teaching for all.

Keywords: academic continuity; business continuity; e-learning; Covid-19; student's perception; online learning; learning experience; higher education institutions

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most disruptive life-changing events that had brought the world to a perpetual standstill for a couple of months in the year 2020. What was believed to have started in Wuhan, China, spread like wildfire engulfing many countries and causing untold damage to the global economy in terms of loss of life amounting to a shocking 1.161 million deaths as of 28 October 2020 [1], shutting down of businesses, scaling back of both production and consumption [2], increasing unemployment, closing schools and institutions of higher education [3,4], reducing the levels of sentiments and increasing perceived uncertainty [5], and increasing suicide rates [6,7] among others, following the massive movement control orders and lockdowns across the world to support physical distancing efforts and combat the spread of the deadly virus.