

The Constructiveness of Online Learning in Mandarin Course During COVID-19 Pandemic Season

**Nurul Ain Chua, Che Mohd Zaid, Che Hasniza Che Noh, Mohd Yusri Ibrahim,
Roswati Abdul Rahid and Mazlina Ahmad**

Center for Foundation and Continuing Education

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu

21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

ain.chua@umt.edu.my, cmzaid@umt.edu.my, niza@umt.edu.my, yusri@umt.edu.my,
roswati@umt.edu.my, mazlinaahmad@umt.edu.my

Goh Ying Soon

Universiti Teknologi MARA

54000 Kuala Lumpur,

Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

gohyi141@tganu.uitm.edu.my

Jumadil Saputra

Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu

21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

jumadil.saputra@umt.edu.my

Abstract

The use of Online Class (OC) in higher education has become more magnificent than before significantly during the Covid19 pandemic outbreak. This paper investigates the practice of OC among Mandarin foreign language learners for their elective courses. The purpose was to create a productive OC. The study presented students' perceptions of the productiveness of OC. The study aimed to figure out how students viewed the instructor's teaching and actions and how such aspects impacted students' expectations of the course and the OC in general. A mixed-method which involved quantitative and qualitative data collection from 65 Mandarin foreign learners' approach employed in this study. The instruction of OC carried out for seven weeks. After OC, the students were given questionnaires and interviewed to explore their experiences deeply. Data was a quantitative analysis based on the themes of Learner access, Learner Interaction, Learner response, and Learning outcomes. The emerging themes of qualitative analysis were teacher, students, content, and technology. The findings indicated that the students were active, worked more autonomously, and became more responsible for their learning. OC enabled the teachers to provide teaching materials via various online applications, better-personalised assistance, and better track student progress. Most students liked learning in the OC environment and indicated they would prefer this instructional approach more than conventional classes. The study found that instructors need to be always reflective in considering and altering the emerging positive or negative feedback with students' suggestions while integrating advanced technology in students' learning. There is a need to reflect, re-act, and re-plan in engaging generation Z with their learning preferences to achieve the learning outcomes.

Keywords

Online class, student's perception and productiveness, Mandarin foreign language, COVID-19 pandemic

1. Introduction

Coronavirus outbreak has impacted the world, especially the education sector (UNESCO, 2020). The outbreak has brought the globe to lockdown for a period to stay safe. Study shows that almost 300 million students interrupted school activities and future education rights worldwide (Handoyo, 2020). China has come out with a "School's Out, But Class's On" policy (Dong, 2020) means "suspending classes without stopping learning" during the COVID-19 epidemic. In this circumstance, most countries were focusing on online learning to retrieve students' education. Some countries are Indonesia (Wajdi, Kuswandi, Faruq, Zulhijra, Khairudin, & Khoiriyah, 2020), Georgia (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020), and others. The gradual shift to online education has been productive and has generated expertise that has prompted a wave of new rules, policies, frameworks, and approaches for potential cases (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

Malaysia's government was also taking education policies that could minimise the spread of coronaviruses. Schools, colleges, and universities were closed for face-to-face classes from the frightening virus. University shifted all lessons to online mode instantly and entirely. The lecturers utilised existing modern technology such as audio or video presentation through various learning management systems, virtual conferencing, and various web-based applications to continue classes. The policies provide instructors with vast exposure to online learning, which is the most reputable nowadays in education, and it became amplified, especially during the isolation period. However, the research found that the Mandarin subject administrators and undergraduates were required to equip pedagogical and technical skills to make online learning a success (Larsen, 2012).

Furthermore, online learning was irreplaceable concerning the uniqueness of face-to-face relationships (Grammegna, 2020). When the teaching strategy shifts unexpectedly, the consistency of learning outcomes and student learning interactions may become a central concern that needs to be tackled. Furthermore, promoting mobile integrated learning has been minimal efforts in the scope of Mandarin learning (Mallawaarachchi, 2019). Thus, this paper was to uncover the productiveness of online learning through students' involvement.

2. Literature Review

Online learning or Distance learning has impacted education significantly since the last decade, and this trend keeps on increasing. In a traditional classroom, learning is through listening, reading, writing, and doing activities designed by the instructor. However, Online Learning is different because the learners are not in the same location, and conceivably they will never meet each other. According to Stern (2018), Online learning is an education that takes place over the internet. It is also referred to as "e-learning," among other items. However, online learning is only one form of "remote learning," the umbrella word for all learning that takes place over remote and not in a conventional classroom. It is also called "emergency teaching remote" as a specific term for the type of instruction given in these pressing pandemic circumstances (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020).

Students who had online learning experiences found more effective learning strategies and higher motivation levels, enhancing students' satisfaction and learning grades. The researchers recommend designing an online course; the instructors need to consider self-regulated learning behaviours and user-friendly online learning platforms and workshops (Wang, Shannon, & Ross, 2013). Grammegna (2020) stresses that online/distance teaching benefits children and parents, but it is self-limited since it lacks its own unique, face-to-face distinctiveness. The findings showed that online videos and explanations seem positive, have a high fraction, and respond to pupils' needs. Besides, the teacher needs to have ten skills during the OC implementation. These skills include planning and promoting learning situations; monitoring progress; designing and creating differentiating devices; engaging pupils in their learning and work; working in and with the team; participating in school management; educating and involving parents; using emerging technologies; resolving the profession's ethical dilemmas and handling continuing education (Wang Shannon, & Ross, 2013).

Also, the researchers suggested that while designing courses, the instructors need to encourage self-regulated learning habits of students in online learning environments. However, the study revealed no significant differences in word acquisition in students' characteristics, self-regulated learning, technology self-efficacy, and course outcomes in online learning.

Furthermore, students could not study effectively from their homes; the online system of learning was ineffective. Parents were incapable of assisting and supervising the learning of their children. The researchers recommended that the students be introduced to innovative and offline e-learning platforms to supplement classroom teaching and learning and benefit students who may not have access to internet connectivity (Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson, & Hanson, 2020). Moreover, in the United States, many schools implemented remote learning during isolation hours, which has prevented students from setbacks during school closures. However, some schools do not provide adequate money to have learning experiences, so not all children have exposure to the

internet at home (Morgan, 2020). Therefore, the study on the constructiveness of online learning must be carried out. The aim is to produce a constructive online learning environment to ensure that learning has occurred online.

3. Methodology

It is essential to develop lessons in a mobile learning environment that can effectively meet learners' needs. Therefore, to determine and hinder constructive online learning factors, Mandarin undergraduates were asked to answer a survey and an interview for data collection. The data were quantitative and qualitative analysed. The study explained the essence of experiences shared among the participants as research findings. After seven-week online classes, a survey form sent to all the students who attended the 2nd semester of the academic year 2019-2020 for data collection. All the elements provided, 32 items are from WEBLEI questionnaire, and eight items have been added to support the questionnaire. The mean achieved for each of the four WEBLEI questionnaires scales modified on the Likert scale, which contains the following stages, from 1 to 5: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Somewhat disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) somewhat agree, and (5) strongly agree. There are five vital parts of the survey. The first part was on students' demographic details. The second section is devoted to the collection of data on online learning exposure. The third section is committed to collecting data about the interaction.

The fourth section was on students' response, and the fifth section was students' learning outcomes of online learning. The items used for this study were taken from Chang and Fisher (2003) with additional alterations to fit this study's scope. Moreover, 12 interview questions elicit students' experiences regarding the online class, which analysed with Atlas.ti8. The research carried out at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) in Malaysia. During the isolation period, UMT has implemented an entire online classroom for all the departments. The sample of this study consists of 65 Mandarin undergraduates who have learned Mandarin online for seven weeks. The students were 29 from Level 1, 18 students from Level 2 and 3. The students learned online via the university's Learning Management System, Google Classroom, virtual conferencing, WhatsApp, and various learning apps like Classkick, Quizizz, Kahoot, Flipgrid, Edpuzzle, Whiteboard. Fi, and others either synchronously, asynchronously, or both. Sixty-five valid responses were received from all the questionnaires administered, which shows a response rate of 100%.

4. Results and Discussion

This study intended to find Mandarin students' learning experiences in an online setting, which offered a clear picture of how they felt about access, interaction, response, and learning outcomes. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was presented first. For each scale, the mean and the standard deviation are shown in the tabulation. Second are the qualitative data through an interview from the students who have attended the online classes. Students' views were used to triangulate the quantitative results.

4.1 Quantitative analysis

4.1.1 Students' demographic details

The participants are 65 Mandarin foreign language learners. As shown in Table 1, the respondents were from three levels of Mandarin courses. There were 29 (44.6%) of level 1, 18 (27.7) of level 2, and 18 (27.7) of level 3.

Table 1: Demographic information

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Level of Mandarin	1	29	44.6	44.6	44.6
	2	18	27.7	27.7	72.3
	3	18	27.7	27.7	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

4.1.2 Learner Access

The median(M) and standard deviation (SD) of item 1 (M = 3.85, SD = 0.71) and, 4(M = 3.80, SD =0.83), 5(M = 3.78, SD = 0.91), 6(M = 3.75, SD =0.88), 7(M = 3.77, SD = 0.68), and 8(M = 3.85, SD = 0.71) of learner access shows that students agreed they can learn through online on individual speed. They agreed they can learn at anywhere (item 2; M = 3.89, SD = 0.81) and any time (item 3; M = 3.78, SD = 0.67). In table 2, most students (72%) prefer the flexibility as it allows them to explore their areas of interest. However, 57% of them perceived that they are unable to decide how much of the content they need to learn in each period. All the frequency and percent of somewhat agree and strongly agree are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Perception of learner Access

Items: Response for somewhat agree and strongly agree	Freq.	Per cent
1. I can access the learning activities at times, convenient to me.	45	69
2. The online material is available at locations suitable for me.	44	68
3. I can use the time saved in travelling and on-campus class attendance for study and other commitments.	42	65
4. I am allowed to work at my speed to achieve the learning objectives.	43	66
5. I decide how much I want to learn in a given period.	37	57
6. I decide when I want to learn.	41	63
7. Flexibility allows me to meet my learning goals.	41	63
8. The flexibility allows me to explore my areas of interest.	47	72

Table 3, the overall view on the aspect of learner access was 3.3404. It indicated that there was a moderate perception of learner access. Students of level 3 showed a more positive perception on the aspect of learner access with a mean = 3.4167, followed by students of level 2 (mean = 3.3958), and the least positive perception reflected by students of level 1 (mean = 3.2586). However, there was no significant difference among the respondents from the three levels of Mandarin learning with sig. value $0.468 > 0.05$ ($df=2$, $F=0.770$) which is shown in table 4.

Table 3: Compare means on learner access.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.354	2	.177	.770	.468
Within Groups	14.256	62	.230		
Total	14.610	64			

Table 4: ANOVA on learner access

Level of Mandarin	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	3.2586	29	0.43421
2	3.3958	18	0.55448
3	3.4167	18	0.46967
Total	3.3404	65	0.47778

4.1.3 Learner Interaction

Table 5, the items of 1,2,3,4 and 8 show more than 80% of students perceive they were interacting with peers and teacher during online learning. However, fewer of them perceived that they received quick responses from peers (72%) in evaluating their own (68%) and others' work (66%).

Table 5: Perception of Learner Interaction

Items: Response for somewhat agree and strongly agree	Frequency	Per cent
1. I communicate with other students in this subject electronically (email, discussion forums, WhatsApp, virtual conferencing)	58	89
2. In this Online Learning environment, I must interact with learning.	58	89
3. I have the freedom to ask my teacher what I do not understand.	55	85
4. I have the freedom to ask other students what I do not understand.	56	86
5. Other students respond promptly to my requests for help	47	72
6. I am regularly asked to evaluate my work.	44	68
7. My classmates and I regularly evaluate each other's work.	43	66
8. I was supported by a positive response from my classmates.	52	80

As shown in Table 6, the overall view on the aspect of learner Interaction was 4.1173. It indicated that there was a rather good perception of learner Interaction. Students of level 2 showed the highest positive perception of learner Interaction with mean= 4.2431, followed by students of level 3 (mean = 4.1597), and the least positive perception

reflected by level 1 (mean: 4.0129). Of the three stages of Mandarin learning, there was no substantial difference between the respondents $0.297 > 0.05$ value ($df=2, F=1.237$) as shown in table 7.

Table 6: Compare means of learner interaction.

Level of Mandarin	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	4.0129	29	0.59325
2	4.2431	18	0.44448
3	4.1597	18	0.39483
Total	4.1173	65	0.50769

Table 7: ANOVA on learner interaction.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.633	2	0.316	1.237	0.297
Within Groups	15.863	62	0.256		
Total	16.496	64			

4.1.4 Learner Response

There were 16 items regarding learner response. In Table 8, the item 7 ($M = 4.25, SD = .73$) and 86% of the students agreed online learning improves their speaking skills. The items 4 ($M = 4.17, SD = .80$), 5 ($M = 4.08, SD = .74$), 6 ($M = 3.98, SD = .74$), 8 ($M = 4.14, SD = .79$) and 9 ($M = 3.94, SD = .83$). However, in item 4 ($M = 4.17, SD = .80$) most of the students prefer learning in the classroom(75%) and of the item 2 ($M = 3.80, SD = .92$) like learning in the computer lab (62%), in item 5 ($M = 4.08, SD = .74$) their reading skills(77%), in item 6 ($M = 3.98, SD = .74$) their writing skills(72%) and in item 8 ($M = 4.14, SD = .79$) their listening skills(75%) had improved. There were 57% of students perceived that they like classroom activities which shown in item 3 ($M = 3.65, SD = .96$), in item 10 ($M = 3.65, SD = .84$) the respondents satisfied with online learning(58%), in item 11 ($M = 3.52, SD = .87$) they enjoyed the blended learning(55%), in item 12 ($M = 3.54, SD = .99$) they learned more in online (51%), and in item 14 ($M = 3.43, SD = .98$) they found it was easy to work with others(52%). There were 43% of them liked online activities which shown in item 1 ($M = 3.42, SD = .98$), and in item 13 ($M = 3.34, SD = 1.03$) which is 49% perceived it is easy to organize group work, 49% of them agreed that online learning held their interest in the item 15 ($M = 3.43, SD = .87$). But, only 12 % (8 students) perceived they felt bored at the end of the semester in item 16 ($M = 2.34, SD = .1.00$). The frequency and percent of somewhat agree and strongly agree were listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Perception of Learner Response

Items: Response for somewhat agree and strongly agree	Frequency	Per cent
1. I liked the online activities	28	43
2. I liked learning in the computer lab.	40	62
3. I liked the online classroom activities	37	57
4. I liked learning in the classroom.	49	75
5. This course improved my reading skills.	50	77
6. This course improved my writing skills.	47	72
7. This course improves my speaking skills.	56	86
8. This course improves my listening skills.	49	75
9. Using online learning makes me able to interact with other students and the teacher asynchronously.	47	72
10. I felt a sense of satisfaction and achievement in this Online Learning environment.	38	58
11. I enjoy learning in this Blended Learning environment.	36	55
12. I could learn more in this Online Learning environment.	33	51
13. It is easy to organise a group for a project.	32	49
14. It is easy to work together with other students involved in a group project.	34	52

15. The Online Learning environment held my interest throughout the course.	32	49
16. I felt bored with this course when we got to the end of the semester.	8	12

As shown in Table 9, the overall view on the aspect of learner response was 3.9346. It indicated that there was a moderately good perception of learner response. Students of level 2 showed the highest positive perception of learner Interaction with a mean: 4.1806, followed by students of level 3 (mean:3.9861), and the least positive perception reflected by students of level 1 (mean: 3.7500). In Table 10, it was found that there was a significant difference among the respondents from the three levels of Mandarin learning with sig. value $.044 < .05$ ($df=2$, $F=3.298$). It showed that level 2 had the most positive perception of learner response, followed by level 3, and students of level 1 had the least positive learner response.

Table 9: Compare means on learner response.

Level of Mandarin	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	3.7500	29	0.57282
2	4.1806	18	0.49487
3	3.9861	18	0.62410
Total	3.9346	65	0.58759

Table 10: ANOVA on learner attitude.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.125	2	1.062	3.298	0.044
Within Groups	19.972	62	.322		
Total	22.097	64			

4.1.5 Learning Outcomes

In detail students (88%) enjoyed quizzes learning which was shown in Table 11 in the item 8 ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .70$). In item 1 ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.75$), the students perceived learning objectives were clear (77%), the lessons were easy to follow(68%) in item 2 ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.72$), the expectations of tasks were clearly stated(60%) in item 4($M = 3.69$, $SD = .88$), activities were well-planned(74%) in item 5($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.81$), content work well in online(74%) in item 6 ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .79$) and the presentation of content was clear(72%) in item 7($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.88$). However, 54% of students perceived Online Learning environment keeps them focused on what is to be learned in item 3 ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.00$). The frequency and percent of somewhat agree and strongly agree were listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Perception of Learning Outcomes.

Items: Response for somewhat agree and strongly agree	Frequency	Per cent
1. The learning objectives are clearly stated in each lesson.	50	77
2. The organisation of each lesson is easy to follow	44	68
3. The structure of the Online Learning environment keeps me focused on what is to be learned	35	54
4. Expectations of assignments are clearly stated.	39	60
5. Activities are planned carefully	48	74
6. The content of my Mandarin course worked well in an Online Learning environment	48	74
7. The presentation of the Mandarin content was clear.	47	72
8. Quizzes enhance my learning process.	57	88

As shown in Table 12, the overall view on the aspect of the learning outcomes was 3.3981. It indicated that there was a moderate perception of Learning Outcomes. It showed that students did not have many Learning Outcomes in using OC for Mandarin learning. Students of level 2 showed the highest positive perception on the aspect of Learning Outcomes with a mean: 3.5972, followed by students of level 3 (mean:3.4861), and the least positive perception reflected by students of level 1 (mean: 3.2198). However, there was a non-significant difference among

the respondents from the three levels of Mandarin learning with the sig. value $0.109 > .05$ ($df=2$, $F=2.301$) in the Table 13.

Table 13: ANOVA on learning outcomes.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.775	2	0.887	2.301	0.109
Within Groups	23.909	62	0.386		
Total	25.684	64			

Table 12: Compare means of learning outcomes.

Level of Mandarin	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	3.2198	29	0.65436
2	3.5972	18	0.55993
3	3.4861	18	0.62263
Total	3.3981	65	0.63349

4.2 Qualitative analysis

The qualitative method is used to understand students' experiences of online learning further. From the interview data, there were seven codes listed, as shown in Table 14. The codes categorised as themes of 'positive feedback' (like online, interaction), 'negative feedback' (dislike online, prefer face-to-face, Learning Outcomes, other problems) and 'suggestions'.

Table 14: Codes of Online Learning.

	M1(29 students) Gr=170	MII (18 students) Gr=103	MIII (18 students) Gr=5	Totals
○ Dislike online (Gr=16)	12	4	0	16
○ Like online (Gr=79)	50	29	2	81
○ Other problem (Gr=11)	8	3	0	11
○ Prefer face-to-face (Gr=49)	26	23	1	50
○ Interaction (Gr=70)	44	26	1	71
○ Suggestions (Gr=24)	19	5	0	24
○ Learning Outcomes (Gr=24)	11	13	1	25
Totals	170	103	5	278

Table 15, all the codes are then categorised into 'positive feedback' (Like Online, Interaction), 'negative feedback' (Dislike Online, Prefer Face-To-Face, Other Problem) and 'Suggestions'. After detail was analysed from the three categories, it was found that the positive feedbacks were about online teaching and students' learning, the teacher, content/pedagogy skills, and self-discipline. The negative feedback included online teaching and students' learning, content/pedagogy skills, Self-discipline, Technology issues and Other problems. The suggestions mainly were on Content/ pedagogy skills. Lastly, the categories were formed under the themes of Student, Teacher, Content and Technology.

Table 15: Students' quotations.

Positive feedback	Negative feedback	Suggestions
<p>Online learning and students' learning <i>very interesting, fun, enjoyable, easy, unique, suitable, comfortable, anytime, platform easy and quick to learn, a reminder, many apps, can access anywhere, learn again, easy to access, interact, to ask, when the internet is ok</i></p>	<p>Online approach/students' learning <i>More tiring than face-to-face, prefer learning in class, difficult to interact with teachers and friends.</i></p>	
<p>Content/ pedagogy skills <i>how it was conducted, given marks, drilling, infographic, more video, more music, Various vocabulary, more knowledge, many experiences, the ways content presented, many activities (quizzes, Kahoot, Edpuzzle, listening and writing), may ways, easy to understand, unique technique</i></p> <p>Teacher <i>supportive lecturer, teacher's guidance, sporting teacher, kind teacher,</i></p>	<p><i>Dislike making video, messy, miss many important things, cannot concentrate, difficult to understand,</i></p>	<p><i>Having games, to have more quizzes, more writing activities, make it more simple, less assignment, a trip, give more time to complete the task, more explanation, singing contest, give more work, having more tutorials, having industry talk, to have more video, write and speak more proficiently, prefer online and offline, more activities, learn more Chinese character, people and its culture, to have more students, the schedule does not clash with another subject, to use Google classroom platform</i></p>
<p>Self-discipline <i>Do all the activities.</i></p>	<p>Self-discipline <i>Not all because not realise, need to catch up the lesson, forgot to do work, not concentrate, missed the due date, failed to manage time, done late, unable to finish.</i></p> <p>Technology issues <i>Slow Internet connection, do not have a laptop, my computer' storage is full, the computer cannot download the applications.</i></p> <p>Other problems <i>Commitment staying at home, house surrounding, family matters, many tasks, difficult tasks</i></p>	

In term of technology, the students found perceived they liked and enjoyed the way of learning. There were 81 quotations, mostly positive tones were prevalent in the student responses of like-online, and only 16 quotations about dislike online. The expressions like online such as "it was very interesting...", "fun", "enjoyable", "easy to access...", "unique", "suitable", "comfortable", "...can be accessed anytime", "...anywhere". The responses showed the students like the way of learning, which was different from the conventional face-to-face approach. The other quotations such as "like the platform...", "...where was easy and quick to learn", "Google Classroom has a reminder...", and "...using many apps" were prevailed in the student comments. More explicitly, most students interested in learning via online platforms and available education apps. Besides, students perceived such"... can

learn again with the recording", "...to interact", and "...to ask". The points reflected that students could re-learn and interact with the materials, teacher, and peers whenever they want. Seventy-one quotations of interaction proved the finding. However, all these only went well when the internet connection was good. The result parallels the research by Wang, Shannon, & Ross (2013), which showed that online students' study would have more successful learning approaches, higher engagement rates, improving student success and learning scores.

Besides, the teacher's pedagogical knowledge influenced students' learning. The detailed responses were listed as "I like how it was conducted", "...the ways the content was presented", and "...the tasks were given marks", "...drilling..." and "...infographic...". Also, "...there were more videos", "...more music", "many vocabularies", "...learned more knowledge", "...many experiences", "...many activities" (quizzes, Kahoot, Edpuzzle, listening and writing), "...many ways...", "...easy to understand" and "...unique technique". All the comments prevailed that teacher needs to carefully plan and employ the online education apps appropriately to suit students different learning needs. Moreover, the apps use was able to achieve the learning outcomes. The result supported the argument that teachers should have ten pedagogical skills when integrating online learning (Wang Shannon & Ross, 2013).

Some of the students commented that the online approach was "...more tiring compared to face to face". Further, the expressions "it was difficult to interact with their teachers and friends" and "preferred learning in the class". The data shows there were 50 quotations about preferred face-to-face. The responses such as "disliked making a video", "it was tedious", "...missed many important things", "...could not concentrate", and "...difficult to understand the lesson". The expressions showed that not all students prefer mobile education as online learning lacks its own unique, face-to-face distinctiveness (Grammegna, 2020).

In term of Self-discipline, it is the crucial variable to make online learning a success. In this study, some students were unable to do all the tasks given. The quotations such as "...did not realise the due date", "...need to catch up the lesson", "...forgot to do the work", "...did not concentrate..", "...missed the due date", "...failed to manage time", "...finished late", and "...unable to finish". The result contradicted with the study of Wang, Shannon & Ross (2013). He revealed no significant differences in word acquisition in students' characteristics, self-regulated learning, technology self-efficacy, and course outcomes in online learning. It may be attributed to the ineffectiveness of the learning system, the parents were unable to help their children, and the students were not acquainted with the technologies (Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson, & Hanson, 2020). Thus, students need to explain why, how and what to do when doing technology-integrated learning; only then would it ensure success in implementing active blended learning as discussed by (Luna & Winters, 2017). However, happenings might be the norm of learning. The result has correlations with He, Gajski, Farkas, & Warschauer's analysis (2015). Researchers found that out-of-class efforts predicted the quality of students' work significantly, but not their final grades.

Likewise, Lin, Warschauer, & Blake (2016) investigated an out-of-school, self-paced online language-learning platform. It found that its long-term adult users' target-language writing displayed improved syntactic difficulty also more mistakes. The huge hindrances were technology issues. The students' comments on the other influencing factors such as "...internet connection were slow", "...did not have a laptop", "...the storage was full", and "...the computer could not download the applications". The other problems found were related to students' commitment. The responses such as "...had to stay at home", "...house environments", "...family matters", "...many and challenging tasks". Although online learning benefited students' learning, this finding also supported the hypothesis that students could not train successfully from home; the online learning program was unsuccessful (Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson, & Hanson, 2020).

In employing online learning, the educator needs to plan, act, observe and reflect continuously to ensure students have meaningful learning. There were 24 voice suggestions from the data to upgrade the online instruction. The expressions like "... more games", "...quizzes", "...writing activities", "...to have a trip", "...a singing contest", "to give more learning tasks", "...tutorials", "...industry talk", "...videos", "...writing and speaking tasks", "...physical activities", and "...Chinese character". Students also suggested that the teacher organise online and offline activities to learn about Chinese people and their Chinese culture. The teacher was asked to have simple activities, reduce the number of assignments, and extend the submission time for the tasks. The students suggested that the teacher continue online learning and ensure that the new schedule does not clash with other subjects and remain in using the Google classroom platform. The result aligned the claim that instructors should show the route in generating a broader and deeper path for learning. Bloemer & Swan (2015) mentioned that informal blending learning is generally used by keen learners who want to learn complete and further what classroom teaching can offer. The key is the activeness in learning. This finding was aligned with the study of Hoe, Teow, Lim (2016). The researchers discovered the joy of studying, the classroom environment, and the form of teaching played a crucial role in students studying a second/foreign language as an elective subject. Moreover, they suggested that organisations and teachers prepare the program, syllabus, and instructional approach to appropriately maintain and improve students' learning satisfaction.

4.3 Discussion

The survey findings showed the constructiveness of online learning in the Mandarin course during the pandemic season. We summarised it in the figure below.

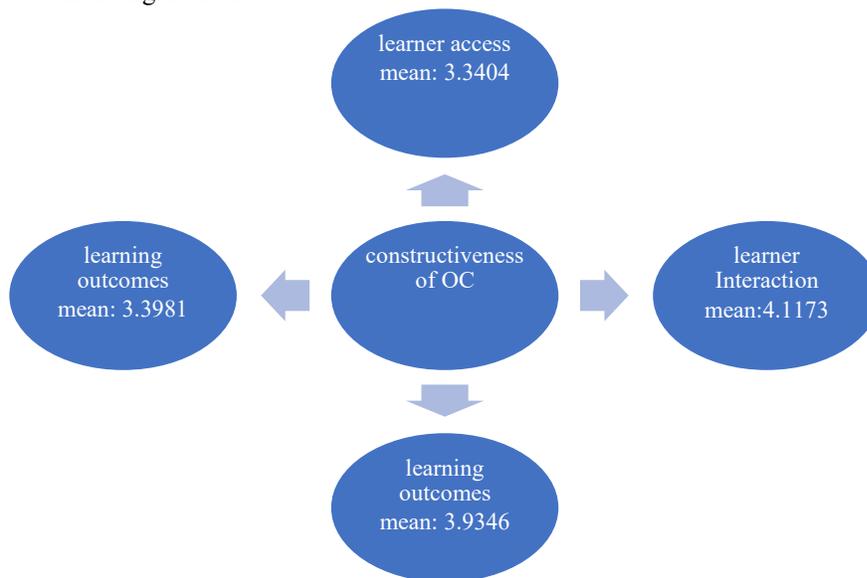


Figure 1: The constructiveness of online learning in Mandarin courses

All four aspects of the survey contributed to producing practical online Mandarin courses (see Figure 1). Hence, they were all above 3.0 from the 'respondents' perspective. To summarise, the finding of qualitative data showed that the invention of advanced technology and the internet had resulted in many applications and education platforms. The facilities changed and eased nowadays teaching and learning approach. By employing the latest technology in the classroom is a challenge for an educator. The qualitative results show that various emerging variables related to self-competence, students' readiness, content design, and technology knowledge show that during its implementation, students' readiness, content design, and technology knowledge. Some of the conventional approaches like the face-to-face classroom, the interaction and communication way, cannot be replaced by modern methods. However, all these can be enhanced through the effort well trained, planned and practised through action research and efficient study design to upgrade self-practice and improve students' achievements.

Online learning's extreme portability may increase access to education in rural communities. For individuals unable to attend a typical face-to-face full-time course due to personal or financial circumstances, the flexibility of asynchronous learning may provide more extensive access. (Michael & Murphy, 2020). Thus, active online learning must ensure that various methods are employed to cater to different needs that ascertain learner access. To sum up, pedagogy skills are essential to ensure the constructiveness of online learning. Besides, learner interaction is meaningful (Bacow, 2020). The instructors may design and provide various learning activities, but they will not be meaningful without their active involvement.

For this reason, the instructors must keep on stressing the importance of interaction among their learners. From time to time, instructors may also reward those students who show energetic involvement to encourage the spirit of interaction that will bring about keen learning. The rewards may include bonuses, mentioning names, badges, small tokens, and others. In short, teachers play the most crucial role in well-planned content, using various fun and exciting methods in engaging students' learning.

Above all, the response still is a constant theme for active online learning. The sky can be the limit, but the response typically decides the height that the students will achieve (Farhadi, 2019). Active online learning must curb the problem of negative learning response that makes online learning ineffective. Personal counselling, peer counselling, monitoring of access, technical advice, and others are among the efforts that can be utilised to yield positive learning responses. Hence, a variety of approaches are needed to cater to students' different learning preferences. After all, it is the learning outcomes that the learners may encounter. All these Results confronted by the students must be advised and solved (Salovey, 2020a, b). It is challenging for the instructors to look for a minimal approach to ensure effective online instruction delivery. The instructors who are ardent to apply various educational, technological tools must ensure that their students understand and know how to use them in their own homes. For instance, instructors who would like to use artificial intelligence tools for speaking activities have to

ensure their students can solve their learning outcomes. In short, besides the knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, a teacher needs to equip him/herself with technology technical knowledge.

5. Conclusion

Due to the magnitude of the community transmission threat posed by campus interactions (Weeden & Cornwell, 2020), it seems that online learning will still be in prevalent use in higher institutions. The four main elements (quantitative analysis) needed to be attended to yield practical Mandarin courses that are constructive to language learning, namely learner access, learner interaction, and learning outcomes. Besides, four other qualitative data themes were teacher, students, content, and technology to be considered while planning a practical online lesson. Humans created advanced technology to ease human's life, so humans should be the most suitable person to alter the emerging issues while integrating them into daily life, especially in educating students. The study found that instructors need to be reflective in considering and altering the emerging positive or negative feedback with students' suggestions while integrating advanced technology in students' learning. It is necessary to reflect, re-act, and re-plan to engage generation Z to suit their learning preferences for the target of lifelong learning. This study's findings are not just relevant to Mandarin instruction solely, and they can be applied to all foreign language learning and all courses in general.

References

- Bacow, L. (2020, March 10). COVID-19 – Moving classes online, other updates. [Community Message]. Harvard University. <https://www.harvard.edu/covid-19-moving-classes-online-other-updates>
- Basilaia, G., & Kvavadze, D. (2020a). Transition to Online Education in Schools during a SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Georgia. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4), em0060. <https://doi.org/10.29333/PR/7937>
- Bloemer, W., & Swan, K. (2015). Investigating informal blending at the University of Illinois Springfield. In A. G. Picciano, C. D. Dziuban, & C. R. Graham (Eds.), *Blended learning: Research perspectives*, (vol. 2, pp. 52–69). New York: Routledge.
- Chang, V., & Fisher, D. (2003). The validation and application of a new learning environment instrument for online learning in higher education. In M. S. Khine & D. Fisher (Eds.), *254 Technology-rich learning environments: A future perspective* (pp. 1-20). Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.
- Dong, S. (2020). Practical Exploration of Using "Cloud Classroom" to Organise Online Learning: A Case Study of Jianye District, Nanjing during the COVID-19 Pneumonia. *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, 5(2), 553–556. <https://doi.org/10.15354/sief.20.rp016>
- Farhadi, B. (2019). "The Sky's the limit": On the impossible promise of e-learning in the Toronto district school board. Doctoral dissertation. Toronto: University of Toronto. <http://hdl.handle.net/1807/97442>
- Grammegna, A. (2020). The New Challenge of Education Value and Limits of Distance Learning Today. *Journal of Education and Culture Studies*, 4(2), p59. <https://doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v4n2p59>
- Handoyo. (2020). UNESCO: Wabah virus corona ancam pendidikan 300 jutasiswa. 2020. <https://internasional.kontan.co.id/news/unesco-wabah-virus-corona-ancam-pendidikan-300-juta-siswa>
- He, W., Gajski, D., Farkas, G., & Warschauer, M. (2015). Implementing flexible hybrid instruction in an electrical engineering course: The best of three worlds? *Computers & Education*, 81, 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.09.005>
- Hoe Foo Terng ; Teow Ghee Tan, Lim. T. H. (2016). L2 Motivational System Of Malay Students Who Learn Mandarin L2 Motivational System Of Malay Students Who Learn Mandarin As A. In *UPALS Language Colloquium 2016, 30 September 2016 (Eproceedings)*.
- Hodges, C., Moore, S., Locke, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. (2020). The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning. *Educause Review*.
- Larsen, L. J. E. (2012). *Teacher and student perspectives on a blended learning intensive English program writing course*. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Iowa State University Ames., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31274/etd-180810-1937>
- Lin, C. H., Warschauer, M., & Blake, R. (2016). Language learning through social networks: Perceptions and reality. *Language Learning and Technology*, 20(1), 124–147. Retrieved from <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2016/linwarschauerblake.pdf> <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2016/linwarschauerblake.pdf>
- Luna, Y.M.; Winters, S.A. "Why Did You Blend My Learning?" A Comparison of Student Success in Lecture and Blended Learning Introduction to Sociology Courses. *Teach. Sociol.* 2017, 45, 116–130.
- Mallawaarachchi, C. (2019). The positive impact in changing of e-learning environment to m-learning to enhance

- critical thinking skills in foreign language learning. In A. Journal (Ed.), *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series* (pp. 73–77). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3338188.3338206>
- Michael P. A. Murphy (2020): COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: Consequences of the securitisation of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy, *Contemporary Security Policy*, DOI: 10.1080/13523260.2020.1761749
- Morgan, H. (2020). Best Practices for Implementing Remote Learning during a Pandemic. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 93(3), 134–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2020.1751480>
- Salovey, P. (2020a, March 10). COVID-19 – Moving courses online and other significant updates. [Community Update]. Yale University. <https://covid19.yale.edu/university-announcements-about-covid-19/covid-19-moving-courses-online-and-other-significant-updates>
- Salovey, P. (2020b, March 14). COVID-19 Update – First confirmed Yale COVID-19 case; extending online instruction to end of spring semester; campus and staffing considerations. [Community Update]. Yale University. <https://covid19.yale.edu/university-announcements-about-covid-19/covid-19-update-first-confirmed-yalecovid-19-case-extending>
- Stern, J. (2018). Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of Science Education*, (3), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eeltv06b>
- UNESCO. (2020). Events canceled/postponed - Coronavirus Outbreak. 2020. <https://en.unesco.org/events/events-canceledpostponed-coronavirus-outbreak>
- Wajdi, M. B. N., IwanKuswandi, Umar Al Faruq, Zulhijra, Z., Khairudin, K., &Khoiriyah, K. (2020). Education Policy Overcome Coronavirus, A Study of Indonesians. *EDUTECH: Journal of Education And Technology*, 3(2), 96–106. <https://doi.org/10.29062/edu.v3i2.42>
- Wang, C.-H., Shannon, D. M., & Ross, M. E. (2013). Students' characteristics, self-regulated learning, technology self-efficacy, and course outcomes in online learning. *Distance Education*, 34(3), 302–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2013.835779>
- Weeden, K., & Cornwell, B. (2020). The small world network of college classes: Implications for epidemic spread on a university campus. Manuscript under review. <http://osf.io/t7n9f>
- Wiebe, G. & Kabata, K. (2010). Students' and instructors' responses toward the use of CALL in foreign language teaching and learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 23(3), 221-234.
- Zhou, L., Wu, S., Zhou, M., Li, F. (2020) 'School's Out, But Class' On,' The largest online education in the world today: taking china's practical exploration during the covid-19 epidemic prevention and control as an example. *Best Evid Chin Edu*, 4(2):501-519

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Universiti Malaysia Terengganu for granting this research with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) with VOT No: 55199.

Biographies

Nurul Ain Chua Binti Abdullah is currently working at the Centre for Fundamental Studies and Continuing Education, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. She is doing individual action research in teaching and learning of foreign language (Mandarin).

Goh Ying Soon is a senior lecturer, and he currently teaching Mandarin as the third language to non-native learners at MARA University of Technology, Malaysia. He is a member of the International Society for Chinese Language Teaching. He has taught Mandarin at the primary, secondary and tertiary level for more than 25 years. He has been actively presenting papers at national and international conferences. His research interests are on using educational technology in Mandarin teaching and learning, web-based instruction, translation, etc.

Jumadil Saputra is a PhD holder and works as a senior lecturer in the Department of Economics, Faculty of Business, Economics, and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia. He has published 125 articles Scopus/ WoS indexed. As a lecturer, he has invited as a speaker in numerous universities, the examiner (internal and external), the reviewer for article journal and proceeding, the conference committee, journal editorial board, and others. He is a professional member of the International Business Information Management Association

(IBIMA), Ocean Expert: A Directory of Marine and Freshwater Professional, and Academy for Global Business Advancement (AGBA). His research areas are Quantitative Economics (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Economic Development), Econometrics (Theory, Analysis, and Applied), Islamic Banking and Finance, Risk and Insurance, Takaful, i.e., financial economics (Islamic), mathematics and modelling of finance (Actuarial). His full profile can be accessed from <https://jumadilsaputra.wordpress.com/home-2/>.

Che Mohd Zaid is a PhD holder and works as a senior lecturer at the Center for Foundation and Continuing Education (PPAL), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia. He has published seven articles Scopus/ WoS indexed. He earned her PhD in Education from the University of Malaya, Malaysia, specialising in the learning environment. His research interests are in the areas of education, language learning environment, curriculum and linguistic.

Che Hasniza Che Noh is a senior lecturer at the Center for Foundation and Continuing Education (PPAL), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia.

Mohd Yusri Ibrahim is a senior lecturer at the Center for Foundation and Continuing Education (PPAL), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia.

Roswati Abdul Rashid is a senior lecturer at the Center for Foundation and Continuing Education (PPAL), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia.

Mazlina Ahmad is a lecturer at the Center for Foundation and Continuing Education (PPAL), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia.