STUDENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-PORTFOLIO
SYSTEM

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To my beloved mother and father hope that this achievement will complete the dream that you had for me all those many years ago when you chose to give me the best education you could. To my husband who always supportive through the years of my study.

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ABSTRACT

The use of electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) has rapidly grown and widely implemented in many higher institutions from foreign countries to facilitate student learning. E-portfolio is not only use for keeping student's coursework and achievements but also to keep track student learning growth and to prepare for future career development. This study analyses undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences toward the use of e-portfolio on the main purpose of usage, involvement of peers and lecturers on learning, benefits gained and recommendation for improvements. Data was collected from 12 undergraduate students by conducting focus group interviews involving three faculty which are FKM, FKA and FPREE that has higher e-portfolio usage from undergraduates. Results shows that the use of e-portfolio positively impact students' perception on their purpose of usage, learning through peers and lecturers, formative and summative assessment, communication skills and benefits they get by using e-portfolio. Students' comments and suggestions on current system implementation were gathered for suggestion on future improvement in terms of implementation and student best practices. The conclusion is that students be able to improve their learning through the interaction between their peers and lecturers, self-knowledge, develop skills that relevant for job application and also realizing the importance of reflective learning and the advantages on using the e-portfolio system

ABSTRAK

Penggunaan portfolio elektronik (e- portfolio) telah berkembang pesat dan dilaksanakan secara meluas dalam banyak institusi yang lebih tinggi dari negara-negara asing untuk memudahkan pembelajaran pelajar. E-portfolio bukan sahaja digunakan untuk menyimpan kerja kursus dan pencapaian pelajar tetapi juga untuk memantau pertumbuhan pembelajaran pelajar serta sebagai persediaan untuk pembangunan kerjaya pada masa depan. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menganalisis persepsi dan pengalaman pelajar terhadap tujuan utama penggunaan e-portfolio, penglibatan rakan-rakan dan pensyarah kepada pembelajaran, faedah yang diperolehi daripada sistem e-portfolio dan beberapa cadangan untuk memperbaik implementasi sistem. Data dikumpulkan daripada 12 pelajar melalui temu bual berkumpulan yang melibatkan tiga fakulti iaitu, FKM, FKA dan FPREE yang mempunyai penggunaan e-portfolio yang lebih tinggi daripada pelajar. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan e- portfolio adalah positif dan memberi kesan kepada persepsi pelajar terhadap tujuan penggunaan, pembelajaran melalui rakan-rakan dan pensyarah, penilaian formatif dan sumatif, kemahiran komunikasi dan faedah yang mereka dapat dengan menggunakan e-portfolio. Maklum balas dan cadangan pelajar terhadap pelaksanaan sistem dalam sesi temu duga berkumpulan dikumpulkan untuk cadangan penambah baikan pada masa hadapan dari segi pelaksanaan terbaik. Kesimpulannya adalah bahawa pelajar dapat meningkatkan pembelajaran mereka melalui interaksi antara rakan-rakan dan pensyarah mereka, menambah pengetahuan diri, membangunkan kemahiran yang berkaitan untuk permohonan kerja dan juga menyedari kepentingan pembelajaran reflektif dan kelebihan menggunakan sistem e-portfolio.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Practice in electronic portfolio has been growing popularity and adopted not only in higher education and professional training, but also take place in elementary school. Electronic portfolio was belief to have a revolutionary effect to the students' learning process and development and has the potential becoming the important tools to facilitate life-long learning in the future. E-portfolio has been known as the most recognize thing in technology innovation on institution and have the potential to change higher education than any other technology used in academic to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. E-portfolios are also belief to have support the student career preparation and credential documentation, to share the teaching philosophies and practice, self-studies program and institutions or program accreditation processes.

E-portfolio act as a tool that help in learning process where students are able to involve in self-directed process by doing reflection in order to collect, organize and presenting their own artefact through media as achievement evidence, such as graphics, audio, text and video. Reflection is a distinctive attribute of mostly thoughtful developed portfolios. Reflections in a portfolio allow their audience to understand the purpose of these items were chosen in order to represent the students capacities and also provides the best of the best from students learning growth. Reflection actually helping student in their learning process in which, students be able to indicates their level of understanding to improve their weaknesses by self-learning.

Even though reflections are parts of the most important thing in developing successful e-portfolio, most students often have difficulties to come up with their own learning whenever they were asked by their teachers to do so without any guidance. Students usually do not know what to write when they were asked to reflect on their learning, as the thinking has been either subconscious or nonverbal. They may know and understand what they have learnt but they do not know how to express or to reflect it in such a way that audience will understand what they are trying to tell.

The e-portfolio system has attracted higher interest from around the world and increasingly continues to grow within students and professional to use e-portfolio to store their achievements where it is ready to access to suitable technology. However, the rapid development of e-portfolio has come to a lack of common approach or standards on creating e-portfolio since there are variety of technical standards based on the user itself, and also a wide diversity of terminology, which cause a confusion to either a person from inside or outside the field.

1.2 Problem Background

UniversitiTeknologi Malaysia (UTM) is the very first university in Malaysia to develop and implemented the e-portfolio system for the use of undergraduate students. This system was launched on year 2011 as the second version of e-portfolio system after the old version has been closed down for a long time. The system was developed by the Centre of Teaching and Learning (CTL) with the collaboration of Centre of Information Technology (CICT), UTM. E-portfolio system has been introduced to undergraduate student starting from their freshmen year. They are encourage to use the system to store all their experiences and knowledge they have learn throughout their study life in UTM. UTM e-portfolio system is implemented in order to help undergraduate student manage their study in an efficient ways, as well as to provide them an additional values during their studies in university and in the future.

According to Dalton, since the incorporation of the system in educational institutions are still at an early stage, conception on the best model of it uses and formats for widely use in educational institutions are still unfold. The concept is on what we know about the user needs. Many researchers found that the way student understand the purpose of e-portfolio significantly influencing the creation and content of e-portfolios. Apart from that, most literature on e-portfolio studies not often point out students' direct opinions. Therefore, it is necessary to know their perceptions on the use of e-portfolio system and how they are attract to use it before claiming that e-portfolio actually give positive impact to teaching and learning process.

UTM e-portfolio system focusses on the undergraduate student, in which involving first year student. However, UTM does not specify the guidelines on creating the e-portfolio, where students are allow to create the content based on what they think it is relevant, according to their creativity. Therefore, the contents may not projected as the student e-portfolio or a professional e-portfolio as expected.

1.3 Problem Statement

E-portfolio system is a part of Learning Management System (LMS) in which, most academic institutional including elementary to higher education from foreign countries has implemented. Due to the belief of its benefits and advantages, UTM started implementing e-portfolio system to undergraduate student for reflecting everything they have learnt and make improvement to their weaknesses.

Since e-portfolio is a new way of conducting teaching and learning, the concept or framework in creating and managing the contents are vary. Students actually realize the benefits and advantages they will gained by using the system, but how far does their understanding on the concept of using e-portfolio system.

UTM e-portfolio system has been used by the first year student. However, it is not a mandatory for them to make reflection from the beginning of their study as an undergraduate student until their graduation. Due to the situation, the use of UTM e-portfolio system by undergraduate students are discontinuous because they only use the system when their lecturers ask them to complete course assignment and projects in order to gain marks.

The problem statement for this research primarily focusses on the student perception towards the use of e-portfolio system to their learning development. Also, the issues on current implementation of UTM e-portfolio system need to investigate in order to know how far this system does and in what stage of implementation does UTM e-portfolio has reached. Also, several recommendations are propose to improve and elevate the e-portfolio system to the university students. This research is conducted in order to achieve the outcomes of the following research questions:

1. What are the current implementation of UTM e-portfolio system?
2. How does student perceive the e-portfolio implementation to their learning?
3. What are the recommendations to improve UTM e-portfolio implementation?

1.4   Project Objectives

1. To investigate the current implementation of UTM e-portfolio system.
2. To investigate the students' opinions on their experience of using the UTM e-portfolio system to their learning.
3. To collect recommendations of improvements to the UTM e-portfolio system implementation.

1.5   Project Scope

The following are the scopes involve in this research study:

1. The study reviews on the previous research regarding e-portfolio implementation.
2. The study reviews on the current usage of e-portfolio system.
3. The study involving undergraduate students who had used the e-portfolio system.

1.6   Project Importance

E-portfolios has been widely used in academic institutional involving from the elementary school until higher educations. It is belief that e-portfolio provide a connection and consistency to the learning process by experiences within their undergraduate study, helping in student reflections and act as an innovative assessment tools to their learning. Most academic institutional has implemented the use of e-

portfolio to their student learning development because the benefits and advantages it provide for lifelong learning. Researches who had conducted studies regarding e-portfolio believed that it has high potential for learning and can be an effective assessment tools.

Studies regarding e-portfolio system to learning has conclude that using e-portfolio system can elicit student reflections and helping student making improvements. However, rarely the literatures are about student perceptions and opinions on the engagement of e-portfolio would give impact to their learning process. Therefore, this study is conducted in order to collect students' perception on their orientation of using e-portfolio system and to find out whether they really get the positive impact by using it. By proofing the benefits that UTM students will get, it may help to attract undergraduates to keep using the e-portfolio system.

Previous study regarding the usage level of UTM e-portfolio system has proof that most of undergraduates not prefer to use the system continuously even though they can. Most of them are force to use it in order to fill up the requirements of course subjects and projects. Students were asked to use the system by the lecturers to get marks and they stated that they will not keep using it after finishing the course subjects. Therefore, this study propose some recommendations on how to keep student using the UTM e-portfolio system, so that students will take it seriously and valued every works and reflections they have done, not just for getting marks but also for their lifelong learning.

1.7 Summary

This chapter summarize about the problems that have been identify for the research study and to come up with the main objectives of the project based on the research questions in order to have an outcomes by proposing some recommendations to improve the current implementation of UTM e-portfolio system. The scope of this

project primarily focusses on the undergraduate students who have used the system for their course subject and reviews from literature review of previous study regarding e-portfolio implementation.

This project is important in order to investigate students' perceptions and opinions regarding the implementation of UTM e-portfolio system as most of the previous study rarely indicates and focus on student perceptions. Therefore, it can be proof what will benefits student by using the e-portfolio system and also some proposed recommendations to help improving the implementations for future reference.

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