

Exploring Benefits and Challenges of Adopting Google Classroom in the Perspective of Higher Institution's Learners

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Abstract:

Google classroom is one of the educational web-based platforms that offers opportunities for learners to make meaningful connections with the real world. This platform has rapidly diffused into the educational system and becomes prevalent in higher institutions across nations. Apart from its impressive educational and digital features, it is offered for free and therefore fits any higher institutions, specifically those with limited resources to set up their own Learning Management System. Despite enticed with excitement, bountiful predicaments might be encountered by learners in adopting the platform. Intrigued with these issues, the objective of this study is to explore benefits and challenges in the adoption of Google classroom from the learners' perspective. In pursuit of this, a phenomenography study was employed, involving 103 undergraduate learners from a Malaysian public higher institution. Data were gathered from web-based open-ended survey and analysed qualitatively by NVivo 14. The results derived from emergent themes indicate that Google classroom offered learners 4 benefits namely paperless communication, ease of access, interactions within web-based community and systematic class management. Meanwhile, sub-themes emerged under the challenges were difficult to comprehend, late educator's feedback, unreliable connections, no in-person connections and lack of support. This discovery provides useful insights that apart from technology, management support and knowledgeable educators are also essential in establishing an optimal digital learning community within a course. Additionally, this web-based platform empowers learners to be prepared with the outside world and succeed in the web-based environment.

Keywords: Google classroom, learners, benefits, challenges, higher institutions.

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Introduction

Back then, teaching and learning were mainly based on face-to-face interactions, whereby knowledge was disseminated from an educator to learners and took place in a brick and mortar classroom. The classroom was conducted at a

specific point of time with the delivery only confined to those who present. The educator closely monitored and physically guided the learners through personal communication, connection and socialization. Complicated and ambiguous issues could also be easier clarified

and elucidated. This traditional mode is suitable for harnessing communication and social skill that are essential to make one succeed, which is less likely to be offered by technology.

The advancement of digital technology and the accessibility nature of the internet have permeated the demand for web-based education in higher institutions. Learners are enthusiastic to embrace technology with the growing expectation that technology provides them higher quality of learning experiences and outcomes. Educators also, have a growing confidence that with the assistance of technology, they can disseminate higher quality of information and knowledge. These emerging demands have triggered higher institutions to embed web-based practices in their educational system. Hence, the notable transformation in the delivery practices is the replacement of classroom setting from traditional to web based.

Google classroom is one of the popular web-based platforms adopted by higher institutions across the globe with the purpose of embracing technology in education. This web-based platform has been conducted in two modes either fully web-based or blended learning. In a fully web-based, the class is fully conducted on the web. While in blended learning, the class is conducted in the integration of traditional and web-based classrooms. Google classroom offers multitude of pedagogical and technological features and it is open to anyone with internet accessed upon invitation from an educator. This web-based platform provides technology-based instructions and very convenient for the usage of both educators and learners. Google classroom serves as a platform for members namely educators, learners and peers to interact and be connected without time, place or situation bound. Hence, building a distinctive web-based community within a course.

Despite offering impressive features, many factors might distort and hinder the acceptance and successfulness of Google classroom. To some

learners, this web-based platform is becoming ubiquitous, but to others, it aggravates pressure and therefore resists to accept new changes in lives. Even worst, to a certain extent, inflicted a feeling that these new changes might cause them a cognitive overload, stress and burn out.

The issues have sparked the interest of many studies to explore on the benefits and challenges of Google classroom in the perspective of learners (Heggart & You, 2018; Blackmont, 2017; Osman Basheer, 2018). It is also noted that studies conducted in developed countries were more likely to focus on fully web-based Google classroom (Beaumont, 2018; Blackmon 2018; DeCoita, 2018; Gilbert, 2015). In contrast, studies conducted in developing countries were more likely to focus on Google classroom in blended learning (Azhar & Iqbal, 2018; Iftikar, 2018; Osman Basheer, 2010; Shaharane et al., 2018; Solehah & Mulyano, 2017).

So far, to the best knowledge of the researcher, dearth of study has been conducted in the developing countries to explore on the above-mentioned issues in fully web-based classroom. Intrigued by these issues, the objective of this study is to explore the benefits and challenges in adopting the fully Google Classroom from the perspective of Malaysian higher institution's learners. Malaysia is one of the developing countries that is persistent in embracing technology in its education system as the country aspires to become a fully developed nation in due time.

Initially the paper starts with introduction while the rest of this paper is organized as follows. The continuing section reviews literature of prior studies followed by the description of methodology. Results, discussions and implications of the study are then explained in the following sections. Finally, the paper ends up with a conclusion.

Literature Review

Web-based Teaching and Learning Platform

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) have rapidly defused and permeated into educational system throughout the globe. In pursuit of this, abundances of web-based educational platforms have been invented for teaching and learning to meet the educational goals. Amongst the available web-based platforms are Udemy, Teacheable, Ruzuku, WizIQ, Educadium and Google classroom. As seen today, Google Classroom has become one of prevalent web-based teaching and learning platforms in higher institutions.

Google Classroom

Google classroom was introduced in 2014, as a platform for a web-based classroom. It is one of the technological and pedagogical innovations invented by Google Applications for Education (GAPE), apart from other Google applications namely Google docs, Google Spreadsheet and Google calendars. An educator will create a class for a course and invite other members namely educators and learners to join. Being a member or citizen, one can have immediate access and able to learn in virtual setting. By only one click, one can be connected even physically he/she is scattered in disperse locations. This web-based platform is fully integrated with other Google applications and thus enables members to share and distribute information instantaneously without leaping from one site to another.

Google classroom benefits the users in many ways. Amongst the benefits are offering a platform for facilitating digital production, allowing the creation of a digital class, fostering communication within a community, organising folders, sharing information, posting assignments and viewing all posted works in real-time (Beaumont, 2018).

Despite enjoy bountiful of benefits from adopting Google classroom, learners also experience

various challenges in adopting the Google classroom. This has been elicited by several studies that explore on the benefits and challenges experienced by higher institutions' learners (Blackmon, 2017; Beaumont, 2018; Gilbert, 2015; Heggart & Yoo, 2018; Iftikar, 2016).

Benefits and Challenges in Adopting Google Classroom

Gilbert (2015) explored the benefits and challenges of assignments submitted through Google classroom on learners who enrolled in online American History course at High School in the US. The study indicates that one of its benefits was it allowed the learners to work at their own pace. This web-based platform also created an environment that learners can pace themselves according to their own educational needs. They were able to manage and focus completely on tasks without distractions such as social interactions with peers or spending time to attend physical classes. Apart from that, the learners also learned on how to manage their work in meeting the deadlines.

This prior study also indicates that the learners faced critical challenges such as unreliable internet connection at home and as such, they had to struggle completing tasks within the constraint of school hours. The learners were also left without educator's guidance on how to verve a course. This made them difficult them to comprehend, specifically in the beginning of the course. The utmost challenge encountered by the learners was either an educator was late or totally did not respond to their inquiries and thus left them in dilemma as to whether their work meet the expectation.

Blackmon (2017) conducted a phenomenology study to explore on benefits and challenges faced by learners in adopting a fully web-based Google classroom in a higher institution in the US. The

study posted a web-based open-ended questionnaire on the Google stream with seven post graduate students responded. The results indicate that the learners were benefitted from this web-based platform as they could view and comment on peers' works. Moreover, the interaction within a class learning community namely educators and learners would also be enhanced.

This previous study further indicate that the learners experienced various challenges such as there were no in-person interactions between the class community. The learners faced difficulty in solving complicated problems apart from feeling awkward and a bit daunting to communicate on the Google stream as opposed to face book, twitter or other web-based social medias. In addition, comments posted by peers were too brief and difficult to understand.

Beaumont (2018) also explored the benefits and challenges of fully web-based Google classroom in the perspective of higher institution's learners in the UK. The results reveal that Google classroom was a worthy educational platform that offered various benefits. It provides an avenue for discussion, engagement and connection. According to the learners, the concept of sharing materials on the Google classroom would nurture a sense of collaboration among the class community. This web-based platform could also be easily accessed and navigated. It did not charge any fee and offer collaborative work opportunities with other Google features namely documents, slides and calendar. Other intriguing features were, it allowed for real-time questions and answers as well as able to schedule posts ahead of time.

Despite benefits, the study also reveals that learners experienced several challenges. This web-based platform did have its imperfections, in which it did not allow text editing and image to be embedded on videos. All posted comments and messages were automatically arranged and as such

they could not be hidden or re-scheduled once they had been posted. Finally, the learners experienced difficulties in familiarizing with Google classroom and did not even aware of features offered by the web-based platform that would benefit them.

Iftakar (2016) carried out a qualitative study to explore on benefits and challenges of adopting Google classroom in blended learning. The respondents comprised of 35 learners from a higher institution in Bangladesh. The results indicate that the learners were benefitted from Google classroom due to its effectiveness, user friendly and unlimited storage. The utmost challenge faced by the learners who were from less wealthy family that they were unable to purchase the mobile data and therefore had to rely on less reliable open accessed internet. Another challenge was that they were left to explore on their own without any guidance. However, with regular usage, they could improve their understanding and familiarization and thus motivate them to engage with the technology. The last challenge faced by the learners was that their enquiries were not replied immediately by an educator. Even worse, there were instances that the educator totally ignored the enquiries.

Heggart and You (2018) conducted a qualitative study exploring the benefits and challenges of embracing Google classroom as a platform at the tertiary level for learners in an Australian higher institution. The results indicate that the learners enjoyed several benefits which were instrumental to the success of Google classroom. Among others were ease of access, usable at any time and the learners could express ideas in a way that they felt comfortable with. For example, they were able to express ideas electronically, rather than verbally and could do so at any time suited them. Eventually, these would lead to quality of learning, as the learners would be confident that their ideas were seen within a web-based community.

While, the challenges encountered by the learners were accessibility problem in relation to the messages posted on the 'stream' (a feature on the Google classroom). This was because the latest announcements, messages, comments and discussions were always appeared on the top. Older messages would then move further down the stream as new messages were posted. The learners would be annoyed as they had to do a lot of scrolling if more posts to the stream were made. Besides that, Google classroom had no-built-in features to analyse an individual learner contribution, or a rudimentary analysis of the kinds of contribution made by each of them.

METHODOLOGY

A phenomenology study was conducted to explore the benefits and challenges experienced by 103 under-graduate learners who enrol a basic accounting class created on Google classroom. The phenomenology study interprets the nuance of live, which is within the interpretivist paradigm. It is designed to explore on how people experience and thinking about the world around them in a qualitative manner (Marton, 1986). In line to the phenomenology concept, this study aims to explore the experiences of every single learner either individually or collectively as to identify for any similarities and variations in his, her or their experiences in adopting the Google classroom.

According to (Akerland, 2005; Yang & Tsai), the phenomenology study was often used to describe and interpret the richness and in-depth of the phenomenon, and the data were commonly collected through in-depth interviews. However, DeCoito (2018) articulated that, the web-based open-ended survey was also suitable for phenomenology study because the learners could freely share their perspectives without any restriction and intimidation. The web-based survey could also be easily accessed for all. Hence, this could suit those who had tight class schedules

that make them difficult to participate if it was conducted in traditional interviews.

Data Collection

Data were gathered via open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were e-mailed to all 103 learners, who joined a basic accounting course on Google classroom. They were informed that the participation was voluntarily in which they could ignore if they did not want to take part. Fortunately, all of them replied, accounted for hundred percent rate of response. The participants were asked to relate their thinking on the benefits and challenges experienced by them in adopting the Google classroom. They were also assured that their responses would be treated anonymous and confidential.

The instruments consisted of the following questions:

1. Based on your experiences, what are the benefits of a fully web-based Google Classroom?
2. Based on your experiences, what are the challenges of a fully web-based Google Classroom?

Question 1 explored on learner's experiences on the benefits while question 2 explored on the challenges experienced by the learner in adopting the fully web-based Google classroom.

Data Analysis

The study used Nvivo (Version 14) for data analyses. This software can be assigned to identify patterns, connections and emergent themes of the narrative description of the participant's experiences. The codes produced by the software were further organised with the purpose was to look for similarities and differences among the collected data. Functions, actions explanations and contexts were then labelled under appropriate

categories. According to Neuman (2007), it is essential to read and reread the data before comparing between logic and judgment. The process of analysis was later moved from coding to interpretation before drawing for conclusions

The results produced by Nvivo were later triangulated with other main sources of evidence such as informal conversations, documentations and direct observation prior to report in narrative statements. Various sources of evidence were used to ascertain the accuracy, authenticity and validity of data. The convergence of multiple sources of evidence would further enrich the understanding of the benefits and challenges that would lead to a more convincing and accurate explanations about the benefits and challenges of adopting Google classroom experienced by the learners.

Reliability of Data

The narrative answers given by a participant were reconfirmed with answers provided by other participants before triangulating with other evidences. This is to ensure the reliability and consistency of data apart from delving deeper understanding and interpretation.

RESULTS

Participants of the Study

Participants of the study were consisted of 60 females and 43 males, totalling to 103 undergraduate non accounting students of a Malaysian higher institution. All the participants were learners who joined a basic accounting course on the Google classroom. The results indicate that 65 of the learners had been using the application for 2 semesters while the remaining 38 had used it for 1 semester.

Code, Sub-theme and Theme

The objective of this study is to explore on benefits and challenges of adopting Google classroom in

the learner's perspective. The results indicate that the benefits had four themes with 23 codes, while the challenges had five categories with 20 codes. The sub-themes of benefits were facilitation of assignment, paperless communication, ease of access, enhancing interactions within web-based community and systematic class management. While the sub-themes emerged under the challenges were difficult to comprehend, late educator's feedback, no in-person connections, unreliable connection and lack of support. The results are depicted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Code, Sub-theme and Theme

Code	Sub-theme	Theme
Assignments can be uploaded	Facilitation of assignments	Benefits of adopting Google Classroom
Can track the progress of assignments		
Assignment is marked immediately		
Immediate feedback on assignment		
There is a folder for assignment	Paperless communication	
No paper required		
Save paper		
Communicate virtually		
Free	Foster interaction between educators, students and peers	
Replacing WhatsApp group		
Facilitate information sharing		
Can post announcement on the stream		
Ease communication within the community	Systematic class management	
Real-time communication		
No time bound		
Can upload videos		
Can share learning materials	Difficult to comprehend	Challenges in adopting Google
Easy for pop quiz		
Learning management system		
No issue of losing works		
Ease to use	Challenges in adopting Google	
No physical class attending		
No physical peers	Challenges in adopting Google	
No personal/individual folder		

Not user-friendly for students	Classroom
Difficult for student to comprehend	
Unable to make it interactive	
Cannot edit the text	
Insufficient teaching materials	
No response from educator topic	late or no educator's feedback
Late response from the educator	
No face to face interaction	no in-person connections
Feeling isolated	
Unable to develop social skill	
Unable to harness communication skill	
Unreliable or no internet connection	Connection problem
Line coverage	
Band width	
Unaffordable	
Cannot use off-line	
Lack of management support	Lack of support
Lack of peer support`	

The emergent themes derived for the benefits and challenges experienced by learners in adopting Google classroom are explained further below.

Benefits of Google Classroom

Theme 1: Benefits of Google Classroom

Sub-theme 1: Facilitation of assignments

The main benefit that emerged from the narrative answers were related to assignments. Google classroom provided an avenue for learners to upload, place and track the progress of the assignments.

“I can submit assignment online and put it in the folder so the educator can easily locate it without messing with other materials.” (L13).

“I used to track the assignment to see whether or not it had been marked.” (L40).

“I use it as for sharing assignments with the class, although I do not use it for checking and grading assignments.” (L6)

“I do not have to print hardcopies of the assignments which is beneficial for educators and students.” (L65).

“I can minimize cost (L5).

Sub-theme 2: Paperless communication

The second sub-theme of the benefit was paperless communication. Learners were indeed contented that there was no paper involved

“I do not have to send notes on paper, as I can communicate with educators and peers on stream at any time.” (L33)

“Sending e-mail, texts and messages do not involve any paper”. (L27)

“Communication can be done online at real-time, virtually, free, without any paper.” (L15).

Sub-theme 3: Enhancing interaction between web-based community

Enhancing interactions between web-based community namely educators, learners and peers were the third sub-theme emerged under the theme of benefits.

“Google classroom can replace WhatsApp group, where I can interact with educators and peers” (L8).

“I can share works, materials, at any time, any place with no storage limit”. (L103).

“Although, google classroom has no user inter-phase but I can interact with educators and peers” (L33).

Sub-theme 4: Systematic class management

The last and forth sub-theme identified was systematic class management.

“I can easily upload videos and share learning materials”. (L54).

“I can answer pop quiz immediately and get quick result”. (L78)

“There is no issue of losing notes, test papers”

“I do not have to attend class and waste time socialized with peers”. (L45)

Challenges of Google Classroom

Sub-theme 1: Difficult to comprehend

Participants highlighted that they learned without educator's guidance.

“I have to learn myself, without educator’s guidance, luckily the course is user friendly..... I can cope with the lesson plan.....” (L55).

“I have lack of experience in the features of Google classroom, but as time passed I slowly adapted” (L39).

Also, some participants were not impressed by the depth of the conversations.

“In some situation, I find WhatsApp is easier to use....” (L42).

“The explanations or comments are not in-depth...” (L89).

“Peers always post short comments.....” (L64).

Sub-theme 2: Late or no educator’s feedback

“Educator does not immediately respond to inquiries.....Making it tough to understand... ” (L25).

“Educator does not respond to inquiries posted to themWe have to settle on our own...but we are able to solve....” (L76).

Sub-theme 3: No in-person connection

The participants mentioned the difficulty of addressing unknown peers and educators. They struggled when attempting to elicit participation from the learning community.

“Because you don’t see an educator and peers, it is very difficult to get them to explain, to participate and present online at the same time” (L23).

“I cannot view other students and therefore interactions are fairly straight forward”(L65).

“We don’t really communicate with our classmates and we never get to meet or talk with our lecturer (L56).

“Feeling isolate, learning without people.....” (L43).

“I cannot communicate verbally, communicate only by texts.....” (L99).

Sub-theme 4: Unreliable connection

The most frequent challenge noted was the lack of reliable internet at home. Three of the respondents did not have access to the internet at home therefore they have to complete everything within the constraints of the higher institution working hour or by attending the public library.

“I have to complete all works within the library hours, as the internet connection at home was unreliable” (L32).

“I have to struggle completing works in the classroom at the college, as there is no internet connection at my residential area.... (L59).

Several participants were from lower income family and could not afford to purchase the broad band internet and therefore they had to rely on open accessed internet. The problem with the open access internet was poor connection. This was due to many users shared the data.

“I cannot afford to purchase broad band, so I have to rely on open-accessed internet...the connection is unreliable....” (L73).

“Google classroom cannot be accessed off-line, relying on open-access really test my patience.... but purchasing data is a bit costly....” (L53).

Sub-theme 5: Lack of support

The participants expressed that management of the higher institution does not provide them training.

“The management should provide us at least a brief training on Google classroom on the registration day.....” (L77).

“The higher institution should invest more on upgrading the network capacity and coverage so that data can be easily accessed, and more area will be covered.....” (L31).

“Sometimes, I barely access to Google classroom, even within the area of the university the management should upgrade the network capacity as number of users are rapidly increased....” (L22).

“Peers sometimes do not support;they prefer face to face discussion rather than communicate on-line....” (L78).

“I can barely see my colleagues commenting on the post unless they are asked to do so...” (L41).

Discussion

The objective of this study is to explore on benefits and challenges in adopting Google classroom in learners’ perspective. The results indicate that emergent sub-themes deriving from the benefits of Google classroom consisted of four

factors namely facilitation of assignments, paperless communication, enhancing communication within web-based learning community and systematic class management.

The first sub-theme was facilitation of assignments. Learners expressed that they could upload, retrieve, track the progress and create folder for the assignments. Indeed, the learners were satisfied that their assignments were safely stored. The results concur with the works of studies that examined on similar issues in relation to Pakistanis learners (Azhar & Iqbal, 2018) and Bangladeshi learners (Iftikar, 2016).

Paperless communication was another emergent sub-theme deriving from the benefit of Google classroom which are in tandem with the results of prior studies (Iftikar, 2016; Solihati & Mulyono, 2017). The communication is displayed on screen by text with no existence of paper. With no cost incur makes the web-based platform very cost-effective.

The results indicate that enhancing interaction among learning community within a course was the fourth emergent sub-theme. The learning community consisted of educators, learners and peers. Active interactions between the members will augment the cohesiveness of the community although they hailed from different locations and are in huge scales. The results resonate well with the works of other studies (Azhar & Iqbal, 2018; Beaumont, 2018; Blackmon, 2017).

Finally, the last emergent sub-theme was systematic class management. This web-based platform enables learners to upload videos, share learning materials and easily take quizzes and tests. They can also focus on the course and have no issues of social distraction or attending physical classes. Self-learning develops learners' self-esteem and makes them excited to embrace technology in education (Azhar & Iqbal, 2017).

The study also identifies five sub-themes under the challenges namely difficult to comprehend, late or no educator's feedback, no in-person

connections, unreliable connection and lack of management support. The first emergent sub-theme was difficult to comprehend. This is because learners have trouble in comprehending this web-based platform, specifically at the initial stage. They were in familiar with the web-based platform; besides they were not allowed to edit text and embed videos (Heggart & You, 2018). To make things worse, learners would have no direction, specifically if the class was inactive and lack of learning material were posted by educators or peers. As, they had insufficient materials to refer and rely on.

The results indicate that another emergent sub-theme deriving from the challenges was late or no educator's feedback. Learners would feel hopeless if the educator delayed in responding to their inquiries. Even worse, if the inquiries were totally ignored. However, some of them managed to solve independently. The results resonated with the works of Gilbert (2015) and Iftikar (2016) that late or no response by educator is a challenge to them.

The third emergent sub-theme was no in-person connection. Learners interacted with educators and peers by sending messages and announcements or posting comments on the web-based through Google stream. With no physical communication and interaction, learners are isolated in their own world (Gilbert, 2015; Blackmon, 2017; Solihati & Mulyono, 2017). They do not see human in the classroom but text on the screen of their mobile devices.

The fourth emergent sub-theme arising from the challenges was unreliable connection. Google classroom cannot be accessed off-line, it needs internet network. Several learners highlighted their predicament in accessing this web-based platform due to poor connection or no internet coverage at their residential areas. Inevitably, they had to go to the open-accessed wi-fi places and struggle to complete their task under the constraint of the availability of data. Similar results are

found with other studies on the challenges faced by learners (Gilbert, 2015; Iftikar; 2016).

Lack of support was the fifth and last sub-theme deriving from the challenges. A few learners viewed that they should be given adequate training. This was to educate and familiarize them with features of Google classroom. After grasping and familiarizing with the operating procedures, then they were able to understand and effectively optimize the usage of this web-based platform.

Implication to academic

This study contributes to the body of knowledge of academic literatures on benefits and challenges of Google Classroom in learner's perspective. To ensure the successfulness of this web-based platform, concerted efforts should be played by the academic fraternities namely educators and learners.

For learners, they need to explore and adopt the technology offered by Google Classroom as it can ease their works. Educators, on the other hand, should be competent in handling Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), as they are the agents who would facilitate the learners to be independent and self-learning. Hence, both groups must support and embrace technology in teaching and learning which will eventually transform the pedagogical quality to a higher level.

To ensure Google classroom is successful, it is important for both educators and learners to have positive attitudes towards technology. Indeed, learners in the 21st century are technology driven and enthusiastic to be a member or citizen of a digital community.

Implication to management

The results provide implications to the management of higher institutions to extensively adopt the Google classroom as their Learning Management System (LMS) specifically for those who do not have enough resources to form of its own.

The results also provide implications to the management of higher institutions to provide training for both learners and educators with regards to Google classroom. Apart from that, the management should put more investment in increasing the network capacity and coverage. This is to speed up the accessibility and avoid the issue of poor or no connection.

Limitation and Future research

The study was conducted in a qualitative approach therefore the results cannot be generalised to present the view of the whole population or in the context of learners from a higher institution. To strengthen the validity and reliability of the results, future studies are suggested to replicate and analyse the issues in a quantitative approach. The results will provide a comprehensive picture on the issue and can be used to improve its usability and effectiveness.

The study only focussed on the issue faced by learners in adopting one educational web-based platform namely Google classroom. As such the experiences were only limited to the features offered by this web-based platform. It is becoming if comparative studies are carried out to explore on benefits and challenges of Google classroom as opposed to other educational web-based platforms. The results will provide valuable information for the learners to ponder on the appropriate educational web-based platform that might fit and tailor their needs.

Conclusion

The results from the emergent sub-themes indicate that Google classroom offered learners four benefits namely facilitation of assignments, paperless communication, enhancing interactions within a web-based community and systematic classroom management. On the other hand, the results also indicate that this web-based platform had also its limitations. The emergent sub-themes of benefits show that the learners experienced several challenges. The challenges were difficult

to comprehend, late or no educator's feedback, no in-person connection, unreliable connection and lack of support. However, the challenges are not dramatically affected its usability because they will be overcome if the learners were familiar with the web-based platform and able to work around the limitation. Most importantly Google classroom is a pedagogical tool that will transform technology into learning experience, provide efficient learning management system and building a web-based learning community. This discovery provides useful insights to academic fraternities that apart from technology and management support, knowledgeable educators who are able to manage the technology know-how effectively are essential in establishing an optimal digital community within a course.

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