ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF ONLINE LEARNING  (A STUDY OF THREE UNIVERSITIES IN ACEH)

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Article Info
This study analyzed students’ perception of online learning in three universities in Aceh, IAIN Takengon, Malikussaleh University, and Samudera University. It studied how they perceived the application of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. In analyzing their perception, researchers considered three aspects of perception; learning process, learning environment, and learning motivation. To gather the data and information, researchers designed a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 16 items to the respondents online using Google Form. In addition, a discussion in the form of FGD with respondent was conducted in each site to gain a more comprehensive insight on the subject. A total of 449 respondents from three universities participated in the questionnaires. Researchers utilized purposive random sampling under the criteria of active students who have experienced online learning on campus. Some students who have responded the questionnaires were then invited for FGD in each of the university. Researchers utilized SPSS software to analyze the data and present the phenomenon and general findings to be elaborated in the study. The results of the study uncovered that students have a negative attitude towards online learning in the learning process, learning environment, and learning motivation. However, the learning process has a positive correlation with both the learning environment and learning motivation.

Keywords: Students’ perspective, Online Learning, Learning Process, Covid-19 Pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION
The Corona virus (Covid-19) first emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, at the end of 2019 (Susilo et al., 2020). The virus then spread out to many countries until it was declared a pandemic by WHO (World Health Organization). Ever since, it has enormous impacts on various aspects of people’s lives, including education.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced a lot of countries, including Indonesia, to implement online learning. To support the application, Ministry of Education and Cultures published guidelines for teaching processes during pandemic (Kemdikbud, 2020). Both teachers and lecturers had to adapt from a typical classroom meeting with screen teaching in front of their gadgets. Online instruction is not something new. Though implemented in smaller scales, information and communication technology (ICT) in education is widely used for effective learning throughout the world. (Balta & Duran, 2015). Conducted online, the process depends primarily on IT. IT tools are such as network bandwidth, network security, network accessibility, audio and video plug-ins, courseware authoring applications, Internet availability, instructional multimedia services, video conferencing, course management systems, and user interface (Selim, 2007).

Response to online application, however, varies one to another. Students at Surabaya State University, for instance, stated that online learning was effective and efficient and that it complemented direct meeting (Fitriyani et al., 2020; Sukardi & Rahmat, 2019; Wida, 2020); however, they preferred...
Several factors come into effect for outcomes of learning, similarly goes to online learning. The use of multiple intelligence approach in teaching, for instance, was proven to increase students’ interest (Aswasulasikin, 2020). In addition to approach, teacher’s readiness to prepare an attractive lesson plan shaped students’ learning motivation (Yenni, 2017). Motivation affected students’ attitude and performance in learning. Contact and interaction with educators significantly contribute to their learning motivation and determined optimum retention in learning (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018).

Teachers and lecturers consolidated numerous approaches and technique in teaching the class. Also, many tried various new techniques and utilized multiple media to make the lesson exciting and increase classroom interaction. Teaching approaches that accommodate diverse learning methods, numerous intelligence teaching strategies, are largely encouraged. Research proved that the use of multiple intelligence approach teaching has effective to improve students’ grade and motivation (Akkuzu & Akçay, 2011). In a similar tone, (Dewi et al., 2015) noted that learning process conducted by teachers affected positively on students learning performance and retention. The effort students put in their study affects their retention. Students who received necessary assistance to their study would study better compared to those doing the same tasks, yet not receiving necessary aids they should have (Kirschner et al., 2009). Thus, good, positive interactions among the students and with their teachers are crucial to establish good learning and, therefore, retention.

On the other hand, three factors may hinder students’ learning; they are low motivation, less attractive delivery from teacher/lecturer, and decrease in concentration (Irfan, 2016). Many factors may cause such a negative perspective on learning. These undesirable habits may lead to adverse learning outcomes. Students’ perception of teacher’s performance, for example, can be observed from their attendance, behaviour, and scores (Mukhtar, 2017). Such actions lead to negative performance and grades. Students become less engaged and involved in their education.

Similar challenge and situation are also real in the current pandemic era. Even though conducted online, a similar principle to good teaching and learning applications. The difference in means of instruction does not change the fact that the process requires identical principle to that of applied in traditional classroom meeting. Teacher/lecturer should prepare well for the class and utilize interactive and engaging teaching approaches. Failed to do so, the classroom will be boring and less attractive to students. Research conducted by (Aswasulasikin, 2020) showed that students feel boredom of online learning and students expect lecturers to be more creative and innovative to avoid boredom of online learning. Boredom in learning is undesirable for all lecturers and students. Not able to balance the task and activities may create another issue. Trying to get students involvement, some teachers felt into assignment trap. They provided numerous assignment in a hope to increase students’ learning engagement, without knowing that many students experienced burnout due to online learning because of that (Pawicara & Conilie, 2020).

Based on the above elaboration, it is essential that further study on students’ perception on online learning, especially in this disruptive era, is conducted. Studies on how students’ responses and perceive the learning process should be conducted to evaluate the process. This study aims at exploring students’ responses of online learning during the pandemic era. This study explored three aspects of students’ perspective; the learning process, the learning environment, and student learning motivation. Each element was sub-divided into detail. In the learning process, it discussed students’ perceptions of the delivery of material by lecturers, the ability to absorb material by students, and student learning outcomes. Additionally, the aspects of the learning environment explored here were the venues where learning took place and the media used. The last element was the motivation to learn. This section
examined self-confidence in the mastery of technology, self-confidence in independent learning, and confidence in online education and communication.

2. METHOD

2.1. Subject

The study was carried out in three universities in East Coast of Aceh, namely Malikussaleh University, Lhokseumawe, IAIN Takengon Central Aceh, and Samudera University Langsa. A total of 449 respondents participated in the research. Respondents were active students from these universities.

2.2. Method

The research format was quantitative research and utilized self-administered questionnaires and FGD to obtain the data. The sampling method used was purposive random sampling using Google form distributed through WhatsApp and email. Sixteen questions were asked based on the 5-point Likert Scale - 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questions queried students’ perspective towards the application of online learning on campus during the Covid-19 pandemic. They asked about students’ perception towards the learning process (7 items), on online learning environment (5 items), and their motivation in learning online (4 items). Analysis of the response was elaborated in three stages, strong (76%-100%), medium (56%-75%), and weak (≤ 55%).

2.3. Data Analysis

Data from the study will then undergo several stages. Being quantitative research in nature, data was accumulated in numerical formats and later evaluated using SPSS software data analysis. Data layout was based research questions by also taking consideration of internal correlation of the results.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students’ perception of the learning process

The learning process is all aspects related to the implementation of teaching and learning, from one end to the other. It covered all preparation by lecturer aspects, delivery, and how students perceive the process. Based on the responses, it was found that the majority of responses fell into the bottom medium category. Students responded rather negatively towards the application of online learning, with an average score of 2.78. That means, only 55.66% of the students perceived the benefit of online learning to traditional direct classroom meetings. (Astuti & Febrian, 2019) found that students responded positively to online learning. Students feel more comfortable doing questions and answers in an online learning pattern than in face-to-face classes. However, some students found online learning less attractive because not natural (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018; Campbell et al., 2011), which decreased their motivation to study (Cahyani et al., 2020).

Detail of the scores is elaborated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LP-1</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.162</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3.27</td>
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<td>2.91</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.82</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2.63</td>
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<td>1.075</td>
<td>1.156</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of the learning process (LP). LP consists of 5 items with the responses are measured using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to agree (1 to 5) strongly. It was interesting to note that the learning process (LP) scores are relatively low. The highest recorded scores are at LP-3 and the weakest at LP-7. LP-3 enquired students’ ability to comply with all the assignment from lectures while Lp-7 enquired about their preferences over the online and traditional direct meeting. During the FGD, students stated that both online and offline class to be effective and efficient. They could understand the material when delivered either way. The medium of delivery did not significantly affect comprehension as it was affected by various factors. All factors pertinent to learning offline also applied to an online meeting.

Assignment completion, students, expounded, had little to do with delivery, online or offline. Students are faced with assignments and tasks both during online and offline class. Therefore, they had to complete all the projects from the lecturer. To complete the job, as in LP-3, students had to exert additional effort to be able to comply with all the tasks. This effort came in the form of recording or watching the recorded lecture and participating in WhatsApp discussion for more clarification. Having this supported network and systems, students found task completion, not a big issue in online learning.

Common interfering factor stated in the FGD was the internet connection, either due to poor internet connection in their area or having no internet packet of their own. Internet provision by the government could not always be used. Not all applications and teaching platforms utilized by lecturers were supported in the quota. In addition, few missed the quota transfer due to registration issues, which forced them to buy internet package and install the new application, when they had money. Students often missed some points and information which created gaps of understanding and may also cause miscommunication and understanding gap during the interaction via online and WA (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018).

3.2. Students’ perception of the learning environment

SPSS data indicated low mean scores from the Learning Environment (LE). High scores were only visible in LE-1, asking if the media utilized by the lecturer was accessible to them. Most students claimed that the media was easily accessible in their online learning. Lecturers used familiar application and software for online teaching. Implementing the online learning, many lecturers utilized common learning platform such university online learning app, Google meets, and zoom, Google classroom, (Bali & Liu, 2018), and Edmodo (Pratiwi, 2020), and WhatsApp Group (Dhull & Sakhshi, 2017). Less common app, they said, caused some issue, such as Canvas. They are not familiar with the app, and it is not user friendly. Though complicated at first, students were becoming familiar with these applications and could use them well. Apart from the internet connection, students had serious no issue with the application used in online learning (Pratiwi, 2020; Tanta, 2010).

Table 2. Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
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<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.60</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.82</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>1.253</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.058</td>
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</table>

Data above provided descriptive analysis on learning environment (LE). Average LE scores indicated low perception. With the average of 2.92 (58.54%), the students’ perception towards online
learning environment was at lower medium. In specific, in LE-1, based on the scores, 3.43, students stated their support in the platform utilized by their lecturers. They explained that lecturers employed learning platform accessible to them. Less than one-third of total respondents expressed their approval of the learning medium. However, despite their approval on the benefit of online learning, still, they proposed a more significant concern in their educational processes.

Students differed whether online learning provided them with supporting environment for study. On the one hand, they noted their preferences as they could, a) access the lesson anywhere, including their homes, b) not needing to travel or prepare much for the class, c) ability to multi-task while attending the course and d) feeling less pressure from the class process and interaction. On the other hand, online learning came with adversities. Accessible anywhere, learning process felt tasteless. Many confessed waking up only a few minutes before class. They attended the course not ready and, even, still sleepy. Besides, some students multi-task during the course. They did various activities during the class session. This was possible because many lecturers did not require their students to open their camera, so they attended the class only by listening to the lecturers, not attentively and while lying on their bed, preparing meals, or doing house chores.

Interaction is the last aspect they mentioned. Many students felt that they did not have the desired interaction they would have had should the class was held offline. Students had problems interacting with their peers and lecturers in an online learning setting (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018). Discussion and interaction with both lecturers and students were challenging. Having to sit in front of handphone or laptop for long hours without anyone to interact with, they claimed, also brought down the learning spirit. Certain activities, though proven effective, such as peer-tutoring (Pramika & Putri, 2013), cannot or was difficult to run in the online settings thus prefer direct contact and communication (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018). Some students feel more open when responding in a virtual environment rather than a traditional classroom meeting (Astuti & Febrian, 2019). Also, Adijaya (Adijaya & Santosa, 2018) expressed that students preferred direct engagement rather than online learning as it was not optimal.

3.3. The motivation of Students in online learning

Students’ motivation (Azhari & Dauyah, 2018) and learning independence are crucial in learning (Amina, 2013). They claimed that they were motivated to study. However, their motivation, as well as understanding, were distorted by poor internet connection. In addition, some lecturers skipped materials they assumed students have already understood. For those who had not understood the material, this caused a gap in understanding and later problems in doing the tasks. Many of such gap, unfortunately, were not resolved due to a) poor internet connection which hinders communication during the class session, b) shy from asking and clarification, c) assumed that lecturers would go back to the material and explained them again, and d) thought they could study about that later by themselves or with peers.

Table 3. Learning Motivation

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics of learning motivation (LM). LM consists of 4 items with the average scores of the responses is 2.58 (64.52%), the highest compared to all. However, despite being the highest in percentage, still, it falls under medium strength. This indicated that students’
motivation and confidence in their study retention is still at lower medium level. Also, students did not have sufficient self-confidence in their study. While, self-confidence is very crucial for elevating their self-belief, learning expectation, as well as motivation not to give up (Yulianto et al., 2020), some remained closed and remained unnoticed.

3.4. Internal correlation

The results of independent t-test to examine the difference of LP, LE and LM between gender. It shows that there are significant differences of LP and LE between female and male (p=0.030 and p=0.021 for LP and LE, respectively), with female participants, have a more positive response of LP and LE compared to male. However, there is no significant difference in LM between gender (p=0.574).

There was a significant difference between male and female in learning process and learning environment. They had different perception on how the LP and affect them and their study. Students, in an online setting, possessed high motivation, concentration, curiosity, enthusiasm, independence, readiness, enthusiasm or encouragement, and self-confidence (Fitriyani et al., 2020). These positive attitudes serve a great deal in the study. Online learning promotes independence and confidence in their research have a positive impact on results (Amina, 2013). Despite so, their motivation has yet affected their learning outcomes. As Azhari & Da’uyah (2018) finding (Azhari & Da’uyah, 2018), high reason alone did not guarantee high learning achievement.

Correlation also occurred between LP, LE and LM. It shows that LP significantly correlates with LE (r=0.738, p=0.000) and LM (r=0.735, p=0.000), indicating strong positive correlations between the three variables. It can be interpreted that the responses of LP are related to the reactions of LE and LM. Students’ learning environment and learning motivation significantly correlated with their learning process. Students with strong perception of learning environment and learning motivation will have positive attitude of learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and data analysis, it can be concluded that though students did not show their objection to online learning, it is less preferable compared to the traditional direct meeting. Students could participate and take part in the learning process, but missed direct meeting elements such as direct interaction with lecturer and peer, luxury to be able to witness the teaching first hand, feel the classroom atmosphere, and provide them with a stronger driving force to study. Internet connection has been the primary concern of the students. Many expressed their problems with a proper internet connection, especially since many had to purchase extra quota for their study and poor internet connection in their area.

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