

# **Enhancing Students' Online Engagement: A Study on Online Distance Learning Institutions' Students in Malaysia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Online Distance Learning (ODL) settings in higher education institutions assist in allocating resources of education, facilitating instructor-to-student interaction, supporting student learning groups, maintaining the progression of student learning, and allowing students to enroll ODL learning (Islam, 2013). Students' online learning exposures in universities and colleges tend to be combined with academic exposures for the continuous learning progress not because only related to academic accomplishment, but also due to individual success of lifelong learning. The online learning setting tertiary education institutions is a learning environment that puts together the latest digital technology with the practices of teaching and learning as important creativity and innovation through the latest performed-technology platform (Eze, Chinedu-Eze, & Bello, 2018). The advantages of online learning settings for both the students and higher education institutions are significant cost saving of having physical infrastructure of teaching and learning, cause the course materials digitization where it can be shared and retrieved at any time and wherever the students are and embedding into the global educational setting (Pham, Limbu, Bui, Nguyen, & Pham, 2019). Malaysia is aiming to become a developed country and has set a long term vision for that to be realized. This aim can only be achieved by producing high technological skills and a critical thinking workforce. Information communication technology (ICT) will be the main catalyst in leading this transformation. In an online learning environment, engagement has become one of the critical issues for the students. Since the trend today of migrating from the face-to-face classroom to web-based systems, some challenges need to be resolved. In fully online learning, there is 78% of students fail in completing their online courses (Simpson, 2010). Students' failures in online courses were mainly due to their inactive engagement (Kuzilek, Hlosta, Herrmannova, Zdrahal, & Wolff, 2015). Halverson, Graham, Spring, Drysdale, and Henrie (2014) in their thematic analysis have found the term engagement been mentioned in more than fifty per cent of the reviewed publications. Thus, this study aims to assess the direct influence of online learning attitude, online peer collaboration, and psychological motivation on digital readiness and digital readiness influence on online engagement.

**Keywords:** Online Learning Attitude, Online Peer Collaboration, Psychological Motivation, Digital Readiness and Online Engagement