

Empowering an Open Distance Dual-Mode Regional Blended Lifelong Learning Management System through Community Colleges in Supporting the Transformation of Village Girls and Women Societal Development and Human Capital

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Abstract

The Purpose of this research is to examine the empowerment of a Dual-Mode Open and Blended Distance Regional Lifelong Learning Management System model on educating village girls and women in improving the quality of life, human capital and digital knowledge in societal development through the existing community colleges in each district vicinity. The village girls and women could use the wifi and internet facilities in community colleges not only to communicate but also to acquire social livelihood knowledge and fulfill the initiative of transforming a digital knowledge society. The culture of using technologies in acquiring social knowledge has great influence in determining the quality of live. Methodology use is by looking into the dimensions of empowerment and enhancing a Regional dual-mode Lifelong Learning Management System (LMS) through the community colleges (village girls and women demographic, technology facility availability, learning culture and leadership of instructors in community colleges) were examined to determine the success of supporting community lifelong Learning for village girls and women in transforming the societal development. The finding shows there are significant differences among factors stated above which will upgrade village girls and women in improving the quality of life. The empowerment of a dual mode regional blended lifelong LMS via the community colleges throughout the country is beneficial to the village girls and women on social economic, cultural, knowledge and networking in fostering and transforming the society development and knowledge society.

Keywords: Community colleges; Open and distance learning, village girls and women, Dual mode regional blended lifelong learning management system.

Introduction

Computer enhancement in education has upgraded the Malaysians' savvy in digital technologies. It also fulfills the government's vision of building human capital, and knowledge society. The different goals of today's society and sophisticated digital technologies that harnessed for information processing should also identify. Wellington (2001) surveyed ICT in home is growing faster than its use in education setting. Digital facilities at home best suit the present digital platform of transmitting educational knowledge and social networking among the village girls and women.

The innovation of technology enhance teaching and learning system has since prompts the development of open distance and collaborative lifelong e-learning in the andragogical process that has also proof as a very useful tool that contributed to the development of rural girls and women in upgrading and broaden their socio-economic, socio-cultural and political perspectives, also fulfill social justice towards girls and women in developing countries

The commissioning of digital learning and teaching laboratories in all district community colleges could be connected to empowering an Open Distance Dual-Mode Regional Blended Lifelong Learning Management System in supporting the transformation of village girls and women societal development

and human capital. Village girls and women in the country are able to access and acquire livelihood knowledge and this formed the foundation for human capital building. Tiffin and Rajasingham (1995) quoted it would allow fully immersed, interactive real-time communication through audio, textual video; and would create a communication environment where all functions of a conventional classroom can take place.

Empowering the community colleges digital infrastructure which connected to the central digital mainframe and every state's regional server will contribute to the self-learning in a networked human and info-tech environment and will accelerate to the paradigm shift of current education reform (Mok and Cheng, 2000) and to upgrade girls and women livelihood, building human capital and social justice.

In the process of empowering an Open Distance Dual-Mode Regional Blended Lifelong Learning Management System in all district community colleges utilized by the Malaysian rural girls and women of the plural society will benefited because Wasonga (2005) found that a class in multicultural background significantly increased knowledge about diversity, attitudes towards multiculturalism could create racial harmony and integration for national unity.

Review of Literature

There rarely any researches conduct on the empowerment and enhancement of digital technology in community colleges for ODL enable accessibility to educate and teach livelihood knowledge of village girls and women as to bridge the digital divide of between the urban and rural Malaysian citizen. This is an effective way of utilizing digital technology for the present community colleges student, also for the village girls and women in acquiring livelihood education.

Empowering a regional dual mode collaborative blended lifelong learning management system is cost effective in disseminations of knowledge to the village girls and women. It enables them to be center into one place virtually for networking among their peers, friendship, racial integration, religious tolerance and livelihood knowledge. Koatas, et.al (2002) quoted academic community is addressing more and more on the rise of on-line community that will be instrumental in the realization of advanced learning society. Internet on-line environment enables new and interesting designs for the support of traditional learning for the development of new forms of learning.

The preferred learning mode for village girls and women is combining both electronic-enabled learning system and traditional face-to-face classroom teaching as they are first time learners and users of digital technology that should guided by instructor. Young (2001) suggested that collaborative e- learning works best within a blended training solution. One method is by providing a consistent level of skills prior to them participating in an instructor-led session so they can get the most out of the training and the instructors' time and knowledge. Eisinger (2000) quoted by combining traditional learning characteristics with the unique environment available on-line, elements that emerge would differentiate excellent in sharing of knowledge through the blended learning environment for village girls and women.

Young (2001) suggested within the web-enabled environment, individuals can access learning materials, courses, topics and performance support resources anytime, anywhere centralize centers of office, at home or while traveling. Standard web browsers offer a consistent and seamless user interface across a wide variety of workstation platforms and networks. One might also ask for the fulfillment and requirements of the curriculum as well as the content relevancy. The production of learning materials could be enjoyed nationwide irrespective of their location. New ideas and materials would become immediately available for discussions and trials after dispatch to a central server. It serves as main frame to enable the instructor to upload all learning files and instructions.

Digital security must install as each individual village girls and women could have their own private access password and also a firewall to filter unwanted information. Fry (2001) noted a series of benchmarks for ensuring learning quality. Evaluating program effectiveness includes a documented technology plan, with, back-up system and reliable delivery, established standards for course development, design and delivery, good facilitation of interactive and feedback and the application of specific standard for evaluation.

Rajasingham (1996) noted that effective, cost-efficient instruction that can match the needs for skills related to technological change, delivered interactively, at the convenience of the village girls and women learners, no matter where their physical location would be, should be able to interact with instructors and peers, with the content in synchronous or asynchronous mode.

Effectiveness in management of the dual mode blended learning platform for village girls and women needs quality. As Roffe (2002) proposed, elements of quality control and assurance system should produce learning materials and monitoring correspondence learning activities. Thus the sheer newness of e-learning brings pressure on evaluation to yield information about its effectiveness and efficiency as a learning solution especially villages girls and women from the digital technology have not. What's more on the awareness of the burden on the instructor in terms of the many and time consuming management tasks for any technology-support learning to occur (Collis,B; Gervedink and Nijhuis, 2000). Therefore all ICT centers need expertise and qualify instructor cum knowledge disseminator to guide the village girls and women proper ways to use the sophisticated digital technology to enhance a blended digital learning environment.

Computer literacy is basic for the village girls and women to master and it takes time. Upon the acquiring only the networking and dissemination of the social knowledge will be introduce. Kulik et.al (1980) have proven that faster learning process; easily remembered; positive attitude and active response towards the application of computer in learning process and the best part is acquired learning flexibility. Brophy (2001) stated that networked learning which leads to virtual university, driven forward by policy emphases on lifelong learning. Then, we are able to see the impact and its effectiveness towards the implementation of a wholesome dual mode blended lifelong learning platform for village girls and women.

Research Objectives

Objectives of this study is to determine effective and excellence in empowering the regional dual mode blended lifelong learning management system in community colleges for village girls and women throughout the country which has an influence on their livelihood knowledge achievement and the nation's human capital building, also to determine maximum utilization of the existing ICT facilities in community colleges in delivering quality and lifelong education to every girls and women in the village.

Research Framework

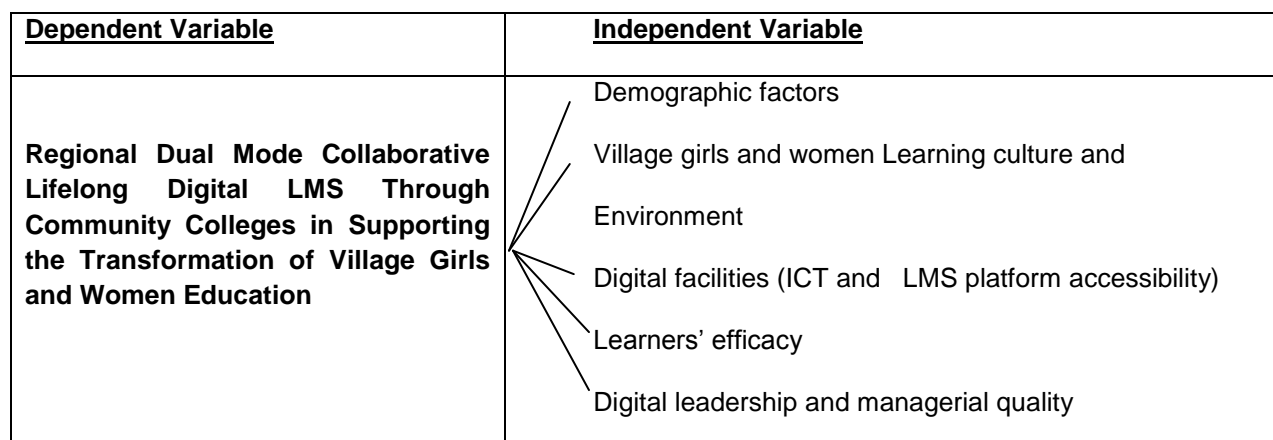


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

A set of questionnaire was given to a total of 300 girls and women respondents from community colleges randomly selected from various district from four states. The questionnaire consists of Part 1 on the respondents' demographical data and Part 2 that includes the dependent and independent variables. Non-parametric and parametric statistical tests were used to analyze the data.

Results

Reliability of instruments:

Cronbach Alpha statistic is 0.870. Therefore the reliability of the questionnaire is acceptable.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Summary of Respondents' Characteristics

SUBJECT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1. Gender Female	300	100
2. Race Malay Chinese Indian	160 75 65	53.3 25 21.7
3. Academic Achievement Secondary education Primary education	220 80	73.3 26.7
4. Working Experience 6-15 years >16 years	260 40	86.7 13.3

5. Experience in using ICT and Internet		
0 - 1 years	195	65
2 -4 years	80	26.7
>5 years	25	8.3

Table 1.1 and 1.2 summarize the respondents' characteristics. There are 300 female (100%) village girls and women users Table 1.3 shows 73.3% of the girls and women possess basic secondary education and the rest only primary education. Among them are 160 Malays (53.3%), 75 Chinese (25%) and 65 Indians (21.7%). Table 1.4 shows 86.7% of them have between 6 to 15 year of working experiences and the rest have more than 16 years of work experience. Table 1.5 shows 65% of the respondents have less than one year of experience in using ICT and internet. The rest have between 2 to 4 years (26.7%) and more than 5 years (8.3%).

Statistics

Table 2: The results of Pearson Correlation tests

<u>Correlation test between</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p value</u>	<u>N</u>
1. Village girls and women's demographic factors and ICT centers facility provided	0.734	< 0.001	300
2. Village girls and women's extent of using ICT and Internet and community colleges' Digital infrastructures (ICT and LMS platform accessibility)	0.583	<0.001	300
3. Community colleges administrator and instructors' leadership quality, commitment and the learning content provided	0.695	<0.001	300
4. Learning culture and environment of village girls and women and the digital technology in the community colleges	0.749	<0.001	300
5. Village girls and women's technology efficacy and community colleges dual mode blended learning management system	0.756	<0.001	300

Note: $\alpha = 0.01$; r = correlation coefficient; N= Total respondents

Table 2.1 shows a strong positive relationship between village girls and women's academic achievement and community colleges' digital facility provided. Each community college has provided digital learning facility to their learners. Village girls and women are encouraged to use the facility for networking with their instructor through the dual mode blended LMS. They are encouraged to attend classes during weekend using blended learning methodology.

Table 2.2 shows there is moderate relationship between digital facilities availability and accessibility in the community colleges. Village girls and women are able to learn better when instructors incorporate the use of blended learning in their instructions.

Table 2.3 shows there is strong relationship between instructors' leadership quality, commitment and the learning content provided. Instructors are committed in providing and maintaining the learning contents in the portal and it is always ready for the learners to access as well as practical classes in the weekend. As Pauleen et.al (2004) stated experiential learning-based team-based assignments which make extensive use of ICT with real life setting could be the best solution in achieving total learning experience combining theory and practice and usefully apply to learners' everyday life.

Table 2.4 shows there is strong relationship between the learning culture and environment of village girls and women and the digital technology in the community colleges. A regional dual mode community enhances blended lifelong LMS provides an effective platform for collaborative village girls and women lifelong learning programs. It is cost effective and fully utilized.

Table 2.5 shows there is strong relationship between village girls and women's digital technology efficacy and community colleges dual mode blended learning management system. The techno first timer will have to guide properly in basic computer literacy, then upgrade into the full usage of internet, networking and utilization of learning portal to surf for information etc. it will be tedious for instructors but patients will overcome the difficulties.

Discussion

Empowering a dual mode regional collaborative blended community colleges lifelong learning environment will bring changes, it is important in the development and transforming the village girls and women into knowledgeable society.

Their demographic factors plays a vital part in the success of a dual mode regional enhances blended community collaborative lifelong learning. As a user, one has to equip herself with the state-of-art learning tools at home too. They need commitments; they will set priority even though they may have family chores.

Their academic achievement, and work experiences may lack experiences, qualification and usage of ICT. This may affect the effectiveness in the management and usage of ICT infrastructure provided in the entire community colleges system. They need experienced portal administrators and content managers' help to minimize those shortchanges. The increases of village girls and women have prompted government to seek extra funding for extra facilities and more community colleges in rural vicinities and accommodate extra bandwidth to their existing technology.

Instructors and administrators may achieve the planned result through their experiences in ICT and the managerial knowledge. A committed leader will yield the success of ICT programs. Not due to the lack of resources but also human factors. Successful implementation and enhancement of a dual mode blended collaborative lifelong learning needs to be compelling to the audience it targets by offering the learner a resource that seems to be appealing, valuable and productive to their goals and aspirations (Henri, 2001). Therefore the community college's administrator must work hard to transform them. Leaders will play their roles by helping everybody in the organization, including gaining more insightful views of current reality and this is in-line with a popular emerging view of leaders as coaches, guides or facilitators.

The learning portal must fully utilize and offering more innovative programs (Gunasekaran; McNeil and Shaul, 2002), since distance students have to face sound organizational problems concerning the working time management and the regulation of all the learning process (Pettenati, M.C; Khaled, O.A Vanoirbeek,C., Giuli,D. 2000). The support of the education process are all in the way with key elements inclusive of provision of learning materials, providing facilities for practical work or simulations, enabling

questions and discussions, assessments and provision of learners support services (Alexander and McKenzie, 1998).

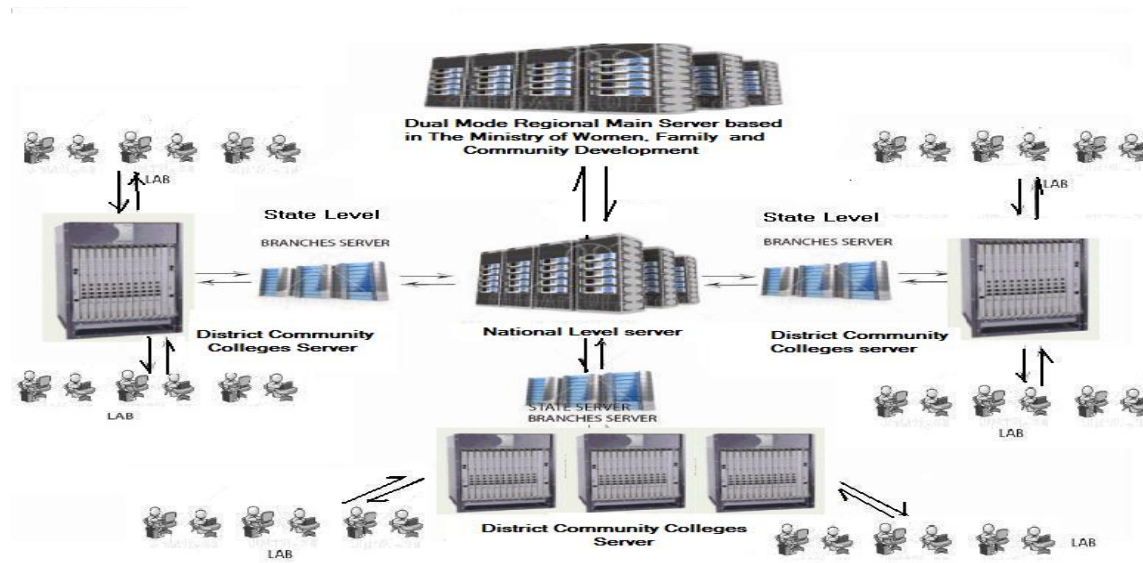


Figure 2: Dual Mode Regional Village Girls and Women lifelong Blended Digital Learning Infrastructure

Conclusion and Recommendations

The effective management and application of regional dual mode blended collaborative lifelong learning centers for village girls and women must be on full time employment basis. Therefore Buttner (2000) quoted that media supported distance courses are concentrated in setting-up interactive communication between instructor and learner and is not as a substation of service with a new technique but as a completely new beginning using new media.

Provision of personal tax relief of MYR5000 and subsidize the purchase of desktop; laptop; i-pad and other digital devices for girls and women in the country. Government should provide electricity nationwide without interruption. Free wifi and broadband facilities for all. Telecommunication shops should used as one stop center for girls and women to cater their need of networking when paying monthly bills while waiting.

Success in the management and empowerment of a dual-mode enhance blended regional collaborative lifelong village girls and women learning centers need a group of trained, skillful, dynamic, experienced, and committed LMS administrators and instructors. This will make a vast difference in influencing village girls and women in societal learning process.

All community colleges digital laboratory could be jointly connected through main frame server under the patronage of the Ministry of women, family and community. A supervisory panel set up at the ministry to supervise to synchronize the policies and procedures of disseminations of knowledge towards the village girls and women.

Village girls and women who wish to upgrade themselves in the knowledge economy has to poses basic knowledge prior to register to use the given facility under the tutelage of trained instructors like ICT literacy, e-mail, surfing, and social networking. The Malaysian government's initiative of extending the

bandwidths throughout the country has constituted to the advancement of internet and connectivity has ensured the success of the digital technology projects in Malaysia.

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