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**PERCEPTIONS OF 3RD YEAR TESL STUDENTS IN
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA TOWARDS EDMODO IN
LANGUAGE LEARNING**



MASTER OF EDUCATION (RESEARCH)

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Awang Had Salleh
Graduate School
of Arts And Sciences

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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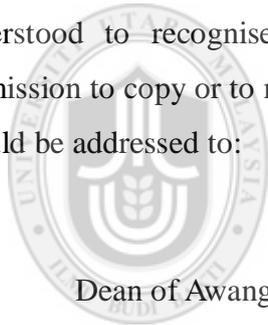
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Abstrak

Pendekatan konvensional dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris tidak lagi relevan bagi pelajar pada abad ke-21 dan ini memerlukan anjakan dalam pendidikan. Objektif kajian ialah untuk meneroka persepsi pelajar TESL tahun 3 di Universiti Malaya terhadap Edmodo dalam pembelajaran bahasa melalui kajian kualitatif terperinci, dan mengkaji potensi Edmodo di dalam membantu pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua. Kajian ini menggunakan sampel terarah dengan empat orang pelajar TESL sesi pengajian 2012/2013 dari Fakulti Pendidikan. Kerangka kajian adalah berdasarkan kombinasi teori konstruktivisme, hermeneutik, interaksi simbolik, dan interpretasi di mana kesemua teori berkaitan memberi tumpuan kepada makna dan dapatan yang holistik mengenai fenomena yang dikaji. Dapatan kajian ini menghasilkan pemahaman yang mendalam berhubung potensi Edmodo sebagai pendekatan alternatif dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris melalui teknik temu bual, gambar, dan *concept mapping*. Dapatan kajian ini dikemukakan dalam bentuk naratif. Dapatan menunjukkan responden kajian sangat menyokong penggunaan Edmodo dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Pengetahuan baharu terhasil berkisar tema utama iaitu persekitaran pembelajaran tidak formal, peningkatan pemerolehan bahasa kedua, antara *interface* dan *outlook* yang menarik perhatian pengguna, dan kekangan Edmodo. Kajian ini mempunyai potensi untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris dengan penggunaan Edmodo yang berupaya untuk menyokong pembelajaran di luar bilik darjah, dan menawarkan pendekatan pembelajaran berpusatkan pelajar.

Kata kunci: Edmodo, Persepsi, Pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris, Platform pembelajaran sosial dan Pedagogi pengajaran

Abstract

Conventional approaches in language learning and teaching are no longer relevant for the 21st century learners and there is a demand for new creative approaches in education. The objectives of this study is to explore the perceptions of Third Year students specializing in Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) at University Malaya towards Edmodo in language learning. This study employed a detailed qualitative study to elicit the potentials of Edmodo in English language learning. The research employed purposive sampling focusing on four TESL students from 2012/2013 intake at Faculty of Education. The research framework used was a combination of *constructivism*, *hermeneutics*, *symbolic interactionism* and *interpretivism* which focus on the process of meaning-making and interpretation of the phenomenon under studied. It aimed to generate insights through in depth interviews, photographs and concept maps from the participants on the use of Edmodo in English language learning. The findings were presented in a narrative manner. Evidently, participants were very receptive towards the use of Edmodo in language learning which subsequently led to opinions on ways Edmodo assisted language learning. The findings revealed three core categories consist of the prelude to the phenomenon, comprehension on the realm of Edmodo and its approaches in assisting language learning. Novelties of new knowledge emerged around the central themes of informal learning environment, enhancement of second language acquisition, its interface and outlook and drawbacks of Edmodo. The pedagogical implications of this research are related to how Edmodo may enable students to access learning resources beyond classroom, and empower student-centred learning by supplementing learners with novelty of tasks, apt learning environment and mobility.

Keywords: Edmodo, Perceptions, English language learning, Social learning platform and Teaching pedagogies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Preface

This chapter discusses the primary aspects that make up this research. First, background of the study is presented followed by the problem statement in which leads to the research objectives and research questions. Research framework and scope of study are also included in this chapter to illustrate the whole processes that took place. Furthermore, the significance of study is given some highlights as well. Consequently, limitations of study are discussed and operational definitions of key terms are given too, which then is trailed by a report organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is the lingua franca in today's globalized world. Countries worldwide have made English as one of the compulsory subjects to be taken in schools. Thus, non-native speakers have taken measures to ensure they are not lagging behind in the advancement. Educators move forward day by day to ensure they have the best pedagogies and teaching methods that involve more social context in learning (Woo & Reeves, 2007). Traditional classroom setting's effectiveness is in question whether it would suffice to equip students with skills needed in this 21st century. Wise (2002) argues that traditional lecture alone is inadequate as ideally teachers ought to practice strategies that they expect their candidates to use when supposedly, they should model expert teaching.

Nowadays, the learners we have are mostly comprised of Generation Y and Z in all levels of educational institutions. The problem lies within conventional methods is its

irrelevance for these generations to survive in the competitive world. Teachers today, mainly encompass of Generation X usually teaches in the same way they were taught and did not inculcate creative nor critical thinking in students. This vicious cycle produces students who are unable to use practical skills at workplace and incompetent to harvest new outcomes because they keep recycling the same knowledge they have. In order to make changes in education, educators must be bold in applying latest pedagogies and up-to-date materials, parallel with recent needs in keeping up with technology advancements.

Scholars have urged educators at schools to transform their ways of teaching in classrooms to be more student-centered and inculcate collaborative learning. In order to excel in this new quest, technology has been progressing rapidly to aid in the learning process (Stracker, 2011). In the latest classroom setting, a number of teachers now are using online materials, websites, videos, pictures, power-point presentation, audio files and so on to make learning process attractive to all learners regardless of their differences in academic achievements, race, backgrounds and others (Hart, 2011). Besides bringing these aids into the class, some teachers have taken the initiative to opt for online websites that would have good input and immediate effects on acquisition of knowledge.

One of the ways in infusing technology is through e-learning tools. E-learning is used via electronic devices and internet technologies to create a rich learning atmosphere which comprises of a variety of instructions, information resources and solutions. Meanwhile, its aim is to improve one's performance, particularly in academic. In education field, course contents and applications are engaged in suitable systems,

homework and sometimes examinations too (Yilmaz, 2012). Asynchronous e-learning can be illustrated as a student-led method where instructor and students collaborate over the internet, however all users are not required to be online at the same time. On the other hand, synchronous e-learning is an instructor-led approach where all users cooperate in learning using online platform and everyone is needed to be online at the same time. This form of pedagogy is contrary to traditional classroom where the approach is mainly teacher-led, has limited number of participants as well as allocation of time (Hammond, 2005).

Websites created to assist in academic performance mainly falls under e-learning paradigm; therefore Edmodo is an example of an e-learning tool. To illustrate how e-learning works, we can look at two principles that manifest itself about the use of innovative technology, those are; interactivity and collaboration in teaching-learning processes (Cristina, Emanuela & Adriana, n.d; Chen, 2007). Another proclaimed biggest advantage of e-learning is convenience where the ability to access any courses are available and students' presence is not compulsory on campus (Billings, 2007). Trombley and Lee (2002) denote e-learning to a series of methods which adopt the use of electronic instructional content which is conveyed through the Internet and synchronous with the terms Web-based or online learning. Keeping up in this information age is essential for our very own survival; simultaneously teachers need to make rapid changes in the curriculum to cope with the different needs of learners and increasing complex conditions of classrooms (Cirocki, Tennekoon & Calvo, 2014).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has formulated three policies for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Malaysia; the first policy is in regards to using ICT as an enabler to reduce the digital gap between schools, be it in urban or rural areas. The second policy puts an emphasis on the role and function of ICT in education as a teaching and learning tool. In schools these days we have classes that teach students on how to be computer literate, manage functions that are available as well as how to look for materials online. Meanwhile, the third policy concerns the use of ICT to increase productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of the management system in schools (Chan Foong-Mae, 2002). The Ministry knows the importance of ICT in today's era and thus enforces such policies to empower the education system in all levels. However, Ozden, Erturk and Sanli (2004) argue ICT and online assessments require close collaboration of not only the academicians, but the technical units too. Therefore, the effort in ensuring effective teaching-learning delivery involves all stakeholders in education and not the teachers alone in executing the outlined government's agenda. Yet the question remains; what are the best methods available to accomplish the targets intended?

This study ponders upon what could be the best solutions for teaching-learning process, hence I opt to propose a tool but before we completely agree on its effectiveness merely by believing previous studies, we ought to test the tool beforehand and discover the views of participants involved. Based on the published studies and articles found, Edmodo is a social learning platform that claims to assist in making the learning process livelier and more interactive. It is an approach stems from the advancement of e-learning. It allows extended discussions when allocation of time in class is not adequate for further elaborations. Besides that, it is equipped

with modern design, user-friendliness, modest features and many more that makes it easy to be within educators' locus of control. Next, Edmodo has a feature in which teachers may keep track of the students' progress, for example; submission of assignment, number of replies, participation in discussions and others.

Moving on, it is an educational social platform that promotes a sense of belonging and community as students will have to interact with their online classmates to obtain good grades which will be assessed online via Edmodo. These are some of the perks of using Edmodo as a tool in delivering lessons or formative assessments. It is highly imperative for researchers to look into the impacts of such an online tool in education. Particularly in meeting current demands and government's agenda, we need to source out and weight every available option. Malaysia is a developing country progressing towards the aim of becoming a developed nation by the year of 2020. This dream will not be a reality if education's quality is not up to the standard of producing competitive, innovative and critical thinkers. Due to this reason, I aim to discover perceptions of participants in regards to the use of Edmodo because this application is neither widely introduced in Malaysia nor well known among educators and students. Given the extensive explanation, this research emerges from the curiosity of how participants may react to the implementation of Edmodo and how it may assist in teaching-learning processes according to their opinions. Edmodo could be one of the best possible solutions to enhance Malaysian students' learning experience. Further explanations on topics concerned will be given in the Literature Review.

1.2 Problem Statement

Numerous issues in education system have made its quality questionable. Finland, a country which excels and is ranked first (1st) in having the best education in the world (Huff Post, 2012), currently adopts a new technique. The Finnish stakeholders in education decided to drop all subjects in schools by the year 2020 (Jackson, 2015), instead students will be taught by topics; for example when students in a classroom are having an English lesson, simultaneously they are introduced to a map and required to name the countries on the map as well, this way they are learning Geography alongside English, while at the same time they are learning culture when asked to present examples on the forms of culture they know about the countries on the map. The Finnish government says, instead of equipping students with knowledge that they might not use for practicality, educators are preparing the students to be eminent employees to fill the demands of the job market and to mould them into becoming global citizens (Garner, 2015).

Meanwhile, Asian schools commonly still adopt the educational approach that is teacher-centric and examination oriented as well as being labelled as rigid, suppresses originality and rote learning (Beech, 2002; Indramalar & Chapman, 2003; Lim & Hwa, 2007). As a result, students are only good at memorizing but not applying the knowledge learnt while it is imperative for them to work directly with latest materials and gain experiences on how to implement those resources (Eltis, 1995). This situation calls for a turning in education system. Education in general needs to promote fun learning instead of focusing on passing the examinations at the end of schooling (Goh & Chapman, 2006). However, incorporation of technology in

teaching is not yet a popular option in Malaysian schools as teachers still prefer the old fashioned way of teaching (Hedberg, 2003).

Traditional teaching presents an enormous threat when there are mismatches between both styles of preferred teaching and learning styles. Studies have proven that teachers' teaching styles ought to be compatible with the students' favoured learning styles in order to produce utmost results. Normally, learners have diverse learning style that leads to different approaches and adoption to it (Ahmad, Mohamad & Saat, 2004). Nonetheless, when the teaching styles are not suitable with the targeted students, it will subsequently lead to students becoming bored, discouraged, inattentive and performing rather poorly in tests and assessments (Godleski, 1984). This form of teaching is a drawback in education and presents a real threat to the whole system. It has been decades since technology in education is introduced yet traditional teaching persists to exist due to the cosiness of being in comfort zones. I believe students' future should not be in jeopardy merely because some stakeholders in education are unwilling to make changes and remain indifferent on seeking for new practical approaches.

Nevertheless, in some universities, besides using institution portals, lecturers often opt for applications out there that might offer more features, user-friendliness and easier to handle. There are a number of teachers and lecturers alike who have been trying endlessly to find effective e-learning tools that will be suitable for the students of today. This leads to wide usage of Moodle, Blackboard, Facebook, Twitter and so forth, especially in developed countries. Lim & Yiong (2008) assert that students perceived time and place flexibility of the e-learning system as advantageous. Despite

the advantages that Facebook, Twitter and some other social media have in education field, some schools and universities block its use within the school/university compound (Kist, 2013) to avoid misuse. Such condition poses a problem where an online learning environment cannot be created due to persevering constraints. Thus, we need to seek for a tool that is academic friendly, offers unlimited advantages and can be accessed anywhere and anytime.

In this Digital Age, it is only logical that the adoption of technology is given crucial attention as the young recipients of knowledge today are the Netizens. Consequently, educational institutions these days are putting more prominence on having less structure and more dialogue in order to cater for the needs and wants of each student (Vyas, R.C. Sharma, & A. Kumar, 2003, p. 125). One vital methodology is by incorporating technology or e-learning tools into teaching and learning process in all levels of institutions. There are many definitions to e-learning depending on the views that the experts hold, but one of it is; an online learning or a network that takes place in a formal context and uses a range of multimedia technologies (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). Edmodo belongs under e-learning paradigm which is deemed to be helpful in education of millennials today. Nonetheless, the claims on Edmodo have yet to be proven until participants in this study offer their insights.

Another pursuing reason to conduct this study is; according to MalCat (an online domain that houses records of published researches, studies and articles in Malaysia), there are only two written articles on Edmodo and no further studies have been done. In fact, those studies did not look into Edmodo thoroughly and therefore, it provides a gap in exploring the advantages and disadvantages of the tool. Edmodo is an

interesting portal to be looked at and evaluated for its effects on learning outcomes. I am keen to explore the use of Edmodo and its possibilities it has in enhancing one's learning experience. Also, as a postgraduate and future educator, I wish to search for its strengths which might be beneficial in my studies and career. Besides that, if Edmodo truly is able in assisting English language learning, the likelihood of its implementation might take place in a wider context in Malaysia, given proper exposure and studies on it.

Another concern that further leads to this study is the lack of awareness which becomes one of the challenges that we have to face. Quoted from Prof. Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Anuwar Ali, the Vice-Chancellor of Open University Malaysia; *“some parents and lecturers still prefer the traditional mode of teaching instead of allowing e-learning to take over, simply because they had the first-hand experience in the conventional teaching and learning process”*. Hence, both educators and parents need to be made aware of e-learning's positive impacts as this modern method might be the best channel for the Millennials of today. Hopefully Edmodo will be able to convince all of the stakeholders involved especially parents, because aside from offering benefits to teachers and students, Edmodo allows parents to keep track of children's progress and be involved on the portal at the same time. It is a fascinating online learning portal and I believe it deserves an attention. Even if Edmodo is not the best solution available, it will at least give an exposure and add value to the number of studies pertaining instructional technology which might be beneficial for Malaysian educational practices.

Other than that, not so many studies have been carried out pertaining to students' perceptions (Ozden et al, 2004), therefore it is highly significant to have it done on the connection between students' perceptions and latest online learning platforms. This is due to the importance of studying the opinions/reactions of recipients through a delicate research before implementing an idea (Belcheir & Cucek, 2002). The recipients in this context are the students generally, be it in schools or universities. Students are the forgotten stakeholders in education, while the future of tomorrow relies in their hands. If we keep neglecting their views, I am afraid that future generations will be comprised of passive thinkers and the progress in all aspects will be slow. Upon entering work field, they will merely be like workers who repeat routines on daily basis without having anything further to expand with the knowledge they have. Henceforth, motivated by all of the concerns I have; I must first implore thoughts, views, opinions and advices in regards to the use of Edmodo in English language learning by the 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya; be it positive or negative, as well as how it can be used as an assisting tool in learning process according to their perspectives. 3rd Year TESL students had been chosen due to two primary reasons; they are students and future teachers of English. This research aimed to explore views that students may have in using Edmodo for language learning while at the same time discover views from future teachers of English who are equipped with methodologies in conducting a language lesson. Therefore, by having participants who hold the status of both of the above, we may gain extra insights and deeper understanding into the phenomenon.

In short, the problems that trigger my curiosity in the areas of study are;

- Deficiency of awareness by parents and educators.

- Mismatches between teachers' and students' preferred styles as traditional teaching remains to be the key method of teaching delivery in Malaysia.
- The need to propose an alternative due to restrictions on social media in educational institutions.
- Lack of literary works on Edmodo and perceptions of students.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to look into the use of Edmodo, particularly in English language learning by generating insights and understanding with the questions of 'what', 'why' and 'how' by 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya. This study explores a comprehension for the implementation of Edmodo in language learning's assistance from the participants' perspectives. Edmodo might be a useful e-learning tool in assisting learners' English lessons if given the proper and thorough execution in teaching and learning process. By understanding students' perceptions in regards to the use of and advantages/disadvantages of applying Edmodo, it is hoped that educators will get an enlightenment on the issue as well as benefitting the students and other stakeholders who might be searching for a tool they will feel most appropriate.

This research aims in discovering the perceptions of 3rd Year TESL learners in University of Malaya towards Edmodo, the social learning platform.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To explore what do the participants think of Edmodo and why do they perceive it in such a way.
 - Exploring views on the subject matter (Edmodo).

- Discovering the reasons and contributing factors behind every opinion shared.
- 2) To discover how Edmodo may assist in teaching-learning process based on participants' insights.
- Investigating suggestions from participants' views as students on ways Edmodo may assist in an English language classroom.
 - Noting the approaches that future teachers of English may apply in implementing Edmodo.

1.4 Research Questions

Research questions are meant to guide the research objectives and purposes. With the help of appropriate and well thought questions, the concerns put forth that encourage me to pursue this study will diminish. As explained earlier, this research attempts to explore the perceptions of participants involved on the execution of Edmodo in language learning, particularly to discover how their perceptions can be influenced by the application and in what ways they might implement Edmodo in teaching-learning process so that the tool can be helpful in teaching lessons. The research questions are supported by constructivist theory, particularly in the branches of hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism, where it gives an emphasis on meaning making after experiencing a situation. Generating research questions have been stimulating and perplexing as I revisit this section, along with many other technical parts for many times.

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the participants' perceptions on Edmodo? Why they have such views about the portal?
 - What are their views throughout the course of exploring Edmodo?
 - Why the participants perceive Edmodo the way they do?
- 2) How Edmodo can assist in teaching-learning process according to participants' views?
 - What are the suggestions from participants as students regarding ways Edmodo may assist language lessons?
 - How Edmodo can be implemented for language learning according to the approaches suggested by participants as future teachers of English?

1.5 Research Framework

Research framework is commonly constructed and not found or something that exists ready-made. Frequently, researchers get the ideas that trigger questions on areas to explore from own experience or memoirs. Besides working on existing theories or collection of previous works, one may choose to build own framework from experiential data. Through experiential, I have decided to mine my experience in coming out with this research's structure. Recollections of my personal memoir and experience, I got curious over the use of Edmodo in language learning. Though, background and identity one brings into a research can be biased, yet the notion remains that there should not be a separation between researcher's life and the study itself because it will jeopardize the research from key insights and validity checks, as C. Wright Mills (1959) puts it;

“The most admirable scholars within the scholarly community . . . do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other.” (p. 195)

My journey as an educator first started when I was assigned for a teaching practicum in Assunta Secondary School from August until October 2013. Located in Petaling Jaya, this school is in the urban area consisting of only female students. As a trainee teacher, I was challenged to test teaching methodologies that I had learned during four years of studies in my alma mater, University of Malaya. My supervisor at the time, Dr. Dorothy is an expert in instructional technologies; she suggested the extensive use of technology in lesson plans. Taking her advice, I incorporated many forms of technology in which I am familiar with for example, power point, audio files, videos, YouTube, movie maker and others. Dr. Dorothy then introduced me to Edmodo, a social learning platform. Even though I was not familiar with Edmodo, I found the site to be easily handled and next I made two groups for two of my Form 4 classes. I used the site mainly to give formative assessments after having taught them literature in classrooms. However, the feedback I received on the site was neither overwhelming nor engaging.

I found myself pondering at questions related to what, why and how; “why the students did not participate in the discussions?”, “why their parents ban the use of internet on weekdays, are they not made aware of the importance of online learning?”, “what do the students really think of Edmodo’s interface and functions?”, “would they have responded differently given enough time and freedom?”, “how do they feel

about learning using the platform” and etc. These questions drive me to conduct a research on Edmodo to explore if the site will be beneficial in learning language or it will be just another failed form of e-learning which attempts to garner Generation Y’s and Z’s attention. This memo serves as the first inquiry process in regards to Edmodo which leads to the study.

Edmodo as a social learning platform is an interesting area of study itself. Upon having too many questions regarding feelings, views and perspectives of students; I decided to conduct a qualitative study that particularly looks into perceptions. My interest stems from reactions of the Form 4 students and their explanations behind it, however the reason why I did not choose secondary school students are mainly due to accessibility to the research site, availability of participants and the advantages that my participants of this study may offer as they are both learners and future teachers of English.

Qualitative methodology for this study allows the views and responses of participants to be presented in a natural manner by giving them a voice without changing any critical part of their participation. I have adopted constructivism paradigm as a guiding epistemology in this study as it states, meaning is constructed by those who experience a phenomenon firsthand. Besides that, hermeneutics and symbolic interaction are the branches under constructivism framework which emphasize on construction of perceptions without my interference, as well as participants and I both comprehend own surroundings by examining aspects around us (people, facial expressions, gestures and others). Alongside these theoretical frameworks,

interpretive approach is involved as it allows me to make meaning out of the data and able to present it from participants' and my understanding of the phenomenon.

1.6 Scope of Study

This study focuses on exploring the perceptions of 3rd year Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) students in University of Malaya towards Edmodo; a social learning platform. The research draws heavily on qualitative study, with constructivist view navigating the process alongside hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism and interpretative which all of these frameworks suggest the process of meaning making has to come from individuals themselves as they may have different views according to their respective experiences. Data is collected by means of naturalistic approach that proposes some of the following methods in this study; interviews, photographs and concept maps. In addition, to help guiding the researcher in a straight path during interviews, an interview protocol is developed according to a step-by-step method by Yin (2011) and Jacob and Furgerson (2012). In this study, four (4) 3rd Year TESL students from University of Malaya are chosen based on purposive sampling because they are deemed to be most suitable in yielding data. Interpretivism approach is highly accommodating in the data analysis stage after I managed to get the coding done because it stresses on interpreting data based on what resources I have and my understanding on the matter as I was profoundly involved with the study itself. Narrative analysis is adopted as a method to deliver findings in order to give voices to the participants' perspectives as accurately as possible. Simply, I aim to discover what opinions do the students have on Edmodo and in what ways it can be implemented to aid in teaching-learning processes along with its reasoning of how and why.

1.7 Significance of Study

This study has produced promising verdicts that will add value to the number of researches in the country. It has presented ways that Edmodo can be helpful in shortening the gap between students to their education and the approaches that can be implemented in order to make lessons more student-centered. Additionally, the research resulted in novelties of new knowledge as it highlights the conducive environment Edmodo provides, its features and functional buttons are given proper emphasis as it is illustrated in details, it is also one of the first studies that examined Edmodo's usage in language learning and the only study in Malaysia thus far that put Edmodo as the main tool under study. Furthermore, possible drawbacks of Edmodo are given equal prominence as no other literature I had perused elucidated this area of apprehension. In light of all its findings, this study adds volume to the limited number of studies done pertaining to students' perceptions as well as proving that evidently Edmodo is deemed suitable to be executed as a supplementary tool in Malaysian educational institutions.

Further, Malaysian educational institutions probably have spent millions of monetary funds in their quests seeking for the best technological tools available on the market to cater for learners' needs. Edmodo does not only impose zero fees, it is also a famous social learning platform in the United States. Malaysian educators must be made known of its existence and its effects. This study is imperative to be looked at because of the contributions it may offer to our stakeholders in education. In this vast progressing era that relies so much on technology, it is vital for education to infuse one of the e-learning tools into classroom environment. When it comes to computer-generated classrooms, virtual universities and Smart Schools may benefit from this

study as it supports the idea of implementing Edmodo as one of the supplementary tools to compensate physical absence.

Other than that, 21st century skills are becoming increasingly significant for the current job market. There are jobs created now which nobody thought would exist, for example administrative personnel for social media, website designer, marketing personnel for social media and so forth. According to Krathwohl's Taxonomy (2002) which was originally coined by Bloom, the taxonomy begins with cognition, remembering and continues upward to a higher level of cognition known as applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. In relation to 21st century skills, students need to be able to do more than just remembering and absorbing knowledge because they need to be educated on how to apply and create more with the existing knowledge (McClain & Brown, 2013). Thus, it is highly significant that educators use proper applications that would suit the needs of today's generation.

Apart from that, Edmodo can be recognized as an e-learning tool where it aims to make lessons using internet livelier and better for both students and educators. It can be a tremendous help in assisting learners' if used correctly. In learning process, Edmodo is an aid that would help ESL learners to learn English interactively and lively via online discussions and forums. Additionally, parents too can be included in children's lessons by having an access via Edmodo. Instead of leaving the responsibility to educate children at the hands of educators completely, parents can now be involved in children's academics and obtain a bird's view of the lessons. Teachers also may create and find a community to discuss, collaborate and get ideas to make lessons more impactful. By using the current technology and its available

application, it is hoped that Edmodo will capture and attract students' interest. This application is deemed to be helpful and should result in better condition for students to learn English.

Moreover, normally primary and secondary schools in Malaysia do not have specific teacher-students' online portals that can be used as an advantage in learning processes. If Edmodo is perceived to be user-friendly and fancied by the students, perhaps this application can soon be introduced to teachers. It is presumed that students in urban areas who are technology savvy would welcome such online website. On the other hand, even though in universities, lecturer/tutor-students portals do exist, a number of lecturers still prefer Facebook, Twitter and other social media as a channel to cultivate student-centered activities. Edmodo too is anticipated to be a better channel to serve the purpose mentioned because it is a specific network made especially for secured educational purposes. Therefore, I hope by providing promising results, this study will bring some light upon the issue and soon inject a sense of confidence for educators to use the online platform.

Ultimately, Ravenscroft (2001, p. 134) aptly asserts that *“we cannot truly transform educational practice for the better through implementation of new technologies unless we examine the roles that computers can play in stimulating, supporting, favouring innovative learning interactions that are linked to conceptual development and improvements in understanding”*. This connotes technology needs to be adapted and adopted with critical cautions and preparations, despite its positive claims and enthusiasm to avoid the loss of money, investment, time and energy of many people

involved. Therefore, this research has its significance to be conducted and the findings will be beneficial to many stakeholders in education.

1.8 Limitations of Study

A study is neither flawless nor able to shed lights on every aspect completely. This research is not exempted as it has its limitations too. First of all, the number of participants presents a drawback to the study because it cannot be generalized in a larger scale. Further, the findings are leaned towards TESL students or students who are studying English courses because assessments are done pertaining to English subjects. Unknown impacts could happen if the learning materials on Edmodo were to be other subjects besides languages; for example Mathematics, Biology, Arts and others. Next, University of Malaya is the only site chosen to conduct the data collection. In this case, we would not know how other students from various universities will respond to the same application. Finally, time constraint is another limitation because if given longer time, probably more effects or opinions can be obtained. Future studies should look into Edmodo in longer period of time with students from several institutions as well as having more number of participants and researchers from other fields besides language. Last but not least, perceptions of teachers should also be an interesting realm of study related to the implementation of Edmodo.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

- Edmodo is a social learning platform for teachers, students, and parents. It is normally thought of as the Facebook for schools, as called by pupils and teachers alike.

- Facebook is an online social networking service established in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg.
- Generation X encompasses people who were born between the mid 1960's and the early 1980's.
- Generation Y/Millennials/Netizens comprise of people who were born between the 1980's and the year 2000.
- Generation Z covers the generation of children born after the Year 2000
- 3rd year TESL students are the undergraduates in Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), University of Malaya who become the participants of this study.
- ICT is an acronym that stands for "Information and Communication Technologies". It refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. This includes the internet wireless networks, cell phones, computers, websites and others.
- E-learning is associated with activities related to computers and interactive networks. It is made possible via the application of ICT.

1.10 Report Organization

This research report consists of eight chapters. The following chapters are organized as follows; Chapter Two highlights the background and related works to the research along with the discussions on Edmodo and perceptions. Chapter Three discusses the methodology of the research which covers epistemology and its theoretical framework, research procedure, research instruments, data analysis procedure, and population and participants. Chapter Four explains the journey during data collection and analyses. Chapter Five illustrates a prelude to the phenomenon studied.

Meanwhile, Chapter Six and Seven present and discuss the results and findings obtained in this research. Finally, Chapter Eight discusses and summarizes the research as well as talks about novelties of the study and recommendations for future's researches.

1.11 Conclusion

In this section, I have illuminated what are the background of the study and problems in the area of concerns which led to the research objectives, questions and frameworks. I have also included the scope, significance and limitations of the study. Additionally, operational definitions of key terms are also given for readers' perusal along with the report organization so that readers may know what to expect in the remaining chapters.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In investigating the perceptions of ESL learners towards Edmodo; it is imperative to look into the current e-learning phenomenon which later shaped social learning advancements, definition of Edmodo and discussion on studies found related to the platform, limitations of traditional approaches which are not adequate to equip learners with relevant skills for future's use, importance of assessments and new pedagogies to equip 21st century learners, implementation of online social platforms as latest teaching approaches in interdisciplinary, definition of perceptions from various views, studies found on perceptions of students in learning, and discussion on research gap that leads to this research. In short, this chapter will be highlighting previous works by various researches along with the synthesis pertaining to this study.

2.1 Introduction to E-Learning

In order to understand where Edmodo stems from, we need to take a quick look at what branches are available in technology's tools these days. Frequently, many educators and scholars get confused on the definitions and features between e-learning, distance learning, and online learning. In this study, I attempt to provide brief definitions to those terms based on literary works found to avoid confusion. Failure to comprehend the differences between these three types of learning reflects a poor understanding of available alternative solutions in education (Tsai & Machado, n.d). Hence, it is highly significant to recognize the key differences because Edmodo is related to one of the channels mentioned.

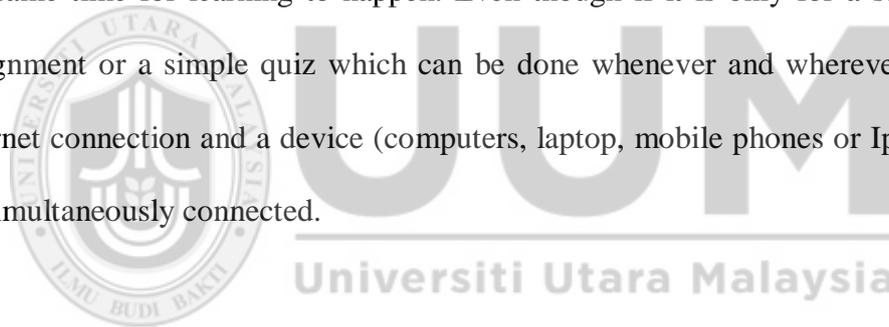
2.1.1 Definition of E-Learning

As of now, there are three well known distinctively different types of learning involving technology which many educators and scholars alike may easily get confused in defining it. First of all, distance learning is often described as an effort of supplying access to learning for students who are geographically distant (Moore, Dickson & Galyen., 2011). For instance, students in Malaysia may enroll in a programme offered by a university located overseas through distance learning with the help of online communication, lectures, assessments and others. Meanwhile, online learning is defined as an access to learning curve through the implementation of some technology (Conrad 2002; Carliner, 2004). Usually online learning is a type associated with readily available learning materials directly accessible from within core application (Tsai & Machado, n.d). For example, students may learn using computers and resources online which have been downloaded earlier; therefore one does not need to have a constant internet connection as online materials are readily available in the computers.

On the contrary, e-learning is frequently associated with activities related to computers and interactive networks (Tsai & Machado, n.d). According to the European Union, e-learning is defined as *'the use of new multimedia technologies and the internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration'* (European Commission, 2001). Various researchers claim that e-learning is a vast and detached area of inquiry which draw attention from diverse disciplines, such as education, computer science, psychology, management, communications and others (Bell & Federman, 2013). Due

to its flexibility in catering for many fields, e-learning has been gaining more popularity.

E-learning does not necessarily entail a computer to deliver learning contents, however both computer and networks need to simultaneously be involved in learning. In addition, Imel (2002) defines e-learning as instruction and learning experience delivered through electronic devices and technologies such as the Internet, audio and videotape, interactive television, virtual classrooms, web-based learning and satellite broadcast. Obviously in this case, Edmodo belongs to e-learning's dimension because it is a social learning platform where users need to be online and active on the site at the same time for learning to happen. Even though if it is only for a submission of assignment or a simple quiz which can be done whenever and wherever, inevitably internet connection and a device (computers, laptop, mobile phones or Ipads) need to be simultaneously connected.



E-learning has proven to be an essential advancement in both education and technology. To understand e-learning, is to first comprehend what definition does it hold, how does it work and why is it important to look into the subject mentioned. Above is the brief explanation on what educators need to know about e-learning. In summary, e-learning is an enormous umbrella in which it has many branches; including Edmodo that exists within the paradigm of e-learning. This study aims at understanding Edmodo and the impacts it has on participants involved, however before I start to look into Edmodo on micro level, I must review it from a broader context in order to comprehend its connection, which category it belongs to, where does it stem from and how the network works.

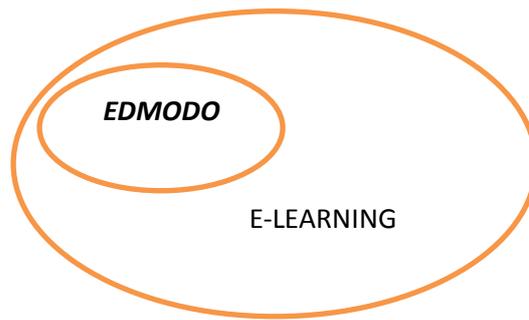


Figure 2.1. The Interrelation between E-learning and Edmodo

2.1.2 E-Learning in Malaysia

We have established the definitions of e-learning, but now a glimpse of definitions on ICT will be given due to its relevance to this research. ICT is an acronym for ‘Information and Communication Technologies’ which denotes the lowest level of connection in the use of computer technology. In my personal view, ICT has the most general idea on any form of information connected to communication technologies. It takes place with the assistance of internet, gadgets, computers or any technology devices which support information and communication to interrelate. Meanwhile, e-learning is associated to ICT when it applies the use of ICT to deliver learning experiences. Though e-learning has been mentioned as an umbrella which has many branches under its model, e-learning itself falls under ICT’s paradigm. The flow chart below helps to simplify the connections:

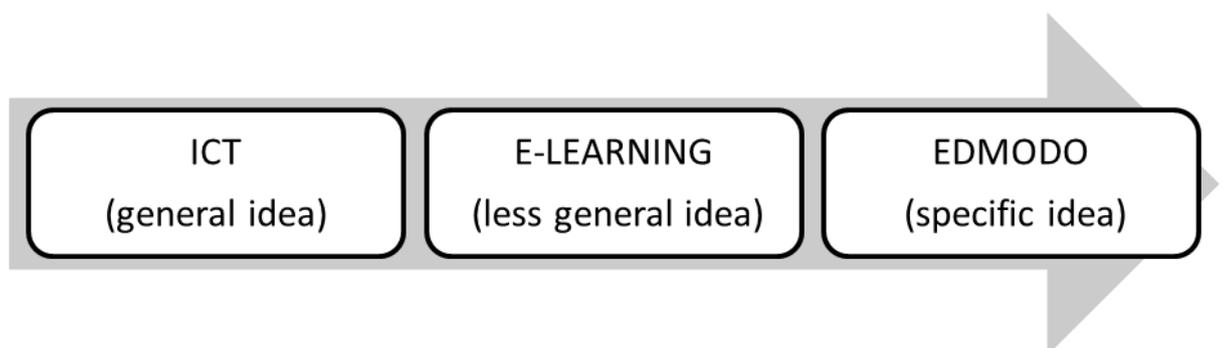


Figure 2.2. The Broad-spectrum Links between ICT, E-learning and Edmodo

As I have presented briefly in Chapter 1 regarding the implementation, guidelines and government's agenda concerning the use of ICT, in this particular section, I elaborated more on those areas of interest. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has formulated three policies for ICT in Malaysia; the first policy is in regards to using ICT as an enabler to reduce the digital gap between schools, be it in urban or rural areas. The second policy puts an emphasis on the role and function of ICT in education as a teaching and learning tool. In schools these days we have classes that teach students on how to be computer literate, manage functions that are available as well as how to look for materials online. Meanwhile, the third policy concerns the use of ICT to increase productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of the management system in schools (Chan Foong-Mae, 2002). The Ministry knows the importance of ICT in today's era and thus enforces such policies to empower the education system. Computers are equipped in universities and schools in Malaysia, be it in urban or remote areas. These educational institutions now are provided with internet connection to explore the virtual world without borders.

To look deeper into Malaysia's initiatives on ICT and e-learning; Smart Schools was successfully established as the former Prime Minister; Tun Mahathir could predict that ICT will have incredible value in the future. Due to Malaysia Multimedia Corridor, it opens up more windows of opportunity for education and e-learning to take place. As quoted from the Ministry of Education's blueprint on the project, below are the Smart School's concept, vision and mission:

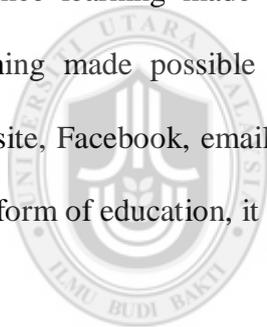
“Malaysia intends to transform its educational system, in line with and in support of the nation's drive to fulfill Vision 2020. This Vision calls for sustained, productivity-driven growth, which will be achievable only with a

technologically literate, critically thinking work force prepared to participate fully in the global economy of the 21st century. At the same time, Malaysia's National Philosophy of Education calls for developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious". The Smart Schools initiative is one of the seven flagship applications that are part of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project. The Government of Malaysia aims to capitalize on the presence of leading-edge technologies and the rapid development of the MSC's infrastructure to jumpstart deployment of enabling technology to schools."

(Smart School Blueprint, 1997).

Smart schools particularly are aiming at moving away from memory based learning engineered for the mediocre pupils to a shift of education paradigm that stimulates thinking, creativity and caring in all students as well as caters to each person's abilities and learning styles. Students will be required to carry out bigger responsibilities for their own education, and it also hoped to seek for more active involvement by parents and community. In short, Malaysian Smart Schools can be defined as a learning institution that has been systematically reinvented in a sense of teaching-learning practices and school management to equip children for information age. Therefore, the significance to look into Malaysia's aspiration for employing ICT in education is to comprehend how Edmodo may be a supplementary tool in many situations in today's educational institutions, especially for assisting teaching-learning process.

To add further, Boettcher & Conrad (2004) say universities frequently look for online tools as methods to deliver instructions. Malaysia pioneered virtual universities in support for technology and education almost a decade ago. Dzakiria (2008) reports most public universities booming in offering distance learning since the 1990s, however was first pioneered by University of Science Malaysia in 1970s. Distance learning was then followed by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, University of Malaya, Universiti Utara Malaysia and Universiti Institut Teknologi Malaysia (UiTM). Undoubtedly, pedagogical shift from teacher-dominated role to the students centered was necessary and made possible with the presence of ICT that offers open and distance learning. These thriving conditions in ICT and distance learning made me wonder though; through which mediums are distance learning made possible and most effective, is it via university-students' official website, Facebook, emails or other available platforms? With emerging solutions for this form of education, it is time for Edmodo to be considered as well.



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E-learning is already a trend in education, especially for open and distance learning which definitely are gaining benefits from the advancement of internet and web-based applications (Rais & Hashim, 2004). As Malaysia moves forward, stakeholders in education are searching for the best platform which may work with the students we have today. Therefore, how Edmodo may assist in this quest? Edmodo is rated with high successful rate in other countries, especially in the United States. However will it be effective in Malaysia? Will our learners see it in the same light? These are the questions which I ponder upon and subsequently attempt to discover. Malaysia is already investing a vast amount of monetary fund; will Edmodo be one of the possible answers in lowering costs? My concerns are mostly on how the participants share

their views on making Edmodo an effective tool in schools and universities, and the views they hold after experiencing Edmodo.

Malaysia is visibly moving forward refusing to be left behind in the progress. Nonetheless, this country's educational institutions can surely do better in on campus education and e-learning by having proper infrastructure, support from faculty members, maximum and effective utilization of e-learning and so on. Ozden, Erturk and Sanli (2004) argue, integration of technology requires close collaboration of not only the academicians, but the technical units too. In addition, to receive and create positive student perception; instructors and institutions should make an attempt to spend time, money and effort on the intended goals. As such, Edmodo might require the same commitment in those aspects mentioned. However, despite the claims and emphasis on efforts from educators, technical units, principals/leaders and others, the perceptions of students should not be overlooked too as they are the ones who ensure the merit of its implementation.

2.2 Introduction to Edmodo

Upon understanding e-learning is the category which Edmodo belongs to, we need to focus on the history of Edmodo itself and its reported outcomes found in news, articles, websites, studies and others. Edmodo was founded in 2008 by Nic Borg and Jeff O'Hara. The company is located in California, America. In November 2014, Edmodo has more than 46 million active users comprising of teachers, students and parents. As mentioned earlier, Edmodo belongs under the e-learning paradigm where it branches out from the idea of e-learning which connotes; 'activities related to computers and interactive networks'. When Edmodo was launched in 2008, the

company decided to implement “bottom up” approach by targeting individual teachers to use the application rather than getting entire educational institutions to sign up (Geron, 2011). This means teachers have the liberty to choose instead of forcing them into using an unfamiliar social learning platform.

2.2.1 Definition of Edmodo

According to Edmodo (2014), the site is known as ‘Facebook for schools’ or ‘Facebook look alike’ due to its layout and design. Edmodo (2014) from its report explains lengthily its exact missions; *“Edmodo’s mission is to connect all learners with the people and resources they need to reach their full potential. On Edmodo, teachers are at the center of a dynamic and engaging network that connects them to students, administrators and parents, and surfaces the world’s best resources and formative assessment tools that contribute to better learning outcomes. Founded in 2008 and used by 91 of the top 100 U.S. school districts, Edmodo was designed to protect the privacy and security of students and teachers by providing a closed, private platform in which they can collaborate, share content, and leverage educational apps to augment in-classroom learning. These powerful capabilities enable teachers to personalize learning for every student. Edmodo is free for teachers and students and always will be”*. Essentially, the founders strive for suitable, effective, comprehensive and innovative education for students of today.

Dalsgaard (2008) claims; the integral point of social network is the mixture of personalization and socialization. While having Dalsgaard notion in mind, the greatest invention of e-learning is when social network is blended into education; therefore Edmodo is one of the best platforms for social network and academic affairs

(Akbar, Purwarianti & Zubir, 2013). Cauley (n.d) who teaches in a school in United States and also runs a blog site gives a definition on what is Edmodo. According to him, Edmodo is an educational website which adopts the idea of a social network and transforms it into a refined site suitable for a classroom regardless of students' ages or levels of institutions. In addition, students and teachers may reach out to one another and connect by sharing ideas, current issues and helpful tips. With the advent of technology, it is only wise to look into social learning platforms as mediums of interaction.

Teachers favor Edmodo because it has up to twelve (12) subject communities which provide a safe environment for interaction with thousands of educators worldwide in the same subject field. Edmodo provides a channel for educators to receive feedback on latest ideas, ask for support, discuss teaching plans, solve problems and collaborate for projects or academic papers. Trust (2012) asserts, teachers engage on Edmodo to expand their networking, grow professionally, enhance knowledge and contribute to a community. Teachers can solicit assistance and support, exhibit knowledge by assisting others and interact about newest piece of information, particularly when Edmodo offers a safe setting for learning platform, inquiries and sharing of resources. Its simple layout, a range of tools and easy notification feature claimed to have drawn teachers' attention. In addition, Edmodo has updated insights on how often a resource is shared by a member; subsequently it motivates the rest of the members to share valuable resources as well. In any case, will Edmodo become a potential channel for teachers to be creative and expand their knowledge, especially in Malaysia?

Based on a survey conducted in 2013, 96% of students these days admitted using internet access for social networking strategies and 50% of discussions on social online platforms are schoolwork-related (Rivero, 2013). These figures show that students are constantly online using social platforms while at the same time discuss about assignments given with peers via internet chatting. Nevertheless, despite the enthusiastic use of social network in education (for example: Facebook, Skype and Twitter), educational institutions are still struggling with issues pertaining to privacy and security of educators and students (Electronic Education Report, 2014). Additionally, many schools simply keep social networking blocked due to the fear of those platforms are lacking adequate control and monitoring mechanisms (Rivero, 2013). In fact some institutions do not permit the use of social network within its compounds. Edmodo on the contrary is well known for its safe and private environment as well as incorporates the involvement of parents as they may participate in the community to bring a level of transparency. It may be prophesied for Edmodo to receive encouraging feedbacks, given the proper execution and positive perceptions by students and teachers.

In this section, we are familiar with Edmodo's missions which can be assumed to be compatible with teachers' that consequently will lead to desired results. However, what if Edmodo's missions are too ambitious or non-obtainable? Thus far, it has gained much popularity in the United States, yet is not famously adopted in Asian countries, including Malaysia. Does this condition happen because lack of publicity or effectiveness? Are educators in Malaysia oblivious in regards to its existence? One assumption is that our educators choose other platforms available as solutions in their teaching-learning delivery dilemma. However, these questions prompt for further

research involving current educators we have in educational institutions. As of now, we need to first and foremost, investigate what do our 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya think of Edmodo and why do they have such views pertaining to the site.

Besides the concerns on teaching-learning process, Edmodo has gone the extra mile in hosting a world conference through its platform. EdmodoCon is an online conference that has been held by Edmodo with thousands of attendees coming from different countries, backgrounds and educational institutions (Flanigan, 2011). Such event provides teachers with improvement and expansion opportunities. Despite having a large scale conference, stakeholders in Malaysian's educational institutions remain absentminded on its existence. Based on my limited knowledge, the number of educators in this country who are aware of and implement Edmodo in classroom is scarce.

Other than the mentioned criteria, the advantages of using Edmodo are the unnecessary need of using computer labs and the ability to stay connected using laptops, smart phones, iPods or iPads. Teachers therefore do not have to go through the hassle of booking or struggling over the chance to use computer labs; which commonly a school in Malaysia is usually equipped with only one or two computer labs. Edmodo that offers such an advantage should be appealing to teachers in schools especially. The opportunity to make tasks easier is wonderful for teachers in Malaysian context as they are entrusted with other responsibilities besides teaching designated subjects, such as in charge of curriculum and co-curricular activities.

From this introduction, we now fathom that Edmodo is a form of social learning platform intended to enhance enthusiasm of communicating and learning while at the same time retaining atmosphere similar to social networking channels. It is specially designed for teachers, students and parents. It offers security, cost-effectiveness, networking openings among teachers, appealing assessments, interactive communication and lively online conference; which many of these statements are expected to be explored on its legitimacy. Thus, in this research I wish to implore participants' insights and discover whether they see it in the same light.

2.2.2 Edmodo's Placement/Ranking/News

Since its inception in 2008, Edmodo has been housing millions of users worldwide comprised of teachers, students and parents. As end of 2014, over 46 million of users have been actively working together in regards to academic affairs on Edmodo. Edmodo is headquartered in California, United States of America. Edmodo organizes online global educator conference known as; EdmodoCon that attracts more than 30 thousands virtual attendees annually (Edmodo, 2014). The conference caters for idea-sharing and collaboration among some of the world's most creative educators. Additionally, EdmodoCon is a free, live-streamed eleven-hour event highlighting innovative educators who wish to showcase various ways in employing Edmodo with other digital tools into classrooms.

Based on the demographic review on Edmodo.com Site Overview (Alexa Internet, 2015), Its implementation in classrooms is very well accepted and known in United States with 74.1% visitors to the site, followed by Spain with 2.6% of visitors, trailed by Indonesia and Canada with less than 3% of visitors. Edmodo is visited commonly

by females with internet average of ‘above’ level. According to education category, it is equally visited by students of all levels of institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary). Finally, the site is browsed mostly from home with internet average beyond ‘above’ and from school with ‘slightly less’ internet average than home.

As we may observe, the trend of using the site from home where users get an access to their education or submit assessments without having to be on campus or in school compound is evidently showing how education in today’s world has evolved. Therefore, perceptions that participants reserve on this trend is worth noting and investigating. Besides that, it is only logical for the United States to have highest number of users as the company is located in the country. However, surprisingly Indonesia made into the ranking of users while Malaysia is not well versed with the application yet, despite both countries are equally progressing towards modernization.

In this modern age, technologies immensely assist in developing applications that aim to help English learners, especially the non-native speakers. Android smart phones can now download applications for free such as offline dictionary, grammar check, pronunciation guide, vocabulary bank and etc. Meanwhile, online websites have been put up to aid English learners in becoming better speakers. VOA Learning English, British Council, BBC, CNN, English Club and countless others are some of the available sites for both educators and learners to view and download its materials, especially for speaking, reading, writing and listening skills. A number of educators opt to use social media as a platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Blog, Wikis and others.

Nevertheless, a number of schools in certain countries blocked the use of Facebook, Twitter and some other social media within the school compound (Kist, 2013). The limitations to only several online platforms can be accessed in schools prompted Nic Borg and Jeff O'Hara to design and launch Edmodo in 2008 as one of the escapisms for this issue because they wanted to connect students to the world outside of school while maintaining the same environment on the web site. Some platforms are not mobile friendly as the desktop version is more optimized, however Edmodo enhanced users' experience on mobile and that particular area should be explored to confirm whether students enjoy the learning experience via the use of smart phones.

By now we have established the fact that Edmodo is a social learning platform for teachers, students and parents. It is normally thought of as Facebook for education purposes as it has the interface, layout and design similar to Facebook (Maguth & Harshman, 2013). This is due to an attempt to make students feel familiar in using it because most students do have a respective Facebook account and it is hoped that they will feel comfortable to communicate via Edmodo as well. Edmodo is very user-friendly, easy to navigate and has multiple useful functions for learning purposes, including Reading, Assignments and Paper-studying (Tomassini, 2013). The theme of familiarity is a subtopic which should be looked into because on the contrary, some students may get along just fine with new applications that offer completely different layout and outlook as they feel it is more authentic and refreshing.

In the world of modernization, we are required to embrace technology as part of our daily lives (Bennet, 2008). The assimilation of technology in our lives is inevitable. In this 21st century, we are looking into the best methods to equip our learners with the

best skills and knowledge, one of the approaches worth implementing is through Edmodo which creates a complete 21st century learning space (Hewes, 2012). Many scholars agree that educators use Edmodo to engage digital native students, to post assignments and videos as well as to teach them good citizenship (Gonzales & Vodicka, 2012), though it does raise a question pertaining users who are not digital natives, for example postgraduate students who were born before the Y-generation.

In a survey done in United States' schools, numerous participants agreed that the module designed in Edmodo was clear, easy to follow and effective. In addition, many have come to a consensus that they are very familiar with online networking and therefore, using Edmodo as a platform for learning is an excellent choice. This situation proves that Edmodo as a social networking site can be incorporated into the curriculum and within teachers' locus of control (Anbe, 2013). Besides that, it has found that participants were able to go beyond what was expected and explored other tools due to the user-friendly interface. It is unknown nonetheless on their schools' area; urban versus rural, because students in urban area might be better equipped with technology skills and devices while rural students might face the opposite situation.

Students consented that they managed to use the functions of Edmodo easily and quickly. They benefited from the quizzes, submission of work, feedback from the teacher, reviews of lessons posted by the teacher, group discussions and many others. According to Kongchan (2008), her study concluded that Edmodo appears to be an amazing learning network that is very stress-free to handle as it received overwhelming level of acceptance and response by the non-digital-native teachers.

Pintor (2012) came to a conclusion that Edmodo introductory training was designed following the Mayer's (2010) twelve principles or multi-media design. There are three categories in the principles, those are; Principles for Reducing Extraneous Processing, Principles for Managing Essential Processing and Principles for Fostering Generative Processing. These three categories are much related to the processes in Edmodo where it reduces lengthy processes in a lesson, has its own efficient management and is able to foster learners via its interactive portal. In addition, students who participated in an Edmodo study showcased four skills namely remembering, applying, evaluating and creating (McClain & Brown, 2013). These four skills are prominent in effective learning according to the infamous Bloom's Taxonomy. Extensive studies on participants' views are equally essential after knowing Edmodo has direct relations to the Bloom's Taxonomy which affects teaching-learning process.

Edmodo too allows extended discussions when time in class are not sufficient, cancelled or there is a public holiday (Chandler & Redman, 2013). Typically, in traditional classroom setting, sometimes the allocated time is not enough, thus Edmodo provides a solution to this issue. Furthermore, students frequently are given credit for their attendance in regular class meeting despite they may not be actively participating or contributing in the class discussions. Meanwhile, during an online discussion, students have no choice but to participate and contribute to the discussion to be considered present for the class. In conventional university classroom, the system dictates that as long as students' attendance is 80% or higher per semester, they will not be barred from examination and it also does carry a weightage in semester's grade while the adoption of Edmodo will be the opposite as students have

to contribute to be considered present. Besides that, students who are normally shy in class will get the opportunity to express their ideas more freely when they are online. These students are usually afraid of judgments, prompt feedbacks and fear of being the center of attention whenever they throw an idea in class. Therefore, I wonder if Edmodo can provide escapism for such students according to the views of participants.

Another advantage of Edmodo is the leniency for students to be mobile while at the same time participating in class online discussions (Chandler & Redman, 2013). Thus it strengthens the sense of belonging between students when they are not on campus. In our globalized society, netizens need to be able to collaborate and interact excellently; hence Edmodo is one of the practical ways to prepare them towards that direction. In retrospect, Malaysia is moving towards embracing technology especially in education field. Nonetheless, to investigate whether students welcome the idea of being mobile while attending an online class is a feasible idea, we need to first introduce them to a platform where such condition may take place. Edmodo can be an example from a bigger umbrella, which may be a topic to kick start a serious consideration of such technology in a wider scale.

This is driven by the fact that netizens these days prefer the convenience of being able to study in the privacy of their homes and on own schedules. Therefore, many educators decided to set up discussion sites so that students may respond to questions and they are expected to facilitate discussions on their own (Kist, 2013). Engaged students in a lesson will result in sharing of own collections in terms of personal experience, new input that they encounter, photos, documents and many others as

there is a sense of trust in the online community (Anderson, 2010). As students facilitate their own discussions, teacher's role is to monitor the progress and ensure no students fall out of the topic or use inappropriate language. As we march into the 21st century, rote learning is no longer relevant and we must look into every possible solution to enhance learning that will fit future generations.

Additionally, Edmodo engages young learners with the subject and connect synchronously with schoolmates and students from other schools (Schacter, 2011). In fact, appeared in an educational newspaper issue (Kid to Kid Connection, 2011), a Science teacher has been using Edmodo to encourage his students to discuss their observations on topics such as characteristics of different animals and adaptations. Such article presents an example of another subject which can adopt the use of Edmodo in classroom. I am interested in applying the application in language learning of English. Though Science and English are two different subjects with diverse methods, topics and models, it is however belongs in education's realm and the creativity of a teacher actually determines the amount of feedback receive on the site. Thus, this research investigates views and strategies of the 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya after experiencing learning via Edmodo as they are the soon-to-be-teachers of English.

On another note, according to Electronic Education Report on 31st January 2014, Edmodo is becoming extremely popular and well received by educators and students. As the schools are commencing earlier 2014, the report tracks down what are the famous online applications for users on iTunes, Amazon and Google stores. These online stores show that Edmodo appears on the list of "Popular Education Apps"

under the “Most Popular Free” label. This is a piece of evidence indicating Edmodo is becoming known to the public as more studies showing its effectiveness and benefits. The fact that Edmodo is gaining popularity must be driven by some factors which I aim to explore as an application will only be famous when it is perceived in a good way by the users. I am intrigued to find out the causes of the rising reputation.

The need to propose novel online methods to support interaction between students and educators has made a number of lecturers from Vietnam and Finland to look into Edmodo and they found that it is a portal which has modest features, intuitive interface, more media richness and does not need hosting nor server (Thien, Phan, Van, Loi, Tho, Suhonen & Sutinen, 2013). These features are available in other learning platforms, however Edmodo hosts the features altogether and easier to be recognized. It can include multiple sources which made it easy for educators to attach, share, post or link any materials found on other websites to Edmodo. This application can potentially be applicable in different courses, lectures and departments. These easy use interfaces are hoped to produce good impressions on the platform by participants in University of Malaya. The findings above were found in other countries and hopefully will yield the same outcome when participants test Edmodo’s usage in language learning.

An article written by Steinman (n.d) who implemented the use of Edmodo for his class finds that at the end of the semester, students’ grades increased by 4%. As opposed to his previous classes, he never used any technological tool but after using Edmodo; discussions became profound and more student-centered as they managed to navigate the progression of the dialogues with less interference by the teacher. This

proves that Edmodo promotes co-operative learning which results in better understanding of topics in their enrolled courses. As students work together toward the same goal which is to communicate and exchange knowledge, students' participation obviously will increase drastically as well (Baumbach, 2009). Even though results are substantial, we are not provided with students' opinions on the use of Edmodo. It could probably be because of the grading system which made students responded to questions on the site as opposed to genuine interest to work via the channel.

Nevertheless, besides gaining benefits for the students, educators too will be able see the perks of using Edmodo for their classes. As human beings, it is only normal to sometimes forget, thus it is inevitable for teachers to occasionally miss out on several students. For example, instead of having to sort assignments into its category on their own, Edmodo offers to classify it for them in categories of; all, ungraded, graded, not turned in or late. Hence, Edmodo simplifies tasks for the teachers and makes their lives easier by helping to keep track of students' progress (Pop, 2013). In addition, students' productions can be viewed effortlessly and the 'progress' feature will help to generate the whole class roll. In Malaysia, there is no doubt teachers' career is piled with taxing tasks which take up much time. This case contributes to negligence, loss of interest in creativity and fatigue that makes teaching quality drops. If participants who are TESL students may see Edmodo as one of the future solutions to the current problems, maybe the implementation of Edmodo is not impossible after all.

The presented inputs above pertaining to ranking, news and placements are gathered mostly from blog, newspaper reports, educational magazines, site ranking,

demographic overview, websites and experiences shared by teachers who implemented Edmodo in their classrooms. These findings are genuine, original and authentic as it comes from mostly the teachers themselves, and facts and figures accumulated from rankings and newspaper cuttings. These results however stem from teachers and writers outside of Malaysia and in addition, none of the articles were written by students. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the views students have on Edmodo, especially in one of the most prestigious Malaysian universities.

2.2.3 Edmodo's Roles in Education

Technologies are advancing rapidly and causing education to experience a student-led revolution (Rivero, 2013). This notion suggests students are now being the center of attention and obtaining the ultimate focus in education. In a way, it ensures students are receiving the best quality of schooling through the paramount pedagogies accessible and technologies ever invented. Unlike the olden days where teachers used to be the only resources available for knowledge acquisition, at this instant learners are being resourceful and responsible of their learning curve. Edmodo is an excellent example of student-led revolution because of its existing features being an interesting medium for knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, some possible solutions are not the only solution to the issue nor can it be 'one size fits all'. On this section, we will look into some of the claimed advantages of implementing Edmodo in learning and its relations to education in Malaysia.

Peer-tutoring is an eminent approach in learning because individuals have different pace of learning and capabilities. Obtaining knowledge from friends and learning in healthy condition are significantly vital for resulting students with holistic growth.

Not only they learn from one another, they are given the chance to be independent and create a strong bond among peers. In this case, Edmodo provides support in class, outside communication and collaboration opportunities. It is a learning space worthy to be explored and evaluated for its contribution as Redman and Trapani (2012) claim, Edmodo is a portal that presents information in an engaging and motivating way which in return becomes a controlled environment suitable for peer tutoring.

Through Edmodo, students will be working with peers and inevitably required to collaborate with others (Buescher, 2010); regardless if it is a pair work, in small groups or within the class. Furthermore, Dobler (2012) finds that while two teachers from dissimilar schools located in geographically different states in America, collaborate to bring their students together via Edmodo combined groups, students in both classes were using the site to carry on an online conversation, discussion, compiling main ideas and exchanging of opinions while at the same time listening to the guest speaker's presentation which was streamed live via Skype. Though distant, collaborative work in education with peers from other places is now possible. This advantage provides means for effective teaching-learning process, however it is unsure if similar results are obtainable in Malaysia's learning environments.

Moving on to the next point, Edmodo helps students to become aware of their surrounding that causes adjustment of responses they give based on the audience they have on Edmodo. Subsequently, this practice instills a good habit in minding their manners when they communicate with people. While looking at a wider picture, it is a good preparation in producing fine global citizens with qualities such as being considerate and kind to others. Buescher (2010) asserts, students adapt and adjust

their replies on Edmodo as they learn their audience consists of teachers and classmates, consequently students will learn how to respond to tasks appropriately with the correct tone, formality, grammar and punctuation.

Harnessing students' potentials in making the most out of social networking which also combines education will prepare students to be global citizen. It has the ability to cultivate skills, empathies and attitudes needed for online civic involvement (Crowe & McDonald, 2013). Introduction to Edmodo at a young age may help to foster the habits of the mind that are important for students to be good digital students as they progressively learn how to use appropriate language, speak kindly, to be supportive rather than critical and to inquire thoughtful questions (Rubin, 2013). Cultivating critical thinking is essential in today's fast-paced digital world. Therefore Edmodo is a great route for a private social learning network to put digital literacy and citizenship lessons into practice (Pr, 2012). Even though nurturing such skills does not ensure effective learning outcomes, it may be an intrinsic motivation for participants who are studying in a renowned local university in Malaysia. This purpose further stresses on the importance of investigating the 3rd Year TESL students' views.

Education these days are depleting in its impacts and values whereby rote learning and memorization have been condemned to cause hindrances and unsuitable for learners of today. Thus, will Edmodo help to curb the issue? Having high educations will not be adequate to survive the 21st century; students should be equipped with the appropriate skills as we currently have stiff competition for jobs, education, healthcare and many more. Cultivating good skills should start at an early age in order to generate students who can make personal and worldly connections in learning and

everyday life. Via Edmodo, students are able to make use of the information that they are learning and discussing to make connections to interrelated subjects and situations beyond the classroom (Buescher, 2010); for example, debates on world crisis, current issues, human rights, volcano eruption and others. On another note in regards to making personal and worldly connections through Edmodo; novelties of tasks, interactivity of the site and platform friendliness are some of the key-points students prefer to have when completing assignments (Pop, 2013) which later may draw them in to be more involved and connected.

Student engagement is rather similar to peer-tutoring but with a slight difference, that is; student engagement refers to collaborative work in accomplishing tasks whereas peer-tutoring refers to students learning from one another. Edmodo provides an interactive channel for discussions and interpretations of assignments where it becomes an engaging alternative to hand-writing homework questions (Buescher, 2010). Moreover, it serves as a 'social' space that fosters interaction and cooperation among students (Crowe & McDonald, 2013) which can be hard to achieve in a physical classroom. As mentioned earlier, Edmodo emphasizes on student collaboration, sharing and learning (Chandler & Redman, 2013; Lu & Churchill, 2013). Exchanging of ideas can be done easily via online grouping (Ratcham & Chen, 2013), whereas in class some students might feel left out during discussions. In terms of Malaysian students' context, we already have platforms such as the infamous Facebook, however researches indicate that it is not the most suitable channel as users might get confused between social and academic matters. Edmodo perhaps can be a salvation, but first and foremost a study on students' perceptions about how it may assist to be an effective tool needs to be conducted to affirm previous findings.

Next, critical thinking is one of the skills that teachers these days are attempting to foster. There is no purpose in education if students simply memorize contents without being able to create something new out of it. Another contribution of Edmodo in our present education is students are capable at developing higher order thinking skills to analyze and respond to tasks posted on Edmodo while teachers facilitate the process (Buescher, 2010). As students type, they have more room to ponder upon their ideas, organize their thoughts, think critically and have more time to work through the best response (Paper Clip Communication, 2012). Hence, a topic in discussion on Edmodo can be analyzed more by using critical thinking technique because Generation Y of today should be taught on how to be independent and able to contemplate on any existing issues. Our Malaysian education system has been said to be like factories producing human robots who only know how to execute repetitive routines. Educators globally are proposing methods and tools to change the vicious cycle because similar situation persists worldwide. Students in University of Malaya are comprised of individuals who possess tremendous potentials, by introducing Edmodo, we will see if the platform can at least hone on critical thinking skills and the potentials they have.

In these challenging times, numerous possible solutions have been introduced to prompt educators' initiatives in changing the face of education. Nevertheless, not every solution is perfect for all situations; depending on the location, culture, beliefs, types of students and many more. Therefore, it is only logical to introduce the use of Edmodo to TESL students who can judge its effectiveness and suggest ways on how to implement it wisely. A number of students who do not prefer to speak in front of an audience may find Edmodo beneficial and convenient. Further, due to diversity and

large number of students, Edmodo offers a channel for each student to have a voice within the classroom while collaborating and interacting with their peers in an engaging atmosphere (Redman & Trapani, 2012). As a result, an authentic out of class experience can be obtained. Students who do not prefer to voice out their opinion may find Edmodo to be less frightening because typing is less intimidating than speaking one's thoughts (Paper Clip Communication, 2012). Besides offering other advantages, Edmodo is hoped to be capable in assisting students with such difficulties.

Redman and Trapani (2012) posit, ICT and multimedia skills of students improved during the learning process because they developed the knowledge to share photos, links and videos on Edmodo. Other than that, Buescher (2010) claims Edmodo is within students' and teachers' locus of control because it merely needs basic computer skills with less use of equipment. Commonly, one of the fears that teachers have is lack of multimedia skills required to operate an online system and at the same time giving assessments for students. Nonetheless, Edmodo requires minimal multimedia skills with its simple features and easy navigation, therefore teachers are able to control and conduct a class online using the site as well as executing assessments online without much worries, preparation and hassle. TESL students might perceive Edmodo to not only be effective in language teaching, perhaps it may assist in honing one's ICT skills. This area proposes an investigation on their views about how a tool such as Edmodo can be of any help to students.

Besides, concerns over students' dependency towards teachers and spoon feeding have always been a major issue. Many are inquiring on how to make a learning tool effective. We are provided with countless methods, yet nothing is ever absolute. Will

Edmodo be helpful in this quest? These questions can only be answered by the participants I have chosen for this study. Edmodo claims to encourage students in making own initiatives for their learning by posting notes, uploading learning materials to the personal digital library, writing comments and many more (Lu & Churchill, 2013). Dobler (2012) additionally asserts, learners are keen to participate in the learning process when they are allowed to explore the multimedia resources which compatible with their learning preferences and needs. Apps available on Edmodo facilitate collaboration and virtual teamwork among students to accelerate on the learning process (Edmodo, 2013), making students proficient in handling tasks online. Similar to the proverb, “killing two birds with one stone”; Edmodo helps students and teachers in enhancing teaching-learning experience and gaining multimedia skills needed in today’s vastly paced world.

Government and schools are investing a large monetary sum every year in course management software (Marchewka & Kostiw, 2007), however to what extent does the software is effective? Ministry of Education and schools in various countries, including Malaysia are not omitted in getting trapped in similar scenario. Stakeholders have spent millions of monetary funds each year in order to purchase what they deem to be effective technology integration such as; online tools, websites, software, CD-ROMs and others. Yet, these tools are not proven to produce high rate of success and such condition causes loss in monetary investments. In addition, students’ and future educators’ views are often overlooked. It has always been a top-down approach rather than bottom-up, this situation leaves the stakeholders at the bottom of the pyramid to simply obey but cannot voice out their opinions.

In order to minimize the loss of financial aid and to maximize positive impacts, we should look at other learning platforms that offer lower maintenance cost or do not require any charging fees at all. Edmodo conversely does not charge teachers, students, parents, schools or any stakeholders for its usage and therefore it is cost-efficient despite many advantages it offers (Buescher, 2010; Pop, 2013). Not only Edmodo is convenient to be implemented, it will always be free and a safe channel for students-teachers communication (Rivero, 2013). Also, teachers now have the freedom to choose on the implementation of Edmodo in the classrooms. Thus, it is a better option than forcing them to utilize a purchased tool which they do not wish to execute.

One of the major appealing factors of Edmodo is its functions pertaining to assessments. Edmodo allows teachers to assess and create poll, multiple choice questions, quizzes, fill in the blanks and other types of assessments which garner students' attention (Buescher, 2010). Pop (2013) similarly posits, Edmodo caters for pools, alerts, quizzes, homework, grammar sheets, reading materials and sub-groups where all of these can be done effortlessly and be accessed by students at any time. Edmodo is a proof that using new technologies may create a profoundly high enthusiasm from students (Chandler & Redman, 2013). While the traditional model assigns homework or revision and the time in class is spent on lectures, Edmodo on the other hand inverts this practice by allowing students to undertake discovery learning independently (Wallace, 2013). Until this day, assignments are submitted in paperwork form while environmentalists have been chanting 'save the nature' and 'reduce papers' slogans. In Malaysia, submission of work online is not vastly practiced and subsequently, will Edmodo bring about the slightest alteration? Hence,

what the students perceive when it comes to digital form of work submission is highly imperative because they are responsible for making revolutionary changes. If they prefer to use Edmodo in doing assessments, undoubtedly educators will not hesitate to implement its use.

Furthermore, Edmodo is perceived positively as a formal learning platform with high interactivity capability, interaction with peers, sharing of information and collaboration on group projects (Lu & Churchill, 2013). Edmodo is an open access virtual learning network where transparency on grading can be assured because assessments strategies and marking format may be seen by all students and parents. Besides that, in order to maximize students learning experience, Edmodo has been working with Audioboo that *“allows smartphone digital recordings and accesses thousands of pre-recorded audio programmes within Edmodo’s online environment”* (Audioboo, 2013). This enables students to have holistic learning experience especially during audio-learning lessons, conversations and debates. Presently, students can be assessed in a holistic manner via Edmodo and exercises may be given online too. Learners these days might have various channels which they subscribe to for diverse reasons, for example Skype for listening and speaking activities while Facebook for writing and reading assessments. On the contrary, Edmodo caters for all skills needed in language learning. However, the mentioned statements are assumptions of what it may do when the extent of effectiveness or positive perceptions remain questionable and investigable.

Other than varieties of available assessments on Edmodo, it is a site where students will get the chance to revise their drafts until they are satisfied with the final

outcomes. Evidently, the possibility to re-record and revise written replies until one is satisfied is among the driving reasons for Edmodo's success implementation in classroom (Pop, 2013). Moreover, students may see their progress in a long run as Edmodo helps to keep a track on their replies and submitted work which can be accessed at any time; this condition represents an essential aspect for learning a second language. Paper Clip Communication (2012) reports, teachers may still be able to enforce classroom rules, such as proper spelling, grammar, no 'text speak', mutual respect and correct punctuation while students accomplish tasks on Edmodo. Enforcement of such rules persist students to keep checking and correcting their replies or recording before submitting them. To ensure findings are not biased in this study, participants unraveled the learning experience and discovered the perceived advantages and weaknesses on their own. Feedbacks by the 3rd Year TESL students are gathered after its execution which involves a number of assessments' postings.

Generally, easy access is what drives students these days to use an online platform. They welcome the idea of accessibility no matter where they are or through any type of devices. Laptops can be taxing to bring, mobile phones on the other hand will always be with students. An online platform which allows accessibility through mobile application is highly preferred by students. A winning feature of Edmodo is that it enables seamless learning opportunities in different situations as it is available on mobile phones, iPods, iPads or any other smart gadgets as well (Lu & Churchill, 2013), thus students do not necessarily have to access Edmodo from their computers or laptops. TESL students in University of Malaya are constantly on the move attending one class after another, perhaps Edmodo will be a preferred platform for assessments and interaction. Moreover, these students are comprised of active 3rd year

TESL students who would have much to say when applications as such are introduced.

Due to Edmodo's nature being a site for education and social networking, students have already developed a sense of familiarity in using the portal. Thien et al. (2013) claim "*social presence support learners to understand their roles in the community, project them online, and form relationships with others by projecting their personalities. Edmodo, with the User Interface similar to Facebook, encourages this sense of social presence by groups, Q&A, opinion polls and so on*". Therefore, familiarity encourages enthusiastic participation from students because as soon as they logged in, they already feel comfortable learning using the site. As I have stated earlier, some students however favor social learning platforms which offer refreshing interface and layout while some others fancy the idea of familiarity. This dilemma can only be answered by students themselves.

Students' perceptions undoubtedly impact the execution of a tool in teaching-learning processes. Even though traditional teaching remains to be coveted by educators of previous generations, stakeholders in current education field need to be firm and notice the urgency in changing the pedagogies and delivery methods. By implementing Edmodo, teaching on the other hand converts to be more interactive, effective, immediate and relevant to today's learners who are equipped with technology availability (Redman & Trapani, 2012). Technology incorporation has taken social factors in conveying impactful e-learning programs into consideration because those are linked to the manifestation of technical factors (Wu & Hwang, 2010; Ratcham & Chen, 2013). Further, pre-service teachers envision integrating

Edmodo into future classroom lessons due to its advantages. Buescher (2010) postulates Edmodo is an easy way to integrate technology into teaching process and students assessments. Participants of this research are 3rd Year TESL students who will soon become future English teachers, therefore their opinions and advices on Edmodo definitely will be substantial.

In addition, Edmodo is one of the best known products of teachers' desire for social network design to complement the curriculum (Tomassini, 2013). At times, teachers wonder if they can be categorized as effective teachers who manage to accomplish teaching goals. With the help of technology incorporation; such as Edmodo, teachers are progressing towards that category where teaching aims can be obtained when students reach their full potential in learning. On top of that, Edmodo's user-experience is geared to teachers, particularly when they can manage classroom and give assessments at the same time. These benefits will produce effective teachers who create impactful teaching outcomes. Edmodo is a social learning platform which may be anticipated by teachers, and through this research we may get beneficial opinions from future teachers who might implement it in their classroom to make their tasks more organized. Going down this path will either confirm or revoke previous findings.

Looking at another relevant idea on Edmodo's contribution to education world, Edmodo is a revolutionary tool which permits teachers to participate in a teaching methodology conversion because classrooms and engagement with students are more structured. Moreover, teachers agree that Edmodo acts as a catalyst and a motivator in transforming traditional instructional models by permitting learners to involve

actively in their learning during in and outside of the classroom (Wallace, 2013; Dobler, 2012). A few studies reported, Edmodo is extremely useful in replacing regular lecture when it was previously cancelled and it was difficult to gather all students for a replacement class (Chandler & Redman, 2013). These studies are mainly conducted in overseas meanwhile the outcomes could be different as we apply it into the Malaysian education context.

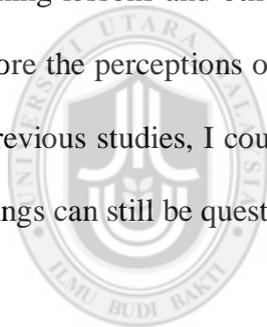
Meanwhile, Lu and Churchill (2013) comment, Edmodo can be used by non-technology savvy teachers because it is easy to post links and files into a library for sharing, track learning progress, create subgroups for different classes, set deadlines for assignments, create quizzes and many more. In addition, Google Docs can also be integrated into Edmodo conveniently. Educators now have an online space to interact with students in a social learning settings that cater for individuals different opinions and answers on tasks given (Schiller, 2011). In traditional classroom setting, teacher is the center of activities while on Edmodo, it shifts the attention to students while teachers take the role of a tutor (Schiller, 2011). Clearly, it is an example of revolutionary in teaching pedagogies and instructional methods. This study attempts to find out reasons behind liking or disliking Edmodo by future teachers of English, thus hopefully they may provide valid reasoning along with suggestions on how to help making Edmodo effective.

Moving on, advancement of technologies has made the creation of global teacher community possible where social learning platforms, for example; Edmodo provides a channel for educators worldwide to interact and form a group. Kavcic, Pesek Bohak and Marolt (2013) and Dobler (2012) postulate, Edmodo assists in connecting

teachers with other educators worldwide to the learning materials in an immediate, comprehensive and collaborative manner. This site has the potentials to be a mediator for different courses with different lecturers, or in different institutions (Thien et al., 2013). In United States, parents who home school their children find Edmodo to be very engaging and helpful in finding appropriate lessons to keep up with the school curriculum (Rubin, 2013). Malaysian parents on the other hand do not practice home school as they prefer to send their children to either private or public schools. Despite such condition as the case, Edmodo might still be able to allow parents' participation and assist teachers.

Besides that, Edmodo offers wider community interconnectedness and involvement to create authentic projects for students (Redman & Trapani, 2012). Exchanging lessons can be done effortlessly while retaining the private and safe environment, while at the same time technology tools can be discovered easily in Edmodo's new application store (Tomassini, 2013). Also, teachers may have the 'Digital Citizenship' community whenever they need some ideas on how to engage safely and efficiently with technology while 'Common Sense Media' provides a chat room for teachers to discuss about topics ranging from internet safety, cyber bullying, plagiarism and so forth (Pr, 2012), these two sub-channels have been partnered with Edmodo for the comfort of having holistic experience in one channel. Manifestly, Edmodo's priority concerning teachers is the facility to create a global community where educators may exchange input and work collaboratively. This feature poses a question in the study, does it take a long time for future teachers to find the community or does it require a great amount of effort and interest to collaborate online?

“Time is gold” is an English expression to emphasize the importance of making the best out of one’s precious time. Through Edmodo, time saving can be done by stakeholders involved in education. Group works that would have been taxing and time consuming to be carried out in classrooms can now be done on Edmodo. It has successfully revolutionized classrooms in terms of students’ engagement (Electronic Education Report, 2014), resulted from the effectiveness of online tasks that can be carried out effortlessly. Edmodo helps to makes educators’ lives easier and saves them time (Schiller, 2011) by helping to check students’ progress, monitor the submissions of assignments and others. These features exist to contribute in saving teachers an ample amount of time in which the extra time gain can be invested in planning lessons and others. Regardless, it remains natural to be skeptical in order to explore the perceptions of students further because if I am influenced by the findings of previous studies, I could be biased in this research and to avoid such condition, all findings can still be questionable, especially in Malaysian context.



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Security is an issue for many educators which hindered the use of social networking platforms in classrooms. Nevertheless, Edmodo has taken the issue into consideration and thus provides a solution to it. Likewise, Thien et al. (2013) assert, Edmodo provides an answer pertaining the pressing need for students and teachers to have communication solutions in order to support interaction between them. It was created in response to teachers wanting more access to easily share contents of lessons with their students (Schiller, 2011). Not forgetting, the site is favored because of the security feature it has which allows teachers to monitor user activities in preventing inappropriate behavior and the options to enable or disable private message and friend suggestion (Crowe & McDonald, 2013). Irrespective, security is a controversial issue

due to the preferences of teachers and students. A number of them do not see security as an obstacle because it helps to remove a barrier, particularly when they get to know one another closer. Meanwhile, a different opinion states that security is an issue that needs to be addressed accordingly because private and academic lives should be separated.

Buescher (2010) posits, Edmodo is a channel in which parents may keep an eye on children and monitor their academic progress. Parents are in favor of Edmodo because it helps to connect, collaborate, share and explore tasks assign to their children as well as to monitor their children's progress (Paper Clip Communication, 2012). Presently, there are a number of cases where teachers being put to blame for students' misbehaviors and low academic performances. This situation is unfair and not supposed to be happening to teachers because they make contacts with students only for a few hours in a week while students mostly spend their time at home with parents. Therefore parents are the ones who should be monitoring their children's progress. With Edmodo in the picture, it becomes a bridge for parents' active involvement in their children's academic growth. The participants in this study could agree or think otherwise and I am keen to discover their stand on this matter.

Last but not least, Edmodo contributes to dynamic collaboration between teachers, students and parents because Edmodo is a closed and private community where access can only be obtained from teacher's class code, which can also be given to parents who may want to have a bird's view on the instructional activities taking place within the site (Dobler, 2012). In short, teachers, students and parents alike will have the opportunity to work together (Redman & Trapani, 2012) by means of this interface.

Based on researcher's knowledge, Edmodo is the only social learning platform that provides an access to teachers, students and parents alike. This application may get many kinds of reaction from participants of this study who are both students and future English teachers. Their opinion on this matter will be imperative for future use and ideas on how to utilize Edmodo to its fullest potentials shall assist other pre-service teachers.

Thus far, we have discussed Edmodo's roles in education based on multiple studies found on the implementation of this interface. Some of the roles are peer-tutoring, multimedia skills, critical thinking, global citizen, personal and worldly connection, student engagement, cost-efficient, mobile application, instructional transformation and many others. In a nutshell, Edmodo has enormous potentials as it features social networking, communication and education altogether. These are the summaries of studies found, however all findings are not yet confirmed to be compatible with this study's outcomes as responses and perceptions of 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya may vary as well as their ideas on how to make Edmodo an effective tool for language learning could be different than the suggested ones in literature. Edmodo poses many questions that need answering and causes controversy on issues such as effective implementation and perception of students in Malaysian context. Nevertheless, based on my limited knowledge and findings, this study has covered almost all of the articles, studies, news and posts related to Edmodo's literature found on these databases since 2008 until currently; MalCat, ERIC, EBSCOhost, IEEE Xplore, JStor: Arts & Sciences, SciVer - ScienceDirect and Google Scholar.

2.2.4 Edmodo in Malaysia

Up to date, according to MalCat; a website housing literary works conducted by researchers in Malaysia, there are only two studies done pertaining to Edmodo. The first article was published in 2011 by Education Journal, University of Malaya. The authors, Looi and Yusop (2011), investigate the features of social network sites, with emphasis on Edmodo. They embark on a journey of identifying key themes contributing to successful learning via such social learning platform. Both researchers noted that concerns embedding social network into lessons is making students uncomfortable because the issue is on the use of public versus private use of technology. Therefore, Edmodo is suggested because of its safer platform that allows students to be academically involved such as discussing, sharing views, critiquing, reflecting and raising questions. Moreover, it is not publicly open to the global community, especially without the teacher's consent and approval.

Three themes have been identified connected to the potential use of social networking sites in improving reading comprehension among young adult learners of English. Those themes are; encouraging positive attitudes and perceptions among learners, improving learners' performance and developing sense of community and engagement among learners. Even though this article has found significant themes related to the advantages of using social learning platform, it does not conduct a complete study on Edmodo. Rather, this study focuses on extensive reading of previous literary works done by various researchers. After having recognized the themes, this study links it to Edmodo and proposes Edmodo to be a potentially advantageous site for learning while retaining the social network structures. In short,

this study does not conduct a full research on Edmodo, but merely discussing the potentials and similarities that Edmodo has by connecting it with previous literature.

The second article found in Malaysia which is associated to Edmodo is written by Hamidon (2014). The aim of the study is to observe and examine the pattern of communication between the eight participants. However, Edmodo is not the only instrument employed because it uses Skype and MyVLE as well. This study does not aim to compare the three mediums as its objective is to look at frequency, when and how these platforms are being used by the students. Hamidon (2014) finds that Edmodo does become a place for interaction between the participants besides the other two tools. He concludes, the numbers of interaction on Edmodo are higher and better than both Skype and MyVLE. He adds, Edmodo is a social learning platform which has the concept of “*always there whenever there is a need*”.

As a conclusion, the two studies found in Malaysia regarding Edmodo provide more rooms for improvements and investigations. These two studies did not utilize Edmodo as the main instrument nor did Edmodo become the main highlight of the findings. Further, none of the studies involved students’ perceptions in regards to Edmodo’s usage. Ergo, this research aims to provide better insights on Edmodo which has the attention of more than 46 million users worldwide comprising of educators, students and parents. Opinions and views are gathered from the eyes of 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya highlighting main features of Edmodo, its advantages and weaknesses as well as how it can be an effective tool in Malaysian education context according to their perspectives.

2.3 Limitations of Traditional Approaches

In this world of technology, it is only wise to look into recent pedagogies and tools which will equip teachers in their goals to impart knowledge and inculcate critical thinking. We have discussed some of the presumably advantages of implementing Edmodo in classrooms, however it is also imperative to have an insight of what may have forced us to shift our methods from traditional to the current ones. As many have known, digital natives are the students we have today in educational institutions, whereas digital immigrants are the previous students who view technology as an innovation and nurtured in an analogue world (Presky, 2001). Subsequently, digital immigrants are mostly the teachers, professor and educators in today's institutions who still choose to practice traditional teaching.

Traditional teaching can be defined as a situation where an expectation emerges that students will learn because teachers tell them to (Schrader, 2013), for example; force-feeding information when students have not yet identified the use for it. Traditional approach in recent years has raised concerns among educators, researchers and parents alike. Unfortunate potential consequences might take place especially when there are mismatches of learning and teaching styles (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Lawrence, 1993; Oxford, 1990). Teaching students who are encompassed of Generation-Y and Z calls for a turning in education approach from traditional to a more comprehensive, communicative and technological ways. The concerns of practicing traditional methods alone can be seen on students where they tend to be uninterested and negligent in class, turn out to be discouraged about the course, may get bored, stop trying in accomplishing tasks given, do poorly in tests and many others (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Godleski, 1984; Oxford, 1990; Smith & Renzulli,

1984). These are some of the consequences in practicing traditional methods alone, while in my humble opinion, we should attempt at incorporating technological tools (insert Edmodo) to assist and ensure a more effective lesson.

Even though studies have reported severe disadvantages of traditional learning which is neither relevant nor suffice to equip the students of these days, a number of educators still resist changes. This is because they claim new approach, such as communicative language teaching; hinders the compatibility success of the approach with exam-oriented setting that is still being carried out (Gorsuch, 2000). Due to situation of getting caught up in between, teachers eventually feel discouraged and later seldom implement newest teaching approaches. Meanwhile, the pressure of allowing students to gain control over their learning is increasing. Materials that are selected by students may exert a positive influence on certain aspects of language skills (Graham, 1982) as Carroll (1997) posits a balanced literacy program that emphasizes students' self-select materials will in return develop critical thinking skills because their willingness to learn should leave an encouraging impact on learning process (Moss & Hendershot, 2002).

A question which should be asked by stakeholders of education is; will memorizing contents be adequate for students to apply it in real life situations? Many are familiar with the traditional methods where lecture becomes a central medium for imparting knowledge from teachers to students. In such classrooms, students learn English via a traditional lecture that ends with question-and-answer format and during the lecture, the teacher writes on the blackboard and students simply jot down whatever that is written on the board (Markee, 2002). Leopold (2012) postulates, lectures serve as a

predominant mode of instruction contribute to mismatch between teachers' and learners' preferred styles. Another limitation to lecturing method is that it leads to students passively follow line of inquiry which hinders problem-solving cognitive skills (Etherington, 2011). In this case, students are learning nothing but a list of topics and its contents to be remembered and spilled during examinations.

Next, a very popular choice of instruction in traditional teaching is the learning of grammar rules versus meaning where grammar rules get the upper hand in teaching-learning processes. In language acquisition classroom, the focus is typically on form, practice and repetition of structure (Elley, 1983). Memorizing English grammar rules, vocabularies and translation skills are what the students have been asked to do (Wang, 2001). Wang (2007) further comments, instructions are highlighted on grammatical rules, analyses and translation instead of allowing the process of make meaning of a context to take place. Teachers who emphasize grammar rules believe that this generative basis will eventually assist learners when they wish to use the language, while in actuality students may know the rules perfectly but are incapable of applying those (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011) because memorizing is completely different than implementing the knowledge learned.

Sadiq (2010) finds that students in UAE University are heavily exposed to ESL grammar since early schooling which causes them to face serious problems in utilizing grammar correctly in executing academic tasks in the university. Thus, the problem lies within the design of curriculum where it does not deviate from peculiarity of the traditional design that makes an assumption that teaching the rules of grammar without its usage is more effective than teaching how to make use of the

grammar rules in actuality (e.g in productive skills). In my years of schooling experience, I remember having single lessons on grammar. The teacher would draw tables and write the grammar rules along with its details, yet never once I fully understood the way grammar works nor have I ever applied it regularly in my writing and speaking skills. Upon entering university, that was the time when I learned grammar by communicating with peers, writing more academic essays, reading extra input for the sake of assignments and listening to conversations of others.

In addition to grammar emphasis, teachers normally opt for having a separate lesson for teaching grammar rules. It presents a grammatical structure model which suggests once students acquire the knowledge of its structure, they will speak and write with correct grammar. This approach stems from behaviorists' belief about reinforcing and rewarding acceptable habits or performance (James & Vanpatten, 1995). Crystal (2004) claims, the instruction and place of grammar within the traditional approach as a 'discipline for the mind' because it is taught to ensure accuracy and precision of sentences and utterances, where learners are supposed to remember the rules during grammar lesson and apply it when necessary. However, this is not completely true, especially for producing grammatically correct utterances spontaneously (Ellis, 1997).

Teaching students in a separate lesson for grammar is a common approach (Ellis, 2006) and Borg (2006) also says teachers generally testified that they valued and encouraged grammar in their work by giving it a strong emphasis. Hinkel and Fotos (2002) both claim that grammar teaching has been a thorny problem among teachers, educators, ESL/EFL professionals and methodologists. Grammar should not be taught in a stand-alone lesson as students are not able to imagine its usage when speaking or

writing spontaneously. It is recommended that traditional teaching of grammar be incorporated in a more communicative or collaborative approach. My experience in Malaysian education system obviously resonates with previous studies. Instead of teaching grammar via the conventional way, perhaps teachers should infuse a pinch of technological use into classrooms. Take Edmodo as an example, grammar can be taught creatively using quizzes, fill in the blanks and multiple choice questions.

I believe, it is a norm for non-native speaking countries to adopt traditional approaches in teaching English. For instance; Iwai (2008) along with Butler and Iino (2005) claim students in Japan study English for the sake of passing university entrance examinations which make up of mostly grammatical and analytical skills of reading instead of communicative and oral skills. This approach is one of the reasons why students in developed countries (example; Japan and South Korea) and rapidly developing countries (example; Malaysia, China and others) are facing problems with learners who are equipped with English language, yet are unable to speak fluently. Despite having admirable reputation in developments, language barriers do present several drawbacks, such as in tourism, communication, economy, education, politics and many others. Bottom line is, we need to avoid the situation where despite having years of English education, students still face the lack of fluency, errors in grammar and inability to converse the language learnt (MacGowan-Gilhooly, 1991).

Moving on to the next limitation of traditional pedagogies is the restriction it poses when teachers plan the exposure to the targeted language instead of allowing it to happen in a natural manner. Planned, restricted, gradual and artificial are the types of exposure to the second language learning (Elley, 1983). Instead of permitting students

to acquire targeted language using natural and communicative approach, teachers emphasize on teaching sounds where the goal of instructions is to acquire native like pronunciation (Wei, n.d). Comprehension of persisting issues in current traditional practices is vital in order for us to find possible solutions. How can we expect students to speak like a native of English when the exposure to the language itself is in a confined, restricted and deliberate manner? The studies found thus far present findings and the loopholes of traditional approaches. I am a believer of face to face interaction in learning, however the exposure to the language should not be unnatural. Learners should be fed with input and subsequently are allowed to embark on their independent learning, produce new information and have more opportunities to use the language in daily life/lessons.

Forcing students to demonstrate knowledge and testing content via a test can be a jeopardy for them because they only have minimal control over this matter (Teemant, 2010), this is due to what they produce will not be of what they know about the language, instead it will be of what they memorize. Teachers believe that the most appropriate and efficient approach for English language learning is by repeating language items in drills (Tang, Lee & Chun, 2012). Krashen (1989) states, the best language learning pedagogy is not when lessons are grammatically sequenced and provided abundantly, rather the input supplied should be arousing, comprehensible, relevant and accessible. Taking what Krashen said into consideration, we need to search for better pedagogies which will allow learners of second language to access and experience the targeted language in a natural manner. Through this way, students are subconsciously learning and such knowledge will be retained for longer time.

Apart from the mentioned limitations of traditional teaching, a mismatch of preferred teaching-learning styles presents a threat to the whole education system itself. This is due to the danger of mismatch between students and teachers preferred styles which will lead to students' discontent and impaired learning (Brown, 2009; Schulz, 2001). Teaching methods may vary; lecture, demonstrate and discuss, focus on principles, emphasis on memory and understanding (Felder & Silverman, 1988), while students learning styles may vary as well. It is a situation that teachers need to be wary of because if students fail to comprehend the contents intended, the teaching goals cannot be achieved as well. Students too need to know and explore more about their preferred learning style to stand a higher chance at succeeding (Syed Mohamad, 2004). Evidently, the advancement of technology has presented a gap between the Generation X (most teachers we have today) and Generation Y/Z (students we have at present). Such a gap makes teaching-learning styles to collide and desynchronized, which in the end results in students' poor academic achievements, inattentive in class, discouraged, perform poorly on tests, low self-esteem and become bored easily.

In order to survive in this competitive era, we must attempt at working collaboratively with all the stakeholders in education. Changes must be made to suit the needs of students nowadays; infusing technology into education perhaps will be able to equip our learners with crucial skills to endure the working world, principally after they leave formal education. Lamboy (2003) criticizes how universities have been slow in planning for students' diverse learning styles and adopting new technologies for teaching tactics. Supported by Dille and Mezack (1991), technology does have a tremendous relation to students' learning style preferences which consequently leads to their academic performances. Another reason why we should not neglect students'

preferred learning styles is that they are most likely to learn when placed under suitable educational conditions (Pasch, Langer, Gardner, Starko & Moody, 1995).

The reason why it is imperative for us to make an attempt at infusing technology into lessons is because researches and results of students' achievements have indicated that every learner has own learning style and strategy. Learners do not learn excellently when that style is thwarted (Lambooy, 2003). One of the methods to fix this issue is by changing teaching style in a way that students feel contented. Even though teachers might not be able to cater for all students' needs, an effort to test what strategy works is worth trying because students might change attitudes and perceptions toward learning which in turn will produce excellent academic results. By tailoring classroom activities to attend to learners learning styles, each student will have the chance to learn in the way that he/she studies best.

Apart from that, occasionally teachers' aptitude profile developed based on primarily theoretical studies while it might clash with the practical expectations of students and later cause a significant mismatch between the two. An effective teacher should be equipped with digital skills especially in the recent developments in the information and communication fields of technology. Modern education systems must not remain indifferent towards all of these advancements, especially if the countries wish to move forward and have global citizen who are able to think and act critically and independently. An excellent example of education system is one that authentically integrates aspects of information and communication technology in its structure. In addition, Park and Yang (2013) posits incorporation of technology in educational

environments has largely been considered as a distinctive trend in education worldwide.

Meanwhile, assessments in traditional teaching have always been drilling on reading and writing, especially on sets of questions similar to examination formats. Writing assignments in many traditional compositions might not be sufficient to prepare students for real academic writing in tertiary level or for reports on the job (Shih, 1986), for example students are given short-essays tests, personal essays, summaries, grammar exercises, reading comprehension tasks and others. On the contrary to real life situations, employees are usually asked to write reports, prepare paperwork or compile documents. Rather than providing students with academic skills, which may not be useful in actuality, we need to supplement them with proper assessments that will be beneficial as they leave educational institutions. Integrating some of the e-learning tools available today (insert Edmodo), may have a direct impact and drastic positive outcomes compared to the traditional ways of giving students assessments.

Wrong set of assessments undoubtedly may cause severe consequences, for example students get the tasks done for the sake of getting marks and drilling for the examinations. Whenever language is concerned, application is far more important as we learn a language because we would like to converse, understand and make use of it in many life's situations. However, due to poorly designed courses and set of assessments, students become disinterested in learning and are likely difficult to be retained (Bista, 2011). Jahin (2012) posits, writing assessments have been treated more likely as a product rather than a process. Assessments in traditional settings do not provide room for application of the language to take place, for example oral

assessments or listening activities. In fact, assessments which can be found in textbooks are various, however little attention has been given on pronunciation (Derwing, Diepenbroek & Foote, 2012).

Next is about corrective feedback which is a practice where teachers write commentaries on students' assignments, hoping that students will read and learn from their mistakes. Nevertheless, Truscott (1996) concludes, corrective method is an ineffective method because if teachers write commentaries without addressing and explaining the mistakes made, students still might not be able to grasp the meanings of those commentaries. Thomas (2010) also adds, students usually do not even read the comments left by teachers because they were only concerned about submitting assignments successfully. In retrospect, teachers should be addressing the mistakes made by students instead of circling grammar errors, missing punctuation and others. Explaining what they have done wrong will help them to rectify their mistakes and improve learning experience. Using a site such as Edmodo will give teachers a bird view on their progress, if students commit errors, it can be addressed using the site and later updates on their newly submitted assignments can also be seen, that can be a way for teachers to keep up with the students' progress.

The problem with ineffective corrective feedback is due to excessive concern for grammar rules that make teachers tend to believe that errors committed by students during productive skills should be corrected (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011) without paying attention to the meanings that students wish to deliver. Moreover, teachers correct errors and change students' language according to what they perceive learners should or want to express, but while doing so teachers' assumptions might

not be correct after all (Ferris, 1995; Gass & Selinker, 1994). Conversely, Woroniecka (1998) finds that students prefer corrective feedback in terms of comments regarding content and ideas of their submitted work rather than grammatical, structural and surface errors. Educational sites on the other hand put an emphasis on formative assessments and the amount of knowledge students are able to acquire rather than focusing on perfect grammar rules, the proper way to utilize the language and rectify surface errors. Such sites encourage application of knowledge learned in a natural way without pressing students so much on the technicality.

Besides, opportunities to discuss are scarce in a traditional classroom because students are geared to read, write and memorize in an English class. Due to these methods, students fail to produce correct and clear utterances of the language learned because teaching is largely stressed in the lessons but the opportunities for communication are infrequent (Wang, 2007). One of the reasons why discussions' opportunities are occasional is attributable to the presence of textbook in lessons (Fleming, Bangou & Fellus, 2011), because it limits the chances of having a group work especially when tasks assigned are more individuals-centered.

Apart from that, fewer discussions occur because content is divided into small chunks of topics which then taught according to prescribed lesson plan (Norman & Spohrer, 1996) instead of allowing students to digest the whole contents and respond to it. Lack of discussion is a drawback in traditional classroom for second language acquisition because students no longer speak the targeted language as soon as the lesson is over, while in class the opportunities are already scarce. We need to find a way for students to use the language even outside of the classroom and school

compound. On educational sites, a discussion can take place 24/7 as there is no limit to it, the only hindrance will be the availability of internet access. Discussions by typing comments may not be similar to face to face conversations, nonetheless a chance to enhance learning curve is better than none.

One major key-point in identifying the quality of traditional method is teacher-centeredness. Teachers who become the main focus of a lesson make the learning process less interactive between students (Wang, 2007). Moreover, students are asked to sit passively while listening to the teacher explaining content of the lesson in front. This results in teacher's dominance during the activities of the whole class. Also, this type of teaching process has the notion of teachers know everything while students know nothing (Friere, 1972). Truthfully, the whole process of instructional delivery becomes mundane and dull as throughout the lesson the teacher narrates, prescribes and sums up information which students need to receive, register into their memory bank and repeat (Eryaman, 2007). These days, there have been movements on shifting the attention of lessons to student-centered activities. When lessons revolve around the students, they will be required to conduct independent learning and retain more information. Through integration of e-learning site, teachers will act as facilitator while students will have to rely on their skills, knowledge, opinions and deliberate effort to accomplish the tasks assigned.

Other than that, in order to increase good grades in examination, teachers promote individual competition rather than collaborative group work (Slavin, 1995), this examination-oriented approach causes students to be self-centered and only good at scoring exams but fail in real life application. Reading, grammar rules and

memorizing vocabulary stem from traditional examinations which guided teaching methods (Wang, 2007; Chu, 2001). Examinations and tests normally evaluate the memory power of students (Mathema & Bista, 2006), but do not provide a room for creativity and application in real world context. Measuring effectiveness of lesson learn through test scores is not perfectly accurate because it declares the amount of knowledge one has, yet does not address the depth of understanding nor the skills one has acquired (Norman & Spohrer, 1996). Sometimes, it becomes common for students to be selfish and stingy in sharing knowledge with peers caused by fear of friends scoring higher in examinations. Meanwhile, if we supplement students with lessons revolving around technology, they will be asked to work collaboratively. Such activities stress on teamwork, communication and cooperation which in the end produce fine global citizens. Moreover, it strengthens the bonds among peers and knowledge learned too will be remembered for longer time.

In addition to traditional teaching classroom, students at times are affected by test anxiety. The term 'test' refers to formal tests, examinations and all situations where the intellectual abilities of students are evaluated (Stipek, 2002). Students are at a brink of failing in academics when threatened with extreme test anxiety due to the examination oriented practice. In fact, 20% of students who have high test anxiety characteristics might quit school or university due to academic failure (Spielberger, 1966). The research by Spielberger was carried out 5 decades ago does not merely mirror the conditions of education in olden days, evidently it is still relevant as it still reflects on the trend of education these days, yet presumably with a higher percentage now as traditional assessments require students to experience numerous complicated summative tests (monthly tests, yearly examinations, semester examinations),

consequently some students in Malaysia stop schooling after Form 3 or withdraw from tertiary education after experiencing tests' difficulties.

Besides the practice of rote learning, Mantero and Iwai (2005) later add grammar-translation method is normally implemented in reading of English texts. This technique hinders learning ability as students usually stop when encountering unknown words until they are able to clarify its meanings, or else they think that they do not comprehend the text. In addition, Kitao and Kitao (1995) comment on grammar-translation method as a threat to students learning of English due to the inability to understand the intention of authors or failure to grasp the real message in its context as they are busy thinking about meanings of each word. In several encounters I had with my previous students, they thought they did not understand the passage simply because there were some words which they had no understanding of its meanings. This scenario happens regularly in Malaysian school context, while conversely students should be taught to understand the passage as a whole and be informed that understanding word by word is not as important as they think it will be, especially in real life situations.

Translation technique involves mostly intervention of native language. Studies have found that teachers still practice translation method (Awasthi, 1979; Shrestha, 1983). The approach is carried out when knowledge transfer from teacher is followed by students copying the piece of information into notebooks, while during question and answer, students and the teacher both speak in either English or native language, whichever is convenient (Markee, 2002). Intervention of native language in English learning is a common issue in non-English speaking countries, for example in Nepal

students speak Nepali language regardless of what levels of institutions they are in (Bista, 2011). Despite the argument that translation method helps in making learners feel secure, oriented and a sense of belonging, a held notion by various researchers claim translation approach is a hindrance on their way of language acquisition (Ebrahimi, 2008).

Another challenge presented in conventional teaching is when a gap exists between teacher-learner beliefs in learning. Subsequently, students' confidence in and satisfaction with the class as well as participation in activities will be decreased. Teachers' beliefs play a major role in teaching process as they contribute the impacts of teaching outcomes (Williams & Burden, 1997). Extensive studies have been done on what contributed to traditional teaching, indeed one of the main factors is teachers' prior belief which is coloured by their experience as a learner and act as a selective filtering mechanism to their classroom practices (Pennington, 1995; Gebhard, 2006). Teachers whom we have today are not familiar with many of the technology tools, websites, gadgets and its features. They were taught with traditional measures and they found it beneficial, however in times of recent years, knowing and having knowledge alone are not adequate to help learners endure the vast-paced world outside of the four walls classrooms. This hindrance needs to be overcome; one of the escapism is by incorporating technological methods even by small amounts of it.

The problem persists because many teachers find computers as a foreign object in the classroom and some do not have basic skills in operating a webpage, creating an e-mail account or using a computer (Black, 2002). Therefore, they stay firm with their old methods. Despite having innovative ideas about incorporating e-learning material

in classes, some teachers lack skills needed in ICT and are unable to create new or improvise existing materials to make learning process livelier and more appealing to students (Kavcic et al., 2013). Attitude too is a motivating factor that comes along with training, support, access and age of an educator (Blakenship, 1998).

“Research supports the idea that teachers teach in a reflective manner of their own experience”, (Niederhauser & Stoddart, 1994). Professors resist change and teach as they were taught and are not willing to spend more time on revising curriculum and pedagogy (Gardiner, 1998). As a result, many educators opt for traditional lecture as their instructional strategy. In conventional teaching, teachers are often to be heavily influenced by their prior beliefs which came from past experiences, philosophical views, personal stance and the way they were previously taught. Educators too may be excessively critical of students while at the same time demotivating themselves in the process (Syed Mohamad, 2004). A set of views hold by classroom teachers pertaining language teaching and learning are personal, experiential, normative and particular (Light & Gnida, 2012), which results in teachers’ assumptions about what might work best in their classrooms using traditional approaches compared to analytical, intellectual, universal and theoretical views promoted by researchers. Nevertheless, a question emerges from this scenario, until when will we be implementing the same practice? We should combine forces and moving forward, not backward.

Many remain oblivious on the purpose of traditional teaching. It was an approach invented decades ago to suit the needs of people in that particular era, it is no longer relevant to be the sole pedagogy in teaching-learning delivery in our time. Further,

traditional teaching is a style affected by behaviorist where teachers design lessons based on what they observe in students' learning condition during early stages of learning (Wang, 2007), while students at that time might not be ready to open up yet, therefore making the preliminary assumptions by teachers invalid. Traditional teaching has come to the extent where trainee teachers are trained to follow their predecessor in education field to practice the same way they are taught (Pajares, 1992), that leads to refusal in taking risks of implementing innovative lesson plans (Gywn-Paquette & Tchon, 2003). Tang et al. (2012) later conclude, trainee teachers have a difficult time in coping with uncertainty about an innovative approach; therefore they have the tendency of reverting back to traditional approaches, which they also went through as learners.

Nonetheless, not all hope is lost when most traditional teaching strategies can be transformed to be more receptive towards e-learning approaches in order to produce a healthy teaching-learning environment (Mamat & Yusof, 2013). Transition from traditional to e-learning gives a room for improvement and transformation in educational paradigms to happen naturally which will create a new culture pertaining to learning and execution of technological evolution in education. Infusion of e-learning into classrooms should be given immense consideration as it may be the solutions to various issues we are facing in education world at present. The significant rationale in exploring the limitations of traditional approaches is to allow us to discover the loopholes and hindrances it created in order for us to search for suitable methods that will be useful in today's new age. Difficult times call for different measures; hence stakeholders in education must make an effort to ensure students receive the best learning experience for the benefits of everyone in future.

Nonetheless as of now, the debate should not be about which approach is supreme than the other, instead it should be regarding what potentials technology tools have in education and how to leverage on the potentials to accommodate various types of students by identifying their perceptions on preference of learning style, especially whenever assessments are concerned so that teachers may make the best use of e-activities (Simuth & Sarmany-Schuller, 2014). There is clearly no silver lining on which method is most effective that will guarantee ultimate success, but in the world we live in today, it is best if we make use of resources and technological devices available by fashioning and blending it into traditional approaches. Especially after the lengthy discussion in this section, obviously traditional teaching has numerous limitations to it that educators of today must overcome. It is imperative that educators use proper tools that would suit the needs of today's Millennials.

2.4 Importance of Infusing Technological Tools into Assessments

Educators and researchers are urged to provide learners with effective teaching delivery, to ensure students' success in becoming practical employees and global citizens. According to Krathwohl's Taxonomy (2002) which was originally coined by Bloom, the taxonomy begins with cognition, remembering and continues upward to higher level of cognition known as applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. In relation to 21st century skills, students need to be able to do more than just remembering and absorbing knowledge because they need to be educated on how to apply and create more with the existing knowledge (McClain & Brown, 2013).

Supplementing a face-to-face instruction with web-based activities will increase the interaction and creativity among students and consequently increasing student interest

and self-learning (Amrein-Beardsley, Foulger & Toth, 2007; Vernadakis, 2012). The researchers further add, learning process that combines e-learning tools has higher success rate than the traditional course. Diversification helps to ensure that no student is disadvantage or left behind prior to mismatch in teachers' and students' preferences (Leopold, 2012). Due to several issues which we have discussed earlier in limitation of traditional approach, we must seek for possible solutions and not dwell on the issue for so long. Face to face interaction is very significant in one's learning curve, however to enhance the experience and help in retaining information, we may try infusing technological tools available into the lessons which many are free of charge, such as Edmodo.

Incorporation of e-learning tools into the traditional approach is a multifaceted process that involved curriculum, pedagogy, institutional willingness, teacher competencies, long-term financing, students' readiness and many others. However, it still needs to be done with collaborative effort due to the pressing need for "*students to focus on the importance of lifelong learning to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills, to think critically and to inspire creativity and innovation so as to adapt to global change*" (UNESCO, 2004). Stakeholders undoubtedly will face multiple obstacles and challenges in implementing technology tools into classrooms which before are dominated by traditional approach solely. Nevertheless, efforts must be made so that education goals as what UNESCO has put forth can be achieved. We are already in the know that aims stated by UNESCO do not concern only certain countries per se, because it involves global mission in education as a whole.

Educators in this globalized era need to work with emerging technologies where a notion “*..engagement with learning is likely to mean engagement with technology*” stands, (Hung & Khine, 2006, p.9). English language teachers ought to seize the opportunities in promoting fun learning environment and positive aspects of ICT as a means of lifelong learning through a mixture of face-to-face interaction and assessments conducted using technology incorporation. We must not remain idle on this mission as collaborative effort is the only measure for success in education’s agenda. Touching slightly on its relevance to this research, participants selected are future teachers of English who are undertaking TESL in University of Malaya, these participants need to know at least one prominent social educational site in the United States, such as Edmodo. This condition allows them to experience a different learning environment and soon, they will have the option on whether or not to integrate a tool as such into language lessons.

Other than that, students too play an enormous role in changing the face of education, but in order to do so, students need to be prepared for the use of ICT in learning; especially technologically, economically and competently ready (Rahamat, Shah, Din & Abd. Aziz, 2011). Concerns related to resources have been an area of apprehension for many educators, however when there is a will, there is a way. Successful teaching relies upon three factors; the first one is the will and effort put in by the students, secondly is a proper environment for the teaching-learning process and thirdly is the existence of teaching and learning opportunities in all aspects (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005). Consequently, students’ effort largely contribute to the success of a learning process and therefore, in order to encourage enthusiasm, teachers need to provide a welcoming environment which can be done via types of tasks given as well

as providing more opportunities for students to learn from various retrospect. In actuality, Millennials are surrounded by technology and by taking an advantage of that situation, stakeholders in education may benefit at the end of the teaching-learning process, for example teachers may assign tasks online and students conduct their own independent learning.

Khan (1997) notes, learners should be permitted to have access to a wide range of information and communication options, especially when it involves their learning process. In addition, McLoughlin (1999) argues that when information is presented to learners in ways that are compatible with favored learning styles, that is when individuals learn best. One example is by conducting discussion with instructor and classmate which would be most beneficial approach in learning rather than having typical paper hand-outs. In recollection of previous discussion pertaining limitation of traditional approach, learners study best when their preferred way of learning is compatible with the educators' way of teaching. Instead of investing resources on printed handouts, technology tools provide a cost effective solution for lessons to take place online.

A growing number of studies indicate online learning helps in critical thinking skills, problem solving interaction, flexibility in time management and autonomous learning (Cavanaugh, 2001; Swan, 2001; Johnston, Killion & Onmen, 2005). Thus, it is only relevant to promote infusion of technological tools into teaching strategy by first enabling students to become self-motivated and independent. Kumar and Toteja (2012) comment, e-learning and traditional methods have potentials to be combined as an effective way of learning English. In this study, I wish to test the statement

posited by Kumar and Toteja. Edmodo thus far has produced promising outcomes in learning, however to try its implementation with undergraduates who are also future teachers may produce different results than the previous ones.

Moving on, assessments for students are meant to enhance the quality of learning and the recognition of knowledge performance. These two purposes can be identified in formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is when students are given ongoing tasks such as homework or exercises during lessons in classroom, it is intended to check on students understanding to improve learning processes. Meanwhile, summative assessments are conducted at the end of schooling/semester to evaluate students' overall academic performance. Boud (1990) argues that the need for frequent formative assessment is often neglected and teachers put an emphasis on summative assessments; this causes teachers to drill students on exam-oriented tasks such as writing and reading assignments. It is hoped that technological tools we have today are able to switch the focus of education. Instead of drilling students for examinations, these tools may be used to give more meaning to the lessons learned.

One of education's main goals is to deliver factual knowledge about subjects and to motivate students' interest in those subjects. However, to assess the mastery of subjects, educational institutions adopt the use of summative examinations as the main approach. Extensive studies discuss the unintentionally side effects of drilling students on assessments for the sake of passing the bar of examinations. Consequently, students' interest has been disregarded while intrinsic goals are proven to be a powerful influence on how they react to a task (Lamb, 2004). The importance of digging into technological tools' effects on education is to affirm if it may assist in

our education goals. Why should we remain oblivious and passive if these tools can aid to enrich language lessons? Students who are forced into believing grades are all that matters need to be given an opportunity to believe otherwise and enjoy learning while they are at it.

In the context of language learning and its assessments, students need to be taught independent learning so that they may be responsible of own progress. Independent learning can be defined as a course of progression in which individuals take an initiative in analyzing their learning necessities, expressing learning objectives, recognizing human and material assets for learning, selecting and employing fitting learning tactics and assessing learning results (Knowles, 1986). Meanwhile, Little (2007) comments independent learning as a development of language learning comprising deliberate effort and conscious reflection. Therefore, by providing suitable materials for learning, students will invest extra effort to achieve targeted goals. These days, educational institutions have been spoon feeding learners with information and demand them to simply absorb knowledge without much inquiry. Instead of relying on own skills and abilities, students merely memorize what has been taught without knowing what to do with it in real life situations.

Teachers should act as a tutor who provides guided assistance when giving assessments to the students in classroom, meanwhile as for a supplementary tool, perhaps teachers may implement the use of Edmodo and discover the effects on their own. As for group work, hands on activities with visual aids are very much relevant as it combines dissimilar skill levels to aid students build and reinforce skills (Hollenbeck & Hristova, 2008). This notion strengthens a rationale of why a tool such

as Edmodo deserves some attention. Therefore, instead of allowing typical lessons to happen in Malaysian classrooms, one of the ways to break free is by being creative with technology resources. Besides that, students in this century are keenly motivated when the quality and atmosphere of school life relates to values and norms, interpersonal relations and social connections and organizational developments, structure and culture (Freiberg, 1998). When these characteristics are at its best, students find this climate to be a positive environment for learning and growing up.

Other than assigning assessments that promote fun-learning, conditions of the learning environment are equally significant. Attitude, motivation, learning conditions and use of strategies are some of the aspects in which have been shown to leave impactful effects in language learning (Ellis, 2008; Fathman, 1975; Ortega, 2009). Countless students are most comfortable working in their comfort zone or own room at home with their own pace. Edmodo is an example of e-learning tool which provides the freedom to liberate students in their learning experience. This situation makes students feel less confined, restricted and stressed. In a study conducted by Wu (2003), she finds that experimental group which was exposed to learning involving technology incorporation to be more creative, autonomous, in charge, initiative and enthusiastic while control group did not provide similar results. Through traditional methods, students in control group felt restricted in choosing own materials, studying in insufficient amount of time, have less opportunities for genuine communication and fail to establish a sense of control over the learning content.

To end this sub-topic, we may conclude that the element of infusing technological tool and social networking, such as Edmodo into learning English has been proven to

give a powerful influence on the learners and teachers (Wahit & Mohd, 2013) because an environment with social networking setting provides a two-way interaction where students may exchange information with peers and teachers, especially impactful for reading and writing assessments. Subsequently, the role of students as active learners can be enhanced and fostered deeper process of learning and knowledge constructions. Even though findings of this study may revoke or affirm some findings suggested by researchers, it remains imperative for us to give students a voice in their learning experience. Students indeed are the forgotten stakeholders in education while the irony in such situation is, students should be made the central focus of education goals.

Edmodo is one of the applications under e-learning model which offers all of the mentioned advantages in infusing technology into traditional lessons. Besides that, it also has criteria worthy of an attention by stakeholders, which we have already discussed earlier. Edmodo has the features which are based on socio-constructivist pedagogy, complete with an objective to supply students with as set of tools for online learning. Utilizing Edmodo as the only tool in teaching-learning processes might not be feasible in Malaysian schools and universities (especially for on –campus students) because face-to-face instructions are still practiced by many, however the idea of infusing Edmodo into the curriculum as an approach to assign assessments will always be doable and will result in countless benefits which have already been discussed earlier. Thus far, Edmodo has produced numerous promising findings that will benefit education goals; nevertheless this study will be conducted firsthand to allow the voices of students and soon to be teachers to be heard. In the meantime, we should remain neutral in order not to be biased or influenced by results of previous

studies which many of it clearly did not have the same context in Malaysian education.

2.5 Use of Online Social Platforms in Interdisciplinary

In this section we will discuss briefly on other social networking platforms and applications available today which are being executed in interdisciplinary. This is because, in order to show the relevance and importance of Edmodo in education, it is best if we look at some of the already applied e-learning tools. Educators these days are working relentlessly in adopting new pedagogies in which they may infuse into the classrooms' lessons. A number of e-learning applications I have decided to present in this study are as follows;

A blog is an informational site published on World Wide Web consisting of discrete entries. Previously blogs are managed and written by individuals solely, however nowadays blogs are also managed by multi-authors who come from different background and collaborate to publish an entry on blogs (Wikipedia, 2014). Learning can take place using blogs when educators instruct their students to work together in order to publish posts related to their studies. Blog offers the advantage of keeping multimedia records, integrating video and sound files as well as images into their posts because it is easy to attach those files (Kist, 2013). Students too can comment on each other's blog or on a thread of a post written together.

Growing up with emerging technology and social sites, my friends and I are not excluded in following the trend. I had a blog depicting my life as a teenager and I stopped writing when I decided to share less with the public. Only until recently I read it again and I noticed there had been a tremendous progress in my writing skill over

the years, I compared my first post when I started writing on the blog in 2009 with my last post in 2011. Grammar, punctuation, coherency and narrative skills are in a much better condition. Besides my personal blog which subconsciously helped me to strengthen my English proficiency skill, my peers and I had a blog when we were Fourth Year TESL students in University of Malaya. The blog was created during our teacher trainee days as a place to share ideas, reflect and discuss with our classmates. It surely helped many of us who were having problems in their appointed schools because some of my classmates were at a brink of giving up, especially when students did not pay attention in classrooms. We worked collaboratively and poured ideas which in the end assisted one another in succeeding the lessons' goals.

Besides that, Moodle is an excellent example of an online portal that can be utilized by students and teachers alike as a complement tool for teaching. It is free of charge as long as teachers sign up as members of the portal. Moodle features contribute to interaction and online collaborative learning that can help educators to improve their teaching practice to meet with the demands and challenges of education in the 21st century (Fidalgo, Paz & Santos, 2011). Many teachers opt to use Moodle mainly because they had prior knowledge and they are aware that this application may help in improvisation in their teaching and learning methodologies (Fidalgo et al, 2011). This tool I believe is similar to Edmodo and offers parallel advantages.

Besides that, teachers sometimes create a webpage specially designed for students where they may create assessments, attach files or integrate other platforms on the website by posting the links to it and many others. Mathematics is an example of a famous subject that adopts the use of online applications, in a study done by Gallo

(2007), it is found that students who participate actively in Math online learning performed on par with those enrolled in on-campus courses. Apart from that, there are countless Mathematics quizzes which can be considered as on-going assessments and students will get the opportunities to self-direct to the portals as well as conduct independent learning. Similarly with English, various websites have devoted itself in providing second language learners with an out-of-class learning experience.

On the other hand, Facebook is a social media that is currently becoming a teaching platform for teachers and students. Students who communicate with their classmates via Facebook are more intimate and friendly with one another (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). As teachers too use Facebook as a medium for conducting lessons and interacting with students, they disclose more information about themselves and are approachable, this will lead to higher levels of anticipated motivation and affective learning and comfortable classroom climate (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007). Facebook can be a contemporary technological tool which can offer teachers and students an opportunity to nurture student-teacher relationship, which consequently will generate positive learning experience for both. However, in remembrance of my experience, I used to implement the use of Facebook for classroom discussion. I created a group for my students to share ideas, conduct discussions, share materials and others. But, due to their inappropriate use of Facebook, I decided to terminate its use, mainly because some students were more interested in befriending me on a social platform than focusing on academic matters. This situation prompts me to seek for more private platform, such as Edmodo and Moodle.

Next, Twitter is also a social platform where users get to ‘tweet’ or put up statuses in maximum of 140 words. Other users can see, ‘retweet’, comment or ‘favorite’ the tweet posted. This social media is used by some educators for their students. One teacher named Laurel Gillette has taken it to another level as she employed this strategy and asked her students to tweet about the trips that they made. *“The students could tweet about almost anything at all that they like and they loved the idea”* (Schacter, 2011). This form of social media provides an opportunity for learners to engage with peers outside of classroom and to share personal thoughts on their lessons learned. Evidently, there are numerous ways to tap into the issue of traditional approach. A social media such as Twitter is able to complement students’ learning experience outside schools. Nonetheless, Twitter is a platform which has its limitations because it is designed for social purposes, thus its application is not education friendly.

Meanwhile, Skype is a freemium voice-over-IP service and instant messaging, this application can be downloaded on laptop or smart phones and users can call, chat or video call anyone at all no matter where they are as long as both ends are users of Skype (Wikipedia, 2014). By using this tool, a school in Birmingham uses Skype as a teleconferencing tool to communicate with partners from Indiana and Columbia. A newspaper article entitled Kid to Kid Connection, 2011 issue that covers the story states that students made friends beyond their comfort zones and learning outcomes were achieved as students used Skype as a channel to communicate with partners and show their Science projects using video conferencing. I believe when teachers wish to infuse e-learning tools into education, it is driven by lesson’s goals. Skype is an example similar to Twitter where its usage in education is limited by several

constraints because these are geared towards social networking. In an example discussed above; Skype is implemented due to its advantage at video conferencing, however to go beyond communication purposes, Skype is not relevant for academic purposes.

Other than that, Wikipedia is an encyclopedia in which anyone can contribute their input; citations are needed even though writers are allowed to share their thoughts. Currently, there have been almost 5 million wikis web pages. Wikis makes online group work possible where it extends the boundaries beyond the four walls classrooms and teachers too are taking educational social networking to a whole new level of interaction as they utilize wikis to house cooperative works by students from diverse countries (Kist, 2013). Despite the claims that Wikipedia is not trustworthy and inaccurate, netizens still find the site useful due its popularity of summarizing topics readers wish to read. This site is beneficial especially in enhancing writing skill and promoting collaborative effort among contributors worldwide who have the same interest and hope to offer input on the same topics.

Voice Thread is yet another wonder of technology tool where it fosters active discussions about primary sources such as photos, maps, documents, movies or audio files. As the name suggests, Voice Thread enables users to add comments on the discussions by using their voice, keyboard or webcam (Anderson, 2010). Its interface is friendly and students will find it easy to navigate around the website. Voice Thread is a tool geared towards speaking and listening skills. For students who do not get much opportunities to exercise their second language acquisition, this site will help to

assist both learners and teachers to communicate and have more chances at practicing, particularly when the time allocated in classroom is not sufficient.

These are some of the e-learning tools and social networking sites available which may assist in teaching-learning processes. Every platform however does have its drawbacks and specialty as each of it has its own targeted users. Nevertheless, these tools are evidences of what technology may help in supporting education goals. The significance of exploring several of its usage and advantages in education is to make us aware of the possibilities in integrating technology into education. Malaysia is a developing country which has capabilities in adopting to current trends and tools in order to enhance learners' learning curve. We must take a step forward and start equipping the students and future teachers with proper skills which can be useful and practical in real world. Edmodo has its relevance as it too offers many of the features similar to the mentioned tools. In fact, some of the features embedded in those tools do not provide rounded experience because some are intended for merely social networking purposes, while Edmodo is designed purely for educational purposes and therefore it gives a more holistic experience to all users. Henceforth, it is vital for us to study the implementation of Edmodo and its effects on views that 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya may have on it.

2.6 Introduction to Perception

This study seeks to implore participants' perceptions in regards to their experience on using Edmodo for English language learning. Therefore, in order to comprehend what is the definition of perception, it is crucial that we take a glimpse into the area of study. Being able to understand one of the cruxes in this research will provide us with

proper knowledge of the phenomenon at hand. Principally, sensation and perception psychology are two of the oldest fields in the study of social psychology. Sensation is mainly made up of emotions. Meanwhile, perception is our recognition and interpretation of sensory information which includes how we respond to the information. Perception is similar to a process when individuals become aware of surroundings through their senses. These two subjects (sensation and perception) are very much interrelated and dependable on one another.

2.6.1 Definition of Perception

Knowing what defines perception is important for us to further gain an understanding over this study. Perceptions can be well-defined as the way one thinks about or understands someone or something, an outcome of perceiving from observation or a mental image that later creates a concept (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Similarly, Oxford Dictionaries (2015) provides meanings to the term perception where it is considered as the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses, while psychology's stance stated perception is the neurophysiological progression including memory by which an organism becomes conscious of and interprets external stimuli.

Davidson (1882) offers a definition of perception as he proposes "*perception is the intuition of feeling as a relation of activity and passivity between the two entities, each of which has that permanent act which we call being. Intuition, therefore, and not identity, is the essence of perception. Without intuition there would be no identity*". From this view, we can learn that perception is a feeling that arises between the connection of activity and passivity, ultimately perception is equal to intuition and without intuition there will be no perception of thought or an identity to be thought

about. In simpler words, perception is a stimulus which forms itself after experiencing a series of connected conditions, such as activity and passivity which later is parallel to intuition that we have about things around us.

Perception is a construction of meaning making that individuals produce depending upon their experiences on objects in their surroundings. Therefore, language learners' beliefs need to be investigated in order to acquire deeper insights due to a growing emphasis on the styles and variables of learners. Fundamentally, students bring in their beliefs, attitudes and language styles to the learning settings which affect the rate of success in language learning. What students think and how they evaluate the target language speakers, culture and learning environment play a vital role as influential factors (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013). Although examining learners' perceptions in ESL education does not assure any concrete success, it does provide substantial amount of useful data that serves as guidelines for future steps to be taken, as learners play the central role in any learning atmosphere. Perception too belongs under the paradigm of constructivism which states, a person needs to make meaning out of an experience he/she goes through. Two persons might experience the same treatment but will have respectively different views about it.

2.6.2 Perception from Philosophical Point of View

In order for us to have deeper understanding of perceptions and where it stems from, I believe it is significant to tap into philosophical stance related to the area of study. As perception is a subjective matter, because there is no single and absolute truth in a view produced by a person, we need to allow meanings of the word to be studied from different angles. First and foremost, there are a few systems of thought in which

philosophers have agreed upon; idealism, realism, nominalism, conceptualism, materialism, spiritualism, skepticism and criticism. Construction of perceptions can be categorized under these systems of thoughts, however nothing is ever definite and therefore perception does not belong to one specific system of thought. This is due to the fact that no terms have any definiteness, except such as they receive in perception itself or in a theory of perception. In simpler words, no perceptions can be a definite thought or placed under confirmed philosophical view as it is changing and human thoughts are always complex to be measured. Further, the theory of perception itself has no resource (Davidson, 1882).

Digging into how perception works, it stems from one's cognitive style, which is an outcome for the way people think, the accuracy of their perception, how they remember and process information as well as how they apply that information in problem solving (Sarmany-Schuller, 1999). Meanwhile, Hayes and Allison (1996) refer cognitive style to a tendency to recognize stimuli and utilize information in a certain manner to guide their conduct. It is very essential to emphasize on cognitive style in connection with learning as cognitive style is what perception is made of. Studies have shown the results of cognitive style or perceptions in regards to behavior and attitudes of students in e-learning environment (Liu & Ginther, 1999; Jonassen & Wang, 1993; Yoon, 1994) are essential. This research attempts at seeking and bringing out views reserved by participants towards their experience in English language learning using Edmodo, essentially whatever experiences gain and feelings emerge upon trying and exploring the site are worth noting. Knowing how these TESL students react to such tool will give us an overview of Edmodo's effects in students' motivation and language enforcement.

Finally, from philosophical stance regarding Edmodo; perceptions derive from the extension of reflection beyond the ready-made objects of thought to act in which these objects appear from the involution of thought. This correlation is founded in the nature of feeling that consist of active and passive side. Active and passive sides which come in the form of feelings cannot be further analyzed or reduced however may be labeled as negative or positive. The vital reason for putting perception under the microscope is students' attitude has been proven to be a strong motivation for the use of online social technology (Shittu, Gambari & Sule, 2013). Individuals who have high perceptions towards the practicality of online social technology may enhance their overall academic excellence (Ractham & Chen, 2013). Similarly, if participants welcome the use of Edmodo in second language acquisition, perhaps it will allow the tool to be accepted in a larger Malaysian education context. As we have discussed earlier, traditional approach alone has its limitations and is deemed to be unsuitable for this century's learners, therefore we are looking into technological tools which may help us in reducing the issues in education these days. Edmodo is one of the technological tools proposed to be studied under the scrutiny of 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya, the findings comprised of participants' perceptions will enlighten many stakeholders in Malaysia particularly.

2.6.3 Measuring Perceptions and Its Importance

Perception analysis is a condition when one interprets the perceived objects in surroundings by giving meaning and context. Perceptions analysis can be done through experiences, feelings, memories, values, imagination, cultural settings and beliefs that one has. Based on the meaning making of perceptions, individuals will be motivated to make decisions on the next actions. For example, if one dislikes the taste

of a burned toast, he/she will throw it away and will not attempt to taste it again or if one likes a new videogame he/she recently bought, he/she will continue playing the game for many times. The equivalent principle is applied to the use of Edmodo and the perceptions that participants have on the matter; if participants in this study like the idea of using Edmodo as a supplementary tool in teaching-learning process, they may make a suggestion to their lecturers or apply it themselves when they are assigned for teaching practicum in secondary schools.

After looking into how perceptions are defined from general dictionaries available online and philosophical views on it, we are now seeking a way to at least measure perceptions in some extents possible. In order to understand how perceptions can be measured, we need to look at the correlation it has with sensation. Our sensory are made up by emotions described as inborn, universal, cross-cultural and effortlessly seen (Ekman, 1980). Six universal emotions are known as happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, anger and disgust (Ekman, 1992). Surprise is the only emotion out of all six which cannot be plainly identified as positive or negative (Goren & Wilson, 2006). Nevertheless, there are many noted differences between negative and positive characteristics of emotions. The positive emotion is when one is feeling happy, whereas being angry, scared, sad and disgust are labeled as negative emotions. Goren & Wilson (2006) note, negative emotions are easier to recognize compared to positive emotions.

Sensory is very much related to perceptions; sensory is encompassed of negative or positive emotions while perceptions are constructed during meaning making process. By connecting these two aspects, we can identify negative or positive perceptions.

When we have already constructed own meanings about experiences or objects of our surroundings, we need to classify whether those perceptions belong in negative or positive category. Perceptions can be measured by classifying it under two aspects; negative or positive emotions. Exploring in depth perceptions of students may be beneficial to stakeholders in education because students are the central attention of a teaching-learning process. In order to enhance learning and give impactful results, we need to examine learners' thoughts and put it into categories (positive versus negative).

This study adopts constructivism with hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism to understand further the process of meaning making by participants on the use of Edmodo. The epistemology and theories mentioned allow interpretivism paradigm to fit in as well because during the data analysis stage, I must classify findings and categorize opinions of participants according to my understanding of what messages the participants wish to imply and convey during interviews. By knowing how to measure perceptions, I will be able to deliver findings appropriately based on classification of participants' positive and negative views. Oxford (2003) further postulates, successful learners develop perceptions into beliefs about language learning processes, own abilities and the use of effective learning methods in the classroom which in return have made the study of perception and beliefs in second language learning significant. In order for learners to perform admirably in academics achievements, positive perceptions need to be constructed in their minds because it may assist to overcome problems and sustain motivation, but if they have negative perceptions, it will then lead to decreased motivation, anxiety and frustration (Puchta, 1990).

Additionally, Schulz (1996) notes, learners' perceptions should not be overlooked due to its importance of ensuring no mismatches occur between teachers' teaching and learners' learning styles. By having students' perceptions studied, curriculum reforms and teaching strategies can be tailored to fit students' learning needs especially after the tools have been implemented beforehand. Savignon (p. 225, 1997) supports this claim by stating positive outlook by learners significantly contributes success in second language acquisition. Further, attitudes towards learning and the perceptions and beliefs might have substantial influence on learners' learning performance and outcomes (Cotterall, 1995b; Weinert & Kluwe, 1987). Independent learners usually develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes, own abilities and the use of effective learning strategies (Anstey, 1988). This condition facilitates critical thinking and has tremendous effects on learning as students are able to reflect and perceive on how teachers play their roles in classroom as well as how students themselves react to it. I am keen to discover if participants in this study will produce positive or negative opinions on Edmodo. The platform thus far has been gaining attention of over 46 million users worldwide and producing promising academic outcomes outside of Malaysia, however will it be able to tame and win the hearts of 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya; who are both learners and soon to be teachers of English?

Additionally, there is no denying that the role of learners' epistemological belief across interdisciplinary has contributed in understanding factors involving learning experience and achievements (Weinert & Kluwe, 1987; Schommer, 1990). Intellectual performance is greatly driven by one's belief system, social cognitions and metacognitions (Schoenfeld, 1983) and therefore influenced by their own

perceptions of success in learning and levels of expectancy by having expectations; high expectations help to build confidence while low expectations or unreasonably high expectations result in de-motivation and disappointment (Puchta, 1999). Hence, it is crucial at making attempts to comprehend students' personal views and insights on experience pertaining to learning and achievements so that educators may know how to enhance their experiences. More importantly is to understand how to measure, classify and present perceptions by knowing categories existed in it, so that we may produce results rich with information, feelings, views and descriptions. Enlightenment on the focus of this study will shed some light into the use of Edmodo, students' perceptions pertaining the platform and implications it may have on Malaysian English language learning.

2.6.4 Perceptions on ESL and E-Learning

Looking into the previous literary works by scholars will give us a glimpse of studies conducted concerning perceptions in second language acquisition using e-learning tools. It is crucial to understand the importance of perceptions in learning because we may enhance teaching-learning qualities for future improvements. Clearly, positive perceptions that students hold have the tendency to boost more positive attitudes towards language learning. On the contrary, negative perceptions may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement and negative attitudes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). I believe by looking at the limited number of conducted studies found on perceptions, it will give us a glimpse of what sort of perceptions students have regarding the implementation of technology into lessons.

E-learning in second language acquisition, particularly English has positive outcomes and perceptions by the learners (Wen & Tsai, 2006). Cheong (2006) notes that students react positively and yield good feelings when repeat practice is available in the courseware because it is more stimulating and more beneficial compared to the practices traditionally found in print media. Further, he adds computers can help to make writing assessments more entertaining and able to improve learners' attitudes towards writing assignments. In addition, his study is supported by Bernhardt et al. (1989 in Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998) which indicate students with high level of positive attitude come from computer assisted classes compared to students in traditional classes.

On the other hand, determinants in using e-learning among students in higher education are qualities known as system, service and information which lead to their behavioral intention (Ramayah, Ahmad & Lo, 2010), for example if information available on e-learning are updated and adequate, it will encourage students to use it and vice versa. Besides that, reliability and accessibility of e-learning do have some influences in its usage (Wu & Wang, 2006; Wang & Liao, 2008; Lee & Chung, 2009). Students are easily motivated when those essential aspects mentioned are constantly improved and be taken into consideration. However, when such aspects are not available, what perceptions will be produced by students? Encouraging results were managed to be collected probably due to students' readiness in using technology and facilities available around them, such as computers and internet connection. Meanwhile, schools and homes in Malaysia are not fully equipped with adequate facilities and some teachers/students are not prepared to handle teaching-learning process online.

Next, positive attitudes towards the internet were obtained along with adequate internet self-efficacy in a study conducted by Yang & Lin (2010). He then added that students with more positive attitudes inclined to take part more in the online discussion. In internet learning assessments, learners' attitudes pertaining to the internet may be prominent to their engagement (Coffin & MacIntyre, 1999; Tsai, 2004). Therefore, learners with high internet self-efficacy execute internet-based tasks better as compared to learners with low self-efficacy. University students in Malaysia are vary; some may be accustomed to the use of computer while some might not be proficient at it despite being grouped in the Generation Y. Thus, it is only wise to give an e-learning tool, such as Edmodo a try because opinions from the participants in this study will yield reassuring outcomes.

A research pertaining to students' perceptions about their autonomy in selecting materials for English lesson (particularly for reading assessments), results indicate that students would very much welcome the opportunity to select own reading resources. Previous studies propose self-select materials by students increase positive perceptions and motivation level as they will be excited about learning the language (Sewell, 2003; Kragler, 2000). Moreover, in order for learners to be intrigued and involved with the lesson, they should be given a certain amount of authority in choosing their materials, for example readings books, news articles and others (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). In a qualitative study by Threadkell (2010) on differences between students' perceptions of teacher assigned and self-selected materials, he found that students were very motivated during learning process and gained deeper understanding of content. These results belong in the positive perceptions category which resulted in good impacts on ESL learning. On Edmodo, if

educators were to assign tasks by giving materials online or give students the autonomy to choose own materials, will it harvest similar outcomes?

On the other hand, in a study on test anxiety which presents a threat to the self-esteem and ego, researchers found that it occurs in the evaluative situations when students have the fear of failure (Sarason, 1978; Zeidner, 1998; Meijer, J. & Oostdam, 2007). Conversely, students are motivated when they perceive the goals of the activities positively, especially when individuals' purposes underlie within the goals orientation. Goal accomplishment theory does not only affect students' positive perceptions; it applies to teaching as well where teachers who have goal orientation will obtain expected accomplishments (Butler, 2007). Teachers' orientation of performance goals result in positive results and perceptions in the teaching process (Ames, 1992). A study was conducted in Malaysia for pre-service teachers who teach Mathematics and it is reported that they show high level of satisfaction towards online courses they underwent (Hong & Tan, 2009).

Consequently, test anxiety by students can be minimized and teachers' obtainment of positive outcomes of teaching process may be achieved (Novita Dewi & Frieda Mangunsong, 2012). Educators in Malaysia need to be wary of their teaching outcomes; whether they only want students to accomplish academic performance on papers by looking at how many A's students can secure or if they want students to acquire long life learning experience by having beneficial knowledge beyond its use in physical classrooms. If the latter is the aim in education, educators should strive for students' academic excellence and positive perceptions about their learning

experience, this goal may be achieved with the help of e-learning platforms, for example Edmodo.

In another study by Oxford and Shearin (1994), findings indicate students' reaction and attitude towards a task can be determined by the degree of motivation level they possess. Yang (1999) finds a high correlation between second language learners' beliefs about language learning and their learning strategies; where students' positive outlook in learning English is strongly related to their use of functional practice strategies. Apparently, practical and functional assessments leave substantial effects on students' perceptions and academic success. Meanwhile, teachers are advised to create an encouraging classroom atmosphere in the English classes to inculcate students' positive attitudes towards English through integration of appropriate up-to-date materials and supplementary resources in addition to the English text books (Mohamad, Majid & Hanan, 2012). Previous studies have found that positive views are attainable with the appropriate up-to-date materials. Even though the majority of university students we have today are equipped with computers/laptops and internet access in their residential colleges/on-campus, we have yet to test this theory especially with the 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya who have volunteered to provide us with their thoughtful opinions.

Criua and Mariana (2014) later postulate, students who perceive their teachers as having low level of pedagogical content knowledge and non-cooperative, will in return causes them to have low level of self-efficacy in self-regulating learning atmosphere. On the contrary, if students perceive their teachers as having high degree of pedagogical content knowledge, helpful in offering guidance and more cooperative,

it will result in students having higher level of self-efficacy and self-regulating learning. Similarly, their positive perceptions increase when self-efficacy and self-regulating increase. Learning using e-learning platforms require teachers to act as facilitators and students to conduct discovery learning, will students in Malaysia prefer having more autonomy in their learning experience or will they still rely on spoon feeding from the teachers? In order to acquire an answer to this question, views of participants need to be collected after the implementation of such learning tools.

Besides that, one of the studies finds that perceived usefulness and perceived satisfaction might be able to increase students' use of internet resources (Lee, Cheung & Chen, 2005). Consequently, satisfaction might be able to cause higher levels of engagement, learning and success in the setting (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Jones, Packham, Miller and Jones (2004) assert that students who use information technology (IT) frequently are more comfortable and familiar with the online learning environment. While inadequate knowledge will inevitably compromise the quality of learning curve which can be provided and developed (White, 2005, p. 170). I believe it goes without saying that, 'practice makes perfect' as students of today are surrounded with technology and kept themselves occupied by browsing the internet for hours. As they are already using technology and internet access, why educators cannot take an advantage of the situation? Probably infusing technology into education will yield more effective impacts and positive views.

Usually students who have online course experience feel more satisfied, comfortable and motivated. Similarly, the same type of students who go through pleasant online experience like the flexibility of study time, study location and less need to be on

campus to attend face-to-face classes. Meanwhile, students with no online or hybrid course experience are only affected by the motivation to learn and this prompts them to continue with the online courses, at the same time it is worthy to note that the absence of face-to-face sessions also make them feel less satisfied (Rodriguez, Ooms & Yan, 2005). Will the same results be obtained in this study? Learners have different learning styles, such as some prefer face to face interaction while some prefer the freedom to be mobile and in comfort zones.

However, Picciano (2002) claims his study finds strong relationship between students' perception of interaction and perceived learning. He noted that some students can also feel alienated in a face-to-face class whenever they do not feel part of a group. Nevertheless, the results indicate that the connection of actual measure of communication and performance is mixed and varying depending upon the measures. A different study reports the lack of face-to-face interaction can be replaced by online discussions in bulletin board, video conferences and others (Blake, 2000). Online schooling can also assist in cutting costs and help graduates to gain crucial technology skills to improve their marketability (Donlevy, 2003).

Further, in a research pertaining to perceptions, proponents argue that online education can discourage discriminatory teaching and learning practices along with favoritism because teachers and students, as well as students and classmates do not meet face-to-face. Students basically cannot differentiate the race, gender, physical characteristics of each other and their teachers (Palloff & Pratt, 1999), consequently making online learning a bias-free teaching and omitting unhealthy learning environment. It is a norm in some learning environments to have educators who

practice favoritism and this situation causes many students who wish to contribute in classrooms to remain silent and reserved. Negative perceptions involving the fear of being rejected is one of the contributing factors for failure in academic achievements, hence can Edmodo help to decrease this problem and produce positive views from learners? I believe only participants can answer most of the questions regarding perceptions of theirs about the implementation of Edmodo and its effectiveness for English language learning.

In the meantime, a study by Richardson (2005) confirms the relationship between students' perceptions of the quality in their respective courses in higher education and the approaches to studying in which they adopt on those courses. Depending on the degree of positive or negative perceptions they have of their courses including perceived content, demands and context of the learning assignment; it will determine the execution of appropriate approaches to studying. Amidst strategies to studying and perceptions of the academic environment, lies an internal relationship which simultaneously present in the students' awareness (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). As for teachers' perceptions on instructional practices, it changes according to teachers' ages (Recepoglu, 2013). Older teachers from the age of 40 tend to have negative perceptions about e-learning instructional practices, which might be caused by previous experiences or the inability to cope with recent advances.

Students perceptions on the use of e-learning channels is an area worth investigating because it shapes a current image on the quality of the education outlook and later provides a guidance to meet the demands of learners (Cristina, Emanuela & Adriana, n.d). The innovations and improvements of education systems are built on the premise

of students' recognition and appreciation on e-learning advantages. Despite having countless studies that measure perceptions via quantitative method, at the same time researchers are advised to conduct interviews as to gather data qualitatively because perceptions collected in quantitative representations do not clearly ascertain students' reasons for their beliefs (Gamble, Aliponga, Koshiyama, Wilkins, Yoshida & Ando, 2013). Henceforth, I see a pressing need to provide enlightenment on this particular study. Moreover a research on perceptions on Edmodo has never been conducted, and majority of studies regarding perceptions of students and teachers on ESL or e-learning are measured quantitatively.

2.7 Research Gap

Perceptions is a delicate subject in which is best studied using qualitative approach because of the qualitative nature in measuring reactions, responding to limited surveys and ability to analyze issues that have been researched with simplicity and precision. Through face to face communication and inductive methods, the sample needed is smaller in size and requirements for analysis of any numeric data are not necessary (Wahit & Mohd, 2013). Moreover, the strategy to examine educators and students' views of e- learning is now widely adopted (O'Malley & McCraw, 1999). The most forgotten stakeholders in education are students and studies on perceptions on theirs are scare, especially in Malaysia. While supposedly, the attention of learning in the first place should revolves around the students yet we give them no voice to opine. It is their future which is in jeopardy after all, why do we remain indifferent on the importance of their learning experience? This rationale prompts me to seek and investigate further their views by implementing Edmodo; one of the frequently used educational tools in the United States.

Further, investigating the perceptions of a target audience is an eminent approach as it influences behaviors. Based on that premise, there have been a number of studies conducted on perceptions of students towards online learning. It is significant to explore the learners' views in regards to their learning experience because it is the initial step for developing and implementing effective e-learning atmosphere (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). If a tool like Edmodo has the potentials to be implemented in Malaysia and ensured effective English language learning, it needs to be given an opportunity to be tested by the participants of this study, which is comprised by 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya. They are the suitable candidates as they are both learners and future teachers of English.

Moreover, Asunka (2008) posits that participants view communication with the instructor as crucial and contributes to motivate learner in pursuing a course and students generally perceive online learning as a fairly easy to use platform. Students agree on a common ground that watching discussions through lurking and checking one's own comprehension may have some importance, however to maximize the benefits, students themselves need to attain the highest degree of participation though direct involvement by thinking and writing about their understanding and engagement in an active conversations (Gerbic, 2006). The findings by these studies propose an extensive study in Malaysian context because the outcomes may be different as participants and research site are not similar.

In another study, learners felt a sense of community was able to be established among learners and professors, thus encouraging their learning experience. Additionally, due to the permanence of postings, students felt the urge to carefully select their words,

check spelling and include references (Stodel & Thompson, 2006). This made them put a lot of thoughts into what they wanted to say as they knew many would be reading it. Their perception of this situation indirectly helped them to practice the usage of correct and proper English. In this scenario, we need to further analyze whether similar situation occurs among TESL students while they interact on Edmodo.

On a different note, besides the two published articles on the use of Edmodo in Malaysia which has presented many rooms for me to explore, a study by Yang & Cornelius (2004) has almost similar purpose and methods to the study which I intend to carry out. According to them, several studies have shed a light on the perceptions of faculty and administrators, yet there has been a paucity of research conducted on students' perceptions toward the quality of education. The study too employed the use of interviews and 'collecting' of documents. Unlike other quantitative studies on students' perceptions that I have found thus far, Yang and Cornelius opted for qualitative methodology to give in depth explanations on certain issues brought up by students.

Although the literature looks almost similar to the study I executed, it is still very much different. Yang and Cornelius (2004) did not focus on any specific online learning platform; rather they focused on online education in general. While Yang and Cornelius (2004) argue that the research provided sufficient findings, the limitations to this study are; convenience sampling was employed even though they acknowledged that purposive sampling was required as it is noted; *“select a sample from which they feel will yield the best understanding of whatever it is they wish to*

study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003)” and the three participants involved were from dissimilar institutions and had different instructors, the findings ultimately are diverse because the course content and instructors’ styles in conducting online classes are not the same as well.

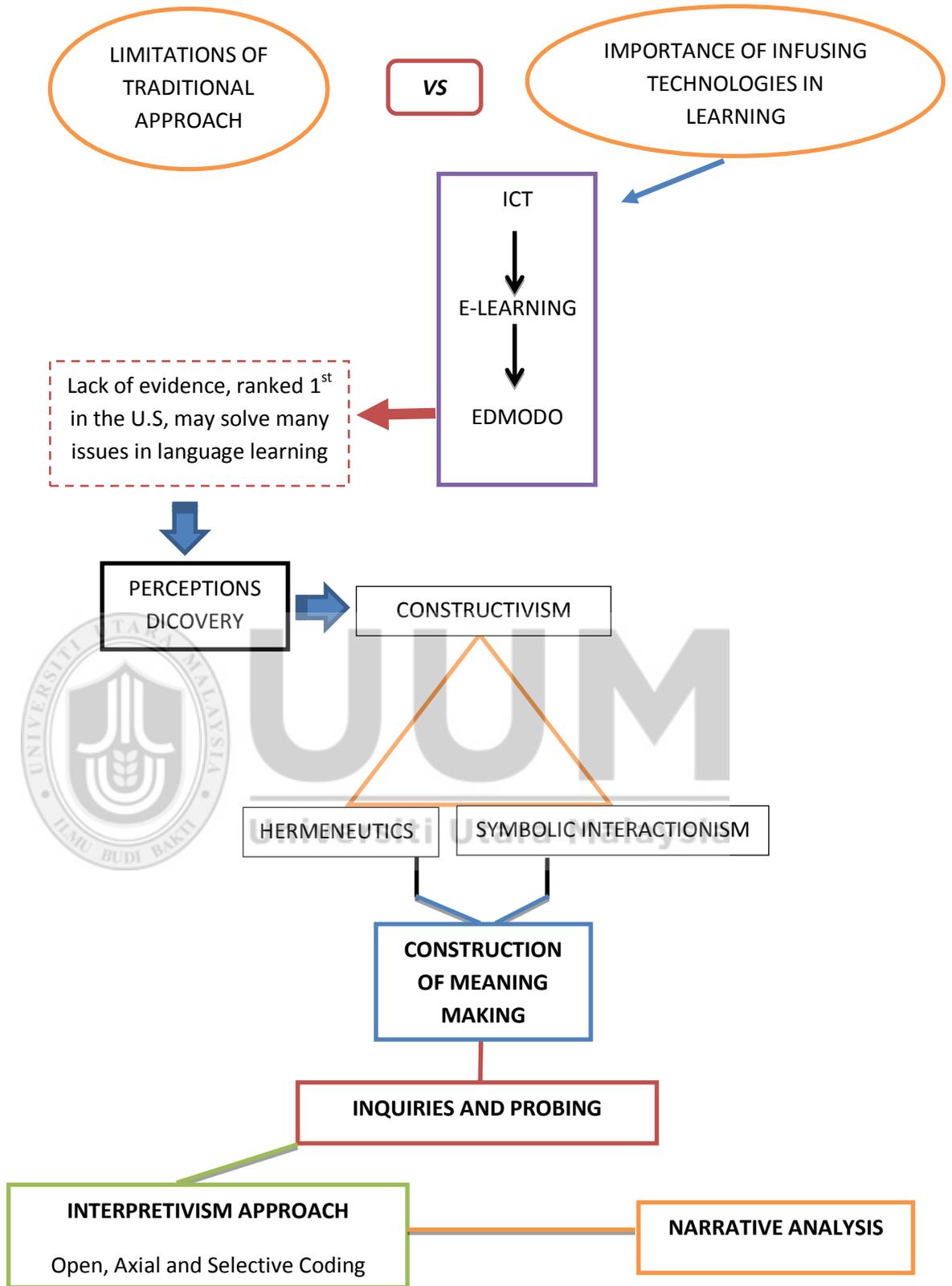
Besides the study by Yang and Cornelius (2004), Savery (2002) finds *“students’ perception of the ability of their instructors to prepare them to use technology effectively in their teaching through modelling and using technology was only slightly positive”*. Interestingly, students do see the positive sides of having instructors who assist them to use technology efficiently. However, this research does not offer explanations of why students perceive the whole learning experience as only ‘slightly positive’. Due to the research being quantitative in nature, it fails to provide reasons behind the results/perceptions of students.

Furthermore, I would like to strengthen the rationale and significance of this research by adding Ravenscroft (2001, p. 134) who asserts that *“we cannot truly transform educational practice for the better through implementation of new technologies unless we examine the roles that computers can play in stimulating, supporting, favouring innovative learning interactions that are linked to conceptual development and improvements in understanding”*. This means that technology needs to be adapted and adopted with critical cautions and preparations, despite its positive claims and enthusiasm to avoid the loss of money, investment, time and energy of many people involved. By studying perceptions of participants on Edmodo, we will be able to obtain data needed on the pros and cons of its implementation.

Additionally, as we have already discussed the two studies found in sub-topics about Edmodo in Malaysia, clearly those two articles did not utilize Edmodo as the main instrument nor did Edmodo become the main highlight of the findings, therefore it provides more rooms for improvements and investigations. Ergo, this research aims to provide better insights on Edmodo which has the attention of more than 46 million users worldwide comprising of educators, students and parents alike. Besides that, this study seeks to explore participants' negative and positive perceptions regarding the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool in learning English as well as their proposition concerning ways of how to execute its use in becoming a supporting instrument for language learning.

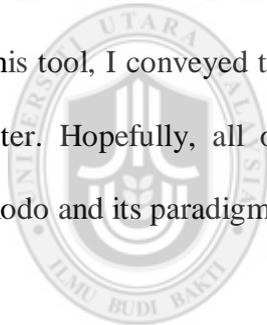
2.8 Overview of the research

Below is the general understanding of the research. It started with the concerns that we face with the practice of solely traditional approach versus the importance of infusing technological tools in education, followed by the narrowed view on the paradigm of which Edmodo belongs to, which consequently leads to the exploration on perceptions towards Edmodo, then trailed by epistemology and theoretical frameworks, the research approaches, concepts and intertwined relationships between them;



2.9 Conclusion

This particular chapter has enlightened us on so many aspects pertaining to this study according to the previous works found. We have looked into the research gap that provides a window for me to study more on the use of Edmodo in English language learning. I have also discussed what the standpoints are in regards to perceptions from various philosophical views, while also looking into the perceptions of learners about ESL and e-learning. Herewith, I have presented briefly the use of other online social platforms in educational interdisciplinary as well. Previously, I also debated on the importance of infusing technological tools into assessments, particularly after looking at the limitations of traditional approaches in practice today. In order for us be acquainted on what Edmodo is all about and how many studies have been carried out on this tool, I conveyed the findings that I managed to gather at the beginning of this chapter. Hopefully, all of these discussions may help one to fathom more about Edmodo and its paradigm as well as other related aspects that make up this study.



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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of 3rd year TESL students in University of Malaya towards the use of Edmodo in learning English as well as giving an emphasis on how Edmodo may affect the teaching-learning process according to the participants' views as future teachers. In order to attain the intended aims, processes are carefully articulated and laid out to navigate the path of this study. This chapter principally discusses epistemology and its theoretical frameworks, ethical considerations, population and participants, research procedures and research instruments. Further, I illuminate the research instrument's items by explaining the design, stages and methods involved. Finally, this chapter ends with the data analysis procedures consist of open, axial and selective coding, interpretive approach and narrative analysis.

3.1 Epistemology and Theoretical Framework

There are many types of epistemologies available that will suit different researchers for various purposes of studies. Epistemological stances provide philosophical grounding in deciding what sort of knowledge is conceivable and how researchers can ensure they are both ample and legitimate, (Maynard, 1994; p.10). According to Crotty (1998), three basic philosophical grounding are known as objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism. Each of it is different from one another and will be suitable according to what the researchers aim to shed a light on.

In this study, the epistemology is constructivism by Crotty (1998),

“Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of (one’s) engagement with the realities in (one’s) world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. In this view of things, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning”.

The process of interpretation and meaning making can be represented via different ways. Below constructivism, there are three branches namely phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. Schwandt (2000, p.190) claim these theoretical positions have dissimilar perspectives on understanding human behavior or reaction, different ethical commitments, and epistemological and methodological issues. Philosophical assumptions assist researchers in guiding their course of study, especially in examining the process and data. The theoretical positions above can be intertwined as they are parallel yet still retain distinctive concerns and have different ways of attending to those concerns.

In this particular study, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism are chosen as the theoretical framework. The rationale for choosing hermeneutics theory is because it directly involves with participants’ online experiences through a dialogic and reflexive encounter which may be part of the interpretive act itself and ongoing development of participants’ viewpoints (Illingworth, 2006). This approach allows time and freedom to discover what is not understood and illustrating situations in which understanding has taken place and therefore revealing meaning. On the

construction of knowledge, participants and I work collaboratively to derive comprehension of the conditions involved. Via this stance, I too can gain better insights of the situations by examining the interrelationship between people, places and practices (Rybas & Gajjala, 2007). Embracing this stance connotes that I have to make attempts in understanding practices which help to shape actions and individual perspectives of the situation I am examining. Below is the summary of hermeneutics philosophy;

“Meaning is participative thus cannot be produced by the researcher. The point is not to reveal truth but to engage with the effects of tradition in a dialogical encounter with what is not understood and clarify and conditions in which understanding may take place, and thus disclose meaning.”

(Crotty, 1998)

Hermeneutics in this study mainly concerns with online interaction on Edmodo. I have opted to gather data via online participation and face-to-face interviews. Therefore symbolic interactionism from constructivism philosophy is adopted too. As Sade-Beck (2004) postulates, physical and visual encounter are able to provide details on each other's identity and on the situation, consequently causing emotions to emerge at the time when participants and I meet face to face. In the construction of knowledge, social scientists view the face to face interaction as the ideal way to vigorously engage with participants in qualitative research (Seymour, 2001). By having this stance, it allows me to reveal rich symbolic world that triggers needs, meanings, desires and choice. We already know that online interactions will not be able to provide us with facial expressions, human touch and gestures; hence I decided

to take symbolic interaction into account in order to enrich findings. Further, through this way I may engage in one-on-one interview to explore the social processes of existing online communities. Included is the summary of symbolic interaction theoretical outline;

“Interaction takes place in such a way that the individual continually interprets the symbolic meaning of his/her environment. Researchers catch the process of interpretation through which individuals construct their actions.”

(Crotty, 1998)

Perceptions on the application of Edmodo, hence will be conceived through meaning-making; one has to experience in order to construct an interconnectedness of objectivity and subjectivity. According to Blumer (1962), the mind is actively involved in the process while at the same time, individual perspectives, perceptions and experiences play a significant role in constructing one's reality. In constructivism's paradigm, the individual is not a passive recipient of a set meaning, but an active, resourceful and reflective participant in the construction of meaning (Charon, 2001). These stances are fitting for the objectives of my research. Below is the epistemology of the study along with its theoretical perspectives;

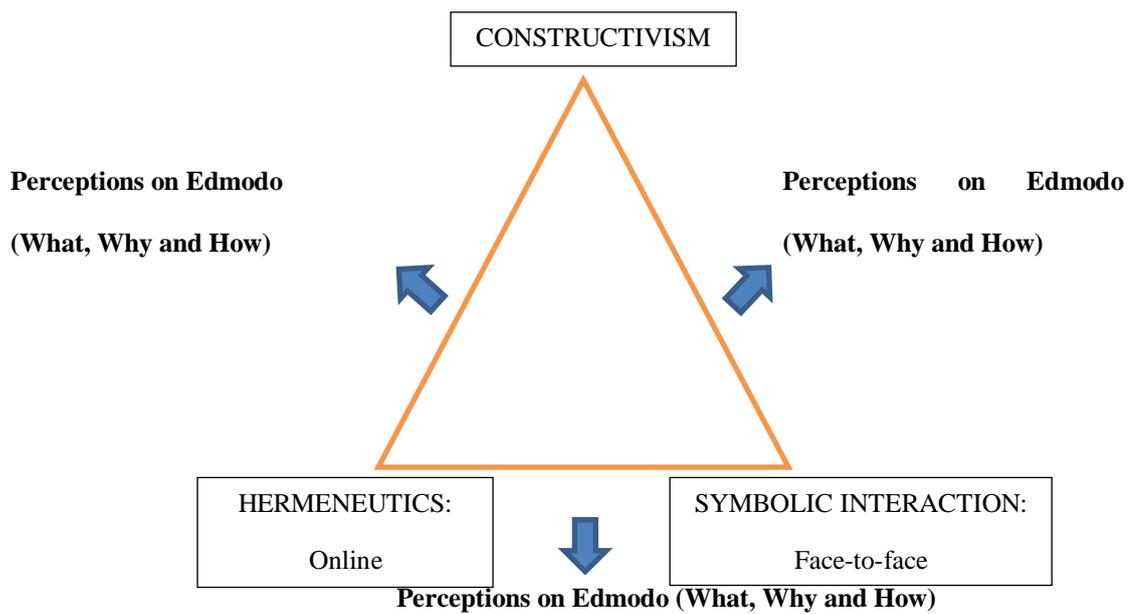


Figure 3.1. Epistemology and Theoretical Frameworks

3.2 Ethical Consideration

Qualitative studies reveal a huge chunk of participants' life as they contribute in offering their thoughts and allowing us to enter their world as a part of the studied subjects. Such exposure poses several threats to the participants, yet they still wish to contribute while concurrently maintain the comfortable lives they are in. Ethics are therefore significant in assuring privacy and security. Ethics are a set of principles and rules of conduct (Dzakiria, 2008). Sieber (1993; p.14) connects ethics to 'the application of a system of moral principle to prevent harming others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair.' Besides participants, any stakeholders or related parties who/that might be affected with the findings of this study should be properly informed and taken into considerations as well.

University of Malaya as the selected site for this study had been informed on my intentions of carrying and choosing participants from one of its faculties. It is highly

imperative to obtain authorization before carrying out the data collection because it might pose a threat in the future if one does not do so. The institution that houses thousands of students from various esteemed faculties have many matters and interests that they need to cater for. A researcher must therefore acquire consent to avoid conflicts of interests (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000). It is only understandable for a researcher to be sensitive of this issue and paid an attention to it, especially when this school of thought is the oldest university in Malaysia with outstanding achievements. Revealing any information that has relation to it must beforehand be authorized by the university.

Moving on, ethics can be achieved and ensured in many forms, however for the purpose of this research I have emphasized merely on two areas of ethics. First of all, I acquired informed consent forms from the participants. In the form, I have explained lengthily the scope of study, duration, risks that may occur, compensation and confidentiality. I provided all of the information to the participants and I kept a copy of the informed consents as well for future perusal. Through this way, participants have the knowledge on the type of experience they are getting and how the overall study looks from macro view. Providing informed consents allow honesty and truthfulness to come in; which everyone in this study now knows the actual situations they are getting into and what can they expect throughout the whole course of study.

Furthermore, confidentiality is an assurance granted to the participants due to the possibility of threats that might take place. In this research, participants and I involved in informal meetings where we simply chose a comfortable place to sit and discuss about their perspectives. Full disclosure from the participants was required in order

for me to get close to them and make them feel safe to share their deepest thoughts. Henceforth, protecting their data and personal information was one of my top priorities. Exposing themselves in qualitative studies need precaution measures to be taken before anything unexpected and unwanted transpire. In a nutshell, providing informed consent forms and protecting the confidentiality of participants' identity and data are the main ethical considerations I decided to focus on. Meanwhile, acquiring permission from the institution concerned is equally significant too as part of the ethical considerations.

3.3 Population and Participants

The university selected is known as University of Malaya, located in Petaling Jaya. According to the QS World University Rankings in 2014, it is placed 151 and as for the QS Asian University Rankings, University Malaya is placed 32nd. Meanwhile, it is ranked 1st for Malaysian university (QS Top Universities, 2014). University Malaya has had a long history since its establishment in 1949 and since its inception; many skillful graduates have been produced. Further, University of Malaya is chosen because it has 50 years of experience in Education field and its Faculty of Education is renowned as Top 100 in the world. It is expected from this faculty to produce successful alumnae who will become respected educators.

Besides that, access to the research's participants is equally important. The university was my alma mater; therefore my rapport with the current undergraduates (targeted participants) can be acquired smoothly. Gaining proper access to the participants and research site are important in ensuring a smooth process from beginning until the end of the study. Besides acquiring access, chosen participants are those whom I considered to be suitable in producing most data related to this research. In short, due

to the reasons above, participants are selected from Faculty of Education, specifically 3rd year undergraduates in Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) course.

3.3.1 Population

The enrollment for University of Malaya is only once a year, the first semester commences in September of every year. Currently there are 25 female students and 0 male students in the intake of 2012/2013. Thus, all of the participants for this research are females. At the time of data collection, participants were studying as the 3rd year students in TESL, Faculty of Education.

3.3.2 Number of Participants

There is no definite number of how many participants should a qualitative study acquires. In qualitative research, the data gathered is sufficient as long as saturation, goals, aims can be attained as well as rich descriptions can be provided. As cited from Morse (2000, p.3), sample size depends on the quality of data, scope of study, nature of the topic, amount of useful information obtained from each participant, number of interviews per participant and the qualitative design employed. However, at first I was facing difficulties in deciding how many participants will be enough to serve the purposes of a study. After looking at several factors namely; scope to be exposed, single site study, limited data sources and time constrain, I then decided that four participants would be sufficient to suit the objectives, aims, purposes of this study while adhering to the factors above (Ajjawi, 2013).

3.3.3 Sampling Technique

In order to select the four participants for this research, purposive sampling technique is employed (Yin, 2011). The rationale of choosing specifically 3rd year TESL undergraduates is because students at this stage have not gone for teaching practicum (only at 4th year of studies, TESL students will be going for practicum), therefore by introducing Edmodo will I be able to get insights from students who are still English Second Language (ESL) learners and at the same time, soon-to-be educators equipped with teaching methodologies, theories and knowledge. It is imperative to improve collaborative thinking and ICT competence among future teachers who will teach undoubtedly students whose life are increasingly digital (Stevenson, 2008; Fleming, Bangou & Fellus, 2011). Having this reason in mind, I purposely decided to collaborate with the future teachers who have not taught secondary school students yet are equipped with proper information and skills needed, who are also at the same time are students of an English course themselves. Apart from that, I would like to quote Fraenkel and Wallen (2003); “select a sample from which they feel will yield the best understanding of whatever it is they wish to study”.



Figure 3.2. Purposive Sampling

Further, Cope and Ward (2002) assert “*teacher perceptions of learning technologies are likely to be key factors in the successful integration of learning technologies. Teachers perceive learning technologies as part of a student-centred/conceptual change teaching approach*” (p. 72). Thus, evidently current and future teachers are

the ones who shape teaching approaches and their perceptions on integration of technology ensure whether those methods will be successful or in failure. This study offers visions in these aspects, particularly in what ways Edmodo can aid in enhancing learning experience. Soon, when these students go for teaching practicum, they can opt to implement Edmodo or the contrary based on their experiences.

3.4 Research Procedure

Qualitative research can also be a type of scientific research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.192) conclude that;

“Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives.”

This study looks into the subject matter with interpretive and naturalistic approach because I seek to explore the participants' views in the most natural manner. Above, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) offer explicit elucidations to what I aim to unfold along with its methods. I employ the use of inductive logic that will allow issues, categories and themes emerge from the experiences of participants in this study (Dzakiria, 2004). Qualitative research is deemed to be most suitable for my purpose, which would facilitate deeper understanding of perspectives by the 3rd Year TESL students. I place

neither hypotheses nor theories beforehand as I hope not to meddle with the findings. The reason why I must approach the phenomenon in a natural setting, without any presumptions is to ensure the neutrality in reporting the data. In order to comprehend participants' views better, qualitative research provides the appropriate approach to tap into the subject matter.

Meanwhile, Creswell (1998) comments on qualitative study as an inquiry process of understanding that explores an area of study. This study aims to build a complex and holistic picture as well as to conduct the study in a natural setting and report detailed views of informants. I depend on naturalistic inquiry based on research methods such as interviews, concept mapping and photographs. The intention at the end of this research is to tell stories from the views of participants, to provide enrich details and to illuminate an understanding on the issue of Edmodo, especially in English language learning. Interpreting the realities and construction of meaning by participants are meant to enlighten the stakeholders in Malaysian education system.

3.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument is the researcher herself (Yin, 2011) because I cannot separate myself from the study. Particularly in a qualitative research, I always have to be involved and within the context area of study in order to gain data and deeper insights. Besides that, I adopt the naturalistic inquiry as an approach to tap into data collection; subsequently interviews are the essential method coupled with audio recording to ensure better data analysis as it ensures no important remarks unattended. Qualitative methods are more flexible because it allows greater spontaneity, for instance it applies mainly open-ended questions which give participants the freedom to respond and not merely answering with 'yes' or 'no'. Further, through this approach I will have the

opportunity to get closer with the participants, predominantly substantial to develop trust which helps participants to be informal, share and elaborate more of their thoughts.

Additionally an interview protocol is developed to aid and extend the procedural level of interviewing. It includes a series of topics to be discussed before, during and after the interviews, to collect consent forms and most importantly to become a mental framework of information that researcher intends to collect (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Other instruments for this research are the collection of participants' work on Edmodo, which later are presented in photographs form, and concluding thoughts using concept maps that also serve as a tool for triangulation of data.

3.5.1 Instrument Design

Interviewees will be approached in a naturalistic manner where the researcher comes in as a person with neutral stance and zero expectations. My duty as the researcher is to unfold their thoughts in a step by step procedure where first and foremost, I will come in as a person doing scaffolding regarding their backgrounds, academics life, general opinions on ICT and e-learning, experiences in using social learning platforms and others. It is imperative not to disturb the natural setting as it is one of the central ways in gaining rich details of data. To help arranging provocative questions, an interview protocol is designed to suit the needs of this study so that it can serve as guidance to collect data in a productive manner. The protocol designed is not a stand-alone instrument as instruments are more inflexible and contain usually closed-ended questions that will end up becoming a survey or a poll instead of a qualitative study (Yin, 2011). The protocol on the contrary will aid to be a mental framework and consists of a stated set of topics that will cover functional ground (line of inquiry).

In order to explore perceptions, closed-ended questions will not work in this study. According to Jacob and Furgerson (2012), open-questions must be developed so that participants may answer without presented or having implied choices. Some of the examples for open-questions are;

What? Where?

Who? When?

How? Why?

In line with productions of meaning, leading questions must be avoided as it is phrased to imply that one answer is expected or to suggest a particular answer. The next step in constructing knowledge is to utilize probing techniques which include ‘what?’ and ‘what’ questions as it serves as a stimulus without putting yourself in it (Jacob and Furgerson, 2012). Bernard (1995) postulates, silent probe requires me to remain silent and wait for participants to continue and later echo probe which means I need to repeat the last thing participants said and inquire them to continue.

“ ..stimulate an informant to produce more information without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data. ..keep the conversation focused on a topic, while giving the informant room to define the content of the discussion. The rule is: Get an informant on to a topic of interest and get out of the way. Let the informant provide information that he or she thinks is important.”

(Bernard, 1995)

Naturalistic inquiry and open questioning is a technique which can be classified as a two-way interaction where both participants and I can query one another. Based on Yin's (2011) and Jacob's and Furgerson's (2012) methods in developing interview protocols, I have constructed a line of inquiry for this particular study that will be paralleled with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, which at the same time serves the objectives that I have decided for this research.

3.5.2 Scaffolding

The questions in this interview protocol are utilized in the earliest stage of interviews with all of the participants involved. First and foremost, I come in as a person attempting to find out more about the participants in this study having neither initial assumptions nor biasness. Qualitative paradigm is unique for its flexibility in naturalistic approach. I see this method as similar to the action of “peeling an onion”; initially I have to personally know the participants in this study, build a level of trust, make them feel comfortable and secure with the surroundings, later on I probe for deeper questions and provide some space while they elaborate their thoughts on the subject matter. Questions probe in earliest interview sessions are related to participants' backgrounds, academics life, opinions on ICT and e-learning, experiences in social learning platforms and others. Generally, scaffolding attempts to explore their previous knowledge and experiences in using any e-learning platform and opinions they have on current education practices.

Table 3.1. Interview Protocol (Scaffolding)

SCAFFOLDING'S TOPICS:

1. How do you define e-learning?
2. Have you ever enrolled for an online course?
3. What do you feel about online education?
4. Have you faced any problems with online discussion?
5. Where and when have you experienced e-learning?
6. Why did your lecturer use e-learning?
7. Share your experiences regarding this topic.
8. Share your thoughts on traditional approach and current teaching practices.

3.5.3 Interviews on Edmodo

The research questions can be answered depending on the reactions shared by 3rd Year TESL participants after experiencing Edmodo. To ensure I do not stray from the aims of this research, a constant reminder on what is the central focus of the study is stressed on; to see how the participants construct understanding after experiencing language learning via Edmodo. Particularly in exploring their views and advices about Edmodo; comprising of its advantages and disadvantages, features of the platform, available channels/apps attached to it, the whole learning experience, feelings, preferences, how to implement the tool in English classroom and others. After conducting individual interviews at scaffolding stage where I implore their earliest thoughts, the individual interviews on Edmodo as the main focus of the study took place twice in duration of two (2) months where assessments were posted once or twice in a week.

Below is the interview protocol designed to guide participants in construction of meanings, it consists some of the highlighted topics as probes during our interviews;

Table 3.2. Interview Protocol (After Execution of Edmodo)

UPON IMPLEMENTING EDMODO:

1. What do you think about using Edmodo as a channel to do assessments?
2. Where and when did you manage to access Edmodo? How was your exploration on Edmodo?
3. Why do you think Edmodo is an effective/ineffective tool?
4. How is it any different than what you did in schools or university?
5. How Edmodo can be used as a tool in teaching and learning process?
6. Would you implement Edmodo in you teaching career? Why?
7. What are the drawbacks of Edmodo?

3.5.4 Documentation on Edmodo Website (Photograph)

Screen-shots of students' work on Edmodo will be captured as photographs, especially when it represents another form of primary evidence. Through this approach, triangulation can be achieved to enhance legitimacy of the findings in this research. As discussed, validity can be ensured due to researcher's effort in triangulating evidence from multiple sources. Constructivist epistemology normally implements the notion of triangulation that *"involves the use of multiple methods and multiple data sources to support the strength of interpretations and conclusions"*, (Mertens, 1998).

In the context of this research, photographs are used as a supplementary tool in reflecting participants' responses during interviews. For example, features that

participants mention and talk about should be illustrated in photograph's form alongside with the views they share so that those who are neither familiar with Edmodo nor involved in the course of this study may have a look and get clearer picture of what the participants are referring to. Making the invisible visible has a strong demand which may be assisted by photographs that depict the situations/conditions of the subject matter (Dzakiria, 2004).

3.5.5 Concept Mapping

Concept maps are the last form of instrument executed in this study. During the final individual interview sessions, I gathered all four concept maps illustrated by participants. Overall, it represents their closing thoughts on Edmodo, but in a simpler and visual way. Visual representation allows for development of a holistic understanding that words alone cannot convey (Plotnick, 1997). Sorayya Malek (2002) further argues that the use of concept map will help to reduce cognitive load. In this case, after experiencing Edmodo for almost two months, the participants finally have to draw a modest concept map of their own to conclude their whole experiences in doing language learning assessments via the site.

Solvie and Sungur (2006) claim that concept map serves as scaffolds to organize structured knowledge, to bring out prior knowledge as it is a component of meaningful learning, to bridge the gap between what students already know with new knowledge as well as to motivate critical thinking about a topic. The use of concept mapping in this study helps participants to organize their final thoughts as well as making it easier for me to comprehend their conclusions. This method too will serve as a tool for triangulation of data to increase viability and reliability.

3.5.6 Data Collection and Profiling the Participants

According to Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) and Creswell (1998), combining research tools; interviews, recordings, written documents and audio visual materials are extremely helpful depending on the aims of intended study. Taking my objectives into consideration, I have decided to conduct interviews with open questions, guided by interview protocol. Besides, I managed to gather some screen-shots of participants' work on Edmodo and the concept maps drawn by them, which all of these instruments have been discussed earlier.

In regards to personal information of my participants, their full names are confidential for ethical purposes. Thus I will only use their nicknames throughout the interviews and data collection. In qualitative research especially, participants are treated as members, contributors or partners, therefore we speak and address each other informally and comfortably, which made the use of nicknames appropriate.

In terms of sorting the data, scaffolding is launched beforehand and served as a start-up point for further exploration on the issue at hand. The data are marked as "SCAFFOLDING". The data further are marked using their nicknames for easier process of transcribing and classifying as well as to ensure I do not get confused in between all of the names and audio files. Thus, participants' data are marked as "Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview", "Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview" and so forth.

After the implementation of Edmodo, interviews are conducted and the transcriptions are marked differently; as "Rose/EDMODO", "Emme/EDMODO" and so on. To

distinguish the interview sessions as I conducted two different meetings with Edmodo as sole focus; number “1” or “2” will be added to indicate the sessions concerned, e.g.; “Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview”, “Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview” or “Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview”, “Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview” and etcetera.

In regards to the data collection on participants’ works on Edmodo, screen shots that serve as photographs are taken on each assessment. Every assessment posted has its replies, discussions, reflections and depiction of the visible reality, which serve as supplements to the data. In addition, any forms of feedback on Edmodo by the participants are recorded. Similarly, it will be coded based on the type of instrument. For instance; “WEBSITE/Photograph” is an indication for screenshots of their work done online. To distinguish what sort of category it belongs to, it will be coded such as these; “Reaction Button/WEBSITE/Photograph” or “Quiz/WEBSITE/Photograph” and others.

Other than the mentioned instruments and its codes, concept maps are also collected at the end of the final individual interviews. Through this way, no input will be left out and triangulation can be achieved via these instruments. The concept maps are also coded correspondingly like the previous ones, for example; “EMME/Concept Map” or “ROSE/Concept Map” and so forth. To distinguish what sort of category it belongs to, it will be coded such as these; “Drawbacks/EMME/Concept Map” or “Interface/FATIN/Concept Map” and so on. I opted to distinguish all types of data that I have with the names of participants for easier perusal of readers later on in the following chapter.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The results and findings are based on interviews, collection of participants' works on Edmodo's website and their hand-drawn concept maps. These methods for data collection purposes are a part of central instruments in qualitative research; therefore its content analysis involves mainly inductive reasoning. Through this way, themes and categories emerge from the data after I carefully examine and constantly compare and contrasts, particularly the transcriptions I have, sentence by sentence. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) shared, conventional qualitative content analysis is one of the main approaches that may permit my involvement in tapping into the data, by which coding categories are derived directly and inductively from the raw data itself.

3.6.1 Open Coding

The first step in working with the data is by analyzing the interview transcription line by line. It is a process of sifting and sorting the transcriptions, compare and contrast the conversational comments and themes, classify similar items together and separate items which are different (Dzakiria, 2008). Open coding is referred to as an analysis which consists of mainly naming and categorizing of phenomenon via intense examination of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.62).

At this stage, my task is to find possible or related answers to research questions. Due to the extensive amount of data, I need to examine all the transcriptions and highlight those main ideas. Besides looking at the transcriptions, I must look into the photographs of participants' work on Edmodo along with their concept maps. While looking at all the three instruments, I constantly compare and contrast the ideas, themes and emerging concepts. At the same time, I have to set aside similar ideas

while isolate the rest of the different ideas. Over time, these concepts will be branded into categories. Categories refer to problems, issues and concerns pertaining to this study, and the following step is to create sub-categories which answer questions about the when, how, why and what consequences related to the phenomenon studied (Dzakiria, 2008).

3.6.2 Axial Coding

Moving on, the next procedure is execution of axial coding; “a set of procedures where data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between a category and its subcategories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.97). This is a process similar to open coding but with more details and attempts to narrow down the categories, sub-categories and its properties. The aim at this stage is to find consistency among patterns and concepts.

In interpretive paradigm where meaning is produced from data, I have to depend on my judgments when analyzing data because some participants do not use the words I have selected to be the key words (Dzakiria, 2004). Basically, I would need to mostly rely on the meanings and synonyms of the words they use in order to group and match the themes found in their responses with the existing categories. Dzakiria (2004) posits this process is a stage where reading the transcriptions over and over again is crucial until one is confident that the themes and data emerged are saturated.

3.6.3 Selective Coding

Once data is saturated, I have to select the core categories as it is the final stage of validating data and finalizing what will be presented later on. Strauss and Corbin

(1990) state that it is a “process of selecting the core category, systemically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (p.116). The core categories in which each has its own categories and sub-categories have the ability to answer all the research questions and accomplish the objectives of this study.

3.6.4 Interpretive Approach

In line with hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism, interpretative theory stresses the need for clarification in explaining meaning in human actions, texts or objects (Dzakiria, 2008). This approach helps me to interpret data from my stance as the researcher who is directly and continuously involve with the participants and the area of study. The aim of an analysis is to produce meaning from data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Interpretivism has numerous definitions to it, for this study I would like to quote Walsham’s (1993) description;

“Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science.” (p. 5)

Interpretive perspective lies on the notion that qualitative research should reveal multiple realities of the people involved, as opposed to capturing the objective reality. This is due to objective reality can never be captured (Denzin, 2010). This research predominantly attempts to discover the process of meaning-making by the participants

and thus causing the epistemologies and theoretical framework to blend in harmony. The grounding principle is in regards to exploring participants' realities of constructing own perceptions. Therefore, by implementing interpretive approach, I get to produce meaning from the data gathered and analyzed. While coding procedures took place, I had to simultaneously relate the data with interpretive approach, along with all of the other epistemologies and theoretical considerations I have deemed to be suitable in this study, which primarily give an emphasis on construction of meaning and interpreting those meanings produced.

3.6.5 Narrative Analysis

In order to present the data after coding procedures involving open, axial and selective, I have decided to implement narrative analysis as a method to deliver the results of this study. Narrative is both process and product in this study because it tries to reduce the story to a set of elements which may reveal the realities of participants who experienced Edmodo. Narratives refer to stories that signify a set of events that can be generated during the data collection process, such as via in-depth interviews and the analysis underlying the approach provides a clearer understanding of a given research area. According to Dzakiria (2008), there are four categories in which narrative framework focuses on, namely; 'orientation' as it describes the setting and character, 'abstract' as it summarizes the events happening in the story, 'complicating action' where it offers an evaluative commentary on events, conflicts and themes, and finally 'resolution' as it describes the outcomes of the story.

This form of analysis is chosen because it attempts to unravel the point or motive of the story (Mishler, 1986; p.236). This approach simply provides meaning to the

participants' lives and to allow their voices to be heard. In order to do so, I have to retell their views in terms of stories. Lauritzen and Jaegar (1997) posit, narrative analysis can be factual as it tells a real life incident. Soon after comprehending the saturated data and emergent themes, data findings are presented in a narration manner which will reflect the truths in participants' realities when they were constructing perceptions in regards to the phenomenon studied. In short, this form of factuality in narrative style mirrors upon the participants' point of views.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explicitly explains in details the methodologies adopted in the mission of conducting the study. The procedures above elucidated how data will be analyzed after it has been gathered. Beforehand, I offered insights of how this research is conducted using the instruments developed. Research procedure is also discussed systematically so that one may comprehend the steps and measures taken in carrying out the study. The ways in which I decided to choose the participants and how I chose them were shared with the readers as well. At the beginning of this chapter, I gave a preview on the ethical considerations that I thought is adequate and appropriate for the purposes of this research. Besides that, I described what are the epistemology and theoretical framework selected and how it will be suitable to guide me in all aspects of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROAD TAKEN TO ACQUIRE AND PRODUCE INFORMATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the processes and stages during data collection. As a qualitative study, the whole developments throughout data acquisition should be explicitly explained for readers' perusal. Hence, I have taken the liberty to share occurrences of events which led to data findings in this study. Next, I have also included the experiences I have gained while conducting data analysis. This chapter consists of progression during data collection and steps that took place in the course of data analysis.

4.1 Journey to Data Collection

Upon having interview protocol and the necessary methods to conduct data collection, the next action I executed was drafting a permission form and formal letter informing the university and potential participants regarding the study. From thereof, everything I planned fell into places. The processes of my journey during data collection are illustrated in this section so that readers may experience and imagine what I went through in order to obtain the data needed. Overall, the whole processes of data collection had been a smooth sailing despite meeting with several inevitable issues along the way.

4.1.1 Approaching the Participants

Before knowing who I should give the consent forms to, obviously I had to go on a search hunt for participants based on purposive sampling (Yin, 2011). Having decided the participants would be from 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya, I opted to use my contacts that I have in the alma mater of mine. Recently graduated from the institution in 2013, I conveniently have my juniors who are still studying there. The person I contacted immediately was my 4th Year junior whom I have known very well, I seek for her help to nominate several names whom she would reckon to be able to opine lengthily in my area of study. From the intake of 2012/2013, she nominated six (6) names out of the 25 students in total; subsequently she created a chat group on Facebook comprising of herself, potential participants and I. Facebook was utilized because all of them are friends on the social media.

Ultimately, the first encounter I had with all of them before finalizing the participants was through the Facebook's chat room. Therefrom, I introduced myself, the current institution in which I am studying at and my intentions of approaching them. Briefly, I elucidated the purposes of this study, duration that it would take and what contributions I aim to obtain. Two (2) of the potential participants could not partake in this research due to multiple commitments at the time. Meanwhile, the remaining four (4) participants agreed to be involved. The whole process of this stage alone took approximately three (3) days as I had allocated them with some time to consider and think about joining the study. Initially I already decided on having only four (4) participants due to the nature and purposes of this study (Adler & Adler, n.d). Even though I was introduced to six (6) possible participants, I knew I needed only four (4), thus when two (2) persons could not contribute, it did not pose any issue in the

developments and requirements of the study. Partaking in any research should be an act of voluntary, thus I allowed the participants to contemplate about the offer and weigh its pros and cons. I aimed at having participants who do not only suit the characteristics preferred for the objectives of this study, but I also intended to have participants who are committed and willing to invest their time and effort as well as have much thoughts to offer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). At first, I was worried that I might end up having zero volunteers; however with perseverance and persuasion, I have managed to get their cooperation and willingness to contribute.

Despite there has been concerns raised over the issue of sampling size in a qualitative researches, academicians and everyone involved must know that it is significant to view data in terms of rich and thick (Dibley, 2011) as opposed to having bigger sample size (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Hence, having decided why I opted to have minimal number of participants in my study, I aimed at producing promising findings that will be sufficient to answer questions raised in the study. Upon acquiring the agreements of the four (4) participants, we exchanged phone numbers for the ease of communication. Accordingly, I created a group on “What’s app” (a chatting application for smart phones), for the five (5) of us. The execution of this application has helped making the progression of the study faster and more efficient. In the chatting room, we discussed numerous matters pertaining to schedules, place of meeting, transportations, whose turn for interviews and many others. Further consultations about these matters were discussed face to face when we met for the first time and from time to time in a duration of two (2) months during in which this study took place in the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya.

4.1.2 Seeking Permissions

Once when the participants have been found, I proceeded to the next process; which was seeking permissions from whom this study may concern. University of Malaya as the chosen site which I deemed to be appropriate and suitable for purposes of this study had been notified pertaining to the data collection of this research. However due to unavoidable issues, the process was prolonged and led me to write an inform letter instead. The informed letter is drafted as a memo notifying I have acquired signed agreements from the participants and no harm shall come to anyone partaking in the study. I further informed them about conducting interviews with its students within or outside the campus' compound. The letter too had a clause requesting permission and informing any disclosure of relevant information shared by participants is hoped to be allowed. Enclosed with the letter, were signed consent forms by participants, defense proposal's approval and thesis conceptual article. By doing so, I am avoiding any conflict of interests in the future (Corti et. al., 2000). University of Malaya as my alma mater is highly respected by me and therefore, I shall not tarnish its reputation with false or irrelevant facts. However, revealing certain issues that might be related to the institution can be a sensitive matter. Being aware of this area of concern has helped me to be more careful of how I interpret and deliver findings while at the same time ensuring there is no misleading information presented in the report. The latest letter similarly was submitted to the Faculty of Education, forwarded to the Dean of the faculty concerned. I had acquired the approval to pursue my intentions, in which all of these ongoing processes took approximately two months from the submission date of the first letter.

Next, I moved on to the next stage of my data collection's journey. Before finalizing the chosen participants, I have written a consent form as a part of the ethical considerations. Consent forms are crucial and must be obtained to ensure confidentiality and transparency regarding the study. In the form, I have explained the details of the procedures, steps, number of meetings, instruments developed, compensations, security and other related matters. These forms come in two copies, one is kept by the participants and another is kept by me for future's use. Obtaining the authorization from participants was an easier process because they were already informed of the research's purposes before meeting with me for the first time. After a brief explanation was given by me, distribution of consent forms took place. Participants took a few minutes to read the form carefully and discussed among themselves (all of the participants are classmates of the same course). I encouraged them to inquire further if they had any questions in mind. Evidently, providing future participants with substantial amount of information helps them to decide on participating as they have fewer doubts and know what is expected of them. In a nutshell, acquiring permissions from related stakeholders or participants in the study are highly important and should be the top priority before any data collection takes place.

4.1.3 Making Appointments

Afterward, I made appointments with the participants. During this stage, it was slightly difficult to come to a common agreement on selected dates. All of the participants have own commitments that they must attend to, for example; sports, projects, organizations, assignments, classes and presentations. Many times we had to reschedule and reshuffle turns for interview sessions. Furthermore, due to my home

based in the Northern side of Malaysia, I rarely travel to the Southern side. However, during the course of data collection, I stayed in Petaling Jaya where University of Malaya is located, for a week in a month; I did so for two months. Overall, I came to the research site for two weeks in duration of two months, whereby in between the time gap of face to face, I posted numerous tasks on Edmodo. We were required to meet only for the interview sessions while all tasks were done online. As a result of this matter, we overcame the issue by each of us sacrificing and squeezing in a slot within a week when I was available to be present at the research site for interview sessions.

Cooperation from participants had been very assisting in accumulating the data. The first face to face assembly was completed efficiently where I enlightened them about the study and collected consent forms at the end of the session. We decided on the next interview meeting with everyone having individual sessions respectively. Any issues before the sessions took place were discussed in the chat room that we have. Sometimes, when one of them had a volleyball practice or events that needed his/her presence, they would negotiate among themselves and swap interview sessions. By doing this, I faced fewer hiccups in the course of data acquisition because the processes remained to be on schedule. Admittedly, making appointments for the face to face individual interview sessions was quite challenging because everyone had to cater for each other's time and be considerate while maintaining daily routines. Frequently, I waited until they had finished their classes and afterwards they would have free time to get on with the interviews straight away. Participants too preferred this approach as they did not have to waste any time or return to their respective

residential colleges, which later will only cause them feeling reluctant to come out of their rooms and go to the agreed place of meeting.

4.1.4 Place of Meetings

Deciding on the place for our meetings was slightly tricky. I could not simply reserve the library's discussion room as I am no longer a student in the institution. I could apply for a temporary access card to use the facilities and resources in the main library; however I had to seek for approval from my participants beforehand. While my participants are eligible to reserve the room, they would rather have the discussions within faculty's compound as it was easier and more convenient. I did not mind about the place itself because as long as I may conduct my interviews and gather information needed in a convenient and comfortable manner, I would be more than grateful to accomplish these goals. Furthermore, the place selected for the session should not only be comfortable and equipped with the necessary facilities, it should be safe for the participants as well (McCosker, Barnard & Gerber, 2001) in order for them to share their thoughts with an open mind.

Finally, we settled on carrying our discussions and interviews around the faculty's area. Finding a good spot with tables, chairs, plugs and comfortable surroundings was not difficult as the Faculty of Education provides many places within its compound with proper facilities for students' use and is easily available. Nonetheless, my only concern was regarding the noise in our surrounding as it was in an open area with other students studying and discussing as well. Inevitably, the concern I had did become a persisting issue for a few times. Frequently, when we have found and secured a quiet space for the interview, other students would come and occupy the

vacant area. Additionally, once a participant and I had to change the place immediately while in the middle of the interview because the lounge room that we were using closes at 5pm. I could not avoid the issue on time, as I had to wait for the participants to be released from classes that usually end at 4pm onwards and those appointed time frames were the only intervals when participants were available. Nevertheless, such issues on surroundings and suitable places for interview sessions in various areas within the Faculty of Education managed to be overcome due to the cooperation, effort, teamwork and toleration which both participants and I had throughout the meetings.

4.1.5 Insider versus Outsider

The issue on insider versus outsider in qualitative studies has existed for decades. No single notion on whether a researcher should be either an insider or outsider can be made. Researchers play a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis, therefore these issues have been under the limelight for every approach in a qualitative study. An insider is when a researcher shares identity, characteristics, experience and role with the participants (Kanuha, 2000); meanwhile an outsider is a researcher who does not share common characteristics with the participants. Asselin (2003) postulated an insider should work with both eyes open, which means he/she should try to be someone who assumes he/she knows either nothing or much less about the phenomenon being studied. In this case, an insider should attempt to be at a neutral stance and avoid from allowing self-perceptions and views being projected onto the participants or the study.

Being an insider myself in this study, the apparent advantages that manifested would be pertaining to the rapid and more complete acceptance by the participants. Knowing I am an alumnus and was their senior increased the level of transparency and trust between us. As a result, they became more at ease, open and honest which helped in gathering greater depth to the data. However, the critical issue of concern is regarding the findings and interpretations that could be shaped and guided by the core aspects of my personal experience instead of the participants'. In order to avoid and lessen this area of apprehension, I remained at a stance of neutrality and took the role of a listener and observer. Evading too much of participation and involvement assisted in this quest, additionally when holding the membership to be an insider does not signify complete sameness within the group selected, likewise not being a member of a group does not represent complete indifference (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). A researcher can be both an insider and outsider, which what I opted to be in conducting the data collection and analysis. I refrained from making assumptions and projecting own thoughts onto the participants as I allowed them to explore more on their own. On the other hand, the benefits of being an insider are the higher level of transparency and comprehension when they spoke their mind to me.

4.1.6 The Extent of Revelation

While quantitative study puts more emphasis on the number of participants and amount of numerical data mounted at the end of the research; a qualitative data is more concerned about how in depth the information is gathered after the data collection. A qualitative researcher must be guided by what he/she wishes to accomplish and knows thoroughly the objectives of the study (Silverman, 2009). When carrying out data collection, I contemplated on how much is enough regarding

the extent of revelation participants are disclosing. Interviews can be dreadful if one fails to navigate the flow of the sessions properly. At the end of the day, I realized it is not about the quantity or piling amount of data I managed to acquire, rather it depends on what problems I wish to shed a light on and what are the responses to the area of study. Abiding to the interview protocol I developed and permitting impromptu questions to pour in during the process of interviewing, aided in keeping me focused and knowing when the data collected is adequate and able to answer the research questions of this study (Yin, 2011).

4.2 Progressions towards Data Analysis

Upon completing the process of data collection, I then pursued the next stage of this research which was the developments in data analysis. Admittedly, the processes involving analyses were challenging and thoughts provoking. I have all methodologies and steps lined out in the study, but the real obstacle would occur when I attempted at data crunching and interpretations of what the participants wish to imply in their speeches. Below were the progressions in coming out with the final findings and results of the research.

4.2.1 Interview Transcriptions

The first step before analyzing the data acquired was getting all the audio files of interviews transcribed. Transcriptions are highly crucial in qualitative study in order to look at the utterances line by line and not missing out on any crucial points (Davidson, 2009). Some researchers however may choose to only depend on their notes that they jot down at the time of when the interviews take place. I on the other hand, jotted down important ideas when simultaneously listened to the participants'

responses to my questions, while at the same time I left my audio player on the table recording the whole conversations.

I had a total of 12 interview sessions in which the duration for each audio file is approximately 30 minutes. The process of transcribing took almost a month and a half whereby I transcribed the interviews word by word. Indeed, it was an overlong and tiring process as I had to focus and listen attentively to what the participants were articulating. Recurrently I had to click pause on the audio player, rewind and listened to the same conversations for many times. I started with transcriptions of the scaffolding session to further understand participants' stances, backgrounds and previous experiences. Next, I did not peruse the scaffolding's transcriptions immediately; instead I went on transcribing the remaining interview sessions where I had introduced Edmodo to the participants. This is my method of transcribing because I believe at finishing one process at a time. If I had chosen to instantaneously analyze the early transcriptions, I assumed I would be anticipating certain answers and be biased when doing the remaining transcriptions as I will only be searching for what I deem to be relevant and coherent to the scaffoldings' data.

Similarly, the repetitive routines of transcribing the remaining audio files after unfolding Edmodo to the participants occurred. At this stage I merely wrote down whatever I heard on the audio player as I was not looking for any specific main ideas just yet. I was very receptive towards hearing new thoughts and point of views as I believe everything they shared would be worthy of noting. However, repetitive words, fillers and similar notions participants set forth were not written down in details when it occurred for the third time and onwards. These repetitions of ideas came about

mostly during the final interviews in which they were asked to discuss further about Edmodo. At the time, it was already clear what views participants have on Edmodo and what are the main elements they wish to deliver. All of the transcriptions were completed using Microsoft Word.

4.2.2 Profiling the Participants

As discussed previously in Chapter 3, I profiled the data by marking it with codes such as; “Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview”, “Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview”, “Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview”, “Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview” or “Rose/EDMODO2/Interview”, “Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview” and so forth. I decided to capitalize the middle part of the profiling so that readers may understand from which stage was the interview came from. Understanding the stages will help readers to see the developments of participants’ thoughts and how their ideas expanded over time.

Meanwhile, participants’ replies and works on Edmodo were not individually marked according to their nicknames. Rather, based on the main ideas they unanimously put forth, I have taken screen shots and converted it into photographs and profiled these pictures according to the main ideas it represents. For example; “Reaction Button/WEBSITE/Photograph” or “Quiz/WEBSITE/Photograph” and others. The capitalize part of the coding indicate from which source the photos emerged. Moreover, ‘seeing is believing’; therefore in these photos I illustrated what elements or central ideas it represents and how does it look like on the website.

The concept maps are also coded correspondingly like the previous ones, for example; “Drawbacks/EMME/Concept Map” or “Interface/FATIN/Concept Map” and so on.

For concept maps, I opted to distinguish them by capitalizing the nicknames of participants for easier perusal of readers. This is due to the reason that each participant had only produce one concept map and I presented the central items on the map by cropping out the less important ones. By doing so, I am highlighting the significant points participants kept repeating during the interviews. Moreover, every participant has highlighted different main ideas respectively. A few times I did stumble upon the issue of profiling and how will I be able to distinguish all of the combined data gathered, especially when each takes a different form than the other. Nonetheless, these are the approaches of profiling participants and data which I thought would be most appropriate for the study.

4.2.3 Taxonomy of Data

As soon as I have decided on the profiling of participants and data, I was ready to look into data analyses using the transcriptions I prepared earlier. The first action executed in data analysis was open coding. I started with reading the scaffolding's transcriptions line by line and highlighting possible area of concerns that participants may have. During scaffolding where they have not been introduced to Edmodo, I inquired on the pressing current issues such as problems in language learning, their experiences and first hands-on encounters with e-learning. I wish to tap into their previous knowledge so that they may recall related occurrences that could be beneficial later. Meanwhile, as for the transcriptions regarding Edmodo, similarly I executed open coding instantaneously after I finished with the scaffolding's data. There were two different interview sessions for each participant pertaining to Edmodo. I perused the transcriptions line by line and at the same time highlighting the possible central ideas. All of the transcriptions were saved in the soft copies of

Microsoft Word, thus I underlined and did changes promptly using the software. At this stage, open coding was a process that consisted of mostly naming and categorizing of phenomenon via intense examination of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.62). As this study has photographs and concept maps as well, I skimmed through those data and roughly categorize it into possible main points that would connect it to the interviews' central ideas. Below is an example of open coding where I created connections between the ideas set forth from all interview sessions. This excerpt concerns predominantly the emerging theme of 'informal environment'.

Table 4.1 Open coding on Learning Environment

<p>EMME</p>	<p><i>I think that Edmodo is a website that should be more interactive and less rigid in terms of the language usage. It will be really less formal</i></p> <p><i>I think it shouldn't be up to the educators it should be up to the students, a hundred percent to the student whether or not want to be formal or informal and it should be an individual choice, if a student want it to be all the way formal so let it be but if this one student want to take it slow, relax and use all those abbreviations and acronyms so let it go</i></p> <p><i>And then I have this notion when I think that if I were to discuss with my friends people whom I know well, some of them might get offended with what I say and really get emotional at certain point. I would rather have discussions with people whom I don't know because I don't know how they will react to my opinion. Are they going to treat this matter like adults? So I would prefer not knowing whom I am interacting with on Edmodo</i></p>
<p>ROSE</p>	<p><i>For our level, lecturers always encourage us not to memorize the script but then I can see that there are still some students who really memorize the script. I mean it is too obvious. I think now because it is online they cannot see what the students are doing, when they are recording their voice whether they are reading or talk to people and keep talking so it is good to have speaking assessment here but maybe we can do additional discussion like you can pick up the same topics prepared and then do face to face discussion in class</i></p> <p><i>Yes it will be helpful for many students to know how to speak in front of the crowd. Recording alone can help to eliminate nervousness.</i></p>

	<i>Of course I find this site very helpful in terms of helping the students to develop English because we can never stick to the traditional approach of teaching and learning and we can never limit learning in class rooms. You cannot only learn language in class. We use it in the social media, we use it when we met people of different languages, people who can speak English so it is helpful.</i>
<i>FARAH</i>	<i>Yea I like the fact that I can see what my friends are doing. I can also copy their points. [joke] When I see how they did it. It becomes clearer to me how I am supposed to do the work.</i> <i>It is exciting to me because I had so much fun reading because I know how my friends are. This is amazing like who said this, who said that, who is going to talk like that. So I think it is really fun.</i>
<i>FATIN</i>	<i>I think maybe it exceeded my expectation. It's both formal and informal at the same time. It seems like you are logged in to your social networking site but the content is educational.</i> <i>I think it's very different, for example, from my formal education portal, UM Spectrum. It's totally different because this site is more relaxing, it's like you are not logged in an education site at all. Easy to navigate</i>

Moving on to the next advancement in classification of data is known as axial coding. Thereof was when I attempted at connecting the dots and solving the puzzles in order to make all the categories fit together nicely. According to the highlighted main concepts found during open coding, I jumbled all the data in one place and pull strings between them to see the interrelationships and consistency. In a new Microsoft Word document, I looked over at the emphasized possible important points earlier during open coding while transferring it into the new document where i have already created general categories. Axial coding is when I mixed all data together regardless of when and where it came from, as long as its emphasized chunks and pieces in open coding belong to the new categories created in the new document solely made for axial coding. This is a process similar to open coding but with more details and attempts to narrow down the categories, sub-categories and its properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.97). The aim at this stage is to find consistency among patterns and concepts.

All forms of data (interviews, photographs and concept maps) coming from the entire data collection were all studied and put under relevant categories at once. Below is an example of axial coding where the excerpt attempts to find consistency in the theme of ‘informal environment’. One may observe how the main points get narrowed down from open coding as at this stage, other points had been taken out where it fits other themes better.

Table 4.2 Axial coding on Learning Environment

EMME	<p><i>When I was in school, my friends said English is a subject where you have to memorize, sit and study. But I didn't study like that. Thus, using Edmodo they can see the lessons are more informal, it's more on acquisition of knowledge and learning process. They know that learning doesn't stop in class, there's a website they can explore to increase proficiency in English. Edmodo is linked to other websites as well, students can get more materials at the same time.</i></p>
ROSE	<p><i>Different kind of experience and that's helpful as it's less formal and you won't feel restrained. If you don't like the environment of the class, Edmodo has helped students to break free from such condition.</i></p> <p><i>Of course I find this site very helpful in terms of helping the students to develop English because we can never stick to the traditional approach of teaching and learning and we can never limit learning in class rooms. You cannot only learn language in class. We use it in the social media, we use it when we met people of different languages, people who can speak English so it is helpful.</i></p>
FARAH	<p><i>It is exciting to me because I had so much fun reading because I know how my friends are. This is amazing like who said this, who said that, who is going to talk like that. So I think it is really fun.</i></p>
FATIN	<p><i>I think maybe it exceeded my expectation. It's both formal and informal at the same time. It seems like you are logged in to your social networking site but the content is educational.</i></p> <p><i>It enhances learning by helping students who are shy to talk, not participating in class and lack of confidence to express their opinions. For example, when the teacher assigns tasks on Edmodo, maybe those students will get to express ideas and comment of friends' opinions better. Later on, it will boost their confidence level and in class will be able to speak comfortably.</i></p>

The final stage for classification of data was a process called selective coding. Saturation and classification of data involving generating categories and sub-categories earlier during axial coding were then being validated and finalized. Selective coding was an action of choosing core categories that would represent its smaller categories and sub-categories. These core categories in which each has its own smaller elements and central ideas have the ability to answer all the research questions and accomplish the objectives of this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The excerpt below illustrates only one of the sub-categories. Here forth, the main ideas for the theme of ‘informal environment’ get validated, refined and confirmed while other relevant points had been reshuffled and classified into more fitting themes. The theme of ‘informal environment’ below is merely a chunk of a bigger category. Under the core category of ‘apt learning environments’; there are three identified themes which explained the phenomenon concerning learning atmospheres that will be conducive for students. One of the themes for this core category is ‘informal environment’.

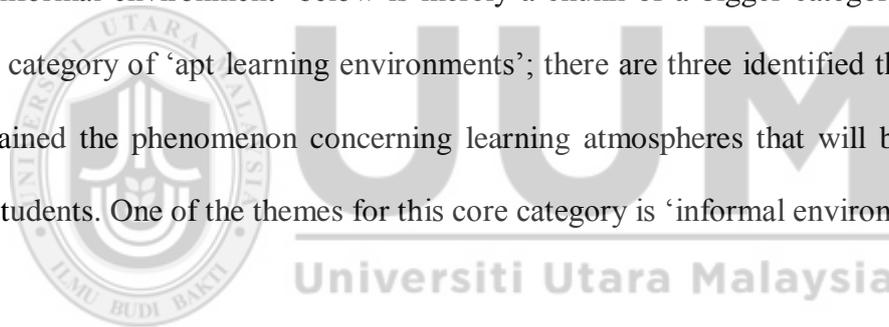


Table 4.3 Selective Coding on Learning Environment

<i>EMME</i>	<i>When I was in school, my friends said English is a subject where you have to memorize, sit and study. But I didn't study like that. Thus, using Edmodo they can see the lessons are more informal, it's more on acquisition of knowledge and learning process. They know that learning doesn't stop in class, there's a website they can explore to increase proficiency in English. Edmodo is linked to other websites as well, students can get more materials at the same time.</i>
<i>ROSE</i>	<i>Different kind of experience and that's helpful as it's less formal and you won't feel restrained. If you don't like the environment of the class, Edmodo has helped students to break free from such condition.</i>
<i>FARAH</i>	<i>It is exciting to me because I had so much fun reading because I know how my friends are. This is amazing like who said this, who said that, who is going to talk like that. So I think it is really fun.</i>
<i>FATIN</i>	<i>It's both formal and informal at the same time. It seems like you are logged in to your social networking site but the content is</i>

	<p><i>educational.</i></p> <p><i>It enhances learning by helping students who are shy to talk, not participating in class and lack of confidence to express their opinions. For example, when the teacher assigns tasks on edmodo, maybe those students will get to express ideas and comment of friends' opinions better. Later on, it will boost their confidence level and in class will be able to speak comfortably.</i></p>
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In this study, I have produced three core categories that would illuminate the whole participants' experiences and directly accomplish the objectives intended. Under these core categories, there are sub-categories which have own branches and classified main ideas respectively. I am illuminating the coding processes involving interviews alone because classifying and confirming themes for concept maps and photographs are easier. Deciding which category concept maps and photographs belong to were done simultaneously with coding for interviews, however the two instruments effortlessly can be grouped according to the emerging themes from interviews. Indeed, classifying data and perusing its contents were a tedious process. At first, I was overwhelmed and did not possess a clue on when, where and how should I start. Nevertheless, after looking at the stages of coding and personally getting immersed into the data analyses progressions, I managed to be engrossed while the essential concepts to this study slowly emerged. A researcher adopting this approach should always be patient and willing to read and reread the information he/she has for several times before being able to saturate the data.

4.2.4 Triangulation of Data

Data triangulation ensures data saturation; therefore one must be aware of this direct link in order to establish higher level of validity and reliability in one's research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In retrospect to this study, constructivism by Crotty (1998)

dictates that perceptions and meanings are not discovered, but constructed by choice. Even though a group of students might face similar experience, the way they view the experience could be different than one another. Within this epistemology, hermeneutics denote that meaning is participative and cannot be produced by the researcher while aiming at disclosing meanings from participants (Crotty, 1998). In relation to this qualitative study, the participants were exposed to the same e-learning tool previously and Edmodo as well, however the way they perceived and conveyed meanings were dissimilar.

Similarly to hermeneutics, despite being both an insider and outsider in this study, neither did I project my views onto participants nor participate in the process of generating perceptions and meanings. Quite the reverse, participants willingly disclosed personal and own interpretations of their experiences that they encountered. Meanwhile, symbolic interaction concerns mostly on face to face interactions that took place (Crotty, 1998), whereby movements, facial expressions and gestures were all very significant in implying and connoting important messages participants intend to express. In this sense I acted as the researcher who catches the process of interpretations through which participants construct their actions. Finally, interpretivism stresses on generating meanings from data (Miles & Huberman, 1984) and believes that even though no study can capture a single reality of a phenomenon or experiences (Denzin, 2010), at least a qualitative study should be able to unfold the realities of participants via the interpretations of the researcher.

This research predominantly attempts to discover the process of meaning-making by the participants and thus causing the epistemologies and theoretical frameworks above

to blend in harmony because ultimately all of it aims at producing meanings out of participants' experiences as well as emphasizing on the interpretations of the researcher towards participants' replies, responses, gestures and body languages. Additionally, I had to concurrently relate the data with all of the epistemologies and theoretical considerations that I have deemed to be suitable in this study, which primarily give an emphasis on construction of meaning and interpreting those meanings produced. Therefore, by implementing these approaches while analyzing the information obtained, I get to triangulate and saturate the data. To ensure data is triangulated nicely, I cross checked all of the data found along with its themes and concepts during the stages of analyses which I have illuminated earlier. Moreover, having more instruments and types of data collected will be helpful in enhancing validity and reliability of this research as it does not rely on solely one type of data. Side by side with all information I have, I needed to ensure it complies with the epistemologies and theoretical frameworks that guided the directions of this study as well. Undoubtedly, when I examined the information at hand I had to rely on my judgments and interpretations of what I thought the participants intended to convey; which is allowed and possible based on the theories adopted for this research. Triangulation of data using all three dissimilar instruments while abiding the theories/approaches selected do assist in increasing the validity and reliability of the study.

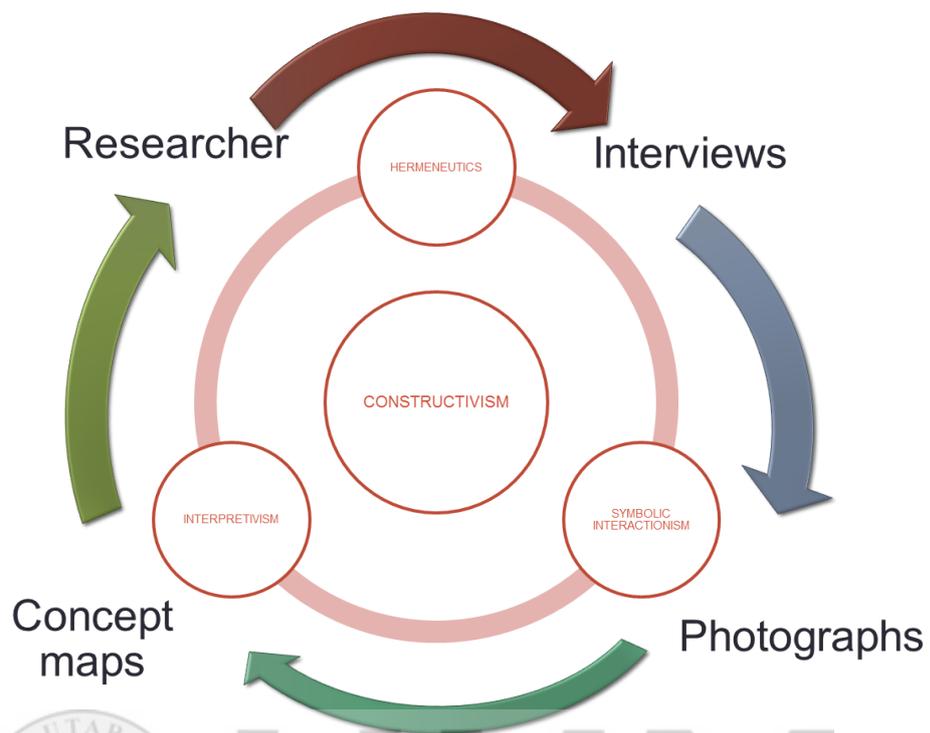


Figure 4.1 Triangulation Process

Besides the above method in triangulation, I further attempted at enhancing and ensuring the validity and reliability of this study by contacting the participants. In the email I composed, I enclosed a copy of data analysis' findings for their perusal. I requested for their confirmation, correction (if any) and feedback on the results produced. All of them unanimously consented on the contents of the results by confirming that my interpretation of their views are aligned with what they intended to say. Meanwhile, feedbacks that they provided are mainly regarding grammar items in the interview transcripts and compliments on results produced. Below are the replied emails from them pertaining to the discoveries that I have manufactured after studying all of the data gathered.



Figure 4.2 Confirmation on Results Produced

As we can observe, the process of triangulating data is quite lengthy, overwhelming and tiresome. However, the journey becomes a fruitful one especially when the researcher manages to obtain validation on the end products after its multiple analyses. Above are the processes in triangulating the data that involved all

instruments to be analyzed at once while abiding the epistemologies and theoretical frameworks. Moreover, I was very contented to be able to ensure its validity and reliability further after obtaining confirmation from the participants themselves. Apparently, the interpretive approach adopted matches with participants' construction of meaning making as the results manufactured are indeed what the participants meant to convey.

4.2.5 Saturation of Data

Content validity may be impeded if data saturation is not able to be achieved as it has an impact on the quality of the study concerned (Kerr, Nixon & Wild, 2010). The stage of data saturation is reached when; enough information is obtained to replicate the study (Walker, 2012), the ability to acquire additional new information has been attained and further coding is no longer feasible. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that no single method in particular may ensure data saturation because designs are not universal. If one has come to the point of no new data, therefore one has most likely reached of no new themes; ultimately one has get hold of data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

According to Fusch and Ness (2015) as well, in order to inaugurate validity and reliability, data triangulation needs to be secured and accomplished foremost. In light of the triangulation processes that I have illuminated earlier, it assures the progression of data saturation. Herewith I decided to elucidate a small chunk of evidence whereby data saturation has successfully been obtained. Below is an example of saturation on the topic of Edmodo's implementation in Malaysia;

Table 4.4 Saturation on Edmodo's implementation

Suitability to be implemented in Malaysia:

"I think this site is very appropriate to be used for teaching process outside the class room because it gives the opportunity for the teachers and the students to discuss."

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

"There's a huge possibility that I will implement it. I will make use of the features I have mentioned, for instance if I have finished teaching in class and I would like to know how much have they learned and understood, instead of conducting assessments in the next class, I can post a quiz on Edmodo because it's more immediate. By looking at the immediate results of assessments, I too can do a reflection to see how my teaching strategy has worked on them."

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

"I think it's beneficial because it's an online site. Students can learn English not only by doing tasks or assessments on this site but also find their resources online. If it's in class they need to do impromptu thinking and sometimes depend on their friends' ideas."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

"Students today are more techs savvy so they will be more comfortable to learn using online platform because they are used to this method and are good at handling technology. It will attract them to learn and use it because of familiarity and preference."

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

"Edmodo is a good tool for teachers and students because of the abundance materials that can be obtained from around the world. I think if we were to use

Edmodo in Malaysian classroom, we need to first and foremost, introduce the site.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

As we can observe from the excerpt directly above, all participants unanimously in support of Edmodo’s implementation. This example is given to provide readers with an insight of how did I reach saturation. Above is one of the situations whereby all participants agreed on a particular topic while having the same views when asked to explain their reasoning behind the agreement. Therefore, at this stage I could not analyze any further, no new emerging themes and coding is no longer feasible. In the following chapters, one may witness how saturated data is presented in its categories which are supported by citations and evidences from data analyzed beforehand. In addition, a prior stimulating triangulation development had already assisted in guaranteeing data saturation.

4.2.6 The Deserving Emphasis

Due to the extensive amount of data, it is impossible to present all of it. Especially when priorities need to be given on only selected items related directly to the objectives, concerns, issues and purposes of the study. Even though the interviews have produced much data findings, many however are repetitive items. Henceforth, I omitted information which I deem to be irrelevant or unimportant for the aims of the study. The chosen information presented is comprised of highlighted themes and categories which resulted in the production of core categories.

Before entering selective coding, I was contemplating on what are the less significant concepts and sub-categories that do not need to be relayed to the readers. However, upon executing selective coding, gradually I could see the patterns and most deserving ideas that must be conveyed in the report. The core categories are like an umbrella which has many branches under its paradigm. The less essential concepts were the ones that did not receive much attention from the participants; be it in their sharing of thoughts during interviews, works on Edmodo or concept maps. Those minor concepts which received less emphasis have led me to believe that it was not very momentous to be reported. This interpretation came about from the collection I have on the information, which are neither many nor occurred repeatedly.

Finally, after obtaining the necessary information that would answer many questions posed in the study; I decided to convey the findings and results in a narrative manner. Mishler (1986) posits this approach is suitable in unraveling the motive of a story. Allowing participants' voices to be heard while concurrently maintain their authentic views can be done through retelling the perceptions in the form of stories. This form of factuality in narrative style mirrors upon the participants' point of views in regards to their experiences involving Edmodo (Lauritzen & Jaegar, 1997).

4.3 Conclusion

This particular chapter is intended to inform readers about the journey I had in collecting the data. The expedition ended with giving a limelight to the well deserving main ideas of the study which before that, I had to execute the processes of triangulation of data, classification of data, profiling the participants and transcribing the interview sessions. The road I took during the voyage in the course of collecting

data was carefully described in details, whereby I looked into the extent of revelation that this study should have (how much is enough to answer the questions and when to stop collecting information), issues on insider versus outsider, deciding on place of meetings, making appointments, approaching the participants as well as seeking permissions from the ‘gate keeper’ and the participants themselves.



CHAPTER FIVE

PRELUDE TO THE PHENOMENON

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I have opted to give enlightenment on the current issues surrounding our education system. Before stepping into the world of Edmodo, it is wise for us to look into the current anxieties pertaining to English language learning. Comprehending issues as such from the eyes of students and future English teachers might provide us with refreshing insights. Moreover, in light of these areas of concerns, it will help us to see how Edmodo may come into the picture, subsequently helps to at least lighten or lessen the problems in any ways possible.

5.1 Is Traditional Approach a Bad Option?

In chapter 2, I have argued on the limitations of conventional methods which are deemed to be insufficient and unsuitable for 21st century learners comprised of Generations Y and Z, especially with exam orientation as the central focus (Gorsuch, 2000). Nevertheless, I did not share the same sentiments with participants prior the interview sessions as I did not wish to influence and temper with their responses. I had always refrained myself from sharing my thoughts in order to implore theirs in the best natural and neutral ways conceivable. As illuminated previously, I am both an insider and outsider in the study who wishes to learn perspectives from different views. In this category alone, I inquired them on their views concerning traditional approach. One of the participants, Emme opined stating that conventional teaching is still relevant, but only if it comes with the right executions and techniques;

“There is nothing wrong with practicing conventional teaching, but language needs skills that you have to obtain instead of memorizing. The students will not be better speakers because they don’t practice the language.”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

On the contrary to Emme’s reply, the rest of the participants think that there is a major flaw in practicing traditional approach. According to them, traditional method places an enormous emphasis on academic excellence based on how many A’s students can obtain from final examinations (Schrader, 2013). Both Farah and Rose believe that when students learn for the sake of securing good grades, the value of education itself will be meaningless and fluctuating. Additionally, teachers too will be pressured, consequently causing them to focus on teaching students how to score in examinations instead of imparting practical skills and knowledge.

“Traditional approach normally puts a focus on grades but I think it should not be merely on academic achievements at the end of schooling, particularly when English is concerned. When that becomes the focus, the teachers will be evaluated based on how many A’s their students manage to get and indirectly influences on how the teachers teach. Some teaching strategies can be effective but unfortunately are not getting implemented in schools.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Education has to be meaningful; this is the missing crux in the process of teaching and learning in Malaysia. The depth of education itself is an issue; as in are the students learning to get an A or to acquire knowledge for own benefits The delivery of the lesson has to change because if students have any

interest in it, that'll change the way of how the students view the lessons as well as change the way they learn.”

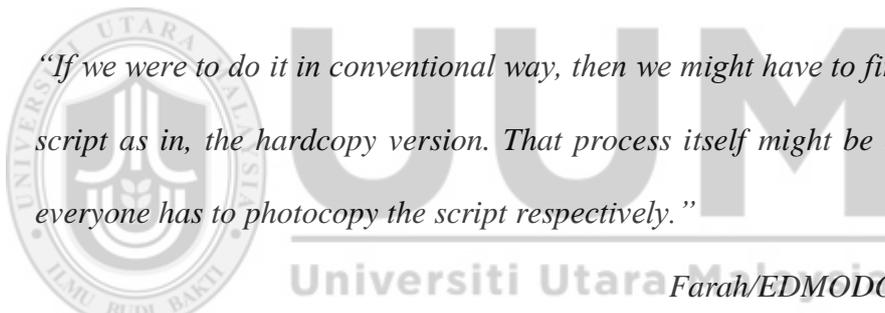
Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Unfortunate potential consequences might take place especially when there are mismatches of learning and teaching styles (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Lawrence, 1993; Oxford, 1990). In light of this issue, participants are apprehensive when the value of learning relies merely on the amount of A's students can secure. The outcomes of practicing traditional methods alone can be manifested on students' behaviors where they tend to be uninterested and negligent in class, turn out to be discouraged about the course, may get bored, stop trying in accomplishing tasks given, do poorly in tests and many others (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Godleski, 1984; Oxford, 1990; Smith & Renzulli, 1984). Another main concern regarding traditional approach is when the activities and lesson plans are teacher-centered rather than the opposite (Elley, 1983). As stated in previous chapters, lessons can be mundane and discouraging when students are not engaged with the lessons (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Godleski, 1984; Oxford, 1990; Smith & Renzulli, 1984). Fatin highlighted the specific issue in her response;

“Problem is that some teachers are not focussing on their students. Lessons are more teacher-centred, that is why the lesson can be boring and students are not paying attention in class.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

The themes of mismatches between learning and teaching styles as well as exam orientation are very much highlighted by the participants and in sync with the previous studies. Although they have not been sent to schools for teaching practicum, they could still share the same sentiments with matured researchers in the field simply by having firsthand experience and enough observations during schooling days. Adding to the category of traditional approach, participants posited that it is a strategy which is not completely effective and wise to be implemented for today's learners, especially when they need diverse methods for their perusal. Touching on the materials and tools being used in conventional methods, two of the participants shared their experience and views pertaining to it;



“If we were to do it in conventional way, then we might have to find the actual script as in, the hardcopy version. That process itself might be more taxing, everyone has to photocopy the script respectively.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Malaysia has been investing a lot on software, websites and CDs alike. I don't like those materials because it's expensive, dull and boring. In school, my teacher used it and I didn't like it. The background music for example, can put you to sleep instead of focusing and learning.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

Despite Emme offering a positive view on traditional approach stating it is fitting to be used as long as appropriate materials are implemented and activities are student-centered, she also later admitted she did not like some of the applied teaching approaches in traditional teaching. Meanwhile, majority of the participants already

concluded that conventional methods bring more harmful outcomes than good as it focuses on grades, teacher-centered activities and the pedagogies/materials become extra taxing for both teachers and students.

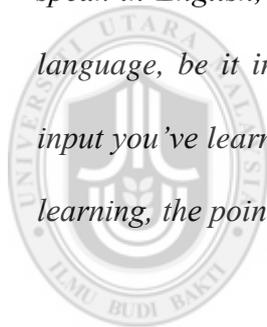
Based on the previous findings and views shared by participants; it is evident that forcing students to demonstrate knowledge and testing content via tests can be a jeopardy for them because they only have minimal control over this matter (Teemant, 2010), this is attributable to what they produce will be of only what they memorize. Thus far, we have established the notion of traditional approach is not the wisest approach to be implemented, especially for this century's learners as Dille and Mezack (1991) further postulated, technology does have a tremendous relation to students' learning style preferences which consequently leads to their academic performances. Another reason why we should not neglect students' preferred learning styles is that they are most likely to learn when placed under apt educational conditions (Pasch et. al., 1995). Moreover, negative perceptions towards their learning curve may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement and negative attitudes (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). The importance of revealing the participants' anxieties over the perplexing issues revolving the implementation of extensive traditional approach is in order for us to see the gap between the problems and what ideas they may offer to lessen it.

5.2 Concerns in English Language Learning

Consequences of traditional approach that is being practiced by educators may vary depending on the implementation and focus of the lesson plans. In this aspect, I inquire the participants to search for issues regarding English language learning as a

result from traditional pedagogies which have been executed for decades until recent times. The emphasized problem they set forth is concerning the inability for our students to converse in English (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). This is a very common issue in Malaysian education context. Regardless of having almost 12 years of studying English in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, our students fail to communicate and apply the knowledge learned from previous educational institutions. In fact, university students refuse to speak in English publicly due to the fear of embarrassments and rejection by peers and lecturers.

“There’s a reason why Malaysian students are very shy when they want to speak in English, it started when they don’t get much chance to speak in the language, be it in class or outside. The issue is whatever vocabularies and input you’ve learned so far, you need to apply those. In the scope of language learning, the point of learning it is to be able to use it.”



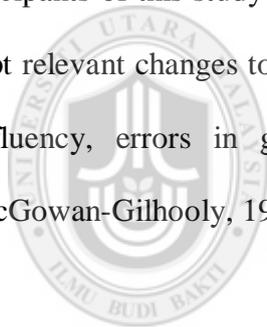
UUM
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“The problem is students cannot speak well in English and I’m not sure if it is due to the lack of confidence. In terms of knowledge, they have the capability to understand the language but less practice and exposure have made them unable to speak in English fluently. Students are commonly receptive towards anything explained and delivered by teachers, but if teachers just provide the knowledge and students are supposed to be like sponge and take everything in, how can students learn effectively?”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

I posed a question earlier in previous chapters; will memorizing contents be adequate for students to apply it in real life situations? Sadly, the answer to the question is ‘no’ according to what participants of this study have stated. In many English language classrooms, students learn the language through a traditional lecture that ends with question-and-answer format and during the lecture, the teacher writes on the blackboard and students simply jot down whatever that is written on the board (Markee, 2002). Such practice is unhealthy and thwarted the learning outcomes. Conventional practices produce students who are incapable of speaking in the targeted language despite having the knowledge needed. Emphasis on grammar will not help generating grammatically correct utterances spontaneously (Ellis, 1997). Both participants of this study and social scientists in language field agree that we need to adopt relevant changes to teaching pedagogies or else students will still face the lack of fluency, errors in grammar and inability to converse the language learnt (MacGowan-Gilhooly, 1991).



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Meanwhile, Rose offers a completely different view regarding this matter. According to her, there are occasions where teachers are not to be blamed. Sometimes, teachers act based on the situation diagnosed and then they will execute the best teaching strategy deemed suitable by them (Williams & Burden, 1997). She further commented, frequently students are the ones who set the standards and outcomes of the lessons as teachers merely impose pedagogies that they think will be most appropriate for their students.

“Problems are vary, for example if I get a class to teach and I assume it is a good class as students can really cooperate and already have a certain level

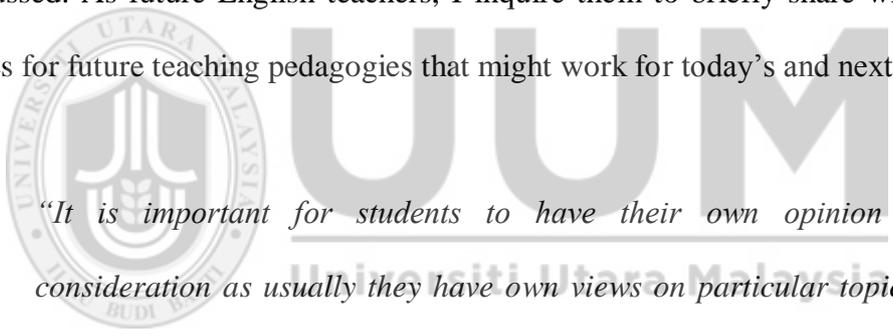
of proficiency, I will then ask them to do discussions but what if the students are not as good, so maybe I have no choice but to lecture them about the poem (presumably the focus of lesson plan). Problems in learning English can come from teachers' spoon feeding, however it relies on students' proficiency level as well."

Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Rose's reply is as fascinating as others because it shows that they see situations from different angles and construct perceptions based on individual encounters. However, the inefficiency in students' proficiency level should not be a deterrent for the teacher of appointed class from pushing and motivating students to improve on their language skills by giving more challenging tasks. Sometimes, teachers prefer to take the easier path and allow students to be at exactly where they are by not attempting to do better in his/her lesson plans. For instance; Thomas (2010) states, students usually do not even read the corrective feedback left by teachers because they only cared about submitting assignments successfully. On the contrary, teachers should be addressing the mistakes made by students instead of circling grammar errors, missing punctuation and others. Explaining what they have done wrong will help them to rectify their mistakes and improve learning experience. Similarly, students who are not very proficient should be encouraged to invest more efforts in learning; probably the teacher could apply communicative and fun teaching involving quizzes, role plays, presentations and discussions while paying less attention to grammar as long as students are able to produce an outcome from what they know. Gradually, learners will be more engrossed in the lessons and acquire additional vocabulary items along with other possible benefits.

5.3 Hopes for Future Teaching Pedagogies

Comprehending the issues pertaining to traditional approach and English language learning helps us to see the gap that can be bridged to curb the issues set forth. Particularly imperative when scholars have urged educators at schools to transform their ways of teaching in classrooms to be more student-centered and inculcate collaborative learning. In order to accomplish these aims, technology has been progressing rapidly to aid in the learning process (Stracker, 2011). Hence, I believe it is sensible to tap into the hopes that participants have on current and future teaching-learning delivery. By looking into their expectations, only then we will be able to see what are their suggestions and its relevance to the area of concerns we previously discussed. As future English teachers, I inquire them to briefly share what are their hopes for future teaching pedagogies that might work for today's and next generation.



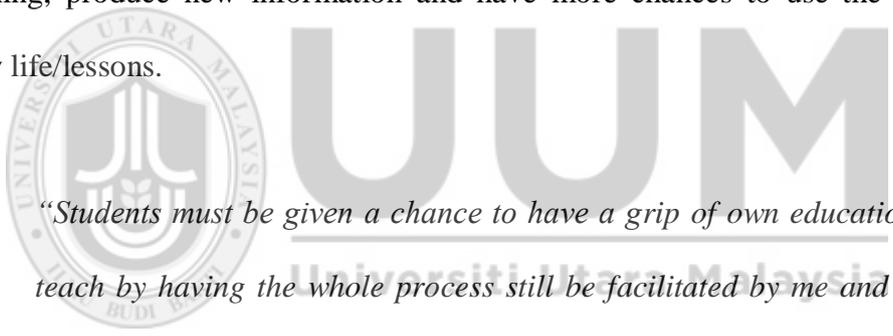
“It is important for students to have their own opinion taken into consideration as usually they have own views on particular topics or poems taught in classrooms. Students have to be able to think and learn independently.”

Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“I would love to discover more if I had a teacher who can tell me things that I can do besides using Google because it doesn't give you much in the end as you still need someone who can really teach you something new. Language is not like science or history whereby you have to grasp everything by memorizing; it requires skills that you have to obtain all the time and applying what you have learned is crucial too.”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

With traditional approach is in the bigger picture of teaching deliveries in schools, teachers think that the most appropriate and efficient approach for English language learning is by repeating language items in drills (Tang et. al., 2012). Participants evidently disagreed to these methods and shared the same ideas on acquiring proper skills instead of drilling students during English lessons and allowing students to utilize the skills and knowledge learnt on daily basis. As posited by Elley (1983); planned, restricted, gradual and artificial are the types of exposure to the second language learning. Surprisingly enough, it remains as the common drill in today's second language learning. On the contrary to such practices, learners should be equipped with input and subsequently are permitted to conduct own discovery learning, produce new information and have more chances to use the language in daily life/lessons.



“Students must be given a chance to have a grip of own education. I wish to teach by having the whole process still be facilitated by me and I get to see how well they're doing, but the outcomes and the processes will depend on their efforts.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Farah aspired to teach by facilitating while leaving her students to make efforts and be responsible of own education; her aspiration is a condition where Little (2007) describes as a development of language learning comprising deliberate effort and conscious reflection. When asked on what sort of method will work for students and how it can change the environment of a physical classroom, Farah and Fatim commented with the following replies;

“Teaching-learning process should be a mixture between communicative approach along with reading and writing assessments, for instance, role plays and application of the language itself.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Collaborative learning will be most effective. When students interact with their friends, they have more opinions and ideas on the subject matter, instead of being spoon fed.”

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Evidently, both of them are suggesting student-centered approaches. Farah stated besides reading and writing assessments, students should be given tasks involving communication where they may use the targeted language. Likewise, Fatin proposed collaborative learning which mainly encompasses application of the language learnt as students communicate and express their opinions with peers on the topics assigned. Manifestly, there is no silver lining on what method is most effective that will guarantee ultimate success, however traditional teaching strategies can be transformed to be more receptive towards what participants suggested; such as communicative teaching and collaborative learning by utilizing e-learning approaches in order to reach the goals exhibited by participants (Mamat & Yusof, 2013). This section enlightened us on what are the hopes, strategies and aspirations participants hold dear to their hearts and wish to implement one day when they become English teachers. Such aims in the noble profession have provided us with a room to ponder upon what would be the possible solutions and methods in achieving it.

5.4 Conclusion

Generally, all participants commented on the current issues and problems surrounding Malaysia's English language learning mostly in schools based on their personal recollections. They summarized by stating traditional pedagogy alone is not suffice to equip today's learners with skills needed as well as lamented on the concerns over inability for our students to speak in the targeted language despite having almost 12 years of schooling comprising of the English subject. Participants next shared their hopes and ambitions to make a change in the education system by altering the methods of teaching-learning deliveries. In order to accomplish the aims intended, they suggested student-centered approaches with some relevant theories that might work. Additionally, this situation also leaves an interval for approaches involving ICT to emerge into the picture because in the world we live in today, it is best if we make use of resources and technological devices available by fashioning and blending it into current practices. Park and Yang (2013) posited, incorporation of technology in educational environments has largely been considered as a distinctive trend in education worldwide.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPREHENDING THE REALM OF EDMODO

6.0 Introduction

In Malaysia, teachers in schools normally do not use technology to its fullest potentials due to the lack of resources and facilities as well as the deficiency of motivation in trying out latest tools. Meanwhile in universities, lecturers do make use of technology to some extents; power point presentations, videos and pictures. However, there are more advanced and available aids that may facilitate learning which have not been explored by educators, probably due to the insecurities of its effectiveness and inexperience in dealing with such tools (Hedberg, 2003). These restraints inevitably cause hindrances and drawbacks in teaching-learning process.

Students as the most important stakeholders in education are not getting the limelight that they are supposed to (Ozden et al, 2004), yet, we strive over and over again to create better learning environment and outcomes for them. It is wise therefore, to record and study their understanding on any tool executed; i.e Edmodo. Edmodo is an example of a technological tool available for stakeholders in education field. It could be the connecting bridge in lessening or solving the issues and apprehensions relayed by the participants. Their hopes and objectives in teaching deliveries can be achieved with proper pedagogies and tools. Understanding what Edmodo may offer and what experiences users may acquire are pertinent before we can make an attempt to implement it in a larger scale.

6.1 Initial Experience which Shape Assumptions

First and foremost, it is domineering for us to inquire more on participants' early encounters involving e-learning because their experiences have shaped certain perspectives over the usage of technological tools in teaching-learning process (Sahin & Shelley, 2008). Since the inception of distance learning and Smart Schools in Malaysia starting from 1970s under the leadership of Tun Mahathir; former Prime Minister, e-learning has been gaining attention in assisting learning experience. Decades later, we are now implementing technology and e-learning at some point yet with a slow pace and adaptation. University students are not completely exposed to the fullest potentials of e-learning because courses offered are mostly conducted using traditional approaches. Therefore, to affirm or revoke these assumptions, I started my interviews by asking participants on how they define e-learning to see the level of knowledge they possess on the topic;

"E-learning is done virtually which relies on the internet a lot."

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"E-learning is basically when you go on a website, click on it, join forum discussion and do the tasks; overall, learning is done online."

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"E-learning is learning online when we surf the internet."

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Looking at the responses given, participants do understand the core of an e-learning system. In order to see if they have ever experienced learning using such tool, I further asked about their previous knowledge. As I have mentioned, knowing

participants' past encounters with technological tools are important as it shapes their initial understanding and the general idea on learning using it. Sometimes, people incline on adapting a new approach due to their previous experience of a similar method (Yang, 1999). I implored their thoughts deeper by asking have they been introduced to an e-learning tool and what have they gotten thus far. All of them answered by saying they have been introduced to 'Spectrum'; a University of Malaya's official website for connecting students and lecturers of academic courses they undertake.

"We have 'Spectrum' in UM and our lecturer gives us tasks, it weighs 10% of our marks. I have yet to see the effectiveness of it because it's still early. I think learning will be easier online; in terms of communication with lecturers, to ask questions, to share our work, for reference and others."

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"For example, in UM here we have Spectrum. I think that way student can actually interact with each other about the course. We can search for journals and others, as well as there are more reliable sources we can search online."

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

On a personal note, Fatin seems to be appreciating the use of 'Spectrum' for several reasons. She added further saying that;

"I like it because it is easier for students to submit their assignments and express their opinions or discuss in groups online. Plus, not everyone is staying at the same college so it is difficult to meet everyone to discuss."

Additionally, sometimes I might not be paying attention in class, so when the lecturer assigns the task, I wasn't really listening, but if he/she assigns it online, it will have the instructions and guidelines to do the task and this way, I get not to miss out on anything.”

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

As many are already aware by now, e-learning is currently a trend in education, because all stakeholders may definitely gain benefits from the advancement of internet and web-based applications (Rais & Hashim, 2004). This notion resonates completely with what Fatin has stated. Further, as noted by another participant, she thinks that e-learning is able to keep up and assist with recent technology progress, parallel with the needs of today's learners in teaching-learning process;

“Youths and teenagers alike prefer to go on the internet rather than go to school. Therefore, there is a need to rethink the system in education that we have now as we cannot rely only on teaching of reading and writing skills and just drill students. We need to incorporate technology in education in one way or another.”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Nevertheless, there is no tool without a flaw; as Ravenscroft (2001, p. 134) aptly asserts that *“we cannot truly transform educational practice for the better through implementation of new technologies unless we examine the roles that computers can play in stimulating, supporting, favouring innovative learning interactions that are linked to conceptual development and improvements in understanding”*. In retrospect,

every tool designed for the use of teaching-learning process is worthy to be examined and scrutinized so that we may learn from its weaknesses and strengths as well as implement in classrooms if it is proven to be suitable. Every classroom has diverse and dissimilar environments, facilities, and students with own pace of learning, thus a tool for example, might work excellently in a class but cannot be an efficient instrument in another class. In recollection, despite the advantages participants put forth about e-learning, they also noted the weaknesses of ‘Spectrum’. Briefly, they mentioned about its interface and the lack of user-friendliness;

“But first of all, the interface of Spectrum needs to change. It looks outdated and boring, as if it’s created in the 90s. It also has so many lines for the links; instead they should change it to emoji, buttons or something more soothing for the eyes.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Spectrum’s interface is not user friendly and dull looking. It doesn’t have many colours, only texts and words. It doesn’t have any graphics, making it not interesting to look at.”

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Such weaknesses may demean the interest and enthusiasm students might have towards e-learning. Integrating technology into lesson plans require dedication, efforts, efficiency, supports, trials and errors (Ozden, et. al., 2004), especially by lecturers and fellow students who are obviously the ones undergoing the results of such conditions. Thus far, we have concluded that participants view e-learning as a process taking place using internet server and connecting devices. At the very essence

of the idea itself, participants welcome and have positive vibes about such tools. However, their personal reminiscences indicate that e-learning using official university's website has been mundane and discouraging. By having their previous knowledge unfolds, we now know where they stand when it comes to the use of e-learning. As of this stage, participants are neutral on the stance of executing e-learning for teaching-learning delivery, but noting some of the weaknesses on university's official teacher-students website.

6.2 Edmodo? What is that?

We are living in a cyber-world where everything is doable; 3D printing, Google glass wear, smart watch, laser operations, water-resistant smart phones and many others. In terms of websites, currently the use of Web 2.0 tools allow us to create so many features we thought would never be possible, possible. Previously, websites were generated and handled by a sole author, but these days a website may have multiple authors from around the world. Additionally, it was used only to inform readers on related topics of interests but now it encourages readers to take part and contribute to the discussions. Websites pertaining to learning were mostly on informing teachers what strategies might work in classrooms while lessons plans, activities and worksheets were also available and can be downloaded easily.

Conversely, due to the advancement of Web 2.0 and social networking, learning has taken a few leaps forward. Instead of merely informing, now websites can be a place where users discuss, cooperate, contribute and work together towards a common goal. Adopting the style of social networking, websites such as Edmodo builds a similar community. Nonetheless, this information was not shared with the participants

because they were supposed to discover and experience Edmodo without interference from me. As a qualitative researcher who studies perceptions, I allowed the application of theories opted in this study; namely constructivism and symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 1998) to naturally come about where participants conducted own meaning-making and exuded suggestive gestures and body languages. Peeling process as such happens progressively; bit by bit after unfolding participants' personal experience on e-learning, I then went further by inquiring on what assumptions and expectations they have on Edmodo. They responded with the following replies;

"It is going to be fancy and has a very up-to-date design probably, especially to attract learners to that website."

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"I'm sensing a platform more on educational base, like a learning tool but I'm also imagining something 'Spectrum-like'. Whatever Edmodo may be, I hope it is good and users can use it without feeling disinterested. Sometimes, the tool is good but because it doesn't look appealing enough, it's not encouraging to be used."

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"I'm foreseeing a formal looking website but this one focuses on learning."

Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

"It's probably a fun and interactive platform. Maybe it's not like the dull looking Spectrum, as in more appealing and interesting. Simply, I think Edmodo will look more like a social network than the official portal we have."

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Evidently, all of them were anticipating an educational website which is interactive, fun, engaging while maintaining its formal outlook. These were the responses and assumptions they shared without having experience Edmodo yet. It is worthy to look at their before and after thoughts on introduction to Edmodo because it gives us a window on seeing the differences between the two stages and the course of experience they went through. Upon creating a group for this research's purpose, I obtained a password for participants to join the virtual class. The code was immediately given to them and in the following interview transcriptions; one can see briefly how the experience was for them in first time joining the Edmodo community.

"I searched on Google and it appeared on the first page, conveniently found. I was shocked at the introduction because 46 million users is a lot but I never knew about the site before. It was easy to access; I just clicked on 'sign up' button and filled in some information. The whole process only took me 1-2 minutes to create an account."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

"It was a pleasant experience in logging in, it wasn't very difficult."

Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview

"I searched the site on Google which is convenient, I filled in the group code, first and last names and that was it!"

Farah/EDMODO 1/Interview

As described by participants, the process of signing up and joining as users has been convenient and hassle-free. This condition is a good early sign as users who are encompassed of mostly students would not want a website that is complicated and

time consuming. These days, users always go for suitability and simplicity as lives are already surrounded by complexity and stiff competition. Further, an international survey in 2013 indicated that 96% of students used internet access for social networking purposes and 50% of the equation belonged to the discussions online done by students for schoolwork-related (Rivero, 2013). Indeed, learning online has progressively taking leaps, therefore providing a simple and convenient tool would be most fitting for both educators and learners.

6.3 The Pulling Factors

In the previous revelations, information that I was able to deliver came only in the form of interview records. However, in the following sections, all instruments are presented in a coherent manner according to the categories and its sub-categories they belong to. As far as instruments are concerned, herewith readers are presented with the three types of materials gathered after triangulation of data was accomplished; namely interview transcripts, photographs and concept maps. In this chapter 6, it focuses on the category of comprehending the realms of Edmodo. Earlier we have discussed on the knowledge participants possess on e-learning, their recollections and how they described the pleasant experience during early encounters with Edmodo. Now, we are stepping into the world of Edmodo itself, which means we need to fathom the paradigms, features, characteristics and realms of the tool under study. Based on statements from the participants, I have decided to illuminate the pulling factors that Edmodo has exuded to them.

Meanwhile, to obtain these data, I executed the use of interview protocol developed in Chapter 3 soon after I introduced Edmodo to the participants. From here on, their responses and replies during the interviews were based on personal encounters and

works done online. I infused all of the theoretical frameworks selected earlier into the developments of meaning-making and interpretations of the data gathered. All of the theories should blend in together in harmony; these whole progressions did not pose many issues because the stances of the theories are almost similar and fit perfectly in guiding this study. By allowing participants to generate own thoughts, I have adhered to the constructivism paradigm, while hermeneutics states I must not interfere and collect data online without tampering with it in any way. Simultaneously, I did abide by symbolic interactionism's standpoints during interviews as I analysed participants' facial expression and body languages. Interpretivism was a guiding approach which helped me to interpret and produce results while examining all information. Through all of these epistemologies and theoretical frameworks cited, I was able to come out with substantial outcomes pertaining to the study.

6.3.1 Familiarity to Social Network

The first apparent reason for crowd puller to Edmodo is the sense of familiarity that it projects. Obviously, entering a foreign and unfamiliar territory can be intimidating to many. Some educators or students do not prefer new ways or methods in learning, however some might think otherwise. Edmodo has been known as 'Facebook' (FB) look alike or Facebook for schools, as labeled by teachers, students and parents alike. In recent times, the most popular and used social networking site is Facebook. Due to its popularity, some teachers opt to utilize it as a medium in creating groups for students' activities and conducting discussions. Nonetheless, its use is restricted in some schools and universities compounds all around the world (Kist, 2013). Meanwhile, a number of educators acknowledged the lack of security as well as

students at times cannot differentiate between socializing and keeping a level of formality with the teachers on FB.

Even so, the facts remain that students go online daily and spend their time mostly browsing the internet, and while they are at it, why not we make the best out of such opportunity? Almost all students have a FB account and manage to keep up with the trend, current news and updates using the platform. Familiarity and simplicity that FB offers has garnered growing number of users yearly. Edmodo realizing the advantages FB proposes, has taken measures to create a website that looks similar to the infamous social network (Maguth & Harshman, 2013), but it is focusing particularly on educational platform geared towards teachers mostly, yet also very much relevant for students and parents. Participants when asked what they think of Edmodo's outlook as well as opinions when it comes to familiarity to the social network that all of them subscribe to, responded with the following views;

"It is familiar to me, for instance on Facebook you have the 'category' feature and you've got the posts in the middle, Edmodo is the same to these FB structures so I like it."

Farah/EDMODO 1/Interview

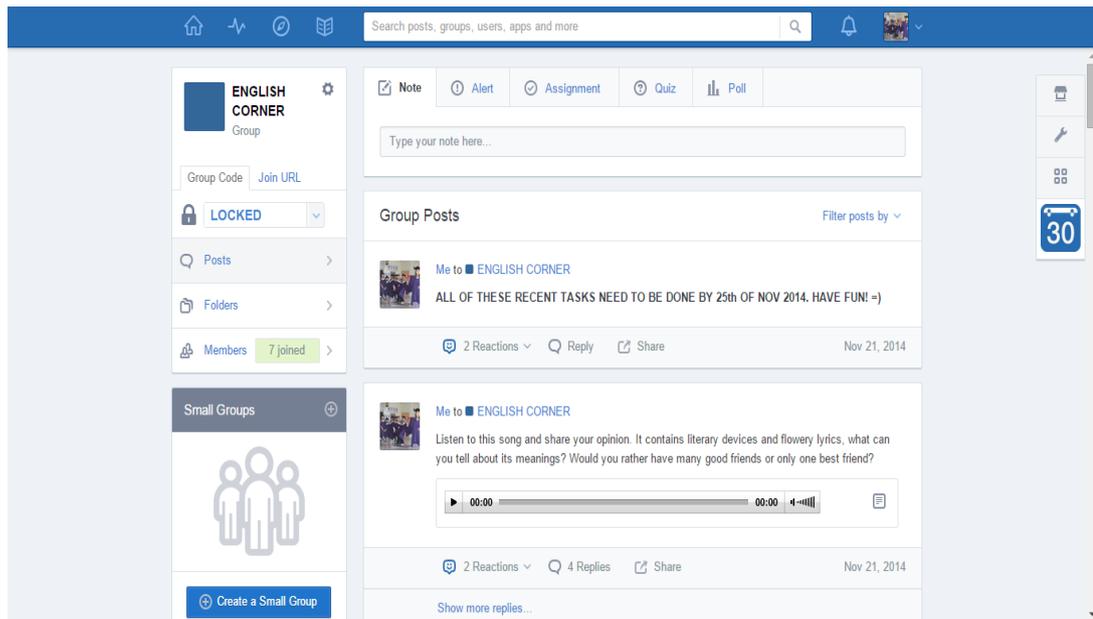
"I think it's easy because it's like logging into Facebook. The first time I logged in, I already know how to use it. Plus, your life gets much easier when you are notified on recent activities of your teacher and peers."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

Farah and Fatin both commented on the similarities they can find on Edmodo, in which they relate to their social network; FB. Fatin mentioned notifications help her to keep track of everyone's post and progress on Edmodo, in a way it is helping her not to be left behind. From this advantage, all students may participate and will not be giving any excuses such as "I did not know about the discussions" or "I did not receive any updates about the post". Further, as Edmodo is a site for educational purposes with social networking outlook, it makes participants feel welcomed and comfortable. Thien et al. (2013) too posited "*social presence support learners to understand their roles in the community, project them online, and form relationships with others by projecting their personalities*", the notion denotes how familiarity in connection to one's social site and education helps making users/learners feel at ease and able to work collaboratively while manage to display their personalities. In addition, Fatin added on the simplicity and similarity of commenting feature on Edmodo which are appealing to her;

"Edmodo is simple and appealing because you don't have to look far and everywhere on the screen for certain subjects or codes to enter your targeted group and assignments. You can also type your messages or points for discussions just like typing comments on Facebook."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview



Familiarity to FB/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.1. Familiarity to FB

As visualised by the picture above, the layout, features and overall outlook of Edmodo is very identical to FB. To the majority of the participants, they have found the theme familiarity of FB to Edmodo as advantageous in learning online. Here, we may witness the connections that they have made between past encounters on social networking site (FB) with the present look-alike social learning network (Edmodo).

On the other hand, Emme offered a new perspective in terms of originality as she commented that Edmodo should be more authentic in terms of their outlook, instead of copying FB design. Yet, she then noted that familiarity may help some users to be comfortable and gain a sense of acquaintance while using the site. At the end of the day, she believes it is only a matter of perspective and preference of individuals (Pasch et al., 1995).

“I think Edmodo should be more original in terms of the interface, they shouldn’t have copied too much of Facebook’s layout. However the interface from Facebook actually makes people like a sense of familiarity, therefore it’s still fitting for some users.”

Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview

Edmodo has commonly been thought of as Facebook for schools or education as it has the interface, layout and design similar to Facebook (Maguth & Harshman, 2013), but with different characteristics, buttons and features. The very essence on the idea of familiarity is well accepted by participants in the study, except for Emme who is neither too happy nor upset as she opined that Edmodo should be more authentic and refreshing, even though for some users, familiarity may become an important aspect to consider in continuing using the site.

6.3.2 Beauty is in the Eyes of the Beholder

Earlier, the problems that the participants mentioned are pertaining to interface, user-friendliness and dull looking official university’s website. They could only recall and relate their involvements to e-learning with the use of Spectrum because they have not been exposed much to other platforms or sites with similar targets as Spectrum and Edmodo. They lamented on the pressing issues on feeling discouraged in using the official site despite all the positive advantages they anticipated. However, due to the technical problems and mundane looking site which they have to face sometimes, participants feel disheartened to learn using the tool. As the phrase ‘beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder’ suggests, individuals focus on visual attractions. Although they might not notice or admit to this, nice visuals do attract people. Apparently, appealing

interface and user-friendliness are two core features that all websites should possess (Tomassini, 2013) in order to draw more users. As participants explored Edmodo more, they have opined on the two characteristics stated;

“As I browsed through Edmodo, it’s very minimalistic and suitable for youths and user-friendly, for example you can explore in just a few minutes and you’ll know how to navigate your way already on the portal.”

Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview

Emme additionally posited, suitability and easy navigation are important for the youths of today. She also commented that online learning is gaining much popularity among Generation Y mainly because almost all of them have smart phones, laptops and other high-end gadgets. She even predicted that Edmodo could be the medium and most used portal for education in the coming five years. Such conviction can be made possible if Edmodo wins over the trust of stakeholders in education and everyone is also made aware of its existence as well as are given the chance to explore and implement its use.

“Online learning is a trend now; particularly because Generation Y has laptops, smartphones and etcetera, so Edmodo will be the ‘in thing’ in the next 5 years or so.”

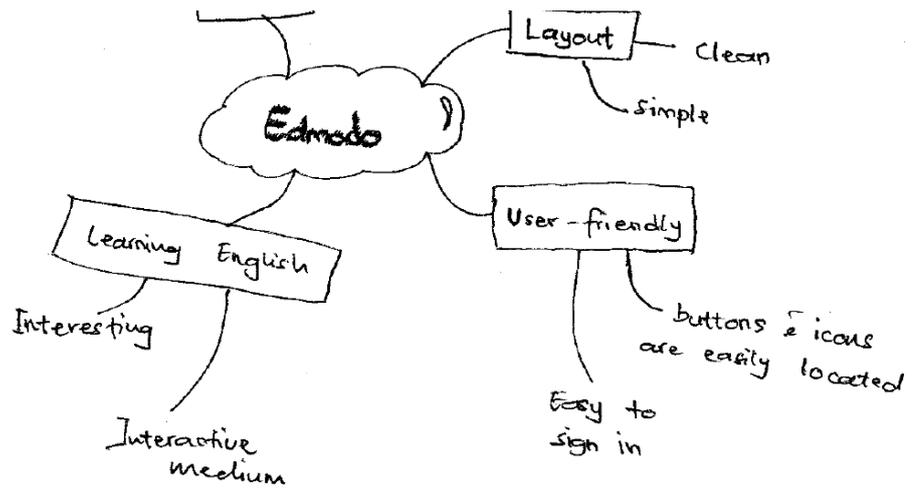
Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

Another participant, Rose relates her experience on Edmodo with another website she was asked to browse and upload a file, in which she faced difficulties doing the tasks

intended. On the contrary to her views on learning experience via Edmodo, she posited that the site is not dull-looking, neat, easy to navigate and suitable for language learning and students can easily interact with each other. Also, she commented that Edmodo is user-friendly for her because she can either sign in using username or email. Some users easily forget their email or username that they used for the first time when signing up, especially when these days they are required to sign up and remember many passwords or emails in each social network they subscribe to (for example; Instagram, Twitter, FB, Gmail, Yahoo and others). But, by giving the options to use either the two methods, users can find the process of logging in has never been easier. Apparently, the whole course of experience has been pleasant for Rose. In her concept map regarding Edmodo, features on layout and user-friendliness are what she emphasized on. Moreover, she also noted more on its layout, user friendliness and appearance.

“It is more user friendly than I expected it to be because I just find it really easy to use. I can read what others say while reading my tasks that I have to do. Additionally, uploading the file is also easier because I had problems on other websites.”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview



User friendly/ROSE/Concept Map

Figure 6.2. User Friendly

“The layout is very neat, simple and clean. It’s also formal looking; it differentiates Edmodo from other sites, it echoes that this site is used for teaching and learning. But even so, it’s not dull. It has everything needed for teaching and learning, yet the students can communicate with each other and use it like other social network. It’s user friendly as the buttons and icons are easily located, no problem in signing in as well. I can either use username or email.”

Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview

Farah shares similar sentiments with Rose as she postulated Edmodo has functional buttons appropriate for learning (Buescher, 2010) as well as soothing colours that will not distract students, especially if they have to stare at the computer’s screen for long hours.

“I like it very much because it’s user friendly, it has lots of functional and appropriate buttons, the fonts are nice to the eyes and suitable for reading, the colours are soothing and non-distracting compared to bright colours and the accessibility is also easy as you simply need to log in.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

Generally, all of them agreed unanimously on the importance of a site’s layout, interface, appearance, colours and user-friendliness which become the pulling factors for users. Nevertheless, Emme did manage to offer diverse views on the matter, as she noted despite Edmodo being user-friendly and appealing, she believes Edmodo is geared mostly towards Generation Y and Z.

“For people in my age group or younger, probably they will see it as a convenient tool because we like to experiment latest things. But for people in my parents age like 40s and older, maybe they don’t know how these sites work and are afraid of clicking the wrong buttons.”

Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview

Although Edmodo claims they provide solutions for teachers who wish to have a secured channel to interact with their students and will be within teachers’ locus of control; she states that the whole idea about educational networking site is actually more relevant to the younger generation. As discussed previously, the educators we have today are mostly from Generation X or older, thus they might find Edmodo unattractive even though it provides a safe environment and many beneficial features needed for effective learning because they are not very used to dealing with

technology (Gardiner, 1998). Nevertheless, if we were to merely focus on the opinions and preferences of participants who belong in the Generation Y, we can conclude that Edmodo has amazing magnetic pull owing to its alluring appearance and user-friendliness.

6.3.3 Functional Buttons that Assist in Lesson Deliveries

Thus far, we have unfolded the previous experience of participants which shape their understanding of e-learning tools, initial assumptions and confirmation of assumptions about Edmodo as well as physical features of Edmodo which consists of familiarity to Facebook, interface and user-friendly. Given more time for exploration on Edmodo, participants were able to discover more in weighing the pros and cons of Edmodo in supporting students' learning curve. Through the assessments given, they were required to explore other available features of Edmodo in order to participate and get tasks done. Understanding the realm of Edmodo allows us to take a glimpse at the insights of their experiences and perspectives they reserve on the processes involved throughout the course of this research.

Learning the features of Edmodo and what it can offer stakeholders of education are pertinent to the future of our teaching pedagogies (Amrein-Beardsley, et. al., 2007; Vernadakis, 2012). Perhaps in some ways, Edmodo may assist educators in teaching deliveries. Students too can benefit from knowing the functions and features of Edmodo in order to make the best out of their learning experience. In terms of Edmodo's characteristics that participants in this study have made known, they give an emphasis on certain drawing features that it has in which may facilitate learning process. First of all, involving a category related to extended materials;

“Students can find information or links and keep it in ‘backpack’ and then when it is time to submit or maybe when they are done with the assessment or task, they can put up the link or whatever they found as a reference.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

“I can put my assignments there on ‘backpack’ as a backup file.”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

“Backpack is convenient especially now there’s virus issues. With this feature, students can no longer give excuses as such. It also makes lessons easier for teachers and students. Learners get to learn more materials compared to in class where teachers alone provide materials. Students too can suggest whatever materials they found online by sharing it.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview



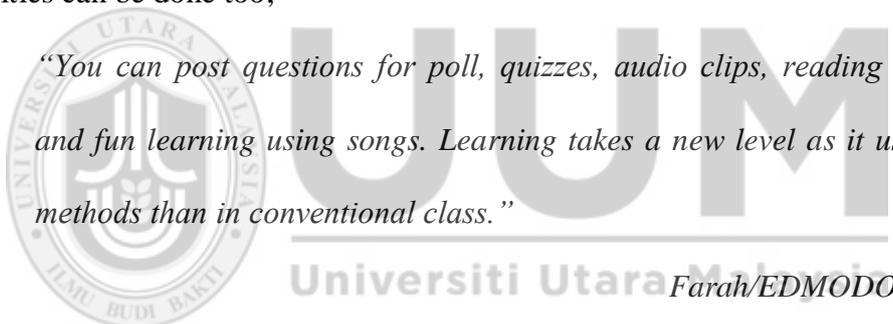
Backpack or Library Feature/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.3. Backpack or Library Feature

Participants touched on the ‘backpack’ feature (for users who sign up as teachers, the similar feature is renamed ‘library’), which according to them makes sharing and

saving files easier. Students may keep their assignments, references, materials, audios, video and other extended materials on Edmodo under this feature. These materials can be shared at any time students wish to post. Besides that, teachers too may keep lesson plans, worksheets, links to creative assessments and many more using the ‘library’ feature. Whenever teachers want to share with students or other teachers in Edmodo community, they can simply click share and post it on the site. Lu and Churchill (2013) briefly summarized, Edmodo can be used by non-technology savvy teachers because it is extremely easy to post links and files into a library for sharing.

Under the category of extended materials, the participants also find the following activities can be done too;



“You can post questions for poll, quizzes, audio clips, reading assessments and fun learning using songs. Learning takes a new level as it uses different methods than in conventional class.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Learning in class alone might present limited methods and materials during lessons, or some schools might not have proper facilities (projector in class) or there may be other constraints, but by using Edmodo teachers can create tasks to overcome these issues in conventional classroom.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Fun and Interactive/FARAH/Concept Map

Figure 6.4. Fun and Interactive

Participants claimed that these features provide advantages for both teachers and students because when the time in class is limited, not all materials can be provided and brought into classrooms. Chandler & Redman (2013) further postulate, extended discussions also can be carried out when time in class are not sufficient, cancelled or there is a public holiday, as well as permitting the extended materials to be posted online. Therefore, Edmodo overcomes the issue on inadequacy of facilities in schools as well by allowing students to have an access towards their learning items. Farah in her concept map concluded features on Edmodo help learning process to be tremendously fun, engaging and interesting while incorporating skills that produce extra advantages in English language learning.

Moving on, another feature of Edmodo that may assist learning belongs in the category of 'progress'. Teachers can assess, give grades, comments and plan tasks for students. It helps both teachers and students to manage their time well and keep

themselves updated with the incoming posts from group mates (Buescher, 2010). Rose mentioned about the importance of monitoring students' ongoing works. Meanwhile, Fatin claimed 'planner' is useful for planning tasks and keep students aware of assignments' submission deadlines.

“You may monitor progress and see whether they have submitted assignments or not. You can also see how they are doing with the previous tests and quizzes; I personally think monitoring progress is the most important and best feature.”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

“The planner is good because you can plan your task and give a deadline on when to submit. It helps to remind you about the task and assignments. It will be easier for me to monitor the students as well”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Progress / ENGLISH CORNER'. It features a navigation bar with 'Grades' and 'Badges' tabs, and a 'New Grade' button. Below this is a table with columns for 'Student', 'Total', and 'MY IDOL'. The table lists several students with their progress percentages and submission status.

Student	Total	MY IDOL
farha alia	0%	-
Farah Fadzil	0%	Turned In
Fatin Farhana	0%	Turned In
Munierah Mukhtar	0%	-
Munierah Mukhtar	0%	Turned In
Rose Linda Roslan	0%	Turned In

Progress/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.5. Progress

Another wonderful feature about progress is its usefulness in allowing parents to have a bird view of their children's improvement. Edmodo permits participation from parents so that they may become part of the community, in many ways it assists parents to be more involved with their children's progress and academic achievements (Dobler, 2012). Often, we have heard assumptions being thrown at teachers claiming they are not applying effective teaching pedagogies, while truth is students spend more time at home than in class. Instead of blaming educators, Edmodo provides a window for parents to have a closer look and take some responsibilities as well.

"I think it is good for parents who want to keep an eye on their children, especially if they have a child who is struggling and needs special attention, subsequently the parents can know in which area of weakness that the child might have."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

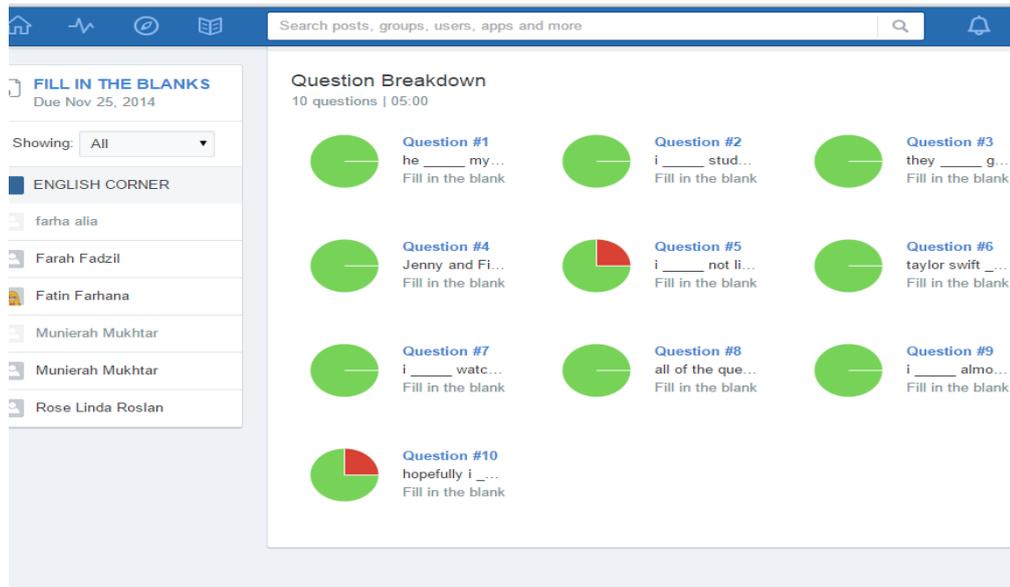
"It's a good initiative to involve parents, particularly suitable for high school students, for parents to monitor their children's work, tasks and achievements. The students will be encouraged to do their work better knowing their parents are on this site."

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

The theme on 'progress' has sub-categories that comprised of monitoring improvements by teachers and bird view monitoring by parents. These two criteria spotted by participants echoed with literary works written by other scholars and teachers alike. Edmodo aids in making things easier for the teachers by helping to keep track of students' progress (Pop, 2013). Buescher (2010) too posits, Edmodo is a

channel in which parents may keep an eye on children and monitor their academic progress.

Finally, an Edmodo's feature that will definitely aid in enhancing learning experience is its ability that enables educators to create creative assessments (Hung & Khine, 2006, p.9). Creating assessments on Edmodo is only a click of a button away. The button where teachers may click and create assessments provides the options such as fill in the blanks, multiple choice questions, quiz, poll, assignments and many others. Such assessments can be posted online and treated as homework. These forms of materials allow teachers to create resourceful tasks and engaging activities. Participants agreed that such characteristics may help reducing workload as teachers do not have to print those worksheets, make enough copies of it, distribute to students and discuss the answers in classroom. Rather, teachers can simply create and post it on Edmodo, allowing students to do the assessments at own pace and at the end of the task, Edmodo will show the correct answers along with in what areas/which questions the students answered wrongly.

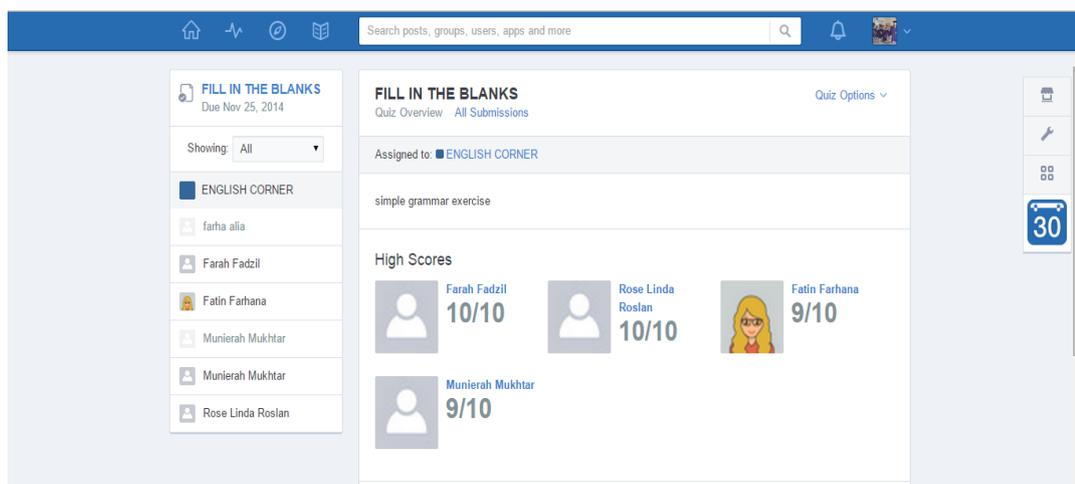


Feedback and Correction/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.6. Feedback and Correction

“Quizzes help make learning interactive. You (the researcher) also gave us the fill-in-the-blank task, I think such assessment gives freedom for the students to give answers, and at the end of the task they’ll know about their overall performance. Plus it has time limit, it’s good because it teaches students to answer questions under pressure and within the time given, it’s a good preparation and practice for summative assessments.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Creative Assessments (Fill in the Blanks)/WEBSITE/Photograph

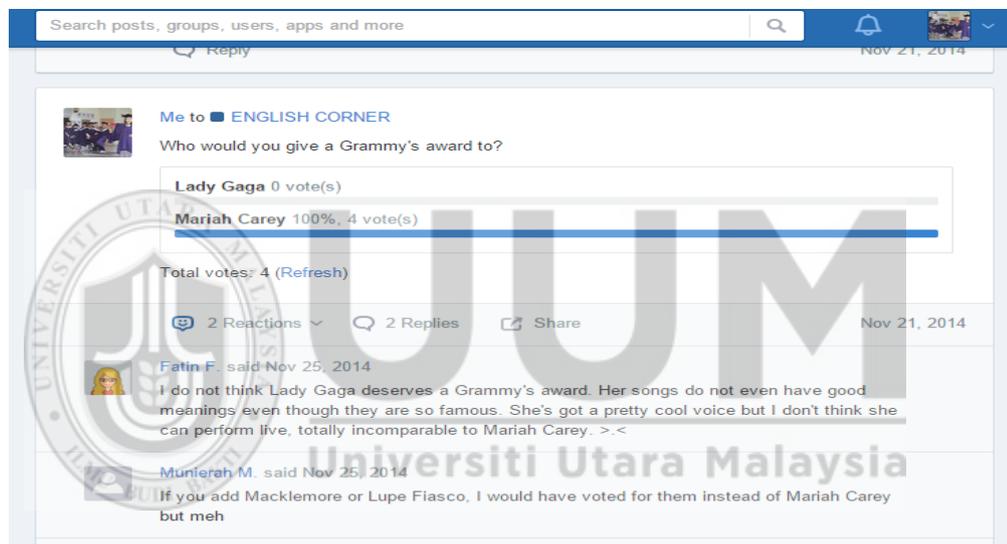
Figure 6.7. Creative Assessments

“I learned that we can do quizzes through Edmodo and we can do it under time pressure. Generally, it’s good because it makes students answer in a short time and think faster.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Quizzes are really fun and the ‘poll’ feature is also noteworthy because you can get quick opinions just by voting.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview



Poll/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.8. Poll

Additionally, participants further noted that Edmodo does assist in creating innovative and authentic assessments besides the ones mentioned above. Students are easily bored with drilling of reading and writing activities in typical classroom (Wang, 2007; Chu, 2001), therefore the options to do different assessments on Edmodo will be appealing and attractive to connect students with their learning experiences.

“If the teacher posts music clips, you can listen to it as well. You (the researcher) asked us to listen to Demi Lovato’s song (one of the assessments), I listened to it many times as the song was nice and I learned about the messages and themes the singer wants to convey. Besides, it’s entertaining as you get competitive with your friends, you may see who did best and who already sent in their work.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Edmodo also has a feature where you can create many kinds of tasks, so I think students will not get bored doing different tasks.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

Both of the participants above also briefly commented on the ‘reaction’ and ‘badges’ buttons where teachers may give immediate response and feedback. In physical classroom, teachers usually give feedback, compliments and comments in the exercise books after assessing the work submitted by students (Woroniecka, 1998). Similarly, Edmodo uses the same idea for teachers to give responses, but in a digital form. Giving credits to students when it is due is significant as it boosts their intrinsic motivation to do better and learn from their mistakes.

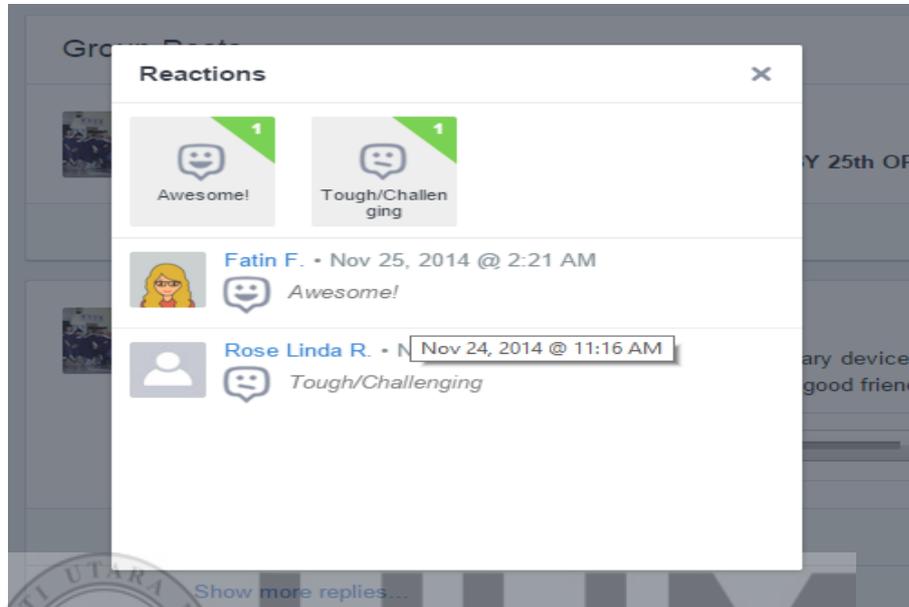
“In terms of fun, there’s a ‘reaction’ button, I thought that’s cute as you can give emoticons as a response on the thread.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Teachers can give compliments to students if they participated in discussions because it has a feature where it can give badges to students. It’s similar to drawing ‘stars’ in their exercise books after checking and marking their

assignments. I do think students like to be praised and those badges may boost up confidence and motivate them to do tasks.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Reaction Button/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 6.9. Reaction Button

Based on all of the readily available features/characteristics above that participants have put forth, it seems Edmodo may help in enhancing learning curve and assist teaching-learning process by offering numerous useful tools. Participants have explored and found noteworthy characteristics that Edmodo proposes, which may be beneficial to all stakeholders in education. Extended materials permit teachers and students to share references and interesting resources with other group mates (Lu & Churchill, 2013). Backpack/library feature is another option to save documents, assignments and materials; making it easier for everyone to keep files without having to bring pen drive/hard disk or log into Google Drive/Dropbox to access their saved files. Besides that, Edmodo proposes a button for teachers to keep track of students' progress and assess their submitted work at the same time. This tool too allows

parents to participate and update themselves with their children's performance and development. Last but not least, Edmodo assist teachers in fashioning creative assessments by having an option to create a number of different authentic tasks as well as permitting teachers to give immediate response or feedback with the reaction and badges buttons. All of these features are accessible only on Edmodo and can be used by its users without limits.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter alone, we have implored the perspectives that participants have on an e-learning tool they tried before getting introduced to Edmodo, assumptions on the site studied, issues and themes of the pulling factors that made participants spoke about it as well as affirmation of previous findings in relation to this study. Participants explained lengthily on the available characteristics and functions they have found while doing the assessments given by me. Those assessments were meant to make participants discover Edmodo's territory more and consequently providing me with their opinions on the area of study. Comprehending the realms of Edmodo is highly crucial in order for us to understand more about the available features, buttons and characteristics it offers and how participants' experiences involving it have shaped their perceptions. The importance of highlighting those features is so that we would understand what capabilities that Edmodo has and what are the things that it may do to assist teachers. We would also want to see how it differs than traditional approach or other e-learning tools out there and how is it any more special.

As discussed previously, students who are less exposed to current technologies might be good at memorizing and securing excellent grades (Mathema & Bista, 2006), yet are not proficient in utilizing knowledge learnt. Generation Y and Z consist of

students who we have in educational institutions at the moment; they grow up surrounded by technologies. Though we may separate lessons and daily lives, the interest and needs to have a form of technology in everything they do transcends limitations that we impose in the first place. Instead of differentiating lessons in classrooms and normal activities students do outside of the physical room, it would be best if we embrace the fact that technology is already embedded as part of our lives and exists in so many ways. One of the ways technology could be used, which most of the members in the society do not explore much; is its relation to the teaching-learning process.



CHAPTER SEVEN

IS EDMODO THE WAY FORWARD IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING?

7.0 Introduction

In chapter 5, I have enlightened readers on the standpoints of participants pertaining to the practice of traditional approach, issues in English language learning and their personal aspirations towards teaching-learning deliveries. Those areas of study were merely prelude to the phenomenon I wish to shed a light on. Apparently, there is an existing gap between participants' concerns in today's pedagogies with the hopes in future teaching methodologies. Seeing the gap in between, I have proposed a connecting bridge that could help in curbing the issues, which explains why this study is conducted using Edmodo as the main instrument under study. Therefore, in the previous chapter 6, I have delivered the prior knowledge and personal opinions on e-learning tools which shaped initial views of participants. I further investigated the assumptions one may have on Edmodo and have their former expectations matched with the experiences unfolded. The features and overall journey on the site was carefully explained in details so that readers can visualize the capabilities of the tool and how do the features look like as well as how does it work on the site.

Entering this chapter, it is a continuation of our earlier discussions. I will convey the participants' insights regarding possible ways that Edmodo may assist in decreasing the issues set forth by them and at the same time looking at the potentials of executing Edmodo in Malaysian context as well as the probable drawbacks of Edmodo. We have observed how does the tool look like and what the features/buttons can it do as a learning aid in lesson plans. However, now I believe it is significant to shift the views

and start discovering Edmodo from educational angle because after all, this tool is created to help teachers and students mostly. Henceforth, we shall implore the area of study deeper by making connections to our topics of concerned; such as problems in current teaching styles and where does Edmodo fit into the picture by using the features/buttons mentioned earlier.

7.1 Multiple Realities of Edmodo

The social learning site; Edmodo does not only offer a channel to conduct virtual learning/classroom, it also organizes a yearly conference called EdmodoCon. This site has millions of members comprising of educators, students and parents coming from multiple ethnicities, nationalities, languages, backgrounds and fields of studies. In this research, we are only focusing on English language learning and how may the site be helpful to achieve the intended objectives of a lesson.

Hopefully, findings in this chapter will provide enough reasons for Malaysian educators to attempt at infusing their current teaching approaches with one of the latest e-learning advancements (i.e; Edmodo). In fact, teachers worldwide do try to make learning process attractive to all learners regardless of their differences in academic achievements, race, backgrounds and others (Hart, 2011) by incorporating technological tools.

Similarly to the earlier chapters, I implemented the use of interview protocol (Yin, 2011) to help me guide the flow of the sessions. Next, by executing open, axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Dzakiria, 2008) on all the three instruments

(interviews, photographs and concept maps), I managed to come out with the remaining findings which are presented in a narrative manner.

7.1.1 The Types of Apt Learning Environment for Language Learning

Upon illuminating what Edmodo offers through its applications and features/buttons available, we must now shed a light on how Edmodo emerges into the lessons itself. One simple reality of Edmodo's involvement in a learning process can be manifested via the apt environment it provides. There are three classified sub-categories that fall under the 'apt environment', namely; informal atmosphere, fun and refreshing learning experience and mobility. These themes will depict the ways Edmodo can provide a proper and fitting learning environment for English lessons (Wahit & Mohd, 2013) which at the same time will help in curbing the issues we discussed formerly. First of all, 'informal atmosphere' is mentioned and largely emphasized by the participants. According to them, it provides a comfortable surrounding whereby students may converse at ease with each other.

“When I was in school, my friends said English is a subject where you have to memorize, sit and study. But I didn't study like that. Thus, using Edmodo, students can see the lessons are more informal; it's more on acquisition of knowledge and learning process. They know that learning doesn't stop in class, there's a website they can explore to increase proficiency in English.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

“It's both formal and informal at the same time. It seems like you are logged in to your social networking site but the content is educational.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview



Informal Environment/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.1. Informal Environment

Emme managed to compare the differences between traditional approach where one memorizes, sit and studies in classroom, to using Edmodo that provides informal environment and extended lessons after school hours. Meanwhile, Fatin posited that Edmodo is both formal and informal because of its welcoming layout, yet retaining the formality for academic purposes. In the photo above, we may observe how participants openly shared their feelings while all at once reflect on their personal recollections. Such activity indirectly helps with improving writing and reading skills, while listening skill was involved when they were asked to listen to the lyrics of the song attached. We can also witness how they converse naturally in an informal manner yet able to use proper English with correct grammar and spelling. Fatin then added the informal environment may help some struggling students who refuse to talk in public due to the lack of confidence;

“Its informal environment enhances learning by helping students who are shy to talk, not participating in class and lack of confidence to express their opinions. For example, when the teacher assigns tasks on Edmodo, maybe those students will get to express ideas and comment of friends’ opinions better. Later on, it will boost their confidence level and in class will be able to speak comfortably.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Learning Environment/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.2. Learning Environment

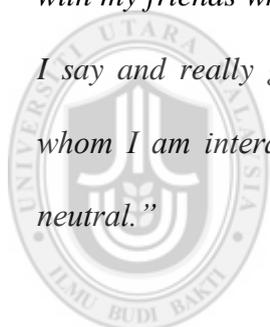
Likewise, the photo above supports the theme on informal environment where participants get to share their thoughts while benefitting from the activity. Besides the informal environment that it exudes, Edmodo is able to convey a 180 degree change in terms of learning experience. The atmosphere that it provides is said to be healthy and refreshing (Mamat & Yusof, 2013), as postulated by Farah and Emme. The essence of Farah’s response is that Edmodo allows a getaway than the normal

physical classroom situations, while Emme stresses on the importance of a healthy discussion because she feels most at ease debating and getting her ideas across without having classmates or friends who might get upset and offended with her opinions;

“I found that in terms of learning, it’s new, refreshing and fun. When I said it’s new, it’s because of the online platform and not the conventional classroom.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I think Edmodo provides a healthy environment because if I were to discuss with my friends whom I know well, some of them might get offended with what I say and really get emotional at certain point. Thus, I prefer not knowing whom I am interacting with on Edmodo because it’s less drama and more neutral.”



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Based on the opinions of participants who suggested Edmodo providing a fun, refreshing and healthy learning environment for English language learning, it is therefore agreeable that this site is becoming a revolutionary tool for teaching-learning approach. It turns into a change agent and a motivator in transforming traditional instructional models by permitting learners to involve actively in their learning during in and outside of the classroom (Wallace, 2013; Dobler, 2012).

Moving on to the next form of learning environment Edmodo offers to assist in language learning is concerning its advantage in permitting students to be mobile.

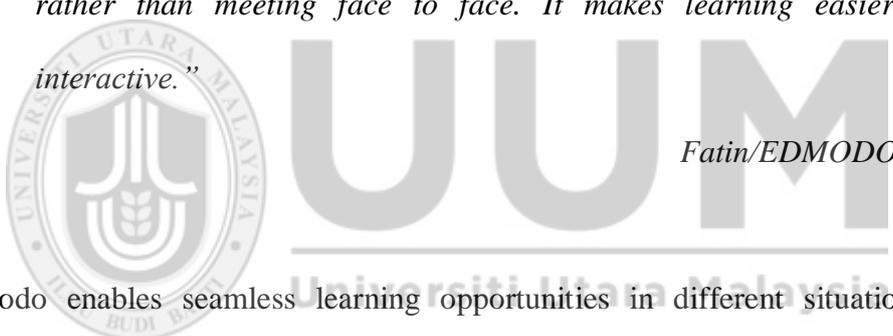
Mobility is reckoned to be an important characteristic for learning due to its consent in authorizing students' own pace of learning and less disruption to their daily schedules (Chandler & Redman, 2013), where they do not have to rush home and write in an exercise book or log into Edmodo using a computer/laptop, simply because users can access Edmodo using smart phones, iPods or any technological device that permits connection to internet and the website.

“More freedom as I can be mobile, do tasks anywhere at any time.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“You can even log in through your mobile phone, so I think it's made easier rather than meeting face to face. It makes learning easier and more interactive.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview



Edmodo enables seamless learning opportunities in different situations as it is available on mobile phones, iPods, iPads or any other smart gadgets as well (Lu & Churchill, 2013). This has become one of the prominent advantages of implementing Edmodo because both educators and students will get the chances to acquire a constant access to education, assignments, progress, updates and announcements. Additionally, Fatin could find an extra connection to Edmodo as she shared about her hectic schedule. According to her, the site gives her an opportunity to stay connected and be involved while maintaining her time table as an active student on campus.

“Edmodo enhances learning and takes education to a whole new level. I find it flexible because you can do it anytime and anywhere because I am actually

quite a busy student as I am involved with sports and other activities. This site encourages me to do assessments and tasks according to my time. I can plan when and how to do my task, so it's easy for me.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Mobility (Access to Assignments)/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.3. Mobility

The photo above depicts how Edmodo looks through a smart phone. In a nutshell, these three core features on types of environment which assist language learning can be summarized in terms of its capacity to allow mobility, providing an opposite environment than the traditional classroom and offering informal atmosphere that makes students feel composed and relaxed. These sorts of environments permit students to regain a sense of tranquility, learn appropriate skills and have fun while they are on the site (Thien et al., 2013). Due to all of these reasons, participants feel

Edmodo has the proper characteristics to assist in the quest of English language acquisition.

7.1.2 Enhancing English Acquisition

Entering a new territory that exists as another reality of Edmodo is pertaining to enhancement of the learning process in the targeted language. This particular category will be focusing on two sub-categories which imply Edmodo to be helpful in enhancing learners' language acquisition. Our current students at present need to be taught and equipped on having appropriate skills along with the ability to apply them in daily lives, soon in the working world too (Hewes, 2012). In order to be effective and innovative thinkers and doers, scholars have urged educators to switch their teaching style to be stressing more on independent learning, whereby learners make discoveries on learning and able to remember information attained longer.

Touching on its relation to Edmodo, participants shared the same views stating that this tool aids in the mission of discovery learning (Wallace, 2013). Unlike the conventional classroom, even though students copied or paraphrased peers' work as their aim is merely to submit assignments and secure marks, they will still be graded as long as they are present and submitted their work. Meanwhile, independent learning focuses on students' discovery on topics concerned. Instead of copying or paraphrasing classmates' work, the students are better off encouraged to take some responsibilities and embark on own journey in exploring knowledge.

“On Edmodo, you can tell how you are progressing with academics since it’s more on discovery learning and you can only depend on yourself for the answers.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“On Edmodo, you have to answer questions given to you or you won’t be given marks. This way, students are more responsible with their own learning process. By using Edmodo it makes learning more attractive to students because it’s very students centered while teachers only facilitate, observe and assess; I like that the most about Edmodo. Students are in charge of what they do on Edmodo.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview



Discovery Learning/WEBSITE/Photograph

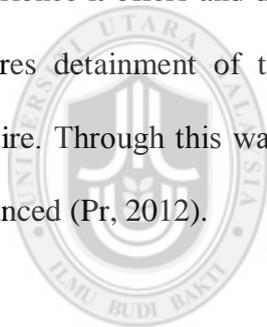
Figure 7.4. Discovery Learning

“Students may gather ideas and opinions from friends and then come out with own opinion or conclusion, they can either agree or disagree with what they

have discussed earlier. This condition inculcates critical thinking and independent learning.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

Evidently, in some ways Edmodo may provide a better training route for examinations. During examination, students can only rely on what they know and how to implement what they have learned. However, on Edmodo the learning curve is endless, for example in the photo it shows that students have the liberty to give own meanings and search for information on their own. Through this approach, students will not feel as if they are studying, when in actuality they are because of the unique experience it offers and different outlook to the whole experience. Discovery learning ensures detainment of the amount of knowledge that students have managed to acquire. Through this way, one's language skills and critical thinking can further be enhanced (Pr, 2012).



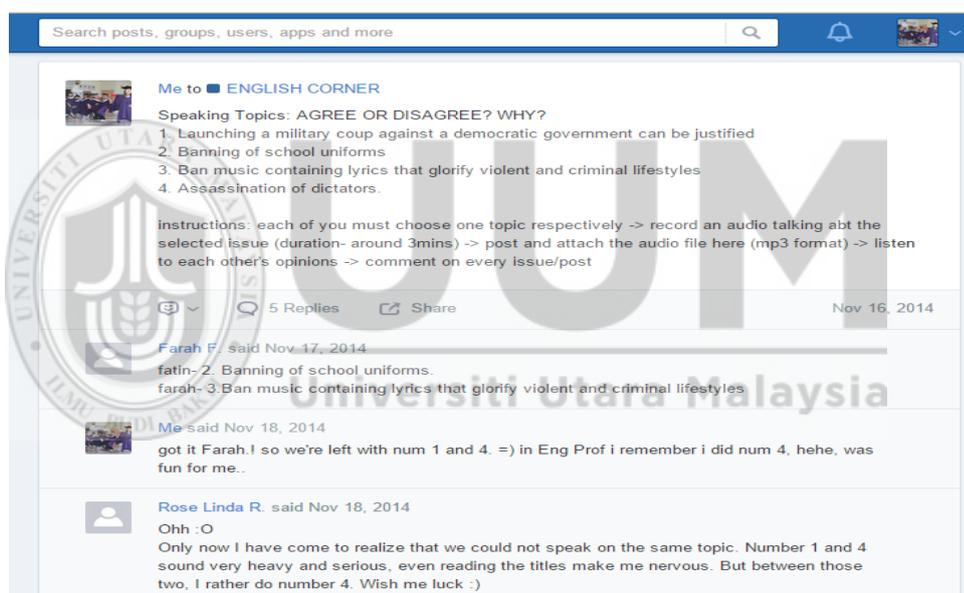
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Moving on to the next idea under the same category, Edmodo may assist in enhancing learners' language acquisition by strengthening the whole process of acquiring knowledge itself. Grammar is traditionally taught through drilling and translating methods (Awasthi, 1979; Shrestha, 1983). Teachers who execute these pedagogies usually expect students to memorize and remember the rules taught whenever they need to apply it (Wang, 2001). On the contrary to the presumed results, students cannot make sense of what they have learned and do not know how to apply those grammar rules because rote-learning is a technique that leaves students to be at disadvantageous. When one acquires information via conditioned environments and approaches, one tends to forget and incapable at applying the information acquired.

Quite the reverse, Edmodo provides a possible solution to the issue highlighted by enhancing learners' learning curve and offering diverse options in assigning tasks while maintaining the focus and aims of the lessons.

“My English can be enhanced by giving me more chances to be exposed to English materials (audio, video, and etcetera). Directly or indirectly, I'm learning the language. Definitely Edmodo may help in time, mainly because of the materials and learning experience.”

Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview



Diverse Materials and Tasks/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.5. Diverse Materials and Tasks

“I think it is good in acquiring knowledge about grammar and sentence structure because these things shouldn't be taught in class by memorizing and drilling, for example before I answer the questions you posted on Edmodo, I actually see the replies of others, for the sake of seeing how they write their responses, how they use the grammar items, finally I try to apply what I've

read in my reply. In a way, I am learning grammar and vocabularies by looking at other comments.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

“It strengthens English acquisition through writing and reading, because you can do such tasks effectively on the portal. I think the fact that everyone will be able to see your answer/response makes you more cautious and give extra attention to it, for example I don’t want to commit grammar mistakes so it makes me more careful of my replies. You would want to write the best that you can because of the competitive situation. My vocabulary can also be improved as I get to read others’ work and learn new words from them. I can learn from peers at the same time.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview



Discussions/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.6. Discussions

Edmodo is able to become a channel that provides multiple resources and materials from teachers and students. It has the capacity to deliver and put up whatever links

and files users find throughout his/her research and if so wishes to post online. Moreover, it inculcates healthy and competitive learning habits when students do not wish to commit grammar mistakes and therefore will try their best in writing the finest replies and finishing the tasks assigned excellently. The theme on being aware of their audience which resulted in checking and editing the replies before posting it on the site resonate with findings from Buescher (2010).

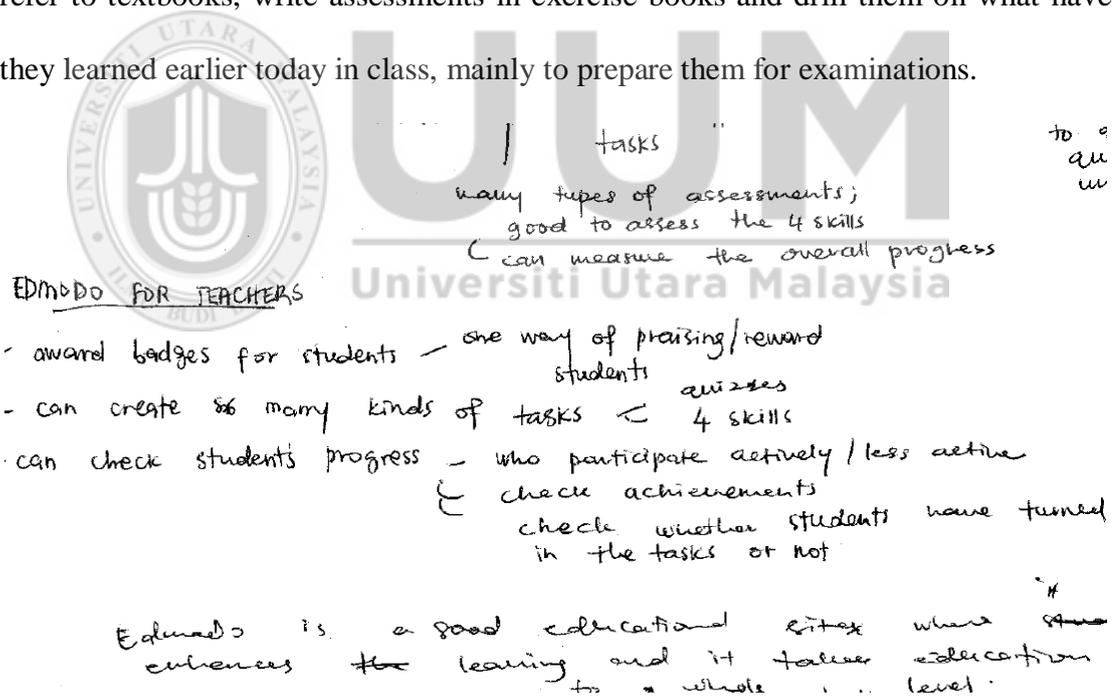
Additionally, students can view comments of their friends while at the same time acquiring new vocabularies, grammar items and ideas. Furthermore, these comments can help to correct any wrongs or errors the user has made, subsequently improves at avoiding the grammar mistakes. This form of learning enables students to be more independent in their learning as well, whereby they are the ones in control of the process and the outcomes (Knowles, 1986). Teachers on the other hand may facilitate and conduct student-centered activities (Buescher, 2010), which are recommended by multiple scholars in order to enhance language acquisition.

Participants posited the advantages of Edmodo in enhancing learners' English language acquisition are through discovery learning by encouraging students to embark on own journey of knowledge seeking, and another category is in relation to reinforcement in the process of education by indirectly permitting students to learn from their peers' replies and becoming aware of their audience which caused them to be more cautious in writing.

7.1.3 Assessments on Edmodo

In chapter 6, I have the privilege to demonstrate how some features and buttons on Edmodo can be used to create authentic assessments. The types it has may vary;

educators will have the liberty to choose whichever they see fit, interesting and suitable for the objectives of their lessons/assessments. Out of the four participants, three posited that Edmodo's features may help in teaching-learning process while in many ways supporting their aspiration for future learning strategies and outcomes. In short, Edmodo is the most proper tool to be executed in schools based on teachers' judgment and individual choice over this matter. This section will examine closely participants' thoughts and perspectives about the reality of what and when is Edmodo best used for. Generally, they established a notion whereby Edmodo is most appropriate for conducting assessments after school hours (Simuth & Sarmany-Schuller, 2014), to replace conventional homework that normally requires students to refer to textbooks, write assessments in exercise books and drill them on what have they learned earlier today in class, mainly to prepare them for examinations.



Edmodo for Teachers/FATIN/Concept Map

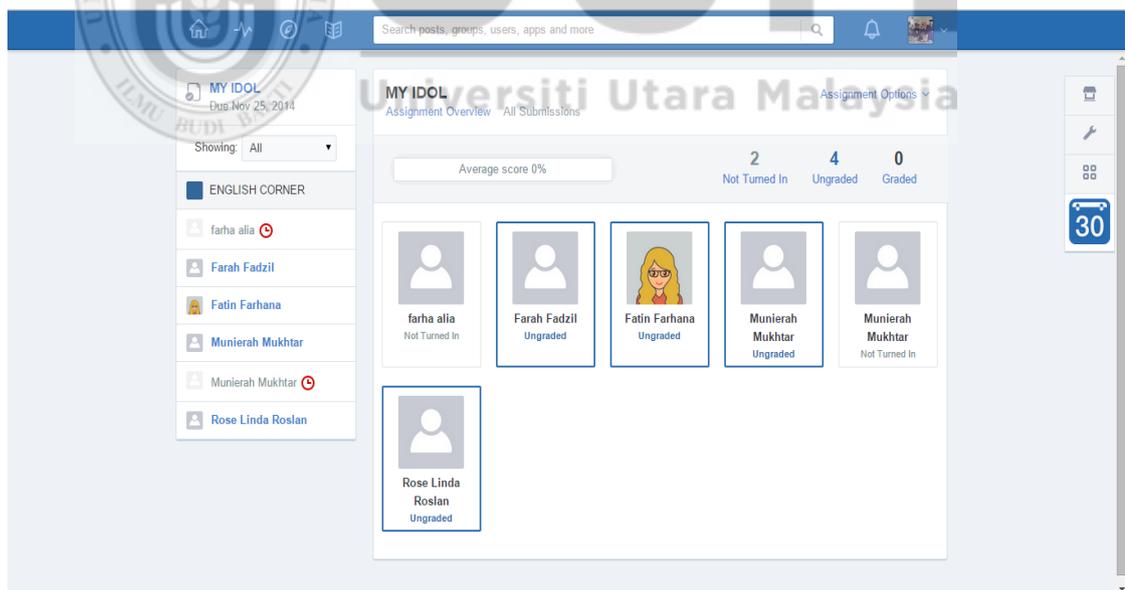
Figure 7.7. Edmodo for Teachers

Fatin's concept map noted the benefits Edmodo may offer teachers, such as herself as a future educator. Assessments can be fashioned in various types for students' perusal

of the four skills in the targeted language. As a soon-to-be teacher, Fatin posited besides the multiple choices of assignments, progress feature on Edmodo will be much appreciated. Further, she commented;

“..... Edmodo is a good tool for teachers to give homework for students to do at home or anytime they want as long as they adhere to the time limit (deadline). Teachers too can see and monitor progress of students, submission of work, participation, check achievements and others. It’s a very good tool. I think Edmodo is best to be used to assign homework, to post announcements and others because I don’t think it can be used very often in class. I would teach them using traditional way in class, but when it comes to formative assessments, I would direct them to Edmodo.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Assessments/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.8. Assessments

“Edmodo can be used the same way you give assessments or homework. Edmodo is the right place for that and to see students’ progress. In class,

edmodo can be used as a medium to present input or you can teach traditionally but then you give assessments through Edmodo.

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

“.... Edmodo can be used to give homework, which is a great feature!”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

The participants believe that traditional approach may still work in physical classrooms, but they would rather use Edmodo as a supplementary tool to assign assessments in checking students' understanding and enhancing their knowledge acquisition (Mohamad, Majid & Hanan, 2012). Rose connects the progress feature that Edmodo has with the assessments that she will give to students. By having assessments and progress in sync, she will be able to keep track of students' overall performance with the tasks posted online. Adding to the opinions on assessments, Rose further commented;

“I have no problem at all reading through the soft copy of the assessment; it is easier because in this generation, we are so used with reading using the soft copy versions.”

Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I think assessments on Edmodo can cultivate critical thinking especially when the topic is controversial and also when you read others' opinions and take into account their views, then you get to compare and contrast.”

Farah/EDMODO 1/Interview

Farah similarly added that tasks on Edmodo will encourage critical thinking, fitting for the 21st century learners who need to survive in this competitive world (Cavanaugh, 2001; Swan, 2001; Johnston, Killion & Onmen, 2005), especially where job opportunities are scarce and skills are appreciated more than academics performance alone. To put it briefly, assessments can be creatively produced through Edmodo and participants synchronously agreed this tool is most suitable for assigning homework after school hours.

Pop (2013) comments on the same theme whereby Edmodo caters for all of the noted functions which can be done effortlessly and accessed by students at any time. Edmodo is a proof that using new technologies may create a profoundly high enthusiasm from students (Chandler & Redman, 2013). While the traditional model assigns homework or revision and the time in class is spent on lectures, Edmodo on the other hand inverts this practice by allowing students to undertake discovery learning independently (Wallace, 2013). Comprehending the reality on Edmodo that states original assessments can be created and delivered on the site is crucial for us to realize its potential in assisting English language learning.

7.1.4 Interactions on Edmodo

Krashen (1989) argues that neutral settings with communicative approach will work best for learners in second language acquisition. While having this proposition in mind, I examine closely Edmodo's assistance for this endeavor. We are now looking at another reality of Edmodo in which may aid in English language learning. Participants in this study claimed that Edmodo possibly will become a tool that helps with improving communication and writing skills. Due to Edmodo being a social

learning platform, students can differentiate the level of formality they need to address and act appropriately according to the situations.

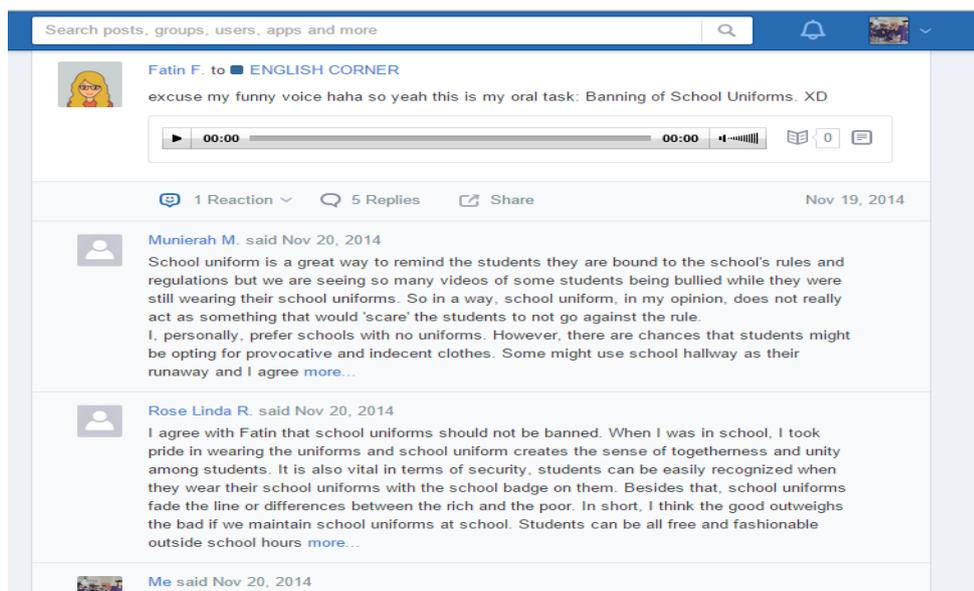
“We know who we are dealing with (lecturer or teacher) so I think it is good for us to apply appropriate language. Soon, when you’re working there is a certain level of formality that you need to maintain, thus Edmodo is a very good training for students to prepare themselves for real life.”

Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Interactions on Edmodo indirectly teach you to write better and hopefully will improve your writing.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

This online site has the capacity to promote interactive teacher-student communication as it has modest features, intuitive interface, more media richness and does not need hosting nor server (Thien et al., 2013). These features are available in other learning platforms, however Edmodo hosts the features altogether and easier to be recognized. Prompt replies using appropriate manners and languages when conversing with teachers and peers are a good practice in instilling qualities of global citizens onto the learners.



Interactions/WEBSITE/Photograph

Figure 7.9. Interactions

Besides that, Fatin mentioned she likes interacting and conversing with her peers online because it is easier and engaging, similar to the results produced by Gonzales and Vodicka (2012). Active participation and application of the targeted language help students to enjoy learning, become better speakers and enhance their social skills. It is easier to speak or write online without the presence of a crowd which would lead to increasing the confidence level of a student.

“I would like to do discussions online and interact with my friends because I only have to reply my friends’ comments and add points on the same thread.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

Practicing healthy and engaging interactions in a deliberate manner help to harness students’ potentials in making the most out of social networking while at the same time combining education will prepare students to be fine global citizen. Participants too approves on this site having the ability to cultivate skills, empathies and attitudes

needed for online civic involvement (Crowe & McDonald, 2013). In a nutshell, engaging interactions on Edmodo is another form of exciting reality that it offers to user/members of the site. Probably, the introduction to Edmodo at a young age may help to nurture the habits of the mind that are essential for students to be good digital users as they gradually learn how to use appropriate language, speak kindly, to be compassionate rather than critical and to inquire thoughtful queries (Rubin, 2013).

7.2 Is Edmodo Suitable to be implemented in Malaysia?

Earlier, I have enlightened and discussed the possibilities and benefits of implementing Edmodo especially in English language learning. We have gotten many themes under categories presented formerly to echoed and resonated with multiple findings and articles shared by scholars as well as educators worldwide. According to the internet site overview in regards to Edmodo, Malaysia did not even appear under the radar, while United States triumphed to rank in 1st place in having the most number of users on Edmodo. Undoubtedly there are many other tools which can be executed by educators in Malaysia, however a tool that has been gaining millions of users yearly such as Edmodo is worthy of an attention too.

Nevertheless, participants did speak about the importance of applying knowledge learned and execution of approaches where students have to interact and utilize the targeted language to be better speakers and users of the language. In this sense, will Edmodo and its features be able to help them realize these hopes? Does it stand a chance to be implemented in Malaysia?

“I think this site is very appropriate to be used for teaching process outside the class room because it gives the opportunity for the teachers and the students to discuss.”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

“There’s a huge possibility that I will implement it. I will make use of the features I have mentioned, for instance if I have finished teaching in class and I would like to know how much have they learned and understood, instead of conducting assessments in the next class, I can post a quiz on Edmodo because it’s more immediate. By looking at the immediate results of assessments, I too can do a reflection to see how my teaching strategy has worked on them.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I think it’s beneficial because it’s an online site. Students can learn English not only by doing tasks or assessments on this site but also find their resources online. If it’s in class they need to do impromptu thinking and sometimes depend on their friends’ ideas.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

The three participants posited that Edmodo’s features may help in teaching-learning process while in many ways supporting their aspiration for future learning strategies and outcomes. Fatin added the implementation of this tool might not be difficult as students are already proficient users of technological devices and Web 2.0 tools. Emme further proposed that Edmodo needs to be introduced gradually to the educators in Malaysia if its execution were to take place in a bigger context. The introduction to this site and its features are significant if educators wish to weigh the pros and cons and later decide whether they want to implement it in their classrooms.

“Students today are more techs savvy so they will be more comfortable to learn using online platform because they are used to this method and are good at handling technology. It will attract them to learn and use it because of familiarity and preference.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Edmodo is a good tool for teachers and students because of the abundance materials that can be obtained from around the world. I think if we were to use Edmodo in Malaysian classroom, we need to first and foremost, introduce the site.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

In order for Malaysia to be a modern country, we need to look into all options that are available for the students of today. 21st century skills need to be cultivated so that students may have holistic developments. Edmodo might be an effective tool to be implemented in assisting teaching-learning process; consequently this study has discovered some of the claimed advantages and offered enlightenment for better understanding on its implications. All of the participants who had first hands-on experience generated own meanings out of their encounters while using the tool. They reached a consensus and manifested their support after witnessing what returns the site may propose; by intending to apply Edmodo in the future for their own lesson plans, especially for assigning students’ formative assessments at home.

7.3 One Size Does Not Fit All!

Nonetheless, no study or tool has existed without a single flaw. Hence, there is a pressing need to see Edmodo in a different light. The site sure does offer various

advantages that will be most beneficial in English language learning. As discussed earlier, it helps with the welcoming learning environment, language enhancement, appropriate assessments which can be created and posted as well as active interactions online. However, I am also aware of the fact that ‘one size does not fit all’. Despite its advantages as put forth by participants, I implored their views on the weaknesses of the tool too. Through this way, I believe the findings of this study will be more biased-free and provides equal insights on the pros and cons of executing Edmodo for teaching-learning process.

As posited by scholars, different people have diverse preferences towards their learning style (Rodriguez et al., 2005). For example, I am an audio-visual person who learns best when is presented with visual or audio materials. In fact, I acquired English subconsciously through watching films with subtitles and listening to music while reading the lyrics. On the contrary, some students learn via writing and reading, meanwhile some others learn best using visual materials alone or merely audio files. During interview sessions with the participants, I inquired on their personal learning strategy and general opinion on how Edmodo affects students with various interests and preferences.

“A visual learner would appreciate Edmodo because of the interaction but auditory learners prefer to learn by listening, so face to face interaction would be better for them. Personally, I prefer face to face interaction with extended discussions online.”

Emme/EDMODO 1/Interview

First of all, Edmodo faces issues regarding learning preferences of a student. As suggested by Emme, visual learners may benefit the most from the use of Edmodo while other types of students might still prefer traditional settings in classroom where they can do hands-on activities. Even though e-learning can be hands-on too as students explore the learning course independently, however it is a type of virtual hands-on experience. Besides that, on personal level, Emme confessed she prefers face to face interaction in classroom, but favors getting supplementary assessments online. At the same time, Rose, another participant talks about similar subject matter;

“...discussions whether online or face to face are always beneficial, but having discussions face to face is more advantageous than online especially when you can see their facial expressions and get quick responses”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

Both Emme and Rose have given a limelight on the concerns over catering for individual needs and differences in Malaysian schools. I agree that learners do acquire knowledge at different pace and with diverse learning styles; therefore it is a matter of judgment and personal perspectives on which forms of teaching approach will work best for them. Additionally, Emme echoes the same concern on the importance of face to face interaction for a few times during the following interview. Farah too shares the same view with Emme as she is slanted towards the need to have face to face interaction during learning in classroom.

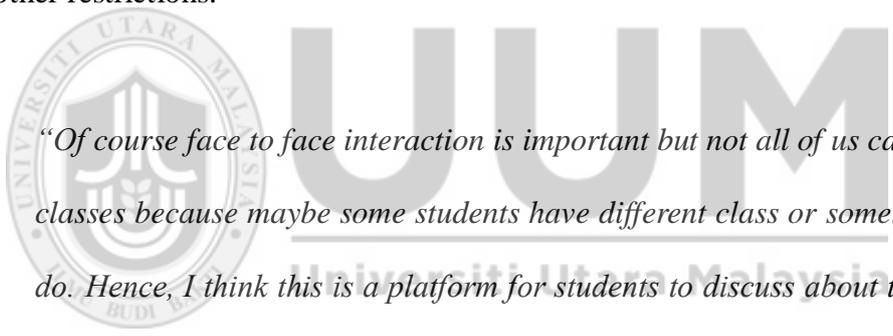
“The only hindrances are less or no face to face interaction and lack of human touch.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I prefer to see the person who is talking to me and also look at the person whom I’m talking to. I need to see people’s faces when they are talking, but if some people are leaned towards auditory or visual learners, I don’t think they would have a problem with this tool at all, so it depends on the person.”

Farah/EDMODO 1/Interview

However, contrary to the popular belief from the rest of the participants, Fatin maintains her stance stating that Edmodo will be fitting and work just fine for every kind of learner, especially university students due to issues regarding time constraints and other restrictions.



“Of course face to face interaction is important but not all of us can meet after classes because maybe some students have different class or something else to do. Hence, I think this is a platform for students to discuss about their group’s task or anything wherever they are.”

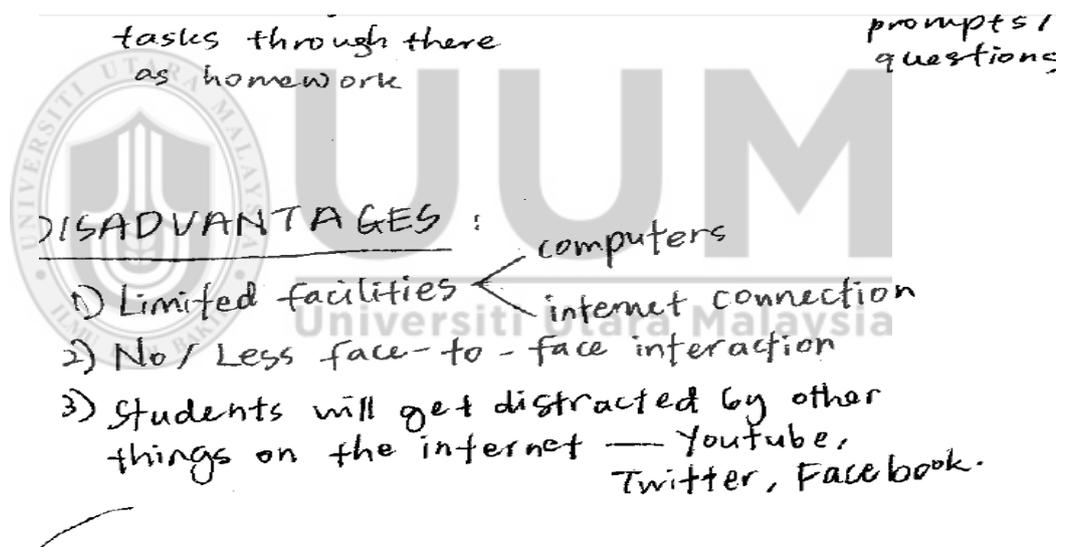
Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

Other than the problem concerning the need to have face to face interaction, the most agreed and pointed out hindrance about the use of Edmodo is related to issues on facilities (Ramayah et. al., 2010), which in a case where the facilities are not properly available, students will not feel encouraged to use e-activities. Generation Y and Z are normally equipped with at least a smart phone, a computer at home or a personal laptop. However, that might be the case for students living in the urban area with families coming from high income or middle higher income. The opposite scenario

for students from rural area is; they might not be privileged enough to own such devices. Meanwhile, even though all schools and universities in Malaysia are provided with infrastructure and proper facilities, there are some schools that do not maintain the facilities well or do not have the capacity needed to cater for all students concurrently at one particular time.

“The only thing I don’t like is the inconvenience some students may have; lack of facilities and internet connection.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview



Disadvantages/EMME/Concept Map

Figure 7.10. Disadvantages

“....what if the students do not have internet access at home? I do know that internet is a common privilege, but there are students who don’t get the opportunity to have the access at home. I’m afraid that I might burden them as they’ll have to go to a friend’s house or cyber café just to get internet

connection. I want this portal to be helpful and assisting, instead of burdening.”

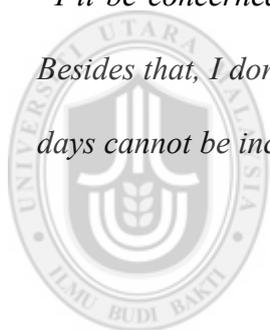
Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I’m afraid that not all students can afford to do the assignments online, some maybe don’t have internet connection at home, come from poor family so they don’t have the facilities (laptops and internet) and some maybe live in the rural area. If I’m a teacher at a school in urban area, that might not be the major problem, but if I were to be teaching in a rural area, it will be a problem for me.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I’ll be concerned about the access; they might not have internet or laptop. Besides that, I don’t think there are any other problems because students these days cannot be incapable of handling a technology device or computer.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview



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On this particular subject matter, all of the participants can come to an agreement that the major drawback about Edmodo is the need to have constant internet connection and a technological device to connect them to the website. Rose added that she does not wish to burden the students having to do their tasks in a cyber café or at a friend’s house, because above all she wants Edmodo to be assisting and not the otherwise. Fatin commented if she gets to teach in a rural area, she will diagnose the situations first, if the students do have necessary facilities, only then she will implement Edmodo to assign assignments. Moreover, Farah stated proper facilities would be the only major concern she has because in terms of capability in handling a technological device and navigating a website, she is confident that students are very much

proficient in that sense. This second concern of theirs is not new as previous studies too pointed out similar anxieties whenever learning using an e-learning tool is concerned.

Last but not least, another drawback of Edmodo is the possibility of being distracted. As Edmodo is a website that requires students to conduct their learning online, some of the participants share their worries that students might get diverted from the real focus. This is an issue that can only be solved by students' sheer will to study and give ultimate attention to finishing their tasks on Edmodo.

“Edmodo is similar to a social site so there's a chance that students might misuse it for other purposes which are non-educational, in the end they might be diverted from the main goal; which is learning.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Students might get distracted while doing work on edmodo, they might simultaneously browse for videos and do other unnecessary things on social media.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

Distraction is an apprehensive issue that exists in almost all tools and methods pertaining to e-learning. However, it is also possible that we might worry or assume too much, for example we are afraid that students might get swayed away from the main focus, but we have not tried to implement and see what are the effects that follow right after.

In a nutshell, there is no perfect tool available as everything has its own flaws. Edmodo indeed has its drawbacks too, mainly concerning the lack of face to face interaction, the need to constantly have internet connection and a technological device to accompany as well as the possibility of distractions that might disrupt learners' online learning experience. These forms of drawbacks as noted by the participants undoubtedly do present hindrances towards the implementation of Edmodo. Nevertheless, it is very pertinent to look at both pros and cons of Edmodo and weigh the considerations to use it later.

7.4 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I delivered the multiple realities of Edmodo comprising of apt environment whereby it suggests Edmodo helps in a sanctuary-like environment for learning as it has informal vibe to it, different than the traditional classroom settings and offers mobility advantages which allow students to have an access to their education at any time anywhere (Lu & Churchill, 2013). Upon revealing the first type of reality Edmodo proposes to the members, I further conveyed participants' thoughts in noting the site's assistance towards enhancing language acquisition through independent learning on the site and the ability to strengthen language learning by indirectly promoting grammar lessons and vocabulary items. Another form of reality that participants experienced was through the assessments which teachers can create and post on Edmodo may be a great substitute for homework as students can learn at own pace and have creative assignments that inculcate fun and critical thinking (Mohamad, Majid & Hanan, 2012). All of them agreed to utilize Edmodo for students' formative assessments at home when they become English teachers in the future. Finally, prior to their

encounters on Edmodo, they emphasized on the importance of interactions on Edmodo which can be very engaging and helping students to become better users of the targeted language. These are the existing realities one may find and experience on Edmodo, especially during English language learning.

The advantages and benefits that Edmodo proposes have high potentials to support the process of second language acquisition. Participants postulated, Edmodo is deemed to be suitable and should be implemented by educators in Malaysia. They shared future aspirations and the possibilities to execute the use of Edmodo for language lessons, particularly after school hours. Nevertheless, despite all of the mentioned criteria which can help in English language learning, Edmodo does present drawbacks as well because it hinders face to face interaction, might not be suitable for all types of learners, constantly needing sufficient facilities (internet and a technological device) and contains the possibility for distractions as the activities and assignments can only be done online. This research devoted itself in unfolding the thoughts and perspectives of participants on both the advantages and disadvantages of Edmodo in language learning, therefore in retrospect I believe I have delivered the intended purposes by enlightening the area of concerns using the instruments and theories adopted which helped to guide and provide outcomes for this study.

7.5 Summary of Chapters 5, 6 and 7

In these three chapters stated above, I have illuminated the journey of exploring Edmodo along with shared perspectives of participants. These core categories hold the ability to explain Edmodo as the phenomenon under study on a macro and micro levels. Chapter five (5) is primarily about the opinions participants have in regards to the practice of solely traditional approaches in language learning. Subsequently, they

too shared the same anxieties pertaining to the issues and concerns in English language learning. Further, I ended the chapter with a glimpse of participants' future plans and approaches that they intend to execute in their teaching career. The integral purpose of looking into their areas of apprehension and future teaching strategies is for easier understanding in looking at the gap in between the concerns and those future plans. In this study, I aimed at proposing Edmodo in becoming the connecting bridge in order to diminish their concerns and subsequently help them to achieve the goals sought for in teaching career. Therefore, chapter five has successfully relayed my intention in a condescending manner.

Chapter six (6) is an illustration of Edmodo's paradigm. In this chapter, I elucidated the peeling process of participants' thoughts. In the beginning of the process, readers may observe participants' views towards e-learning and have their expectations matched when they experienced the use of such website for the first time. Here forth, we can safely conclude that their initial expectations were not met as the only exposure they had on e-learning was the official university's website. Moving on, they were then introduced to Edmodo. Based on the opinions shared, their course of experience in exploring the site had been smooth. As Edmodo gains more popularity and support from millions of users worldwide, the participants opined on the pulling factors that have been alluring users to the site. All of the participants commented on the functional buttons and seamless features that it offers. Tomassini (2013) postulated, there are two main categories that an excellent website should possess; interesting interface and user-friendliness. According to the perspectives put forth by participants, evidently Edmodo does retain these two crucial aspects on their website.

Chapter seven (7) is a discovery on multi-faceted layers of Edmodo that assist in lessons deliveries. It started by shifting the focus of viewing the buttons and features of Edmodo by looking at how those buttons can be accommodating in teaching and learning styles. Prior to this chapter, we observed how the tool provides conducive and holistic apt environments which are suitable for the 21st century learners. Next, I illuminated how Edmodo helps in enhancing students' English acquisition based on participants' views on this matter. Assessments that can be fashioned in a more creative way and updated too become one of the methods in assisting language learning. Further, Edmodo allows interactions between peers to happen in a natural manner, which consequently aids in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1989). In light of these perspectives set forth by participants, I then explained their opinions pertaining to the possibility of implementing Edmodo in Malaysia. All of them unanimously stated that the idea to execute such tool is very feasible as it focuses on a bottom-up approach. Following to these results, I discovered the potential deterrents of implementing this tool because it does have its disadvantages and possible flaws.

As a summary, I reckoned I have managed to deliver both the pros and cons of using Edmodo in English language learning. These three chapters above are predominantly concerning the results of meaning-making processes of the participants. In these chapters, I have relayed their opinions exactly as it is due to the nature of narrative approach that mirrors upon the realities of participants (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1997). Besides that, I adopted interpretive approach (Walsham, 1993) that allows me to tap into the data and analyze it accordingly to my comprehension of the instruments involved while executing open, axial and selecting coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the final chapter which follows after this, I will be discussing the benefits of

executing Edmodo and ways it may help in shortening the gap between students and their education, as well as the shifting of teacher-centered to students-centered approaches through the use of the tool. Additionally, I will attempt at providing solutions to the possible deterrents of using the site. Besides that, I will revisit the results of this research that resonated with previous studies found in literature. Last but not least, this study will come to an end by giving a limelight to the novelties of new knowledge discovered throughout the course of this insightful research's journey.



CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSIONS

8.0 Introduction

In this final section, we will be discussing the findings presented in the previous chapters in relation to participants' perspectives on Edmodo. In recollection, we are already aware with grammar lessons and translation methods which are still being practiced in educational institutions, yet are not very effective in delivering intended outcomes (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). On the contrary to the recent notion, educators should be well prepared with appropriate skills so as to face the new era of information and technology. Optimum utilization of IT skills is crucial for educational institutions to remain relevant.

Edmodo as one of the social learning platforms available provides an access to stakeholders in education to keep up with recent trends and create a comprehensive learning atmosphere, especially in our recent technology advancements. Participants have shed a light on many areas of concerns, consequently providing us first-hand insights into their experiences which are proven to be beneficial to many. Indeed, diversification aided by various materials and tools may assist in teaching learning process to ensure no student is at disadvantage and will get equal chance at learning (Leopold, 2012). Later in this chapter, we will be looking into how the findings have provided answers to the research questions and attained the intended objectives as well.

8.1 Revisiting Participants' Perception on Edmodo that Help to Shorten the Gap between Students and the Accessibility to Their Education

The first research question that guided the flow of this study is in relations to what perspectives do the participants have on Edmodo and what triggered the thoughts. In numerous ways, participants have conveyed their views on the matter, consequently providing us with substantial information. Through constructivism and hermeneutics, they manifested their feelings during interviews and while doing the tasks assigned on the portal. Undeniably, understanding what and why participants think of Edmodo in ways they do will give us an opportunity to make sense of their learning experience and how their views influence their behaviours.

In many developing countries, teachers give out assignments to students which should be written in exercise books. This form of practice poses limited amount of resources as students merely refer to text-books and rely on what they have learned in classroom earlier to provide answers. Conversely, Edmodo may assist in the quest of knowledge seeking when it is employed to conduct assessments after school hours by broadening the amount of resources available to the students, especially with the advancement of internet and web-based applications (Rais & Hashim, 2004). Through Edmodo, students can go beyond text-book reference while at the same time having an authentic learning curve like no other. Participants did postulate that Edmodo is suitable for out-of-class experience and formative assessments, particularly because they claimed traditional approach alone is not sufficient to equip today's learners and the investments on CD-ROM, websites and other tools are a waste of government's monetary funds as it has very minimal positive impacts on them. Instead, these

monetary supports should be advanced towards the use of other new methods or approach of teaching.

Further, in relation to distance learning and online learning, I did wonder in Chapter 2 about through which medium learning was made possible. Upon illuminating the features of Edmodo which emphasize on e-learning and e-activities, participants commented it is possible and doable for a tool such as Edmodo to be implemented in Malaysia for distance and online learning. Moreover, given longer period of time, this site can be tremendously beneficial to stakeholders in Malaysian education. Steinman (n.d) echoes the same concept as he finds academic performance of his students increased drastically by 4% after executing the tool within the time frame of merely one semester.

As posited by the participants, Edmodo interface and user-friendliness are at its best conditions. None of them faced any troubles logging in or finding the site. Such features encourage students to feel comfortable using it and hence, making it appropriate for learning (Buescher, 2010). When feelings as such can be evoked within learners, it helps to bring them closer to their education and boosts motivation to take part in the learning process. Additionally, Anbe (2013) posited, due to the interactive interface and user-friendliness, this site becomes manageable by teachers and users could go beyond what was expected of them.

Additionally, participants noted that familiarity to Facebook (FB) has assisted them in feeling acquainted with the outlook and characteristics of Edmodo. Despite the fact that Edmodo offers completely different features than FB, it still retains similar

functions, buttons and layout. Postulated by Tomassini (2013), Edmodo has easy navigation for learning purposes and similarities to infamous social network; FB. The feeling of familiarity may be able to enhance learning experience for learners and keep them enthusiastic in seeking for knowledge. Nevertheless, one of the participants (Emme) provided a completely different view, as she questioned the value of originality which does not transpire. In this case, familiarity is an option which only users themselves can relate to and decide on according to their preferences and liking.

Extended materials can aid in lesson plans by allowing teachers or students to share more resources online. Edmodo has a feature where it permits users to save any type of files on the site, which later can be downloaded at any time of the day. Obviously, we need to make use of the leverage we possess on the potentials of extended materials with the intention of accommodating teaching-learning pedagogies so as to allow educators to create the best use of e-activities (Simuth & Sarmany-Schuller, 2014). Besides that, all of the participants agreed Edmodo's "progress" feature keeps students updated of their performance while at the same time helping teachers to keep track and assess learners (Pop, 2013). Parents, who possibly will obligate to busy schedules daily, may have an overall view of children's academic progress. These features and interactions between teachers, students and parents resonate with Buescher (2010), who claims this application helps making lives easier and hassle-free.

Creative assessments are extremely crucial in retaining students' interest and attention in or outside of classroom. Engagement with students' learning curve can further be enhanced with properly designed assessments (Hung & Khine, 2006, p.9). Edmodo

provides a feature where fun and interactive assessments can be easily made; it is all just a click away. As students facilitate their own discussions and learning, teacher's role is to monitor the progress and ensure no students fall out of the topic or deviate from the focus of the tasks assigned. At present, rote learning is no longer appropriate; therefore providing diverse assignments is significant. Students who are engaged and immersed with their learning curve will result in sharing more of own collections in terms of personal experience, new input that they encounter, photos, documents and many others as there is a sense of trust in the online community (Anderson, 2010).

Moving on, how can it be promising for students to have a constant access to their education if teachers become one of the hindrances? Hung and Khine (2006) states “..engagement with learning is likely to mean engagement with technology”. The notion denotes; learners need to be engaged with technology in order to have an encouraging engagement with learning. Educators these days are very much engrossed on practicing conventional pedagogies where they teach using the same way they were taught (Pajares, 1992), which resulting in refusal to take risks with technology infusion (Gywn-Paquette & Tchon, 2003). Consequently, students too will be affected as they become the products of the whole teaching-learning processes.

Basically, learners can only have an ultimate access to their education if only teachers permit it. Difficulties in coping with innovative approach will cause educators reverting back to traditional approaches (Tang et. al., 2012). Subsequently, if this situation persists, it will cause learners to face deficiency in freedom to their education outside of school. Providing and drilling students with homework are not adequate in preparing students with practical skills for the future as this only leads to

students memorizing instead of learning. Certainly, one can neither change nor transform entirely his/her way of teaching that he/she has accustomed to after many years of being an academician, however I believe one may incorporate both traditional approach and e-learning (insert Edmodo), to provide more opportunities for students to have an effectively holistic learning experience (Kumar & Toteja, 2012).

Participants posited one of the most supportive features of Edmodo is the capacity for students to be mobile while having freedom to access the site. Appraisal on this particular feature transcends what participants in this study commented, as Chandler and Redman (2013) and Lu and Churchill (2013) obtained, and put emphasis on the same result. Further, mobility enables seamless learning opportunities which bring students closer to their education. In my humble opinion, mobility is an inevitable aspect that needs to be looked at if we want learners to always have the capacity in accessing their education anytime and anywhere. Additionally, in the digital world we live in today, providing continuous openings for students to be mobile while connected to their learning experience should be easily made possible, particularly with the advancements of Web 2.0 tools, social learning networks and many others.

Up to date, learners are pressured into performing excellently in academics along with co-curricular participations. Besides that, many of them are involved in musical lessons, charity work, household responsibilities and many others. Due to tasks and chores to juggle on daily basis, it poses issues pertaining to time constraint. The essence of utilizing Edmodo in teaching-learning process is the idea of being taught and acquiring constant access anywhere and at any time of the day. Henceforth, I

believe Edmodo may assist in decreasing the concerns on the subject matter by permitting users to participate, respond, reply, discuss and submit their work at own pace. Besides, looking at one of the instruments executed, the photographs have shown how students may be involved in their learning curve even though they were at home and in their comfort zones. The photos have also displayed how students can get in touch with their peers and do the assignments in a very engaging manner.

Furthermore, the practice of individual competition can be decreased by having more collaborative efforts with the peers. Group work is often disregarded as teachers are more concerned about individual achievements, as a result it stimulates singular competition (Slavin, 1995). Therefore, a two way interaction on Edmodo may give a voice to the students and autonomy to liberate their freedom on personal learning curve (Wahit & Mohd, 2013). Additionally, allowing access to students' education helps in lowering negative perceptions, low cognitive achievements and undesirable attitudes (Victori & Lockhard, 1995).

In a nutshell, besides the advantages that Edmodo offers users through the diversity of features, it helps to shorten the gap between students and their accessibility to education. Wider accessibility to one's education demands willing effort to take on more responsibilities and own exploration. In review, all of the available options intact on the site may assist teaching-learning process and transform students' learning curve to be more comprehensive, holistic and complete. Digital Natives of today would very much appreciate the execution of e-learning tool, such as Edmodo because of the benefits it proposes. To put it briefly, these findings resonated with previous works while at the same time answered the research question through

participants' construction of meaning making during face-to-face meetings and on the portal.

8.2 The Shifting of Teacher-Centered to Student-Centered Approach

Evidently, there are numerous flaws in traditional approach as it highlights rote-learning and memorization. Therefore, one of the solutions to curb the issue is by incorporating e-activities to make learning more meaningful and engaging. The participants posited that Edmodo may assist their quest for effective teaching-learning process in the future. Little (2007) describes development of language learning comprising of deliberate effort and conscious reflection, in which this notion inspires participants who are TESL students to become innovative teachers capable of encouraging students to invest extra effort in learning independently.

Two of the main concerns participants set forth are pertaining to the students' inability to speak in English despite having almost 12 years of education (kindergarten, primary and secondary schools) on English subject and the overly emphasis on academics achievements by simply looking at how many A's students can secure while overlooking the importance of education and its real life application (Schrader, 2013). Subsequently, lesson plans and teaching pedagogy become teacher-centered instead of the opposite (Elley, 1983). Taking symbolic interactionism and interpretivism stances in the study into consideration, I recalled seeing participants' facial expressions disliking the current method in practice. All of them made suggestive gestures stating they disapprove the traditional approaches, especially when they reminisced on their own memoirs during schooling days. Their knitting

eyebrows and stressed utterances proposed the idea of disapproval with the teaching-learning conditions in schools.

Participants and previous studies similarly postulated teacher-centered lessons will only result in lessons becoming mundane and discouraging (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Godleski, 1984; Oxford, 1990; Smith & Renzulli, 1984). On the contrary, Edmodo can provide a more student-centered approach where they have the autonomy to conduct own learning process. I interpreted participants' moods on this matter to be hopeful, excited and positive. As they talked about how they can make use of Edmodo and when will they implement its use, a happy curve formed itself on their lively faces. I could sense a good vibe as they spoke, commented and shared views about Edmodo. Seeing such responses from them, I thought to myself the idea of infusing Edmodo into the curriculum is not an impossible concept after all.

Stakeholders do know that independent learning is a very crucial aspect in education because if students are merely being spoon-fed, in the end they hardly learn anything but only good at memorizing. Examinations therefore are testing their memory power and not what information they truly have acquired with full comprehension. Many of the formats for examinations pose neither critical thinking nor practical questions which require students to reflect and think in review on how to relate what they have learned into certain life situations. Thus, learners need to be educated on how to apply and create more with existing knowledge (McClain & Brown, 2013). Edmodo inverts the conventional practice through its collaborative effort in empowering students to undertake discovery learning autonomously (Wallace, 2013).

Additionally, higher order thinking skills to analyse and respond to tasks posted on Edmodo while teachers facilitate the process is a form of student-centered method (Buescher, 2010), where it becomes an engaging alternative to hand-writing homework questions. Proper approaches to learners' education ensures enhancement of language skills and critical thinking (Pr, 2012). Additionally, as postulated by participants, students may get out-of-class learning experience by practicing English on Edmodo. Chandler and Redman (2013) similarly agreed that Edmodo extends discussions when time in class is limited, and therefore allowing learners to embark on own learning discovery.

Understanding why Edmodo is very well received in schools in the United States is imperative as we wish to look at good examples of teaching practices to be followed. Apparently, participants could see why this site is gaining much attention outside of Malaysia. One of the main reasons is due to its fun, innovative and interactive platform for learning. In addition, corrective feedback which many teachers still practice is not as effective as they thought it would be because students do not read the comments Thomas (2010). On the contrary to the teachers' belief, students are more concerned about the explanations on what did they do wrong and not what form of grammar or sentence structure's mistakes they committed. Hence, on Edmodo this practice can be reversed using its innovative way of giving feedback and comments, side-by-side with its fun features consists of emoticons, emoji and button badges. This easy paced yet interactive platform encourages the learner to be engaging and to seek out knowledge without being bored out.

Besides that, typical four walls classroom focuses on the teacher in front where he/she becomes the centre of attention while imparting knowledge to learners. Students on the other hand, sit passively and are required to absorb all information taught. Such inert method of student-teacher interaction puts pressure on the students to keep up with the teachers' pace, successively causing them to neglect the application of what is being learned. This form of learning does not ensure academic excellence as we would never know how much they have understood until at the end of an examination where students simply spill out everything they have memorised. However, this form of practice can be replaced with online discussions where students have no choice but to participate and contribute in order to be graded and considered present. Supplementing a face-to-face instruction with web-based activities will also increase interaction and creativity among students while leading to self-learning (Amrein-Beardsley & Toth, 2007; Vernadakis, 2012).

Further, students learn best when they conduct exploratory learning and attain practical knowledge subconsciously. TESL students in this study and Buescher (2010) conveyed that users/students adjust their replies accordingly on Edmodo as they are aware on how to address the targeted audience. Therefore, students tend to apply the correct tone, formality, grammar and punctuation. As photographs and interviews' transcriptions have conveyed, we can observe how the participants carefully wrote and replied on the thread by applying proper spelling and proper language items. Not only the participants agreed that Edmodo does help in strengthening students' language use, in fact they too exuded the same behaviour. Via this observation, we may witness the effectiveness in enhancing language skills as it is neither just a

theory/assumption that we think of nor a comment made by other scholars, instead it did happen in this particular research.

Additionally, increasing students' autonomy is vital in permitting them to have a wide access of information and communication options (Khan, 1997). Participants suggested that fun and engaging assessments on Edmodo will be most compatible with students' learning styles and it leads to better academic performance; McLoughlin (1999) posited the same conception in his research. The gist of education is to prepare the students of today for tomorrow; collaborative effort which can only be obtained via student-centered approach is therefore momentous due to the pressing need for *“students to focus on the importance of lifelong learning to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills, to think critically and to inspire creativity and innovation so as to adapt to global change”* (UNESCO, 2004).

Another appalling result of teacher-centered approach is the outcomes it produces; students' incompetence to speak and apply language learned due to the stress being on lessons alone (Wang, 2007). Even though Edmodo does not cater best for speaking skill, undoubtedly it remains to have the capability in allowing students to practice with resources available online especially when it is more stimulating (Cheong, 2006). TESL students in this research commented, Edmodo inculcates healthy and competitive learning habits when students attempt to write their finest replies so as to avoid embarrassment when their peers read the thread online.

Additionally, they noted the importance being able to read peers' comments which can be helpful in acquiring new vocabularies, grammar items and ideas. Through Edmodo, students are keener to ask questions as some might feel shy to do so in

classroom, but the ease of the platform would invigorate the students to inquire more which later stimulates the education process. Given longer time, students might boost their confidence and able to speak with clear utterances and pronunciation. Undoubtedly, such developments require deliberate efforts, commitments and investment on time from educators and students.

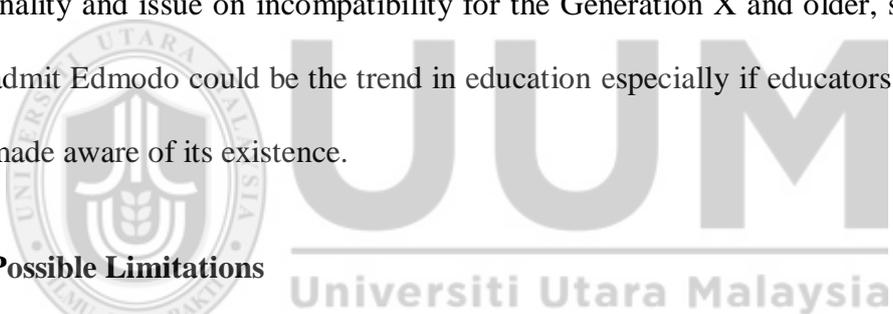
In general, participants claimed Edmodo to be most fitting for assessment outside of school hours, which can conveniently be executed and replace typical hand-writing homework. Alongside execution of face-to-face interaction in classroom, Edmodo would be a supplementary tool in assigning assessments and checking students' understanding as well as enhancing knowledge acquisition. Positive perceptions and beliefs towards learning and creative assessments will result in enormous influence on learning performance and outcomes (Cotterall, 1995b; Weinert & Kluwe, 1987). Henceforth, Edmodo can be one of the methodologies in shifting the teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered approach.

In this section, I am suggesting that the use of Edmodo in an appropriate duration of time with correct execution may assist in shifting the conventional teacher-centered approach which normally exists within traditional approach to become student-centered and more modern-like by blending the portal into curriculum. The second question of the study is regarding how Edmodo can aid in teaching-learning process based on the participants' perspectives; meanwhile the objective is to discover how the site can be profoundly helpful in teaching-learning delivery. Upon exploring what the participants think of Edmodo, I have also relayed suggestions from them in possible ways that Edmodo can be helpful. The participants' views on this matter

have been enlightening because currently they are both learners and future teachers of English. Focusing on this area will be of tremendous contribution in Malaysian's education practice.

Essentially, we discovered methods and techniques to use Edmodo in inverting the teacher-centered practice into more student-centered. The three instruments applied for this study have been very helpful in generating findings and results. Moreover, I interpreted participants' responses and facial expressions when they spoke about their hopes and its relation to using Edmodo in the future to be encouraging and promising. Additionally, though one of the participants commented on the lack of Edmodo's originality and issue on incompatibility for the Generation X and older, she however did admit Edmodo could be the trend in education especially if educators in Malaysia are made aware of its existence.

8.3 Possible Limitations



LACK OF FACE TO FACE INTERACTION + FACILITIES (TECHNOLOGY DEVICE) + INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY + DISTRACTION = POSSIBILITY FOR DETERRENTS

Figure 8.1. Concerns for Limitations

TESL students in this study commented on the lack of face to face interaction which may become a major disadvantage of Edmodo. I consented on the importance of direct conversations that ultimately produces rich interactions with proper social skills. Apparently, this point of viewing resonates with the findings by Rodriguez et. al. (2005) who stated face-to-face interaction does play a significant role in learning. Both educators and students are concerned about the lesser physical interaction especially when they are not proficient at virtual interaction (Syed Mohamad, Talib &

Faridah, 2007). However, it is merely a matter of judgments and a preference of one's learning style. One of the participants did not see the absence of face to face contact as a hindrance in her learning; due to her hectic schedule she prefers having sought after the use of Edmodo in submitting and finishing her tasks in order to accomplish other daily responsibilities as well.

Moving on, facilities turn out to be one of the drawbacks in implementing Edmodo, particularly when facilities are not properly available. Subsequently, students will feel discouraged to use e-activities (Ramayah et. al., 2010), which all of the participants concluded that the lack of facilities and internet connection will become an enormous issue to both teachers and students. Instead of growing into an assisting tool, the lack of crucially needed facilities will only cause hindrances in teaching-learning process. In order for Edmodo to be executed smoothly, students need to be or provided to be technologically, economically and competently ready (Rahamat, et. al., 2011).

Besides that, the possibility for distraction can occur if learning takes place online. Some of the participants stated; as Edmodo is a website that requires students to conduct their learning online, students might get diverted from the real focus. This concern can only be overturned by students' sheer will to learn and devotion to pay attentive attention in his/her learning. These are the main concerns put forth by participants. I strongly believe if such deterrents do exist as a major issue in schools or universities; the implementation of Edmodo cannot be done efficiently. Until these limitations are overcome, only then Edmodo effortlessly can be executed by educators.

Nevertheless, restrictions and concerns claimed above can definitely be overcome; therefore I would like to propose some of the possible solutions. First and foremost, besides distraction online, we must embrace the fact that distractions are already inevitable in everything we do; for example if students do their hand-writing homework at home, they might be distracted to watch television or play video games instead. However, through Edmodo, parents can play a role by restricting websites they do not wish their children to visit; this approach has been used by public universities and educational institutions for many years now. Students too need to be taught on how to stay focus when they are learning and shift their focus to entertainment and leisure time online only after they are done with the tasks assign on Edmodo. Via these ways, distractions when learning online can be minimized.

Moving on to the issue of facilities and internet connection; universities should not pose problems pertaining to these because the libraries are equipped with computers and internet. Not only a public university has one main and numerous mini libraries on campus, inside and outside of the campus, there are cyber cafes providing services for students' use. Additionally, students in universities are normally equipped with personal computer and anywhere within the university's compound, internet access via Wifi is also provided. On the other hand, school students may not have personal laptop or a computer at home. However, they or at least a family member might own a smartphone which can be used to access Edmodo or they can simply get the tasks done at any cyber café or a friend's house that has such facilities. Undeniably, if restrictions mentioned still persist, Edmodo will be difficult to be implemented for school students, but not for university students.

Another possible deterrent is the lack of face to face interaction. In this case, conventional approach where physical meetings become a main part of an instruction converts to be important. I would like to suggest face to face interaction to be maintained regularly in classroom but the assessments and tasks be assigned on Edmodo for the many reasons discussed previously. Even so, I would advise educators who wish to apply Edmodo in his/her teaching strategy, to conduct a quick survey on the availability of facilities and internet access as well as learners' preferred learning style before implementing the use of this portal.

8.4 Revisiting the Findings of This Study

Briefly, this section will unfold and conclude what are the key themes in this study that echoed the literature review's themes which I have conveyed in the former chapters. There are many concepts arose from participants' views on traditional approaches that resonated with previous findings, but we will not focus on those due to the importance and emphasis that should be given on the purpose of this study, which is exploring Edmodo. Based on my limited knowledge and readings of previous works, I managed to identify 18 themes about the use of Edmodo in education. Those themes are known as familiarity to Facebook, teachers' locus of control, extended discussions, mobility, teacher-student communication, progress, peer-tutoring, global citizen, critical thinking, authenticity of tasks, students engagement, independent learning, cost-efficiency, transparency, involvement in and out of classroom, teachers' community, security and parents' bird view.

Out of these 18 themes, this research is able to affirm and be in sync with 15 themes listed above. The three themes that did not emerge in the study are cost-efficiency,

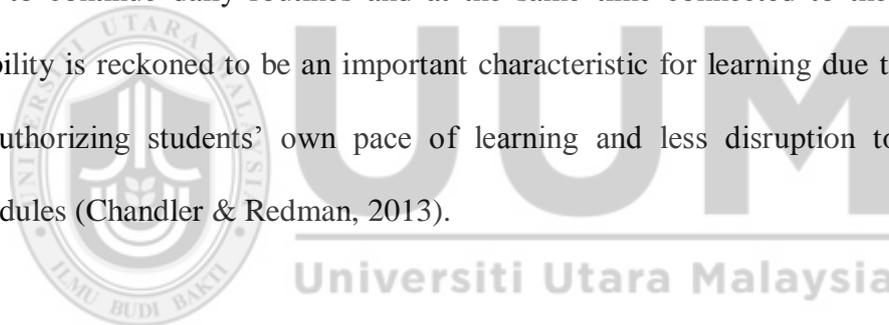
teachers' community and security. First of all, familiarity was indeed the foremost theme confirmed by the participants as instantaneously they pointed out the striking resemblance that Edmodo has to FB. Edmodo since its inception has taken measures to become a look-alike to the infamous social network; FB (Maguth & Harshman, 2013), but focusing particularly on educational platform geared towards teachers mostly, yet also is appropriate for students and parents.

Secondly is regarding Edmodo being within teachers' locus of control. As of now, educators in Malaysia's educational institutions are comprised of those from Generation X. While Generations Y and Z are proficient users of technological devices, this might not be the case for many of the teachers from Generation X. Therefore, a gap between these generations exists. Edmodo, from the literature and this study's findings have claimed that the social learning network is indeed easy to be handled, even by non-digital natives. Teachers may effortlessly facilitate and conduct student-centered activities (Buescher, 2010), which are recommended by multiple scholars in order to enhance language acquisition. Lu and Churchill (2013) too postulated, Edmodo can be used by non-technology savvy teachers because it is extremely easy to post links and files on the site.

Moving on, the next confirmed theme is the ability of having extended discussions. Chandler & Redman (2013) summarized, extended discussions can be carried out when time in class are not sufficient, cancelled or there is a public holiday, as well as permitting the extended materials to be posted online. Participants' were enthusiastic when they talked about having extended materials online. They explained lengthily the benefits of being able to post more items related to students' curriculum. These

items may encourage more online participation from peers which I believe, having collaborative learning in action is essential because it allows students to use the language learnt.

Next, mobility is an important feature that brightens participants' faces. Some of the assessments posted were done using their smart phones because in some tasks I inquired for impromptu replies and thoughts on the issue discussed. They stated that in some occasions where they forgot to reply on the threads, they however managed to do so while shopping in the mall, walking to the class or having their breakfast. Their giggles and smiles when sharing these stories suggests they really liked being able to continue daily routines and at the same time connected to their education. Mobility is reckoned to be an important characteristic for learning due to its consent in authorizing students' own pace of learning and less disruption to their daily schedules (Chandler & Redman, 2013).



The next theme I made a connection to is about teacher-student engagement. The social learning network understudy permits teachers to participate in a teaching methodology conversion resulting classrooms and engagement with students to be more structured. “..Engagement with learning is likely to mean engagement with technology” (Hung & Khine, 2006, p.9), therefore educators in this globalized era need to work with emerging technologies where this notion exceeds any boundaries or differences that they may have. As they work with technological devices and use it to interact with students, the level of healthy engagement among them shall increase, subsequently producing better academic achievements. We may see from this theme

that engaging interactions on Edmodo is another form of exciting reality that it offers to user/members of the site.

The sixth theme is pertaining to progress of students. Edmodo simplifies tasks for the teachers and makes their lives easier by helping to keep track of students' progress (Pop, 2013). This is a momentous feature that participations too emphasized on. They further noted saying probably progress is the most important concept among all advantages Edmodo may offer. In addition, students' works can be viewed effortlessly and the 'progress' feature will help to generate the whole class roll. We are living in a fast paced world whereby everything needs to be convenient, hassle free and up-to-date. Teachers in Malaysia are given many responsibilities besides teaching, hence I hope with Edmodo at least it will lessen their burden in accessing students' continuous progression.

This study highlighted the theme on peer-tutoring whereby students learn from one another. Redman and Trapani (2012) claim, Edmodo is a portal that presents information in an engaging and motivating way which in return becomes a controlled environment suitable for peer tutoring. Participants commented on the benefits of seeing peers' replies and work on Edmodo as they at the same time get the chance to acquire vocabulary items and different point of views. During interviews, I could interpret their facial expressions and responses on the issue to be very positive. As if being sneaky, they said the ability to lurk on peers' comments made them feel excited. In my perspective, it could be a form of vigorous competition because all of them wanted their voices to be heard in a healthy environment. Further, participants like the

idea of interacting and conversing with peers online because it is easier and engaging; which is similar to the results produced by Gonzales and Vodicka (2012).

Next, I would like to present the theme of inculcating global citizen's qualities onto students. Participants shared their experience in adjusting their replies accordingly on the site. They knew who the audience is, what issue they are discussing and what form of language should they be using. Therefore, the language used is more formal if it is on a serious subject matter but otherwise if the discussion is more on leisure topics. Buescher (2010) too asserts, students adapt and adjust their replies on Edmodo as they learn their audience consists of teachers and classmates, consequently students will learn how to respond to tasks appropriately with the correct tone, formality, grammar and punctuation. The social networking site apparently has the ability to cultivate skills, empathies and attitudes needed for online civic involvement (Crowe & McDonald, 2013). Hence, a continuous usage on Edmodo could be a good preparation in producing good global citizens with qualities such as being selfless and compassionate to others.

Cultivating critical thinking is one of the main goals in learning. Participants when commenting on this area stated that the site offers a better training route for examinations. In contrast of examinations' format, students can only rely on what they know and how to implement what they have learned. But the learning curve on Edmodo is endless, for example students have the liberty to give own meanings and search for information on their own. Consequently, leading to fostering habits that are important for students to be good digital students as they progressively learn how to be critical, think outside of the box and find own solutions to problems (Rubin, 2013).

In terms of assessments, we have already explored what types of tasks Edmodo can create and offer to the users. Participants said they loved doing quizzes and tasks which can simply be created and posted on the portal. Previously, I assigned a quiz to the participants, which resulted in a very good feedback and positivity. Evidently, the site allows students to do the assessments at own pace and at the end of the task, it will show the correct answers along with in what areas/which questions the students answered wrongly. Fashioning an authentic assessment into a lesson plan is just a button away now. Overall, participants noted the ability it has in enabling educators to create creative assessments (Hung & Khine, 2006, p.9), which similarly found in other articles as well.

Student engagement is yet another important theme highlighted by Redman and Trapani (2012) in their study. According to them, Edmodo offers a channel for each student to have a voice within the classroom while collaborating and interacting with their peers in an engaging atmosphere. At the same time, looking at how the participants in this study reacted to this theme, I can conclude that the level of engagement among them is good and can be nurtured further with longer period of time. The most significant aspect when giving a task is mostly on the topic concerned, as I posted provoking questions that required them to reflect, relate and opine accordingly. I hypothesized the situations on the site as active conversations taking place with opinions being exchanged among them.

The 12th theme that I could synthesize between literatures to results in this study is regarding independent learning. I inquired how the vicious cycle of drilling and

producing human robots through education system can be inverted. Based on what I have managed to gather, Edmodo helps to revert these deadly outcomes by allowing students to undertake discovery learning independently (Wallace, 2013). Exploration on Edmodo enables students to be more independent in their learning, especially when they are the ones in control of the process and the outcomes (Knowles, 1986). Earlier, I conveyed participants' thoughts in noting the site's assistance towards enhancing language acquisition through independent learning and the ability to strengthen by indirectly promoting grammar lessons and vocabulary items. Indeed, the theme of independent learning becomes transparent in this research.

I believe a normal situation in educational institutions involves the question of transparency. Sometimes, students feel the need to know what might have caused them to get lower marks than their peers when in their opinion; peers' works are similar to what they submitted. In order to satisfy their curiosity, formative assessments that are conducted on Edmodo can be more transparent and successively helping everyone to see their progress and aware of own mistakes that could have led to the results/marks of their assignments. Both participants and former studies posited, Edmodo is an open access virtual learning network where transparency on grading can be assured because assessments strategies and marking format may be seen by all students and parents.

The 14th theme emerged is pertaining to Edmodo providing extended lessons after school hours. In this case, it provides support in class, outside class' communication and collaboration opportunities. Not only participants could learn from one another, they are given the chance to be independent and create a strong bond among them. In

my humble opinion, this social learning platform could assist in the quest of engaging students with the lessons intended anytime of the day. Participants and educators who commented on this theme synchronously see it in the same light (Wallace, 2013; Dobler, 2012).

Finally, the last theme that I could relate in results from this study to the written works I could examine is about parents' bird view on Edmodo. According to an article from Paper Clip Communication (2012), parents are in favor of Edmodo because it helps to connect, collaborate, share and explore tasks assign to their children as well as to monitor their children's progress online. This portal is known for its safe and private environment as well as incorporates the involvement of parents as they may participate in the community to bring a level of transparency. Participants additionally added, parents could also be more involved and take some responsibilities in their children's education as well instead of leaving everything in the care of teachers at school who teach the students only a few times in a week with limited lesson hours.

On the other hand, the three themes which could not be confirmed in the research are cost-efficiency, teachers' community and security. It is probably due to participants' views that mostly came from the eyes of a student and future teacher, not an already appointed teacher with teaching experiences in schools. Therefore, probably the ideas of lowering costs, having teachers' community and utmost security while interacting with students online did not come across to be very crucial. However, it is noteworthy to admit that these assumptions emerged merely from my own interpretations of the

situations by looking at participants' current standpoints as students and future teachers.

Besides that, they were not given enough room to explore the site as a teacher, because they logged in with a 'student' passcode. Temporarily, I allowed them to discover Edmodo as a teacher using my existing account. Perhaps, this reason too contributed to why they did not comment on these three themes as usually only teachers would offer opinions related to these. In fact, the three themes were postulated by Buescher (2010) and Pop (2013) when they stated cost-efficiency is one of the attracting advantages of Edmodo, while Trust (2012) asserted teachers engage with other educators globally on Edmodo to expand their networking, grow professionally, enhance knowledge and contribute to a community, and Edmodo (2014) claimed their website was designed to protect the privacy and security of students and teachers by providing a closed, private platform in which they can collaborate, share content, and leverage educational apps to augment in-classroom learning. Evidently, none of the three themes mentioned came from the students' positions and perspectives, thus probably participants in this study too could not relate to it.

As a conclusion, those 15 affirmative themes demonstrated above are the concepts that I could synthesize between the results that I obtained through this study to the ideas put forth in the literatures that I managed to inspect. To put it simply, the themes are parents' bird view, involvement in and out of class, transparency, independent learning, students' engagement, originality of tasks, critical thinking, global citizen, peer-tutoring, progress, teacher-students communication, mobility, extended

discussions, within non-digital teachers' locus of control and familiarity to FB. Meanwhile, there are three themes that could not be affirmed from the data analyses, namely; security, teachers' community and cost-efficiency. Below is the figure that simplifies this discussion whereby the themes that resonated with previous findings are classified together in the same clause meanwhile the themes in literature that could not be identified in this study are placed outside of the division;

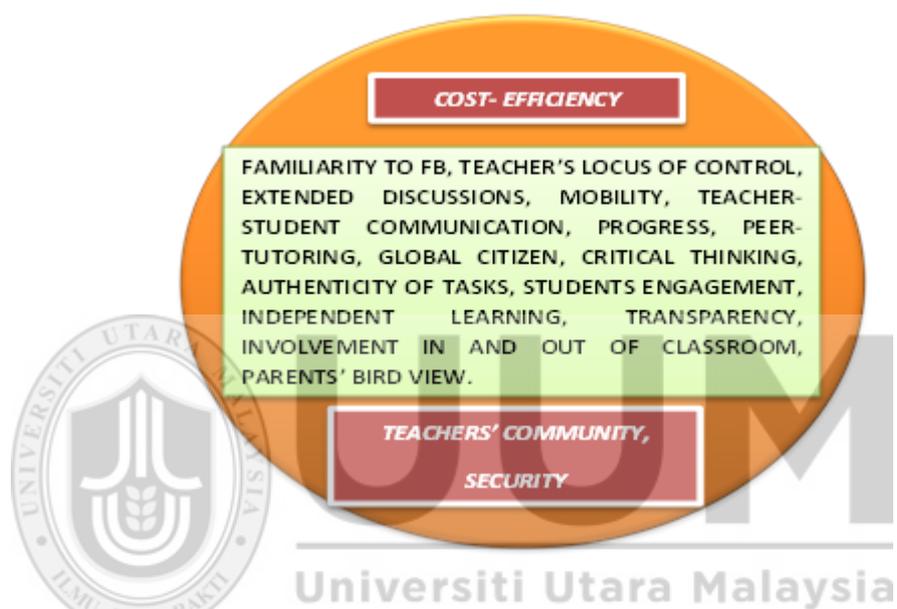


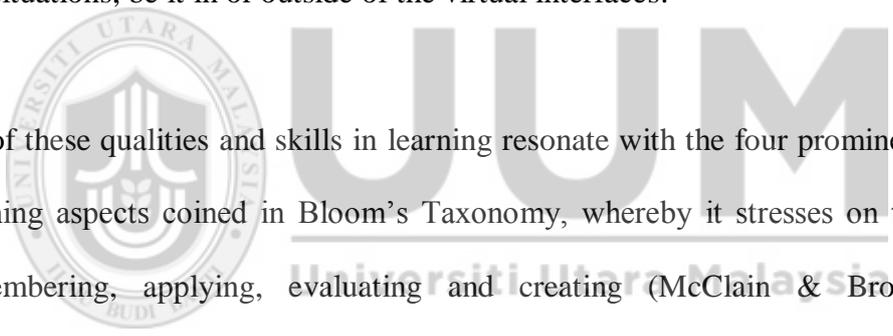
Figure 8.2. The Themes Found Regarding Edmodo

8.5 Novelties of New Knowledge

As discussed earlier, there are many ways Edmodo may facilitate learning and enhance English language acquisition, as deemed by participants and former written works in the literature review. Nevertheless, this research is able to generate authentic and original findings as well. In this section, we shall see what new knowledge is found in the study. Briefly, participants noted Edmodo provides a more comprehensive environment, suitable for independent learning, contains interactive assessments and inculcate lively discussions. Due to its apt learning environment and

vast resources, Edmodo is equally formal and informal because of its welcoming layout, yet able to retain the formality for academic purposes.

Particularly, on the subject of informal learning, it is a concept which is not mentioned by any scholars whose works I have gotten the liberty to examine closely. Additionally, participants did mention apt environment provided by Edmodo creates a comfortable atmosphere for learning, however they noted the importance on knowing the boundaries, especially on when and how to be formal or informal depending on the topics and types of assessments. Evidently, this is a skill which cannot be found through individual hand-written homework questions and can only be practiced in real life situations, be it in or outside of the virtual interfaces.



All of these qualities and skills in learning resonate with the four prominent effective learning aspects coined in Bloom's Taxonomy, whereby it stresses on the skills of remembering, applying, evaluating and creating (McClain & Brown, 2013). Essentially, learners who are provided with apt learning atmosphere and appropriate tasks will be more engaged in their process of language acquisition. This condition results in independent learning which utilizes the skills of remembering, applying, evaluating and creating, as posited in Bloom's Taxonomy to be significant in effective learning progression.

Moving on, the perceptions of participants regarding Edmodo being appealing, not dull looking and contain soothing colours as well as functional/appropriate buttons have not been found in previous works as well. Based on my limited knowledge, these new ideas on Edmodo's overall outlook are worth noting and may consequently

encourage more users/members to the site. As nice visuals do entice people, Edmodo apparently have tapped into this area especially when all of the participants agreed on it its appealing interface and user-friendliness as the two core features that any website should possess. Tomassini (2013) too posited, these aspects are important in order to draw more users. Participants moreover suggested soothing colours do play a role in e-learning because it will not distract students, especially if they have to stare at the computer's screen for long hours. Despite previous studies have reported on it being within teachers' locus of control, easy to navigate and user-friendly; none has reported on the aspects of fun, refreshing, not dull-looking and soothing colours.

Besides that, this study gives a limelight for enhancement of English using Edmodo. While all of the other journals and articles written posited Edmodo's advantages when used correctly to support the curriculum, none of it tried the tool for English language learning. For example; I inspected an article appeared in an educational newspaper titled Kid to Kid Connection (2011) whereby a Science teacher who has been using Edmodo to encourage his students to discuss their observations on topics such as characteristics of different animals and adaptations. He finds that the site has been very helpful in refining academic performance along with the other benefits. Science and English are two distinctively different fields; therefore many of the proposed findings in this study are different than most of the previous works I have discussed earlier, especially when we look at it from English learning context; such as learning grammar, acquiring vocabulary items and improvement on the four skills in second language acquisition.

Other momentous results in this study would be on the discussions on drawbacks of Edmodo. Despite proposing possible solutions to the deterrents, from my limited reading I have not found literatures that mention any drawbacks of the tool under study. Instead, all of the works found presented only the good sides of Edmodo without taking facilities, distractions and learners' learning styles into considerations. By exposing participants' perceptions and concerns over these matters, I have successfully illuminated the possible restrictions it might pose and what are the ways that we could implement to cater for these issues.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, particularly under 'Research Gap', we are already aware of the two articles found on MalCat (a site housing literary works in Malaysia), that do not conduct any full form of experiment on Edmodo, because one of it connects the benefits of using e-learning tools based on themes found in literatures to the possible advantages of Edmodo, while another executed a study using Edmodo as one of the instruments but not as a central tool under study. Henceforth, not only this study is the first in Malaysia to explicitly scrutinize Edmodo as the main tool tested, it also adds to the collection of qualitative researches in Malaysia, while at the same time accumulates to the studies on perceptions too.

Besides the ideas I have emphasized above, I would like to tap into the significance of this study which could be added into the aspect of authenticity. Previously, I relayed my hopes in contributing to the teaching practice in Malaysia by proposing Edmodo as a supplementary tool. Malaysia probably has spent millions of monetary funds in its quest seeking for the best technological tools available on the market to cater for learners' needs. I am proposing the use of Edmodo because it does not impose any

fees and well known as one of the most famous social learning platforms in the United States. Hence, Edmodo is imperative to be looked at because of the contributions it may offer to our stakeholders in education. In this vast progressing world, it is vital for education to infuse one of the e-learning tools into the classroom environment. When it comes to computer-generated classrooms, Malaysian virtual universities and Smart Schools too may benefit from this study by using the portal as one of the supplementary tools which may help in attaining better academic performance.

Moreover, normally primary and secondary schools in Malaysia do not have specific teacher-students' online portals that can be used as an advantage in learning processes. If Edmodo is perceived to be user-friendly and fancied by the students, perhaps this application can soon be introduced to teachers. It is presumed that students in urban areas who are technology savvy would welcome such online website. On the other hand, even though in universities, lecturer/tutor-students portals do exist, a number of lecturers still prefer Facebook, Twitter and other social media as a channel to cultivate student-centered activities. Edmodo too is anticipated to be a better channel to serve the purpose mentioned because it is a specific network made especially for secured educational purposes.

In a nutshell, there are a few novelties in the results that this study has proposed. It has proven Edmodo to be suitable in Malaysian learning context, may help in the issue of cost-efficiency in Malaysian educational institutions, becomes the first research in this country that completely shed a light on Edmodo from the perceptions of participants using a qualitative approach, presented the possible drawbacks of

Edmodo, illuminated ways of how the portal can assist in curriculum especially in English language learning, commented on its appealing interface, soothing colours and functional buttons, and emphasized on the benefits of its informal environment that exists on the site.

8.6 Implications of the Research

The study has generated a number of authentic results which leave an impact to the phenomenon under study. It has successfully unraveled the mysteries of having millions of users worldwide and unfolded the perspectives of users in the study firsthand. I demonstrated the course of journey throughout the processes of meaning-making and how do the participants' views reflect on Edmodo's disadvantages and advantages. According to their opinions shared, we have been elucidated on the current areas on apprehension regarding language learning, the need to have a revolutionary tool in shifting the focus of education for this century's learners, meaningful features of Edmodo that draw users to the site, seamless learning opportunities through the use of such tool and possible deterrents of Edmodo.

Additionally, I have delivered original findings in the area of study as it has discovered a few new aspects that have never been mentioned in literature. First and foremost, its apt environment in terms of allowing informal learning to occur naturally was never mentioned in the literature, especially in the language learning department. Moreover, I have also made a connection between informal learning to Krashen's theory (1989) that postulates neutral settings with communicative approach will work best for second language acquisition as opposed to planned and restricted exposure to the targeted language. Besides that, Edmodo's features, functional

buttons, soothing colours, interesting interface and attention-grabbing outlook have not been discussed in details in previous works.

Other than that, based on my limited knowledge and readings, no researches that I have perused thus far tested the effectiveness of Edmodo for language learning. Almost all of the written data pertaining to the tool present its advantages in a broad context. Further, there is no single study in Malaysia that has scrutinized or placed Edmodo as the main instrument under study (Malcat, 2015). Evidently, this research too has enlightened many of us about the drawbacks of Edmodo. The results in this particular department are note-worthy as none of the literature I have gotten the liberty to synthesize gave any limelight on the subject matter above. Due to the paucity in examining students' perceptions (Yang & Cornelius, 2004), I believe the extensive discussions heretofore have productively gave a number of students' representatives a voice in a matter related to their education.

Above are the implications of the study in a summary for quicker comprehension. As a product of the findings, this research proposes that Edmodo is most suitable for school students as parents too can benefit from this tool. Through the use of Edmodo, all three stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) may have a holistic experience in education by allowing everyone to play a significant role respectively. Next, university students come second as suitable users for the site due to its supportive environments in assisting and stimulating academic growth. Adult learners should have no troubles in using E-learning as it has been proven to be beneficial and thought-provoking if used efficiently. Also, the research has found that teaching and studying at a distance can be as effective as traditional instruction, only when

techniques and technologies implemented are fitting to the instructional task (Syed Mohamad, Talib & Faridah, 2007). Therefore, by executing Edmodo appropriately, physical absence should not present a severe threat to students' education. Distant, online and university students in specific may benefit the most in this department because Edmodo provides seamless learning opportunities via its mobility feature. This feature is deemed to be very momentous for adult learners. All of the discussed matters in this section and earlier depict the implications of this study in short for easier perusal.

8.7 Limitations and Recommendations

A study is neither flawless nor able to shed lights on every aspect completely. This research is not exempted as it has its limitations too. First of all, the number of participants presents a drawback to the study because it cannot be generalized in a larger scale. Further, the findings are leaned towards TESL students or students who are studying English courses because assessments are done pertaining to English subjects. Unknown impacts could happen if the learning materials on Edmodo were to be other subjects besides languages; for example Mathematics, Biology, Arts and others. Next, University of Malaya is the only site chosen to conduct the data collection. In this case, we would not know how other students from various universities will respond to the same application. Finally, time constraint is another limitation because if given longer time, probably more effects or opinions can be obtained.

Hence, future studies should look into Edmodo in longer period of time with students from several institutions. This is due to the possibilities of having diverse opinions

and enriched data that will help us understand the phenomenon deeper. The likelihood of generalizing e-learning phenomenon will be higher as well. Despite many positive claims on the implementations of e-learning tools, we have yet to come to a proper understanding and broader view of the phenomenon and its tools. Other than that, future researches related to Edmodo or new e-learning tools ought to have more number of participants and researchers from other fields besides language learning. This study specifically focused on the use of Edmodo in language learning. Thus, the tool should be tested for various subjects besides language. Last but not least, perceptions of teachers should also be an interesting realm of study related to the implementation of Edmodo. In my humble opinion, educators will be able to provide insightful perspectives and diverse views which will be tremendously enlightening for many counterparts in education.

8.8 Conclusion

Agreeing to Rivero (2013), student-led revolution concerning education is caused by technology's rapid advancements. Accordingly, educators must not remain indifferent on current tools and innovations; thus it is required of them to keep up with the technology advancements in order to stay relevant for present day's schooling. As illuminated in this study, participants have shared their insights and perspectives on one of the most well-known social learning platforms in the United States of America. Indeed, 46 million of users on Edmodo prompt for further exploration on why and how this application is implemented in many schools and universities.

I decided to conduct a qualitative research on perceptions on both learners and future teachers of English in order to gather findings pertaining to their experience as

learners on the site and opinions of soon-to-be teachers who might contemplate on applying Edmodo as well. The motivating purpose in studying perceptions of learners is because students' attitude has been proven to be a strong motivation for the use of online social technology (Shittu et al., 2013). Manifestly, we have been enlightened on many features available on Edmodo and what participants feel about those supporting features. We have also been informed on why such feelings emerge from their perspectives. Additionally, the participants shared their feelings towards the use of Edmodo in enhancing the quality of English language learning. Throughout the course of this study, they explicitly illustrated their learning experience on the site.

Regardless of Edmodo providing support for students to gain more access to their education and secure more autonomy in learning, it is also noteworthy that every learner does have own preferences in learning. Lamboy (2003) criticizes how universities have been slow in planning for students' diverse learning styles and adopting new technologies for teaching tactics. Supported by Dille and Mezack (1991), technology does have a tremendous relation to students' learning style preferences which consequently leads to their academic performances. In many cases, Edmodo can be one of the possible solutions to equip and expose students in an out-of-classroom experience, yet it is only a matter of perspective and preference of individuals (Pasch et. al., 1995). Therefore, educators should beforehand assess, check on students' available resources and cautiously implement the use of Edmodo. Personally, I would implement Edmodo in a smaller scale to support teaching-learning process, especially for the collaborative approach. Probably after students are comfortable using the site, I will assign more assessments through the portal while concurrently replacing hand-writing homework. I firmly believe that Edmodo is the

way forward in advancing our primary, secondary and tertiary curriculum in order to persevere and sustain ourselves with this ever advancing and evolving world whereby technologies play an enormous role in everyone's life.

Hopefully the findings in this research have provided and benefitted stakeholders in Malaysian education with perceptions of first-hand users of Edmodo. However, this study admittedly has imperfections and limitations, therefore future studies regarding the use of Edmodo should attempt at acquiring more number of participants and diversify their backgrounds as in this research I recruited only 3rd Year TESL students in University of Malaya. Additionally, other learning materials should be tested on the site as well; for example Mathematics, Biology, Arts and others. Time constraint was the main restriction because if given longer period of time, perhaps additional effects or opinions can be obtained. Perceptions of teachers should also be an interesting realm of study related to the implementation of Edmodo. In a nutshell, future studies should look into Edmodo in longer period of time with students from several institutions as well as having more number of participants and researchers from other fields besides language.

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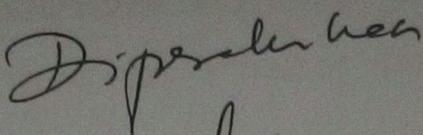
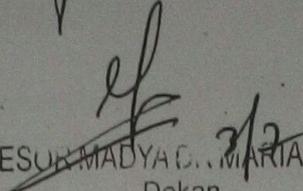
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APPENDIX A:

Faculty of Education,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia

Attn: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariani Md. Nor

Dear Madam,



PROFESOR MADYA DR. MARIANI MD NOR
Dekan
Fakulti Pendidikan
Universiti Malaya

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH / INTERVIEW ON TESL STUDENTS

Referring to the matter above, I am **Farha Alia Binti Mokhtar (Student I/D No.: 816890)** who is currently a postgraduate student in Master of Education (Research Mode) at the University Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah. I am at present doing my Master's Thesis under the supervisions and guidance of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hisham Dzakiria (Director of EEPD/Senior Lecturer in School of Education and Modern Languages)**. This letter relays my intention of seeking your permission in conducting interviews with students in the Faculty of Education.

2. On 2nd of July 2015, I received a phone call from the faculty pertaining to the current status of my request. This letter is prior to the conversation and a continuation from the last update. Attached is the terms and measures included in the consent form which was distributed to the students as I seek for their agreement before nominating their names to the faculty. Further, I provided a copy of the consent form to them in order to increase the level of transparency so that they know what sort of commitment is expected of them. Included in the form, I have explicitly stated only nicknames will be used in the report to ensure confidentiality.

3. The research I am currently conducting for my said Master's Thesis involves interviewing the students from the Batch of 2012/2013 in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) in Bachelor of Education. Therefore, I am hereby seeking your consent and approval to interview **four (4) students** from your TESL programme whose names are as follows:

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------|--------------|
| (i) | Fatin Farhana Nordin | (PET 120006) |
| (ii) | Farah Aida Fadzil | (PET 120003) |
| (iii) | Munierah Ainaa Mukhtar | (PET 120012) |
| (iv) | ROSE Linda Roslan | (PET 120021) |

4. Additionally, I have attached herewith a copy of my Conceptual Article on the Master's Thesis including the Defence Proposal's Approval Letter which I received from the School of Education and Modern Languages for your records.

5. Upon completion of the interview and/or research with the above named students, I will be

APPENDIX B:

Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF 3rd YEAR TESL STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA TOWARDS EDMODO.

You are being asked to take part in a research study on your perceptions in regards to Edmodo; a social learning platform. The researcher is asking you to take part because you are a suitable candidate for this research (purposive sampling). Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the perceptions of 3rd year TESL students in University of Malaya towards Edmodo.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, three sessions of individual interviews will be conducted with you. The interviews will include questions about your experience, background knowledge, academic performance, future plans on teaching methods and your opinions about Edmodo. The interviews will take about 30 minutes each to complete. Besides that, you will be required to enroll in an Edmodo virtual class created for this research's purposes and complete four online assessments. With your permission, I would also like to audio-record the interviews and collect your work on Edmodo.

Risks and benefits: I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Any relevant information from whatever you have decided to reveal, might be used in the reporting of this study.

There are benefits to you such as experience in participating in a qualitative study, a close look into Edmodo which can be applied when you are working as a teacher and development of understanding in research's processes should you intend to pursue studies after Bachelor's.

Compensation: You will be receiving a payment of RM150 for your participation.

Your identity will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. The reporting will be done with your nicknames being used in the research. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. However, once you have decided to partake in this research, you are not allowed to withdraw due to the study being a continuous progression that requires same participants to be involved in the procedures/sessions.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Farha Alia Mokhtar. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Miss Alia at farhaalia1990@gmail.com or at 012-5346294. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

TITLE OF STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF 3rd YEAR TESL STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA TOWARDS EDMODO

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview audio-recorded.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Name of person obtaining consent _____

Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

APPENDIX C:

