

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Editorial

Welcome to the Vol. 8, No. 2 issue of the Malaysian Journal of Distance Education. In this issue, we are privileged to publish seven articles and they are quite diverse as far as the focus or theme is concerned. The articles report on issues related to the ICT and e-learning in distance education, predicting students' success in distance education, insight into the learning programme in distance education, issues on gender bias as well as research on the support system in distance education.

The first article is by Qing Li of the University of Calgary and the article reports on how the online learning environment contributes to knowledge building among students based on twelve determinants. The study found out that social interaction and collaboration play important roles in enhancing student learning and fostering socio-cognitive development for knowledge building.

Temple et al. of the Athabasca University, Canada contributed the second article of this issue. It is interesting to note the high enrolment in the nutrition course at that university compared to the enrolment at other conventional universities for the same course. This is related to the nature of the distance education itself that allows learning by adults while working and managing other commitments. In addition, the institution is highly rated by the students in terms of its academic credibility.

The third article is on the insight into the distance learning programme and is contributed by Heng & Eng of Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. In it, they discuss the adapted model of distance learning and provide insights and reactions to the major operatives in place at their institution.

In the subsequent article, Chakraborty of the Subhas Chandra Bose Academy of Training and Research, India, reports on the gender differences in the objectives of enrolling in the open school in India. Ten attributes were studied and the study found that the basic attributes of social activities and religious activities differ significantly while other attributes such as the aspiration, co-operation, understanding, interest, problem solving, self-confidence, self-respect and economic do not record any significant difference.

The fifth article is on the issue related to the challenges and strategies of information technology in distance education and is contributed by Zuraini & Noresah of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia. They proposed a framework that would provide a basis for understanding the current and future critical issues arising from the rapid acquisition of information technology.

The sixth article is contributed by Joyes of the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. He reports on the localisation of the e-educator project in China and Malaysia that allows learning materials to be suitably adapted in the local context. Various tools developed, such as the learning analysis tool, are discussed particularly for the development of the effective scaffolding for online learners.

The last article in this issue is contributed by Hisham of Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia, and he addresses the issue of the support system in distance education. He argued that in the design of the learning support system, the appropriate combinations of methods for particular learning contexts should be considered.

In the past years, the MJDE has grown and we have been receiving a substantial increase in articles for reviewing. We have tried as much as possible to accommodate articles from different parts of the world as can be seen in this issue. With this, we hope that the journal would provide an opportunity to disseminate research findings and new theoretical concepts in distance and open learning taking into consideration the different contexts, cultures and experiences of different countries across the globe.

Many thanks to all contributors in this issue and I look forward to receiving more articles for the consideration of publication in the next issue.

Hanafi Atan
Chief Editor