

Islamic University Students' Voices on Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 health protocols aimed at preventing the spread of the novel Corona virus have changed many ways of our life, including teaching learning process. Teachers and students are encouraged to be computer and digitally literate, due to online teaching learning processes. The online teaching learning process drives people to make adaptation and innovation to reach the learning goals. Under this context, the important issue that should be addressed is students' readiness to access the online learning. The present article is aimed at explaining the UIN Malang students' opinion on online learning process, from the students' point of views. This is qualitative research and the data are collected through online questionnaires filled by students. The students in this research are those attending the Cultural Studies class in the last semester, at the beginning of pandemic (March-May 2020). The writers argue that students are the subject of learning process so that students' agency is determining factor that foster the success of learning process. The data show that students took great efforts to have online classes. The opinion can be defined from the ability to attend the online class, the ability to understand the materials provided through online class, identifying the strength and weaknesses of the online class, and show different level of confidence in comprehending the subject. There are at least two factors affecting the students' success in online learning, cultural and economic factors.

Keywords: confidence, online class, opinion, pandemic, UIN students

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic forces students and lecturers to do the online learning process since last semester. In the on-going semester of 2020/2021 academic year, the learning process is done in the distance education, as stated in the Indonesian Minister of Education policy, that the education at university level has to be done online in any areas of Indonesia (The decision of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Religious affairs, and Ministry of Health, June 2020). Higher education institutions are considered to be ready for online learning, assuming that the universities have enough resources to do online education. The decision is important as the response for the educational process during pandemic in 2020. At the higher education institutions, it might be true that the universities have the facilities to do the online learning. However, the students' capability and access for online learning have not been taken into account. For that

reason, this research is an effort to answer the gap, looking into the students' point of view of the online learning in the first few months of the pandemic

Online learning is a challenge for most educational institution in all levels. However, there are more universities or higher educational institutions built the centers for supporting online learning as part of university infrastructure, as are specialized learning management systems such as e-learning, Moodle, Canvas, and Blackboard (Miller,2014) Moreover, the pandemic times force teacher and students to do the online learning. With the more and more interest and development of the technology of online learning, there comes the inquiry on the most effective practice for online teaching and learning.

There was a robust debate on the educational technology literature is whether media or pedagogy

makes technology-mediated learning more or less effective. Some argued that pedagogical methods and the application of instructional design principles, rather than the medium used, are what affect student learning Clark (1983, 1994). The others argued the opposite (Cobb, 1997; Kozma, 1994; Ullmer, 1994), that different media attributes make some types of learning easier with one medium than another. Technology application made possible for various learning experiences especially in the language and humanities education.

Under the context of pandemic, distance education (DE) research is necessary to be held, where the health protocols required technology to be used in the online learning. Technology is also required for content delivery and communication between students and teachers, and among students. This paper is the response to the necessity to study in the areas. Therefore this study aims at exploring students experience in online learning in the last semester, in the pandemic time. To reach the objective, the questions posted here are: first, what is students' opinion towards the online learning. Second, what are the factors influencing students' success in online learning?

2. METHOD

This is a qualitative research method by having questioners as the instrument for data collection. The primary data of this study are taken from the questionnaires given online to the students.

The respondents of this study were the students attending the Cultural Studies online classroom last semester, in Faculty of Humanities. There are 140 students in the cultural studies class, and there are 92 respondents (students filling the questionnaires) in this study. The data are classified and presented into tables. There are 5 tables showing the 5 questions, open and closed questions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students Opinion towards the online learning

Last semester was the first time to do the total online learning since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, on the midst of March 2020. In the UIN Malang context, most of the lecturers of humanities use the WhatsApp along with email and another platform like zoom. There was no single platform to be applied. During this emergency situation, lecturers are encouraged to use the simple and accessible platform for distance learning. Upon the situation of learning, students in this study said 96 % the online learning use WhatsApp groups. This is understandable because the university has not built the

one platform that can be applied for all of the subjects in all departments. This is called emergency online learning. In such situation, the online learning occurs in such a way that the students are also make adaptation. Here are the students' opinion toward the (emergency) online learning.

The opinion can be divided into several aspects; their ability to attend the online class, their understanding of the materials in the online class, and students' opinion on the benefit and weaknesses of online learning, and student's confidence in online learning.

Table 1. Students attendance the online class

Attendance to the online class	N=92	%
Always able to attend	75	82, 4%
Often	13	13 %
Rarely attend	3	3%
Never attend	1	1%

Table 2. Students' ability to understand the materials in online class

Able to understand the material	N=92	%
Very good	15	16%
Good/average	59	64%
Less	15	16%
Not at all	3	3%

Students' opinion on the benefit and the weaknesses of the online learning can be seen from the following data. The benefits of online learning according to students' experience are four aspects: flexibility, relax, feeling more confident, and the material aspects that can be read anytime they want to.

Table 3. The benefit of online learning

Benefit of online learning	N=92	%
Flexible	53	57%
Relaxed	39	42%
More confident	19	20%
Material can be reread	13	14%

From those 92 students fill the form, most of them (57%) said that online learning is good and fun because it is flexible. The flexibility ranges from the place up to the clothes, or who people they choose to meet. They are free to find the place, at their room, on the bed, at dining table or wherever they think it is convenient and possible to attend the online class. They also feel more relaxed because they do not necessary to think the clothes they

have to wear. Some of them even say that online class is fun because it is not necessary to meet the unpleasant people or mates (like whom they had to meet at the conventional class). The other benefit of having online class is that it is more relaxed. They can attend the class while eating and drinking or enjoy snacks. They also feel relax, not sitting formally in the classroom and look at the teachers' explanation or whiteboard. They can do the class while lying down at the bed or sofa, or at the garden as long as they can get internet connection.

From the material of the subject, they built the opinion that online class enables them to read and reread the material given by the teacher, many times, especially when the material is in written form or recorded video. This is a good chance for students to understand it better.

Table 4. The weaknesses of online learning

learning	N=92	%
Problem with internet access	64	69%
Problem in understanding the material delivered in the class	33	35%
learning	N=92	%
Problem with internet access	64	69%

Students confidence in online class is important aspect to see the students comfortable in online classroom. The Table 5 shows that student's high confidence was 11%, while average confidence was 61% and the less confidence is 23%. The average confidence was related to their ability to understand the materials of the class (see Table 2). Table 2 and Table 5 show that most of students have average understanding materials and average confidence on the subject they learn. The Table 5 also shows that more students feeling less confident (23%) in their success of online learning. To some reasons, this is caused by the fact that the online learning was the first time they had, and they felt that many things seem unclear. This fact implies that teacher should help more to make the learning process more understandable.

Table 5. Students' confidence in online class

Confidence in the online class	N=92	%
Highly confident	11	11%
average	57	61%
Less confident	22	23%
Not confident	2	2%

3.2. Factors Contributing to the success of online learning at home

In doing the online learning, students are highly affected by at least two factors; economic and cultural factors. Economically students are dependent to the family. In Indonesia, most of students are not independent financially, so that they need support from the parents for accessing the online learning. In this pandemic time, they have to do the learning process from home, which means they need internet access, or quota for the smartphone to do the online learning. There are 69% students having problems

with the internet access (Table 4), in the forms of the high price of quota for internet access and the bad internet access due to the remote areas. While they were living with the parents, the economic condition was also influenced by the pandemic, in which most of the parents were also got impact of the pandemic. The economic problems in the household will affect the students access to the internet.

In the attendance, most of students were able to attend the class, 82%, which was very high. However, the attendance was only seen from their online in the WhatsApp group. This attendance did not imply that they were able to access the whole learning process. For example, this high attendance rate did not mean that they were able to do the other tasks, like finding the online references or discussion with groups, that requires internet connection. The number of students who stated rarely and never attend the class (4%) were due to economic problems as well. In the more conversation, they said, they had to help the parents to fulfill the economic necessities. They had to work or get money for their daily food. These situations forced them quit the class.

The second was the cultural factor, which means that whether the academic culture was supported or not while they were doing the learning process at home. Many parents thought that when their children at home, they were idle so the parents tended to ask for their help many times, ignoring that they were in fact in learning times. The academic culture was not easy to be applied at home, especially when the learning process at home was done in relaxed and informal ways. Many parents still had in mind that the schooling have to go away from home and wearing uniform, and other attributes as students. Studying at home is a big challenge especially for the home that did not have facilities to study such as a particular place and time and internet access to study. These are the factors contributing to the success of students online learning from home.

The other cultural factor related to the academic culture is student's problems in understanding the materials provided in the online classroom. During the online class, teacher gave the materials online, which encourage students to read by themselves. This activity can get success when students were able to read and understand the materials. Otherwise, the students would get difficulties. The student's problem with the understanding of the text is caused by the fact that they did not like to read a lot. When they are given many texts to read, they complained. Most of students did not have a good habit of reading. The reading culture was still limited to reading short messages like in the social media. This situation is a big challenge for lecturers to provide various ways of presenting the materials while also encouraging students to increase their reading skills.

4. CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, this paper would explain students experience on online learning in the last (half) semester due to Covid-19 pandemic. The study shows that students perceive the online learning as positive, in terms of its flexibilities of the time in reading the materials and in doing the learning at home. However, the flexibilities also bring another problem of their low understanding of learning materials and the other problems like internet access. All the situations above imply that students are challenges to build a stronger reading habit and academic culture. While for lecturers, the situation implies that they have to be more creative in the online classroom, presenting materials in various ways using multi modal presentation, to help students' better understanding on the learning materials, and in doing so, better confidence in online learning process.

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