

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT AND FLEXIBLE EDUCATION: HOW FLEXIBILITY CAN TRANSFORM EDUCATION AS WE KNOW IT

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic which started in early 2022 has changed our life forever. Many countries including Malaysia are trying their best to adapt with the new norms. Recently, Malaysia has taken a big step to amends its labour law in order to meets with the new norms due to the spread of Covid-19. Among the labour the law which being amended is the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265]. On record, the Malaysian Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] is the main legislation governing the employer-employee relationship in Malaysia. Updates to the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] have been long overdue as there have been many concerns and gaps in relation to the protection afforded to employees. On 30 March 2021, the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed by the country Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) where several key amendments were tabled. The Employment (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed with the objective to increase and improve the protection and welfare of workers in the country in line with international labour standards as outlined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Among the new insertion in the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] is the implementation of flexible working arrangement (FWA). FWA are no longer a novelty, but a necessity for employers in this post-pandemic era. With more and more potential employees seeking better work-life balance in their careers, companies need to consider implementing FWA to attract the right talent. The Employment Act 1955 (Amendment) 2022 as it is known now is expected to come into force on 1 January 2023. The idea of flexibility has attracted not only those belonging to the common working sectors but also those belonging to the educational sector as well. Educators and students both in schools and universities started to demand the implementing of flexibility for the educational sector as well. The online teaching process which been practices during the lockdown for nearly two years has open the eyes of many. The process of education should be transformed in line with the rapid development of science and technology. Educational process can no longer be confine to certain places or location like schools building and universities campus compound like before. Some peoples might think that the words flexibility and education can never occur in the same sentence. People usually associate education with a school or university structure, daunting timetables, and the never-ending school or university week. The educational process is hardly ever described as “flexible” due to the huge amount of time and effort needed for its fulfillment. For this reason, flexible education emerged as a means to resolve the inconvenient aspects of traditional education. As the name indicates, flexible education is all about convenience and effectiveness. It is a system in which learning is basically student-centered with regard to the when, where, and how of learning. Students enjoy the luxury of choosing the timing of their lessons, whether they want to continue education at school or university or at home, and in what style they want their education to be like. This system is also designed to provide students with unlimited access to the materials, training, and support needed for an overall successful teaching and learning experience. Thus, it is the object of this paper to examine further about the issue of flexibility and education and the benefits flexible education can bring. At the end of this research, recommendations will be made to the Malaysian government over the need to transform the national education policy.

Keywords: Flexibility, education, transformation

1 INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic which begun in early 2020 has change the world. Many transformations and adjustments have been made for us to adapt with the new norms or lifestyle. Though Covid-19 pandemic brings many sufferings to the peoples, it has allowed peoples to re-think and open their eyes to many possibilities to make the new world a better place for them and for the future generation. Many peoples no longer want to live to the life which they used to prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The spread of the pandemic and the advancement of technologies, allow many peoples to conduct their daily activities in a very simple and effective way. Life has changed for many peoples and this include the life of the workers and students. Covid-19 pandemic has allowed workers and students to explore and utilized technologies to carry out their basic duties and responsibilities in more flexible way. Before going further, it is very important for use to briefly examine the Covid-19 pandemic itself and the steps which been taken by the Malaysian government to tackle with the spread of the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). (WHO, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), December 15, 2022). The novel virus was first identified in an outbreak in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019. (Natasha Khan, January 8, 2020). Attempts to contain it there failed, allowing the virus to spread to other areas of Asia and later worldwide. The leading international health association namely, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 as an outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020 (Michael Nedelman, January 30, 2020) and later declared Covid-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. (Jamie Gumbrecht and Jacqueline Howard, 2020). As of 11 December 2022, the pandemic had caused more than 649 million cases and 6.65 million confirmed deaths, making it one of the deadliest in human history. (Coronavirus Resource Center, 2022). Covid-19 symptoms range from undetectable to deadly, but most commonly include fever, dry cough, and fatigue. Severe illness is more likely in elderly patients and those with certain underlying medical conditions. Covid-19 transmits when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and small airborne particles containing the virus. The risk of breathing these in is highest when people are in close proximity, but they can be inhaled over longer distances, particularly indoors. Transmission can also occur if contaminated fluids reach the eyes, nose, or mouth, or, more rarely, via contaminated surfaces. Infected individuals are typically contagious for 10 days and can spread the virus even if they do not develop symptoms. Mutations have produced many strains (variants) with varying degrees of infectivity and virulence. Senior citizen or people aged 60 years and over, pregnant individual and those with underlying health or medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, diabetes, obesity or cancer, are at higher risk of developing serious illness. However, anyone can get sick with Covid-19 and become seriously ill or die at any age. A person infected with Covid-19 also may not experience any symptoms and, without knowing, can transmit the virus to others. (WHO, April 18, 2022).

Due to the serious effects of Covid-19 to people's life and health, the lack of deep understanding over the virus in the early days of its spread and in the absence of suitable medication and vaccination, governments around the world have taken a very drastic steps to control it spread. Many countries attempted to slow or stop the spread of Covid-19 by recommending, mandating or prohibiting behaviour changes, while others relied primarily on providing information and education to the peoples. Measures ranged from public advisories to stringent lockdowns. Outbreak control strategies are divided into elimination and mitigation. Experts differentiate between elimination strategies which also known as "Zero Covid Policy" that aim to completely stop the spread of the virus within the community (Anna Llupià, Rodríguez-Giralt, Anna Fité, Lola Álamo, Laura de la Torre, Ana Redondo, Mar Callau and Caterina Guinovart, 2020) and mitigation strategies or commonly known as "flattening the curve" that attempt to lessen the effects of the virus on society, but which still tolerate some level of transmission within the community. (David Livermore, 2021). These initial strategies can be pursued sequentially or simultaneously during the acquired immunity phase through natural and vaccine-induced immunity. (Raj S. Bhopal, 2020). *Nature* journal reported in 2021 that 90 per cent of immunologists who responded to a survey think that the Covid-19 will eventually become endemic where everyone has not other option except to live with it. (Nicky Phillips, 2021).

Covid-19 pandemic also affected Malaysia when Covid-19 started to spread wildly all over the world in early 2020. Since January 2020, the medical response and preparedness to the outbreak in Malaysia are overseen by the country Director-General of Health Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Haji Noor Hisham Abdullah under the Health Ministry of three successive governments led by the Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (2018 – 2020), Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (2020 – 2021), Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (2021 – 2022) and Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim (2022 – present). The first cases in Malaysia were confirmed among travelers from China in Johor via Singapore on 25 January 2020 (Sipalan, Joseph; Holmes, Sam, January 25, 2020) and continued to be limited to a few imported cases until March 2020, when several local clusters emerged. The most notable

was a Tablighi Jamaat religious gathering in Sri Petaling, Kuala Lumpur that sparked a massive spike in local cases and imported cases to neighbouring countries. (Ng, Kate, March 16, 2020). By the end of March 2020, the total number of cases had risen from below 30 to over 2,000 active cases across every state and federal territory in the country. As of December 15, 2022, with over 4.8 million confirmed Covid-19 cases and over 36,000 deaths, the country is currently ranked third in the number of Covid-19 cases in Southeast Asia behind Vietnam and Indonesia, and fourth in the number of Covid-19 deaths in Southeast Asia behind Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. (Please refer to the Southeast Asia Covid-19 Tracker, 2022 and the Malaysian Ministry of Health (MOH) official website for data and insights on COVID-19 2022).

In response to the surge of cases in March 2020, the Malaysian government led by the then Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin imposed a nationwide lockdown known as the Movement Control Order (MCO), which came into effect on 18 March 2020. (The Prime Minister's Special Message on COVID-19, March 16, 2020). On 16 March 2020, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin made an official speech and officially promulgated the movement control order under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 [Act 342] and the Police Act 1967 [Act 344]. The order included the following restrictions: General prohibition of mass movements and gatherings across the country including religious, sports, social and cultural activities. To enforce this prohibition, all houses of worship and business premises would be closed, except for supermarkets, public markets, grocery stores and convenience stores selling everyday necessities. Specifically, for Muslims, the adjournment of all religious activities in mosques including Friday prayers would be in line with the decision made on 15 March 2020 by the Special Muzakarah Meeting of the National Council for Islamic Affairs; Sanctions covering all Malaysians travelling abroad. For those who have just returned from overseas, they would be required to undergo a health check and a 14-day quarantine (or self-quarantine); Restrictions on the entry of all tourists and foreign visitors into the country; Closure of all kindergartens, government and private schools including daily schools, boarding schools, international schools, tahfiz centres and another primary, secondary and pre-university institutions; Closure of all public and private higher education institutions (IPTs) and skills training institutes nationwide; and Closure of all government and private premises except those involved in essential services (water, electricity, energy, telecommunications, postal, transportation, irrigation, oil, gas, fuel, lubricants, broadcasting, finance, banking, health, pharmacy, fire, prison, port, airport, safety, defence, cleaning, retail and food supply). The MCO, which was originally to be ended on 31 March 2020, was extended to early May 2020. By early May, the MCO had led to a gradual decline in daily infections. The government progressively relaxed lockdown restrictions in a staggered phase; beginning with the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) on 4 May 2020, which allows most business sectors to be reopened under strict standard operating procedures (SOPs), followed by the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) on 10 June 2020. The government had planned to end the RMCO on 31 August 2020 but due to the continuous detection of imported cases, measures were extended until the end of the year, with several sectors remaining closed and strict travel restrictions from several countries remaining in place. The strict orders which was carried out through the first MCO in the country has force many workplaces in the country to closed and workers been allowed to work their home. Starting from this period many employees in the country both in public and private sectors started to force themselves to learn to use and utilized any available technologies to perform their duties and responsibilities remotely from their houses. It is strongly believed, the first implementation of strict MCO in the country in March 2020 has given rise to the idea of work from home policy as well as flexible working arrangement. Though the idea of work from home and flexible working arrangement has been around for many years in the country before the Covid-19 pandemic occurred, but the level of desire over such arrangements of work is not high as compare to the situation during and after the pandemic. Now, many workers in the country and in many countries started to love and demand flexible working arrangement from their employers.

2. EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021 AND THE INSERTION OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT (FWA)

Important to know, Malaysian laws are heavily influenced from the British. This is due to the fact that Malaysia was colonized by the British from 1786 until 1957. During the period of British colonialization in Malaysia, heavy influence of the British judicial and legal system has influenced the country judicial as well as legal system and structures until today (Wu Min Aun, 1990, pp. 1 – 31 and Lee Mei Pheng, 1998, pp. 13 – 48). There are various kind of labour statutes which currently been used and enforced in Malaysia. The main labour statutes which are currently being enforced in Malaysia includes the (i) Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] (the law applicable in the States of Sabah and Sarawak are the Labour Ordinance Chapter 67 and Chapter 76, respectively); (ii) Industrial Relations Act 1967 [Act 177]; (iii) Employees Provident Fund Act 1991 [Act 452]; (iv) Employees Social Security Act 1969 [Act 4]; (v) Trade Unions Act 1959 (Revised 1981)

[Act 262]; (vi) Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 [Act 514] and others (Siti Zaharah Jamaluddin, 2000, pp. 153 – 177, Sharifah Suhanah Syed Ahmad, 2012, pp. 179 – 196, Ashgar Ali Ali Mohamed, 2014, pp. 35 – 74 & Marilyn Aminuddin, 1990 at pp 1 – 9). Among all the labour laws which currently been enforced in the country, the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] is the most important piece of legislation in Malaysia which prescribes the minimum protection of rights to workers or the employees in the country. This includes the payment of wages, maternity protection, protection of female workers, prescribing the rest days in each week, maximum hours of work a day, annual leave, sick leave, overtime rates payable for extra hours of work, and others. The Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] is a protection given for workers in working in the private sectors. For the public sector, there is a different set of employment law which governs the civil servant under the purview of the Public Service Commission. The Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] is been administered by the Labour Department at the Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR). It also should be noted that the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] only applies in Peninsular Malaysia as well as in Federal Territory of Labuan. The employees in Sabah and Sarawak are covered under their own labour ordinances. The law applicable in the States of Sabah and Sarawak are the Labour Ordinance Chapter 67 and Chapter 76, respectively. Employment Act 1955 [265] sets out the minimum provisions which must be complied with and failure to provide any of those benefits is an offence for which an employer can be prosecuted in the Labour Court. Not every employee been protected under the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265]. Before the amendments were made to the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] in 2021, the following types of employees are included under the act namely (a) Any employee as long as his month wages is less than RM2000.00 and (b) Any employee employed in manual work even if their wages is more than RM2000.00 per month. It also applies to employees under contract of service not contract for service. According to the act, contract of service means any agreement, whether oral or in writing and whether express or implied, whereby one person agrees to employ another as an employee and that the other agrees to serve his employer as his employee and includes an apprenticeship contract.

On 30 March 2021, the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed by the Malaysian Dewan Rakyat (House of Representative) where several key amendments were tabled. The Employment (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed with the objective to increase and improve the protection and welfare of workers in the country in line with international labour standards as outlined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Given that the First Schedule of the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] prescribes the application of the Act to certain categories of employees, there are uncertainties on whether the amendments would alter such categories once coming into force. As such, Malaysian employers and employees have been eagerly waiting for revisions to the First Schedule to be gazetted in relation to the categories of employees that fall within the purview of the amendments. After a long wait, the former Human Resources Minister, M Saravanan announced that the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 will come into force on the 1 September 2022 simultaneously with the Revised First Schedule of the Employment Act 1955 (“Revised First Schedule”) that was gazetted on 15 August 2022. These amendments are widely perceived to be far-reaching as the scope of the amended Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] covers all employees, irrespective of their monthly wages.

News that the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 was to come into force on 1 September 2022 sent Malaysian employers into panic-mode as the announcement only allowed employers a few weeks to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions. Fortunately, the implementation has been postponed to 1 January 2023, giving employers ample time and opportunity to comply with the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] and revise their employment contracts. (Hana Naz Harun, 2022 and Bernama, 2022). The largest change to the employment landscape in Malaysia pursuant to the Employment (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2022 is that the First Schedule has been widened to include any person who has entered into a contract of service, meaning the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] now applies to all employees irrespective of wage. Notwithstanding this, certain provisions in respect of overtime payments and termination benefits will not apply to employees earning more than RM4000/month. As stated earlier, the previous position was that only employees earning up to RM2000/month were protected under the Act. This widening of the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] scope means employers should ensure that their employment contracts comply with the minimum standards set under the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265]. Any employment terms that are less favourable to the employee can be rendered void and unenforceable. The Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] now provides that employees can submit a written application for flexible working arrangement to modify their hours, days or place of work. Any application must be approved or rejected by the employer within 60 days in writing, and any rejection must be justified. Besides the ambiguity in the framework, not all job positions are suitable for flexible working arrangement and require physical presence. Naturally employers should draft and implement policies to cover flexible working arrangements as it will make such employments much more competitive and attractive to the market. (HR Ministry: Employees can apply for flexible work arrangements when Employment Act amendment comes into force on Sept 1, 2022). Besides this, another

amendment also been made to the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265] regarding the number of working hours in the country where the weekly working hours in Malaysia been reduced from 48 to 45 hours. (New Straits Times, August 11, 2022).

What is flexible working arrangement (FWA)? Flexible working arrangement or generally known as flexitime or flexi time is a variable and changeable of working arrangement in terms of its schedule or the nature of the working environment, in contrast to traditional working arrangement which normally required employees to work at a standard time period from 8 am until 5 pm per day from Monday until Friday in one standard or usual location usually in an offices, premises or buildings. Before the 2022 amendments made to the Employment Act 1955 [Act 265], work weeks been defines as 48 hours, with a maximum of 8 working hours per day and 6 working days per week. There are various kinds of flexibility working arrangement which can be taken into consideration by both employers and employees like “Flexi Hours” which allow employees to vary their working hours according to their convenient, “Flexi Weeks” which allow employees to vary their weekly working pattern, “Flexi Year” which allow employees to vary their yearly working pattern, “Flexi Location” which allow employees to work from locations of their own chose other than their designated workplace location determined by the employer, “Flexi Worksite” which allow employees to work from different locations within the workplace, and “Flexi Career” which allow employees to move in and out of the workforce and structure their career around other interests or responsibilities. The listed examples given above aren’t exhaustive but it provides an idea or a description of some of the more common forms of flexible working arrangement which can be adopted by workers. (Can refer further to Tan Kwang How, 1994, pp. 13 – 28 & Devanand Subramaniam, 2000, pp. 143 – 148).

Flexible working arrangement (FWA) has become a very hot topic of discussion not only in Malaysia, but in many countries. In April 2022, Malaysia close neighbor, Singapore has released a report that many workers in Singapore preferred flexible working arrangement. According to a paper produced by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), workers in Singapore says that flexible work arrangements should be the new norm for Singapore, with four in 10 also saying that employees should be allowed to work from home three days a week. Here are the top 10 takeaways from the report: 1. Flexible work arrangements should be the new norm for workplaces here, according to about half of the survey respondents, 2. Working from home on most days should be the norm, around 20% to 35% of those polled said. Recently, around four in 10 also felt that employees should be allowed to work from home three days a week, 3. Most women polled also wanted flexible arrangements, with 73% saying that should be the new norm, especially those with dependents, 4. Employers should allow the workers to choose the days they prefer to return to the office, nearly half of the respondents said, 5. Some said they would consider looking for another job if their employer required them to return to the office on most days, 6. Some would rather work from the office for three reasons: easy access to tech systems, collaborating with colleagues and being in a conducive space for work, 7. Working from home has three benefits: workers felt they are less likely to catch Covid-19, have flexibility in balancing personal life and work schedules and are able to attend to family needs, 8. About half of the respondents said they learnt new skills during the pandemic that would help them in their careers, 9. Work aspirations have changed due to the pandemic, said nearly half of the people polled, with some considering a career switch, 10. Workers were more likely to prefer taking precautions, like taking tests, to lower their risk of getting infected with Covid-19 at the workplace. (Sue-Ann Tan, 2022). Malaysian workers also prefer to have some flexibility for their work. In 2021, a survey was conducted which indicate that half of Malaysian workers want flexible work arrangements. The Randstad Workmonitor survey revealed that 48 per cent of local respondents want such flexible work arrangements. For comparison, an average of 35 per cent of respondents interviewed across 34 markets around the world think this hybrid schedule is the ideal work arrangement. Randstad Malaysia head of operation Fahad Naeem said a further 14 per cent of respondents in Malaysia want to work from home permanently. This is the same as the global percentage of those who would like to work from home all the time. (Malay Mail, 2021). All the studies which been conducted as clearly indicate to us that many workers in the country and in other countries prefer flexibility working arrangement (FWA). Flexible working arrangement (FWA) bring a lot of benefits to the employees in terms of saving their time, energy and money. (The Upwork Team,2022). Due to the benefits it brings, the idea of flexible working arrangement has started to attract workers almost all working sectors in the country including those belonging in the educational sector.

3. FLEXIBLE EDUCATION

Flexible working arrangement (FWA) has also influenced the educational sector in so many ways. Even since Covid-19 pandemic started, adjustments have been made to the educational system so that it gives priority over student’s safety while learning both in schools and in the universities. When Movement Control Orders (MCO) was implemented in Malaysia in 2020 and 2021, steps have been taken by the government to

ensure students will not skip their learning lesson. Lessons were being move through online. (Angelin Yeoh, 2020 and Ida Lim, 2020). The idea of remote learning and flexibility begin to emerge. Students and educators started to become creative and wanted flexibility for the education and learning process. Improvements in technology and the need for a flexible working environment has meant that people increasingly want and expect to have greater choice in the way that they learn. Flexible education or flexible learning, as the name suggests, can be defined as the ability for students to customize how, what, when and where they learn. Generally speaking, flexible education or learning can be delivered across a variety of settings, including classroom, at home, blended approach or even a work-based study program. It is often used interchangeably with other terms such as open learning, distance learning, as well as e-learning which are all forms of flexible education or learning. The main question which need to be ask now, why flexibility is important for students? In the fast-paced world that we live in, the need for flexibility has come from the advancement in technology as these developments has created new and exciting opportunities for both personal and professional development. With flexible forms of education and learning, students are able to learn and take classes wherever and whenever they want to. This added freedom is important, providing the ideal opportunity to learn at a time or place that suits without the constraints of physical location. This also enables students to fit their learning around family life or work commitments and schedules. Flexible education or learning can provide access to a high-quality education and learning experience to students who might not otherwise have had the chance to do so. With this kind of learning approach, students are able to refer to materials and resources as needed, are able to advance through content at their own pace, and choose a course suitable to their existing knowledge and capabilities. Greater choice in how they learn enables individuals to take personal responsibility for their own study, and a more flexible environment ensures students don't feel overwhelmed and pressured when it comes to learning. This ensures an integrated learning environment where the needs of all kinds of different people and abilities can be catered for. The next question which need to be ask is how effective is flexible education or learning? When it comes to the effectiveness of learning, a higher level of flexibility allows individuals to adapt their learning pathway to suit their interests and abilities, in order to create a better experience and engage more with what is being taught. Students are able to take breaks in between learning to recharge, which can often contribute to higher retention of knowledge, producing better results. Learning platforms are now more robust and fit for purpose than in the past, providing better access to course content, while having choice over schedules, learning styles and physical location improves productivity and concentration. Lack of interaction with instructors, however, is one of the biggest drawbacks of a flexible learning approach, and it still needs to be seen whether it is as effective long term as traditional forms of education or learning. (CPD News Team, 2022). There is also the issue over the lack of tablets and internet excess which can hamper this idea of flexibility in education or learning. (Stephanie Lee, 2020 and Malay Mail, 2021).

Flexibility in education and learning can bring many benefits to all concern parties in the educational sector namely the students and the educators in schools and in the universities. Flexibility would allow both students and educators opportunity to teach and learn from any convenient locations which they prefer. Having such flexibility would reduce the level of stress and tension which we normally encountered before the pandemic when the teaching and learning process were carried out through conventional ways namely by being present in a classroom or lecture hall. Flexibility in education or learning would also allow all parties to save their time, energy and money. When flexibility is being implemented, students and educators can save their precious time, energy and money from travelling to the schools or universities and spend money for meals and using any transportations. Flexibility in education or learning also would ensure the safety of all concern parties. When flexibility been implemented, there is no need for students and educators to travel go and back to or from schools or universities and expose themselves to the risk of accident, kidnapping, or any kinds of unthinkable crimes. Using technologies to delivered knowledge would allow us to add more skills for the students. It is very important for students to be train at the early age to use technologies as many as possible so that they can adapt with many new changes in the real world once they completed their study. Despite the benefits in flexible education and learning, many would still prefer to do things like they used to do in the past before the pandemic started. Government and parents still wanted their children to be in a classroom or lecture hall and get their education or learning face to face. It is fully understandable over their hostile response over the idea of flexibility in education and learning. As for parent, nobody going to monitor their children if their children being ask to stay at home and study remotely since many parents are working and have to make a living to support their family. As for the government, it is also understandable that they have spend millions or billions to build many schools and universities to support their educational policy. Allowing flexibility for students and educators would make schools and universities a deserted area. This would be a waste of the public assets. There is also a fear over lack of social interaction among the students if we implement flexibility in education and learning. When the teaching and learning process are been

conducted remotely, using computer, laptop or tablets, students might not have the experience of face to face social interaction among themselves and with their own educator. Lack of social interaction might also lead to other problems like lack over the ability to communicate with people, becoming secluded and isolated and would also hamper the growth development of the students themselves. Having said so, we should not totally reject the idea of flexible education or learning. Flexible education or learning should explore and enhance further so that more opportunity can be given to the students and educators to undertake such mode of modern teaching and learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

The Malaysian government has taken a good step in improving their existing laws in line with the current post-pandemic world. Flexible working arrangement (FWA) has started to received spotlight by the government and employees in the country. However, all sectors in the country should benefits from this encouragement of flexibility and this include our educational sectors as well. It is impossible for us to implement the exact flexible working arrangement (FWA) for our schools and universities as the scope of duties and the individual involves is different from those belonging in the common working sectors. However, the idea and spirit of flexibility should be carried out in the educational sectors as well. The Malaysian government should include the idea and sprit of flexibility within the national educational policy so that the country educational system can be further strengthen and adapt to all the changes which has happen after the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Besides the issue of safety, flexibility has been proven effective when it comes to enhancing educator and student accessibility, increasing student engagement, reducing unnecessary costs, and much more. These flexibility advantages definitely serve the growing demand for distance education in general. Students no longer have to be dependent on their educators for their supply of information. This will facilitate and develop the self-learning skills that students so hugely need. In that manner, students and educators alike benefit from flexible education or learning as it not only eases the workload on educators but also broadens students' knowledge even beyond the classroom. Sooner or later, academic institutions will fully acknowledge the necessity of adopting the flexible philosophy of learning into the educational system. Remote learning or E-learning systems have proven effective and productive in many schools and universities worldwide. Transformation need to be carried out within the country educational system. Flexible education or learning is a great asset for schools and universities, a convenient platform for educators, and an efficient system for students. The time has come to start applying different educational techniques in schools and universities to embrace young learners' immense potential for knowledge.

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