

## **Students' Acceptance Level of Digital Newspaper Publication Performance Assessment Innovation**



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**ABSTRACT:** The alternative assessment was implemented in the Editing Course (AK20903) to analyze students' group achievement in digital skills. This core course is compulsory for all second-year communication (UH6321001) students to prepare them with the skills of writing, analyzing, and copy editing. Students' digital skills are assessed through the publication of a digital newspaper that uses graphics applications provided by the university. However, this software can only be accessed within the campus area. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of student locations where students are no longer within the coverage area where the software is accessible. To address this issue, the Canva application is being tried out. This study employs a quantitative approach with a sample of 124 respondents consisting of current students who are registered in the AK20903 (Editing) course. This study aims to analyze the acceptance level of the students of the introduced innovation. To collect the data a set of four parts questionnaire was used that included the demographic information, perception of user-friendly, perception of usability, and students' satisfaction. The results showed that most of the respondents highly agreed that perception of usefulness, perception of usability, and users' satisfaction are the factors that influenced their acceptance of the innovation performance assessment of digital newspaper publications. The findings of the study indicate that students' acceptance of the innovation performance assessment of digital newspaper publishing is influenced by the benefits and usability gained from the use of Canva.

**KEYWORDS:** application; alternative assessment; digital skills; Canva; pandemic.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Education is arguably the most critical element in building a nation. The responsibility of nation building essentially also lies in the hands of the teachers and lecturers as students spend quite a big chunk of their time at schools or academic institutions. Unavoidably, they communicate more with their teachers or lecturers. Classes with positive interaction will definitely create classroom environment that are more helpful to learning and meet students' developmental, emotional and educational needs. In the process of teaching and learning, teaching refers to the participation of teachers in the process of instructing and imparting knowledge to students, whereas learning refers to the participation of students in the process of establishing knowledge (Smith, 2018). The role of a university lecturer is to cultivate, develop and enhance a student's potential in learning. Another important component in the teaching and learning process is assessment. Assessment is important as it involves the collection of information with regards to students' learning as well as lecturers' teaching. This can be observed by how a lecturer spends most of their time designing and conducting assessment activities. Assessments can be used as a tool to collect information, such as pertaining to the lecturer's evaluation on his/her teaching methods, and at the same time, it can also be used to make professional judgements on students' performance in every teaching and learning process undertaken (Bashir et al., 1997; Tajularipin Sulaiman et al., 2020).

Assessments in education are applied in various ways, especially in the teaching and learning process. In addition to this, assessments not only provide assistance to lecturers and students but also provide help to education administrators, education researchers and other education stakeholders to obtain useful information, so as to better decide whether to strengthen education strategies or to enhance education plans to improve education (Pellegrino, 2014). Aside from this, there are two forms of assessment, namely traditional assessment (multiple choice question, fill in the blanks question, true and false question) and alternative assessment (projects, open-ended question, journal writing). The first focuses more on scores, however the latter focuses more on the student's performance in the process of learning (Tajularipin Sulaiman et al., 2019).

On a global scale, the current generation needs to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century world. Therefore, Malaysia's education system introduced Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the year 2013. In the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB

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2013-2025), the blueprint requires teachers to educate or stimulate students' 21st century skills as well as encourage students to apply 21st century skills, such as critical thinking skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, and collaboration ability (Kim et al., 2019; Hiong, 2017; (Tajularipin Sulaiman et al., 2017). The 21st century teaching and learning classroom environment has yet to be regarded as a success as students still struggle to apply critical thinking skills outside the classroom, and they are still incompetent in solving real-life problems (Shamilati Che Seman et al., 2017; Siti Ruzila Hassan et al., 2016). In the current teaching and learning environment, teachers are still struggling to incorporate 21st century skills in the classroom. Thus, coupled with the lack of integration in the teaching and learning process, the 21st century might be a big challenge for teachers and students (Norhaqikah Mohamad Khalil & Kamisah Osman, 2017; Hiong, 2017).

In light of this, the world is striving to create a 21st century teaching and learning environment. The teacher plays an important role in cultivating students' cognitive skills such as creativity, as well as challenging and stimulating students to think and to see situations differently in classroom activities, which should be encouraged among students (Hamid & Kamarudin, 2021).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyse the level and acceptance factors of alternative assessment to help or improve the 21st century teaching and learning environment. The factors involved in this study are perception of usefulness, perception of usability and student satisfaction. Students' digital skills are assessed through the publication of a digital newspaper that uses graphics application provided by the university. However, this software can only be accessed within the campus area. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of students' locations where students are no longer within the coverage area where the software is accessible.

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

Evaluation is a process of making judgments and decisions about student performance (and program performance) based on benchmark standards specified by performance criteria and performance targets for a learning outcome based on evidence obtained from the assessment process (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2014).

Assessment, on the other hand, refers to direct and indirect data collection methods as well as evidence of student learning that are carried out systematically, continuously and repeatedly using a variety of different sources. The data collected, analyzed and discussed is intended to know and understand in more depth what students know and can do so that feedback can be provided to improve the quality of student performance, student progress, the teaching of academic staff and others (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2014). In short, assessment is a systematic process of measurement and evaluation that involves the activities of collection, analysis and translation of the level of student achievement of learning objectives.

Alternative assessment means the process of collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting overall information related to teaching and learning to help students improve abilities and make decisions to improve the teaching and learning process and achieve goals in learning (Gipps & Stobart, 2003; Mohd Haidzir Yusof@Jusoh & Norasmah Othman, 2019; Mohd Huzaimi Abdul Manap et al., 2020). Continuous assessment or evaluation began to be seriously emphasized by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) in 2011. The seriousness of MOE in the implementation of alternative assessment is closely related to the emphasis and efforts to transform assessment into student-centered assessment in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025 (Azizi Alias & Kamisah Osman, 2018). Subsequently, the implementation of alternative or continuous assessment is also intensified to the level of higher education students in line with the Malaysian Education Development Plan (Higher Education) 2015-2025. the choice of prospective employers in offering employment.

Gipps & Stobart (2003) explain alternative assessment refers to measurement methods other than examination methods such as answer choice-based measurement. It also refers to a method of measurement that uses or is assisted by technological tools. Alternative assessments also refer to an approach that incorporates aspects of assessment as part of the teaching and learning process. The definition of alternative assessment is very much in line with the research problems of writing this paper. The use of technology in the implementation of editing courses is a key element in demonstrating and exploring students' abilities in displaying mastery of knowledge that includes creative thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity. The approach taken in line with the 21st-century Learning Guide at the tertiary level emphasizes the mastery of 4C elements for students namely Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity at all levels of education and must be homed in every corner of life, in residential colleges, halls. lectures, across volunteer and entrepreneurial activities and also on sports fields (Mohd Fairuz Mohd Yusof 2017; Ab. Halim Tamuri & Nur Hanani Hussin, 2017).

Alternative assessment is a measurement of the abilities demonstrated or achieved. The knowledge involved in alternative assessment includes performance assessment, authentic assessment, direct assessment and portfolio assessment (Nasab, 2015). There are six characteristics of alternative assessment according to Azizi Alias & Kamisah Osman (2018) dan (Nasab, 2015) as the table below:

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Table 1. Characteristics of alternative assessments (Azizi Alias & Kamisah Osman, 2018; Nasab, 2015)

Item	Features of Alternative Assessment
1	part of the learning process because it looks into the development of how students learn and constructs knowledge
2	focusing on reviewing students' strengths for further improvement and improvement of their weaknesses
3	providing meaningful learning opportunities for students to hone problem -solving abilities, high thinking and creativity
4	show students' achievement and development performances
5	demonstration of learning outcomes such as products or projects, performance and process skills
6	gleaning feedbacks from lecturers/teachers as well as students' responses to the feedbacks

Specifically, these alternative assessments need to have the characteristics of valid, authentic, adequate, current and consistent evidence. Valid refers to the evidence presented by students that are relevant to describe the standards and learning outcomes. Authentic means that the evidence collected and produced is the result of students and the original work of students. The characteristic of adequacy is the evidence that shows the work and ability of students who follow the criteria or rubrics set. Real-time evidence shows students performing and completing tasks according to current standards or set time and consistency refers to evidence of the consistency of behaviour and results. Even though the assessors of people are different, they give the same assessments and results (Gipps & Stobart, 2003; Nasab, 2015; Azizi Alias & Kamisah Osman, 2018)

## Application of Theory

Previous researchers have extensively discussed the acceptance of technology by combining various theories and models (Sharma & Chandel, 2013) but in different circumstances, cultures and environments.

Commonly used theories and models are Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Extension of TAM, Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), Reasoned Action Theory (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These theories and models have varying thoughts, beliefs and benefits to researchers. Theories and models are still popular and relevant used in the study.

This study adapts three factors from previous theories, models and studies related to the acceptance of the use of Canva among students to complete assignments that will assess their performance of publishing digital newspapers. Two factors namely usability perception and usability perception were adapted from TAM (Davis, 1989), while user satisfaction was adapted from Information Systems Success Model (DeLone & McLean, 2003).

Perceptions of usefulness and perceptions of usability can influence users' desire to use e-learning technology and will then influence the use of the system. Perception of usefulness (TK) refers to the extent to which a person believes that the use of a particular system will improve his or her work performance, and Perceived ease of use (TMG) refers to the extent to which a person believes that the system can be used easily. and independent or otherwise (Davis, 1989). The notion of usability also influences the notion of usefulness which means that if a person thinks that the system is easy to use then the system is useful to him.

User satisfaction factors adapted from MISS (DeLone & McLean, 2003) to measure student satisfaction levels in teaching and learning activities of Editing courses that measure digital skills in newspaper production assuming their intention to continuously use the Canva application to complete assignments. This factor is borrowed because the author is sure of the user satisfaction of the Canva application and the benefits that will be gained by using the app making students continue with the intention of using it.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

### Research design

The method used in this study is descriptive survey employing questionnaire as a research instrument to provide an overview of the acceptance of e-learning among students. According to Yahya Don (2006), a descriptive survey study can gather a variety of information and measure the variables associated with a phenomenon. The questionnaire method allows gleaning of exact information needed based on the research question items. This method also only requires the respondents themselves to mark the answers on paper (Jas Laile, 2008). Thus, this questionnaire method is simple, cheap, fast and saves time. This study uses a questionnaire distribution approach through Google Form, distributed online. Respondents do not need to provide personal information (email or matrix number). This is to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents' identities and to avoid bias in the awarding of assignment marks. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the distributed questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed during the review week to provide space and get real feedback from the respondents' experiences in performance appraisal activities.

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## Study Sample

### *Population Targets and Study Context.*

The population was determined based on the objectives of the study which aimed to analyze the level of student acceptance of the innovation of digital newspaper publishing performance assessment. Therefore, the population of this study consists of undergraduate students Semester 2 Session 2020/2021 Communication Program, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UMS who follow the course of Editing.

### Study Sample.

The sampling frame will represent all elements in the population in which the sample was taken (Sekaran & Bougie, 2012) such as Communication Students Year 2, semester 2 session 2020/2021. In this regard, sampling facilities are used for the purpose of obtaining data on their level of acceptance of digital newspaper publishing performance assessment innovations that perform this task fully online following the covid-19 pandemic and the closure order of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).

The study sample consisted of year 2 students of the Communication Program, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities who took the editing course of semester 2, academic session 2020/2021. In this study, the sampling used is simple random sampling. The study involved a total of 124 respondents.

## Study Instruments

In this study, a set of questionnaires containing four (4) sections were prepared, namely Section A: Student background; Part B: Perceptions of Usefulness; Part C: Concept of ease of use; Part D: Satisfaction. The questionnaire was adapted and modified from researchers such as Waheed and Hussain (2010), Ab Hamid et al. (2014), Song (2010), Sun et al. (2008), Selim (2007), DeLone and McLean (2003) and Davis (1989). This questionnaire uses the Likert Scale 5 measurement of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree to see the level. However, these items need to be measured in terms of validity and reliability before using them.

## Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed using SPSS software version 20.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0). The items in Section A will be analyzed based on frequency and percentage. While the items in Sections B to G, data were analyzed based on descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation.

## III. DISCUSSION

### Respondents Profile Analysis

There are five sample demographic profile of respondents with respect to gender, device, state and internet coverage. The survey showed that Sabah off Campus location was 58.1%, campus location was 16.1%, Peninsular off Campus 11.3% and oversea 5.6%. Majority of the respondents was female (79.8%) and male (20.21%) due to number of female students are higher in the Editing course. Meanwhile, device usage showed that majority of the respondents were using more than one device (58.1%) and there was 26.6% for laptop, 15.3% those using mobile phone or mobile device. The distribution of respondent by state showed that majority of student from Sabah (69.4%), Sarawak (9.7%), China (4%), Brunei (3.2%), data contributed from Peninsular which consist of state of Pahang (3.2%), Kedah (2.4%), Selangor, Johor, Kelantan (1.6%), Negeri Sembilan and Melaka (0.8%) and Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan (1.6). Furthermore, Internet coverage showed there was 37.9 respondent having 4G internet accessibility, 29% having WIFI, 16.9% having 3G, 8.9 using 4G/LTE, 3.2% having 2G, 2.4% having fixed line (Unifi) and 1.6% having maxis and Celcom home fiber. Table2 showed the frequencies of respondents' demographic profiles.

**Table 2. Demographic Information of Respondents (n=124)**

Demography	Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>	Male	25	20.2
	Female	99	79.8
<b>Location</b>	Campus	20	16.1
	Sabah – Outside Campus	72	58.1
	Sarawak – Outside Campus	11	8.9
	Peninsular – Outside Campus	14	11.3
	Oversea	7	5.6
<b>Device</b>	Mobile phone/ Mobile devices	19	15.3
	Computer/laptop		
	Mobile phone/Mobile devices;	33	26.6

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	computer/laptop	72	58.1
<b>State</b>	Pahang		
	Selangor	4	3.2
	Negeri Sembilan	2	1.6
	Johor	1	0.8
	Kelantan	2	1.6
	Kedah	2	1.6
	Melaka	3	2.4
	Sabah	1	0.8
	Sarawak	86	69.4
	Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan	12	9.7
	Brunei	2	1.6
	China	4	3.2
<b>Internet Coverage</b>		5	4.0
	2G		
	3G	4	3.2
	4G	21	16.9
	4G/LTE	47	37.9
	Wifi	11	8.9
	Fixed line-Unifi	36	29.0
	Home Fixed Line Mobile-Maxis/Celcom	3	2.4
	2	1.6	

Cronbach's alpha value for each construct was generated. From this test, the alpha level that more than 0.9 is considered as excellent reliability, from 0.8 until 0.9 is very good reliability, from 0.7 until 0.8 is considered as good reliability, from 0.6 until 0.7 is considered as moderate reliability, less than 0.6 will be consider as poor reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Table 3 below highlights the reliability analysis results which stated that perceived ease of use has a value of **87.7%** followed by perceived usefulness is **89.3%** and user satisfaction **83.7%**.

### Descriptive Analysis

Mastery of Students' Acceptance Level of Digital Newspaper Publication Performance Assessment Innovation.

The purpose of this section is to answer research questions, which is the students' acceptance level of digital Newspaper Publication Performance Assessment Innovation in Editing Course in order to face IR 4.0. The analysis results report shown in form of mean and standard deviation.

The findings, as presented in Table 3, show that overall, respondents have shown a high level of acceptance of Canva. Useful factor and user satisfaction verified a mean value of 4.00 and followed by a satisfaction factor of 4.35 mean. This suggests that the level of acceptance among students is influenced by perceived usefulness, user satisfaction, and perceived of ease to use.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Students' Acceptance Level (n=124)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Perceived of Usefulness	4.41	0.68
Perceived of Ease to Use	4.35	0.63
User Satisfaction	4.41	0.57
Overall mean	4.39	0.54

Influence factors of Students' Acceptance Level of Digital Newspaper Publication Performance Assessment Innovation.

Two factors of students' acceptance level that contributed to using Canva. The factors included perceived of usefulness and perceived ease to use.

### Perceived of Usefulness

The perceived of usefulness factors in terms of job creation (B1, B2, and B3) affected the respondents' acceptance, the results showed the overall mean at a high of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.70 as shown in Table 4. In addition, respondents agreed that they can apply practical skills in performing Digital Publishing tasks using Canva.

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**Table 4. Perceived of Usefulness factor for Mean and Standard Deviation Min (n=124)**

No Item	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
B1	Canva is easily used to complete the final group work assignment (digital publishing)	4.42	0.70
B2	I find Canva in this group work assignment easy to learn	4.45	0.70
B3	I am good at using Canva even after several use	4.39	0.71
B4	I find Canva useful in applying practical skills when performing digital publishing group work assignments	4.42	0.70
Overall Mean		4.41	0.68

The alternative assessment approach in this study showed that the innovations introduced were successfully enhanced the practical presentation (digital publications) of students which 95 percent agreed that this method effectively improves their performance in the implementation of assignments.

Perceived ease to use.

The findings show that the perceived-of-ease-to-use Canva's adoption in Digital Publishing as a whole with a mean value of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.63. In other words, this study has shown that respondents agreed that using Canva in Digital Publishing can save time (C4). In percentage, 97.6 percent of students agreed that innovations introduced to contribute to easy-to-use and time-saving ways of completing digital publishing tasks.

**Table 4. Perceived ease to use factor for mean and standard deviation (n=124)**

No Item	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
C1	I find Canva in this group work assignment easy to learn	4.39	0.71
C2	I am good at using Canva even after several use	4.46	0.69
C3	I am good at using Canva even after several use	4.22	0.73
C4	I find Canva easy to use	4.40	0.69
C5	Overall, I find Canva is user-friendly	4.35	0.79
C6	I find it easy for me to become skillful in using Canva	4.31	0.71
Overall Mean		4.35	0.63

### User Satisfaction

Table 5 shown user satisfaction using Canva to publish digital newspaper. The result showed overall mean for this factor is very high which is 4.00 and standard deviation 0.57.

**Table 5. User Satisfaction factor for mean and standard deviation (n=124)**

No Item	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
D1	I find the multiple technique lessons enjoyable	4.43	0.65
D2	The multiple technique lessons have contributed greatly to my acquisition of relevant skills in copy editing and graphic	4.46	0.62
D3	I find the multiple technique lessons as being highly interesting	4.42	0.63
D4	The multiple technique lessons make me spend more time studying to acquire practical skills	4.36	0.64
D5	I am satisfied with my learning from the multiple technique lessons	4.42	0.62
D6	Canva lets me showcase my digital skills in producing publications	4.40	0.58
Overall mean		4.41	0.57

During the pandemic, the innovation used in the alternative assessment, Canva is alternative with a one-app-for-all features approach to producing digital publications. Data analysis in terms of percentage from this study showed 94 percent of students enjoyed performing their assignments. The combination of text, animation, photos, visuals, and video in online application software openly gives them a comfortable time-space in task solutions.

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From the results of the study analysis, it was found that the overall mean for the usefulness and easy-to-use response factors each influenced the acceptance of performance assessment – the publication of digital newspapers was 4.00. This suggests that students have a positive attitude and believe that innovation in alternative assessments by using Canva benefits the use of the app. The findings are in line with the studies of Davis et al. (1989) and Davis (1989) which explained the factors of the notion of usefulness and easy-to-use responses in tam theory having a positive impact on the use of online learning systems. This statement is supported by Ahmad Al Thunibat et al. (2011) who expressed the notion of usefulness and easy-to-use impressions influencing consumer acceptance of technology-assisted products and services. According to Ahmad Al Thunibat et al. (2011), products and services that are beneficial and easy to use will affect consumer acceptance of the services provided by the agency. In contrast to studies conducted by Fadzli Adam et al. (2014), and Kusuma Hadri (2014) which explained that the notion of use factor does not affect the acceptance of e-learning among consumers. This suggests that the findings of this study with past studies are different and inconsistent. Differences in study findings can be influenced by other factors. In this regard, this study can be expanded by looking at other factors that affect the innovation of alternative assessments that have been implemented. This is because this study focuses only on three easy-to-use factors, consumer satisfaction, and consumer satisfaction perception. Only three factors studied in this short study limited the detailed explanation of other factors that contributed to the success of alternative assessment innovation in courses involving students' technical skills.

### CONCLUSIONS

Innovation in alternative assessment approach is very important as a method in diversifying teaching and learning methods among lecturers and students. The findings showed that the level of acceptance of innovation among students was high and influenced by factors such as the notion of usefulness and easy-to-use notion. The usefulness and ease of use of students is influenced by the easy of use of the application which is Canva. Studies can increase the knowledge of researchers in the field of e-learning especially in relation to the practice of e-learning usage and acceptance. From the student and lecturer side, alternative assessment using application such as Canva can help and facilitate learning and teaching as alternative assessment can be implemented anywhere and at any time, as long as the place or location has a networked environment. This study also provides a clear picture to the administration and management as well as lecturers on issues related to e-learning so that measures can be taken accordingly. In addition, this study encourages lecturers to use alternative assessment to help smooth their teaching process. In addition, this study also increased the number of studies in the field of e-learning and became a source of reference for the researchers to do further research. Recommendations to future studies should focus on improving the study methods, additional variables and respondents in a wider scope in order to produce better study conclusions. This study only involves students as respondents, so the recommendation for future studies is to involve lecturers so that the information and views are more comprehensive and robust. In terms of study methods, it is proposed in the future, the study is done through two approaches which are quantitative and qualitative (combined method) to be more robust (Aini Hassan, 2007). Based on the quantitative survey, the respondents were unable to provide such subjective information as the respondents were controlled by a questionnaire in a structured form (Aini Hassan, 2007). In addition, proposals for the future, in addition to printed questionnaires, respondents can channel information or answer questionnaires via online methods as they are easier to analyze ((Wright, 2005). On behalf of the management, the institute needs to take appropriate measures to implement the application chosen in this context of study Canva thoroughly and neatly. Evaluation and monitoring of usage should be carried out so that all students and lecturers use the existing e-learning system more effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, variable such as technical support, internet connection, lecture abilities and outside factors need to be included in the next research. The results of this study have implications for the management, lecturers, researchers themselves and the students.

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