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(IJEPC)<https://gaexcellence.com/ijepc>**THE LEVEL OF LECTURERS' PERCEIVED
EFFECTIVENESS AMONG OPEN-DISTANCE LEARNING
(ODL) STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING ASSESSMENT**Dharizwan Ghazali¹, Abdul Said Ambotang^{2*}, Ghazali Sulaiman³, Syahrul Nizam Salam⁴¹Department Of Language, Kolej Poly-Tech MARA (KPTM) Bangi, Malaysia iwanp28@gmail.com <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6127-563X>²Faculty of Education and Sport Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia said@ums.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8455-3299>³Institut Aminuddin Baki, Cawangan Sabah, Malaysia ghazalisulaiman73@gmail.com <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7454-8119>⁴Labuan International Campus, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia syahrulnizam.salam@ums.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4793-1518>

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Abstract:

The expansion of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has significantly transformed teaching and assessment practices in higher education (Garrison, 2011; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). This study aims to examine the level of lecturer's perceived effectiveness among ODL students in public speaking assessment. A quantitative method with a descriptive research design was employed, involving 400 undergraduate students from selected higher education institutions. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring instructional clarity, feedback quality, student engagement, and assessment practices. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the overall level of lecturer effectiveness was high. Among the dimensions, instructional clarity and feedback quality recorded the highest mean scores, while student engagement showed relatively lower scores. The findings suggest that although lecturers are generally effective in ODL environments, there is a need to enhance interactive teaching strategies to improve student engagement. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on ODL effectiveness and provides practical implications for improving public speaking assessment in online learning contexts.

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Lecturer, Open-Distance Learning (ODL) Students, Public Speaking Assessment.



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Introduction

Public speaking remains one of the most essential competencies for academic success and professional development, as it enables individuals to articulate ideas clearly, engage audiences, and demonstrate confidence in various communication contexts. Traditional approaches to public speaking assessment have largely relied on face-to-face presentations, written examinations, and group-based tasks (Flores et al., 2015). These methods have been shown to cultivate learners' confidence and enhance their overall communicative competence (Taswadi & Santosa, 2019). However, the rapid digitalisation of education has reshaped how public speaking skills are taught, practiced, and assessed.

The rapid digitalisation of higher education has accelerated the adoption of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), reshaping traditional teaching and assessment practices (Garrison, 2011; Means et al., 2013). ODL offers flexibility and accessibility, enabling students to engage in learning beyond geographical and temporal constraints (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). However, the effectiveness of teaching in such environments remains a critical concern, particularly for performance-based courses such as public speaking.

Public speaking is a skill-intensive subject that requires active interaction, real-time feedback, and audience engagement (Brookfield, 2017). In conventional classrooms, lecturers can observe students' verbal and non-verbal cues, provide immediate feedback, and foster interactive learning environments. In contrast, ODL environments often limit these interactions, potentially affecting the quality of teaching and assessment (Hrastinski, 2008).

Lecturer effectiveness is widely recognised as a key determinant of student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). In ODL contexts, effective lecturers must demonstrate not only content expertise but also digital competence, communication skills, and the ability to engage students virtually (Anderson, 2008). Despite its importance, limited research has specifically examined lecturer effectiveness in the context of public speaking assessment within ODL settings.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the level of lecturer's perceived effectiveness among ODL students, focusing on key dimensions including instructional clarity, feedback quality, student engagement, and assessment practices.

Research Objectives & Research Questions

The objective of this study is to describe the level of perceived lecturers' effectiveness among Open-Distance Learning (ODL) students in the assessment of Public Speaking course. Meanwhile, the research question is what is the level of lecturers' perceived effectiveness?

Problem Statement

The transition from conventional face-to-face instruction to ODL has introduced significant challenges in delivering effective teaching and assessment (Means & Neisler, 2021). Public speaking, as a performance-based subject, is particularly affected due to its reliance on interaction, immediacy, and audience feedback (Kearns, 2012).

Recent research indicates that students in ODL environments often experience difficulties in understanding instructions, receiving timely feedback, and maintaining engagement (Bond et al., 2021; Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Additionally, reduced interaction and limited lecturer presence may lead to lower motivation and participation levels.

Variations in lecturers' digital competencies and pedagogical approaches further contribute to inconsistent learning experiences (Rapanta et al., 2020). While some lecturers successfully adapt to online teaching, others face challenges in replicating the effectiveness of traditional classroom instruction.

Although many studies have explored online learning effectiveness, there is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on lecturer effectiveness in public speaking assessment within ODL contexts, particularly in Malaysia. This gap highlights the need for further investigation.

Significance of Study

This study is significant as it contributes to ongoing debates on digital transformation and the pedagogical effectiveness of online learning environments. By examining how learning portal engagement relates to public speaking performance, the study adds empirical evidence to the emerging discourse on technology-enhanced communication education (Rahman & Yunus, 2024). The findings can assist lecturers in designing more interactive and feedback-rich online public speaking activities, thereby optimising learning portal features to improve student engagement and communicative competence (Lim & Abdullah, 2023).

For ODL institutions, the study offers practical insights into how portal functionality can be strengthened to better support oral-based assessments, addressing inclusivity and accessibility concerns highlighted in recent educational research (Syaf, 2023). Moreover, this study fills a critical research gap, as few studies directly examine the connection between learning portals and performance outcomes in public speaking assessment, a gap made increasingly relevant by the widespread reliance on online platforms in post-pandemic education (Gotlib et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Lecturer Effectiveness in ODL

Lecturer effectiveness in ODL environments encompasses instructional clarity, communication skills, feedback quality, and digital competence (Anderson, 2008; Rapanta et al., 2020). Effective lecturers are able to design structured learning experiences and facilitate meaningful interaction (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Recent studies emphasise that digital pedagogy and technological competence significantly influence teaching effectiveness in online environments (Rapanta et al., 2020; Palomino et al., 2023). Instructor presence and clarity have also been identified as key factors influencing student satisfaction and academic performance (Garrison et al., 2000; Richardson & Swan, 2003).

Public Speaking Assessment in Online Contexts

Public speaking assessment involves evaluating delivery, content organisation, language use, and audience engagement (Brookfield, 2017). In ODL settings, such assessments are conducted through synchronous or asynchronous platforms (Hrastinski, 2008).

However, recent studies highlight challenges such as reduced interaction, limited non-verbal communication, and increased student anxiety in virtual presentations (Bond et al., 2021). These challenges may affect students' performance and perception of assessment effectiveness.

Student Engagement in Online Learning

Student engagement is a critical factor influencing learning outcomes in ODL environments. Engagement includes behavioural, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning activities (Bond et al., 2021).

Recent research indicates that engagement remains one of the most significant challenges in online learning, particularly due to reduced interaction and lack of immediacy (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Palomino et al., 2023). Strategies such as interactive activities, collaborative learning, and real-time discussions have been suggested to improve engagement.

Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on Open and Distance Learning (ODL), several critical gaps remain insufficiently addressed. Existing studies have predominantly focused on general aspects of online learning effectiveness, such as student satisfaction, engagement, and technological readiness (Bond et al., 2021; Palomino et al., 2023). While these studies provide valuable insights, they often adopt a broad perspective and do not sufficiently examine discipline-specific contexts, particularly performance-based courses.

Moreover, prior research on lecturer effectiveness in ODL has largely concentrated on general teaching competencies, including instructional design, communication, and digital literacy (Rapanta et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of focused investigation into how these

competencies translate into effective assessment practices, especially in courses that require active performance and real-time evaluation, such as public speaking.

In addition, studies examining public speaking in online environments have primarily explored student anxiety, communication barriers, and technological challenges (Kearns, 2012), with limited attention given to the role of lecturers in facilitating effective assessment. This indicates a gap in understanding how lecturer effectiveness influences student perceptions and outcomes in public speaking assessment within ODL settings.

Furthermore, empirical evidence from the Malaysian higher education context remains limited. Most existing studies are conducted in Western or general international contexts, which may not fully reflect the pedagogical practices, institutional structures, and cultural dynamics present in Malaysia. This lack of contextualised research limits the applicability of existing findings to local educational settings.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the level of lecturer's perceived effectiveness specifically in public speaking assessment within ODL environments, from the perspective of students in Malaysian higher education institutions. By integrating lecturer effectiveness with a performance-based assessment context, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of teaching and learning in ODL.

Methods

Study Design

This study employed a descriptive research design within a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between learning portals and public speaking assessment among Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students. A research design serves as a deliberate and structured plan that guides researchers in systematically carrying out a scientific study (Perrin, 2023). Similarly, Vijayanthi and Vidhukumar (2020) emphasized that a research design provides a framework that directs how a study is conducted, ensuring that the objectives are addressed effectively and efficiently.

The quantitative approach was selected as it aligns with the positivist paradigm, which values objectivity, measurability, and the observation of externally verifiable reality (Rauteda, 2025). This approach allows the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify trends, relationships, and differences among the variables under investigation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' engagement with learning portals, their performance in public speaking assessments, and the role of lecturers in influencing these outcomes.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics were employed. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the level of perceived lecturer's effectiveness among ODL students. This design enabled the study to generate empirical insights into the extent to which learning portals contribute to enhancing communication skills in an ODL context.

Questionnaire Design

In accordance with the research design, survey was conducted in this study where it requires the sample to answer a set of questionnaires. As the study entails with large number of populations, Jones, Baxter & Khanduja (2013) suggested questionnaires were a highly useful piece of survey equipment that make it possible to evaluate big populations in a very simple manner. Munn et al. (1990) mentioned questionnaires are a common method of data collection. Table 1 indicated the summary of the items in questionnaire.

Table1.: Summary of Items in Questionnaires

Section	Item	Number of Items	Source
A	Demography Characteristics		Individual
	• Gender	1	
	• Age Group	1	
	• Level of Study	1	
B	Lecturer		Ariyani, A., Wello, B., Basri, M., & Arham, M. (2024). Lecturers' Interpersonal Communication Skills and Their Influence on Student Engagement in EFL Speaking Classes. <i>English Language Teaching (ELT) Worldwide</i> , 11(2), 512. https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v11i2.67062
	• Active Learning	20	
	• Scaffolding		
	• Social Interaction		
	• Contextual Learning		
C	Public Speaking Assessment		Gonçalves, A. S. (2022). <i>The concept and role of public speaking for students kpi department uin abdurrahman wahid in the class of 2021</i> . https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/du469
	• Authentic Assessment	20	
	• Formative Assessment		
	• Assessment Rubric		
	• Contextual Feedback		

Data Analysis Procedure

SPSS Version 26.0 software was used to analyses the data in descriptive manner. In translating the variables, the researcher will use descriptive analysis of the mean scores, which will then be interpreted. Geetha & Sujatha (2024) described that a descriptive analysis uses statistical

techniques to summarise and interpret numerical data, emphasizing measures of central tendency and variability

Result

The analysis was done based on the research objectives and hypothesis of the study that had been formulated in chapter 1. The type of statistical test used refers to the suitability of the variables used in the study. The data was analysed in descriptive manner. Respondents that chosen in this study were ODL students from selectes private educational institutions around Petaling Jaya districts. Based on (Table 2), there were respondents' profile recorded in this study such as gender, age group as well as level of study.

Table 2: Respondents' Profile

Demography Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	105	52.5%
	Female	95	47.5%
Age Group	18 – 20 years old	80	40.0%
	21 – 23 years old	65	32.5%
	24 – 26 years old	35	17.5%
	27 – 30 years old	20	10.0%
Level of Study	Diploma	80	40.0%
	Bachelor's Degree	120	60.0%

According to the data shown in Table 2, there were a total of 200 participants in this study, including 105 male students (52.5%) and 95 female students (47.5%). Meanwhile, for the age of the students, there were 80 students (40.0%) who are in the age from 18 – 20 years old, 65 students (32.5%) who were 21 – 23 years old, 35 students (17.5%) who were 24 – 26 years old, and 20 students (10.0%) who were 27 -30 years old. In terms of level of study, there were 80 lecturers (40%) who are in diploma, and 120 lecturers (60%) who are in bachelor's degree.

Descriptive Analysis

In order to fulfil the research objectives, the data was obtained from instruments in the questionnaire involving ODL students. Data from the questionnaire has been analysed using SPSS Version 26.0 software. A discussion was made based on the overall answer of ODL students. Positive and negative comments were used in the form of Likert scale 5 items in a variety of instruments. Respondents' self-reported levels of agreement with statements about the level of students' learning portal, and level of public speaking assessment. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree represent five tiers of precision. Scoring for positive remarks goes from 5 down to 1, whereas for negative ones it goes from 1 up to 5.

Table 3: Variable Mean Score Measurement

Mean Score	Score Explanation
1.00 - 2.00	Low
2.01 – 3.00	Moderate Low
3.01 – 4.00	Moderate High
4.01 – 5.00	High

Source: Cooper and Schinder (2011)

According to the Table 3, which indicated the variable Mean Score Measurement by Cooper and Schinder (2011), when the mean score was between 1.00 to 2.00, it considered as low. If the mean value was between 2.01 to 3.00, it showed the value was in moderate low. Meanwhile, if the value of the mean is between 3.01 to 4.00, it considered as moderate high, and when the number is between 4.01 to 5.00, it showed the mean value was high. Therefore, the following subsections entailed the mean value based on all the items in the questionnaire.

To Identify the Level of Perceived Lecturers' Effectiveness Among Open-Distance Learning (ODL) Undergraduate Students.

What is *level of perceived lecturers' effectiveness* among Open-Distance Learning (ODL) undergraduate students?

Table 4: Level Of Perceived Lecturers' Effectiveness

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Active Learning	4.350	0.695
Scaffolding	4.405	0.637
Social Interaction	4.351	0.644
Contextual Learning	4.413	0.621
Average Mean (4.380)		0.605

Table 4 presents the level of perceived lecturers' effectiveness among ODL undergraduate students. Overall, the results indicate a high level of perceived effectiveness, with an average mean score of 4.380 (SD = 0.605), suggesting that respondents generally viewed lecturers as highly effective in facilitating learning.

Among the constructs, Contextual Learning recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.413, SD = 0.621), indicating that respondents perceived lecturers as particularly effective in relating instructional content to real-world contexts. This was followed by Scaffolding (M = 4.405, SD = 0.637), reflecting lecturers' strong ability to provide structured guidance and academic support. Social Interaction also demonstrated a high mean score (M = 4.351, SD = 0.644), suggesting that lecturers effectively fostered communication and engagement among students. Similarly, Active Learning recorded a high mean (M = 4.350, SD = 0.695), indicating that lecturers encouraged active student participation during the learning process.

The relatively small standard deviation values across all constructs indicate consistency in respondents' perceptions. Collectively, these findings suggest that lecturers demonstrated strong effectiveness across multiple pedagogical dimensions.

Discussion

The discussion in this section emphasized on the findings of ODL students on the level of lecturers in selected private institutions around Petaling Jaya, Selangor. The data was discussed based on all the research objectives.

Level Of Perceived Lecturers' Effectiveness Among Open-Distance Learning (ODL) Undergraduate Students.

The findings of this study indicate that the level of lecturers' perceived effectiveness among ODL students in public speaking assessment is high. This suggests that lecturers have generally adapted well to the demands of online teaching and are able to deliver instruction effectively despite the constraints of virtual learning environments. This result aligns with previous studies which emphasise that lecturer effectiveness remains a critical determinant of student learning outcomes regardless of the mode of delivery (Hattie, 2009; Rapanta et al., 2020).

The high level of perceived effectiveness may be attributed to lecturers' ability to provide clear instructional guidance and structured learning experiences. Instructional clarity is particularly important in ODL settings, where the absence of physical interaction requires lecturers to communicate expectations and assessment criteria more explicitly. This finding is consistent with earlier research highlighting that clear communication and well-organised course design significantly enhance students' understanding and satisfaction in online learning environments (Garrison et al., 2000; Biggs & Tang, 2011). It also reflects recent evidence suggesting that structured digital pedagogy contributes positively to students' perceived learning effectiveness (Palomino et al., 2023).

In addition, the high rating of feedback quality indicates that lecturers are able to provide meaningful and constructive feedback, which is essential for skill development in public speaking. Feedback plays a crucial role in helping students improve their performance, particularly in performance-based assessments where iterative practice and reflection are required. This supports the argument that timely and formative feedback enhances student learning and engagement in online contexts (Shute, 2008; Rapanta et al., 2020).

However, despite the overall high level of perceived effectiveness, the relatively lower level of student engagement observed in this study reflects a persistent challenge in ODL environments. This finding is consistent with recent literature indicating that student engagement remains one of the most significant issues in online learning, often due to reduced interaction, limited social presence, and lack of immediacy (Bond et al., 2021; Martin & Bolliger, 2018). While lecturers may be effective in delivering content and providing feedback, fostering active participation and interaction requires more dynamic and student-centred approaches.

The nature of public speaking as a performance-based subject further amplifies this challenge. Effective public speaking instruction typically involves real-time interaction, audience feedback, and experiential learning, which are more difficult to replicate in virtual environments. As such, the lower engagement levels may reflect inherent limitations of ODL

rather than deficiencies in lecturer performance alone. This suggests that lecturer effectiveness in ODL should not only be evaluated based on instructional delivery but also on the ability to create interactive and immersive learning experiences.

These findings carry important implications for teaching practice. Lecturers should be encouraged to adopt more interactive strategies, such as synchronous presentations, peer evaluations, breakout discussions, and the use of multimedia tools to simulate authentic speaking environments. Such approaches have been shown to enhance student engagement and participation in online learning settings (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

Furthermore, continuous professional development is essential to support lecturers in enhancing their digital pedagogical skills. As ODL continues to evolve, lecturers must be equipped with the necessary competencies to design engaging, interactive, and effective learning experiences. Institutions also play a critical role in providing technological infrastructure and training to support effective teaching practices.

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate that while lecturers are generally perceived as effective in ODL public speaking assessment, there remains a need to strengthen student engagement strategies. Addressing this issue is crucial for improving the overall quality of learning experiences and ensuring that students develop the necessary public speaking competencies in online environments.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the level of lecturers' perceived effectiveness among Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students in public speaking assessment. The findings reveal that the overall level of lecturer effectiveness is high, indicating that lecturers have successfully adapted their instructional practices to meet the demands of online learning environments. In particular, the dimensions of instructional clarity and feedback quality were rated highly, suggesting that lecturers are effective in communicating expectations and supporting student learning through constructive feedback.

Despite these positive findings, the study also identified student engagement as a comparatively weaker dimension. This highlights an important area for improvement, as engagement remains a critical factor influencing learning outcomes in ODL contexts (Bond et al., 2021; Martin & Bolliger, 2018). The nature of public speaking as a performance-based subject further underscores the need for interactive and experiential learning approaches, which can be challenging to implement in virtual environments.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on lecturer effectiveness within a specific and underexplored context—public speaking assessment in ODL. It also offers practical implications for lecturers, institutions, and policymakers. Lecturers are encouraged to adopt more interactive teaching strategies, while institutions should provide continuous professional development and technological support to enhance digital pedagogy.

However, this study is not without limitations. The use of a quantitative approach may not fully capture the depth of students' experiences, and the focus on selected institutions may limit the generalisability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to incorporate

qualitative methods, expand the sample across diverse contexts, and explore additional variables such as student motivation, technological readiness, and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, while lecturer effectiveness in ODL public speaking assessment is generally perceived as high, enhancing student engagement remains essential for improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. Continuous efforts to refine instructional strategies and leverage digital tools will be crucial in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of ODL in higher education.

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