

## Online teaching in an Indonesian higher education institution: Student's perspective

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received May 16, 2021

Revised Feb 25, 2022

Accepted Mar 27, 2022

#### Keywords:

Feedback

Learning strategies

Online teaching

Personal devices

Students' perceptions

Teaching material

### ABSTRACT

Online teaching has been pushed further as the best solution that addresses the challenges of colleges and universities closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study intended to disclose students' perceptions of the online teaching. A quantitative survey approach was employed to collect data from a total of 175 students which were conveniently established from amongst students enrolled in academic year 2020/2021 at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. Applying the SPSS software version 16 as the tool, obtained data were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages. The results showed the majority of respondent were disagreeing with the facts that they have an access to personal devices and that they can easily access to both internet and online classes. The majority of respondent were agreeing with the facts that teaching materials were well-planned and that various learning strategies were used to help students understand. The majority of respondent were agreeing with the facts that students were given opportunity to raise and answer the questions and that feedback given on students' work are very helpful. Lecturers need to reach out and check students' conditions before starting online teaching.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread in Indonesia, digital technologies is continuing to play a crucial role in ensuring that all the essential sectors (such as banking and industries) would continue to operate in order to prevent national economic breakdowns [1]. In education sector, colleges and universities have chosen to switch all face-to-face classes. They have mandated the lecturers to transfer their teaching online [2] to keep teaching, staffs, and students protected from a public health epidemic that is rapidly moving [1].

In Indonesia context, many colleges and universities are currently struggling to invest digital technologies in order that lecturers are adequately assisted in conducting whatever form of online teaching that they most likely to adopt [1]. There is different meaning of online teaching. Bakia *et al.* [3] described online teaching as the way of instructing students through internet. Meanwhile, Smith, Basham, and Hall [4] described online teaching as the method of teaching that use one or more technologies to educate students who are separated from their instructors.

Online teaching as the formal activity delivered wholly through the internet, with some supports from supplemental technology, it occurs when students and their lecturers are separated by terrestrial distance or by occasion [4]. Similarly, Finch and Jacobs [5] explained online lecture as a form of teaching and learning where the students and lecturers are separated physically and temporarily. Whereas, Singh and Thurman [6] described online teaching as electronically assisted learning that rely on the internet for teacher and student interaction and delivery of class materials. Based on these different concepts, the online teaching can simply be described as a method of teaching which is administered and delivered through the internet. In online teaching, students and lecturers do not reach each other in real time. Thus, all the materials and schedules are accessed on an individual basis using the help of technological devices.

Smith, Basham, and Hall [4] outlined nine strategies that lecturers can use to effectively transition from face-to-face to online teaching: i) Knowing the technology: lecturers should be familiar with the technology that students are expected to use; ii) Creating and maintaining a strong presence: lecturers are obliged to maintain a strong presence by creating various verbal communications and the use of non-verbal communication such as emotions with students; iii) Setting clear expectations for the course: lecturers are obliged to set clear expectations for the course early and to outline how an individual's grade in the courses will be determined; iv) Establishing a sense of comfort and developing a community of learners: as the online teaching are still new and different to many online learners, lecturers are obliged to begin their classes by demonstrating feeling of enthusiasm and excitement about instruction and instruction materials; v) Promoting reflection and communication through quality asynchronous discussion: lecturers are obliged to understand the cyclical nature of asynchronous discussion and comprehending the importance of not permitting a posted topic to be abandoned on a discussion board; vi) Having a good balance of active leader and active observer: lecturers are obliged to begin their classes as a manager of learning. As the manager who possesses the majority of the responsibility in the learning community, lecturers are obliged to be able to transfer gradually the responsibility of manager of learning from himself to the community of learning; vii) Requesting regular feedback and being cognizant of misinterpretation: lecturers are obliged to request feedback regularly because it can be useful when designing a new online classes or revising the current one for a following group of students; viii) Checking content resources and applications regularly: lecturers are obliged to check regularly all links, resources, modules, and activities due to that of the rapid changes in technology, and ix) Expecting the unexpected and remaining flexible: at some point technology will fail, whether it is a video chat not connecting or resources link not properly working. In this point of view, lecturers are obliged to have a backup plan for all assignments and assessment that rely on technology.

Despite the fact that researchers may show otherwise, online teaching bear the stigma of being lower quality than face-to-face teaching [2]. To improve the quality of online teaching, Keengwe and Kidd [7] recommended the need for online lecturers to balance pedagogy and technology in planning and distributing teaching content. Emphasizing the pivotal role of online lecturers, Keengwe and Kidd [7] further rated curriculum design and development, teaching design, facilitating meaningful group and class activities, establishing timetable for required assignment, and offering guidance for students to properly use the technologies related to online teaching.

Community College of Aurora [8] detailed several benefits of the online teaching as: i) Flexibility: in online classes students have the freedom to manage their own class; ii) Reducing cost: online classes exclude costs related to both transportation (such as fuel and parking) and meal; iii) Networking opportunities: online teaching offer the chance for students to network with their peers across nations or even different continents; iv) Documentation: all the information needed, such as teaching materials and discussion documents, will be safely stored in online database; v) Increasing lecturer-student time: students in online classes may get the personalized attention they need to have concept clarified. The online guided discussions and personal talk with professors and lecturers are seal of online classes; and vi) Access to expertise: online classes may give students access to specialized degree courses and allow the sharing of expertise that help them more access to education.

Whereas, Gautam [9] detailed the disadvantages of the online teaching as: i) Inability to focus on screens: one of the biggest challenges of the online classes is the struggle with focusing on the screen for long periods of time. Students may even have a greater chance to be easily distracted by media social or other sites; ii) Technology issues: without a consistent in internet connection for lecturers and students, there can be a lack of continuity in learning for students; iii) Sense of isolation: in online classes, there are minimal physical interaction among students and between students and lecturers, iv) Teacher training: online classes oblige lecturers to have an adequate understanding of using digital technologies; v) Manage screen time: online classes oblige students to devote so many hours watching at a screen. Students may develop bad posture and other physical troubles due to staying so many hours in front of a screen.

Regardless of the advantages and disadvantages, online teaching has already been the fantastic approaches of ensuring the consistency of students' learning. Some colleges and universities in Indonesia have done it successfully, while many faced major concerns from students and even parents. Southern Papua,

of which Musamus University takes place, is one of the most impactful areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tuscano [1] asserted that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused anxiety to many Indonesian students and has even underlined the digital technology gap between the haves and the have not. Tuscano [1] further mentioned that students who have an access to personal learning devices and internet will significantly benefit from online teaching programs than that of students who have not. Therefore, all the lecturers, in this trying time, should seriously consider the actual condition of students before starting online classes in order that no student is left behind.

This study aimed to portray how students perceive the online teaching offered at the Indonesian Language and Literature Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. A vary of existing studies have closely explored students' perceptions of the online teaching and learning [10]–[20], but we are still inspired to explore more this topic to put forth a proof from the very real context of Musamus University of Merauke, of which some of Indonesian youth were striving to build up their future life. As none of studies, to the best of our knowledge, has empirically explored students' perception of online teaching in Southern Papua area, of which Musamus University of Merauke takes place.

Thus, the study intended to fill-up the existing gap by disclosing students' perceptions of the online teaching, taking the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department at Musamus University, Indonesia, as the population and samples of the study. This study explores the following research question: how do students perceive the online teaching offered at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1. Research design

This study was a quantitative research approach using a survey technique as it sought to describe students' perception of online teaching offered at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. A survey technique was applied as several studies [21]–[26] have outlined the benefits of using survey technique as: i) Large amount of data can be collected in a relative short time; ii) Relative low-priced; iii) Comfortable data collection; iv) Little investigator prejudice; v) Detailed outcomes; and vi) Better statistical application.

### 2.2. Population and sample

Population of this study was all the students enrolled in academic year 2020/2021 at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. Using a convenient sampling technique (due to COVID-19 pandemic), a total of 175 students were established as respondents. Detail of demographic information about the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic information

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	61	34.86
	Female	114	65.14
Age	Less than 18	9	5.14
	18-20	89	50.86
	More than 20	77	44
Semester	1st semester	64	36.57
	3rd semester	51	29.15
	5th semester	29	16.57
	7th semester	31	17.71

### 2.3. Data collection and measurement

Data were collected from November to December, 2020. Data related to student's perceptions of the online instruction were measured by developing a survey questionnaire of 12 items which were distributed over three aspects: i) Technology devices and accessibility: comprised of items no. 1-4; ii) Lecturers' teaching competency: comprised of items no. 5-8; and iii) Lecturer-student interaction: comprised of items no. 9-12. All the items of questionnaire were distributed in Indonesian language and respondents were asked to rate their response in a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (SD=strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Sample of the items of questionnaire in English version are the following: "I can easily access the internet", "I can easily access the online classes offered", "I can easily submit all the assignments online", "The objective of instruction was clearly explained", "Instruction materials were well-planned and provided", "Instruction materials were clearly presented", "Various learning strategies were used to help students

understand”, “Students were given opportunity to raise question to have concept clarified”, “All the questions raised were well responded”.

In order that all the questionnaire were completely filled-up and returned directly by respondents, a face-to-face technique was used in distributing questionnaire to all the surveyed students. The internal reliability of instruments was verified using a Cronbach’s alpha value. The value of Cronbach’s alpha was 0.871 as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The internal reliability of research instrument

Case processing summary				Reliability statistics	
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	30	100.0	.871	12
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0		
	Total	30	100.0		

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

## 2.4. Data analysis

Collected data were analyzed statistically. A descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages was applied to see how students perceive the online teaching offered at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. To obtain an accurate result, the software statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 16 was used.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored the perceptions of students about the online teaching. The software SPSS version 16 using descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages was utilized for data analysis. The following sections present that students’ perceptions of the online teaching were vary from aspect to aspect and from item to item alike.

### 3.1. Technology devices and accessibility

To succeed in university during the COVID-19 pandemic, students must adapt to the extensive use of the full range of technologies used by lecturers when delivering the course completely online [27]. Srichanyachon [28] identified students’ challenges to participate in online lecture as: i) Problems with online system such as connection errors, systems complexity, communication convenience and attractiveness; and ii) Personal issues such as access to a personal technology devices and a lack of internet skills. Students’ experiences of using technology devices during the online classes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that 14.86% of surveyed students were strongly disagreeing and 38.29% were disagreeing to the facts that they have an access to a personal device for online lecture. It means that more than half of surveyed students (53.15%) do not have an access to a personal device for online lecture. Data in Table 3 also showed that the online teaching seems to be still unfamiliar to many of students as 16.57% of surveyed students were strongly disagreeing and 41.71% were disagreeing to the fact that they can easily access the internet. Further, 29.15% of surveyed students were strongly disagreeing and 44.57% were disagreeing to the fact that students can easily access the online lecture offered. Whereas, 10.28% of surveyed students were strongly disagreeing and 50.86% were disagreeing to the fact that they can easily submit all the assignments online.

The online teaching might be an excellent alternative to a face-to-face class during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there are still several problems that must be resolved before applying online teaching. Despite of the technology issues such as interference on the internet connection [9], two simple things that the lecturer should consider before starting online teaching are to make sure that all the students have an access to a personal device for online lecture; and to set up a regular meeting for guiding students using a synchronous platform, such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and Moodle. Though Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture has decided to provide 50 GB of internet data pulses to both lecturers and students, this gift would be of no use at all if students do not have an access to personal technology devices and the internet connection is so bad. Besides, as the online teaching are still unfamiliar and different to many online students, lecturers at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia, should start their teaching by exhibiting a sense of eagerness and enthusiasm about the lecture and lecture materials [4].

Table 3. Students' perception of the technology devices and accessibility

Aspect	Items of questionnaire	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Technology device and accessibility	I have an access to a personal device for online lecture	26	14.86	67	38.29	63	36	19	10.86
	I can easily access the internet	29	16.57	73	41.71	57	32.57	16	9.14
	I can easily access the online lecture offered	51	29.14	78	44.57	30	17.14	16	9.14
	I can easily submit all the assignments online	23	13.14	89	50.86	49	28	14	8

### 3.2. Teaching competence

Teaching competence refers to personal ability to encompass the willingness to act [29]. Thus, describes a wider range of personal appearances [30]. Table 4 presents how students perceived professional teaching competence of the lecturer. The table shows that the teaching competencies of the online lecturers were highly perceived by the majority of surveyed students. The data showed that 22.86% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 45.71% were agreeing that the objective of lecture was clearly explained, while 14.86% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 48% were agreeing that teaching materials were well-planned and provided. Further, 26.29% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 45.71% were agreeing that lecture materials were clearly presented. Similarly, 19.43% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 46.29% were agreeing that online lecturers use various learning strategies to help students understand. The result of this study recommend a need for ongoing professional development programming for all the lecturers involved in the instructional mission, as they were being asked to do uncommon things about delivery of knowledge and skills during the COVID-19 [2].

Table 4. Students' perception of teaching competence

Aspect	Items of questionnaire	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Lecturers' teaching competence	The objective of teaching was clearly explained	14	8	41	23.43	80	45.71	40	22.86
	Teaching materials were well-planned and provided	16	9.14	49	28	84	48	26	14.86
	Teaching materials were clearly presented	10	5.71	39	22.29	80	45.71	46	26.29
	Various learning strategies were used to help students understand	8	4.57	52	29.71	81	46.29	34	19.43

Previous researchers [31], [32] asserted that the effectiveness of online teaching do not depend foremost on technology devices and accessibility itself. In the same vein, Branch and Dousay [33] believed that effective online teaching and learning results from a thorough educational design and planning, using an exact model for design and improvement. Therefore, without lecturers' well-preparation [31] and self-directed learners [32], the online teaching would not work effectively for everyone. A well-defined and sound organization of lecture materials, for instance, may visibly impact the quality of the online learning experience and, in turn, impact positively students' performance [34].

### 3.3. Lecturer-student interaction

Interaction is the ideal link that allows lecturers and students to work well. Different from traditional classes which is centered on the lecturer who tries his/her best to transfer knowledge and skills to the students, online lecture is primarily focused on the interaction between lecturer and students [35]. When good interaction has been established, lecturers and students enjoy with each other, and the students, in turn, will feel more encouraged to perform the best [36]. Pianta [37] believed that positive interaction will promote student's self-correction and improve students' social skills. Table 5 presents how students perceive the interaction established between lecturers and students.

Table 5 shows that the majority of surveyed students seem to perceive highly to the lecturer-student interaction. To the fact that students are given opportunity to raise question, 13.71% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 32% were agreeing; while 28.58% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 48.57% agreeing that all the questions raised were well responded. Further, 26.86 % of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 52.57% agreeing that they were offered opportunity to answer all the questions raised in online classes. Similarly, 32.57% of surveyed students were strongly agreeing and 57% agreeing

that feedback given on their work are very helpful to deepen more the lecture materials. The result of study recommends the need for lecturers to provide more times for students to get the personal attention they need to have lecture materials clarified [8].

Table 5. Students' perception of the lecturer-student interaction

Aspect	Items of questionnaire	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Lecturer-student interaction	Students were given opportunity to raise question	19	10.86	76	43.43	56	32	24	13.71
	All the questions raised were well responded	6	3.43	34	19.43	85	48.57	50	28.58
	Students were offered opportunity to answer all the questions raised	9	5.14	27	15.43	92	52.57	47	26.86
	Feedback given on students' work are very helpful to deepen more the lecture materials	0	0	29	16.57	89	50.86	57	32.57

Students are dynamic partakers in their own learning [38]; therefore, the first priority of helping student to be more motivated and involved. Thus, to be educationally successful, is to establish and maintain the positive lecturer-student interactions [39]. Payne [40] and Kohn [41] argued that good relationship between lecturers and students is of important to build up the classroom atmosphere psychologically. Despite the requirement for lecturers to preserve a certain control over students to achieve educational effectiveness, students would feel more comfortable and excited about their learning if the lecturers are enthusiastic in teaching, friendly and responsive [42].

Regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to rise in Indonesia, one of the most crucial things that Indonesian colleges and universities must do right now is that to understand what students are thinking about online lecture and how it effects on their future success due to that of understanding the characteristics and demographics of online students may help the lecturers to recognize the eventual obstacles to online lecture [43]. Therefore, online teaching requires an initial serious planning about the teaching objective and a careful study of the profile, characteristics, and needs of the students. In order to take benefits of the synchronous interaction in online teaching, lecturers need to reflect upon the teaching objectives, and then design and implement activities that integrate these tools into the teaching to be delivered [35].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study found that the majority of respondent were disagreeing with the facts that they have an access to personal devices and that they can easily access to both internet and online classes. The majority of respondent were agreeing with the facts that teaching materials were well-planned and that various learning strategies were used to help students understand. The majority of respondent were agreeing with the facts that students were given opportunity to raise and answer the questions and that feedback given on students' work are very helpful.

It is suggested that lecturers need to reach out and check students' conditions before starting online teaching. Hence, this study was limited at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department of Musamus University, Indonesia. In this point, there are still need for future studies with large sample size and covered wide area.

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