Vocational Lecturers' and Students' Perceptions on Online Learning during Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to look into the perspectives of lecturers and students on online learning during the pandemic, particularly in disciplines that require practical experience. This study is driven by a desire to better understand the potential of online learning in education, the acceptance of technology and online learning during a pandemic, and research gaps relating to lecturers' and students' perceptions during a pandemic. This research is descriptive quantitative (explorative) by describing the results of the study qualitatively and showing the percentage of responses from the respondents. There were 95 students and 32 lecturers who responded to the survey. The findings revealed that instructors were the only ones who benefited from online learning during the epidemic, with students, particularly vocational students, missing out on the majority of the potential benefits. Practicum is the most significant barrier to online learning that both lecturers and students face.

Keywords: *Vocational, Perception, Online Learning, Pandemic.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning patterns are shifting as a result of technological advancements. Online learning (e-learning), mobile learning (m-learning), hybrid learning, and distance learning are some of the terminologies used to describe approaches to learning using technology. They all employ technology in their classrooms and use online media to deliver information. These various types of models will be referred to as online learning in order to facilitate and equalize perspectives.

The use of technology in learning is increasing due to factors such as portability, affordability, availability, usability, and accessibility [1]–[4]. The use of technology, especially mobile technology, is considered in accordance with the needs and lifestyle of millennial learners [5], [6]. In addition, online learning is assumed to be able to sustainably support learning with diverse settings and contexts, and is considered to be able to increase students' opportunities to learn ([7]–[12]. In short, online learning has various potentials and benefits that are useful for improving learning

Although evidence of the usefulness of technology in learning has long been echoed, in the realm of education it has not been fully utilized [13], [14]. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of technology in learning. In 2020, based on data from UNICEF Indonesia, more than 60 million students in Indonesia are required to study from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The same thing happens in universities. The pandemic situation requires lecturers to change learning patterns from face-to-face to online mode, assisted by applications and communication technology. WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, and YouTube are some of the main applications in presenting online learning [15]–[17]. However, have these applications and technologies been used properly? How do lecturers and students perceive online learning during the pandemic?

Before the pandemic, several research findings [18]–[20] revealed that educators were still reluctant to integrate technology into classrooms. According to [21], doubts arise from the complexity of preparation, the amount of effort and costs required in implementing online learning, the lack of motivation of students and lecturers, and so on. Teachers' perceptions of the usage, usability, ease, and sustainability of technology in

learning are deemed necessary during the epidemic, since the success and initiatives of employing technology are greatly dependent on the attitude and support of lecturers [22]–[24]. Students' perspectives are similar, considering that it requires their readiness and willingness to embrace and participate in online learning [25], [26]. To gain an understanding of how technology is used in education, both instructors and students' perspectives must be examined and analysed

One of the issues in higher education, according to [27], is the low quality of higher education as a result of insufficient graduate competencies. Furthermore, they claimed that inadequate competence resulted in low acceptability of graduates in the workplace since they did not match the industry's competency standards as graduate users. This issue became the primary focus of vocational education, with the goal of producing ready-to-work workers with market-relevant skills [28]. One strategy for overcoming graduate rejection is to rejuvenate the vocational curriculum by strengthening the learning material and adjusting it to the field's needs. One of the requirements for enhancing the curriculum is to complete a practicum or field work experience. Accreditation and certification are also done to guarantee that graduates are prepared to work.

Unfortunately, the learning process is altered during a pandemic. Lecturers and vocational students rarely get the opportunity to undertake practicum in the laboratory as a result of the instruction to learn from home through the PJJ program. It's also grown increasingly difficult to send internships through the Field Work Practice (PKL) program. According to a report by the International Labor Organization [29], the COVID-19 outbreak has hindered not only the economy, but also the training process and vocational learning practicum. A similar issue has been noticed in Indonesia. For example, the PKL program in the Undiksha Hospitality Study Program had to be postponed since many hotels were closed or refused to accept internship students. Similar circumstances were discovered in a number of other vocational programs. In the online form, practicum and street vendors are recommended. Herein lies the main problem of online learning for lecturers and vocational students.

Despite the fact that the main principles of BDR recommended in the PJJ suggest meaningful learning without being burdened by the demands of completing learning outcomes [30], lecturers and vocational students continue to believe that a lack of skills due to the low number of practicum hours during BDR will be an obstacle to getting jobs in the future. It is clear that there is a mismatch between attempts to improve graduation quality and the decrease in the number of practicums available to vocational students. There is also a discrepancy between lecturers' and vocational students' needs and perceptions and the policies proposed by PJJ.

This research aims to look into the perspectives of lecturers and students on online learning during the pandemic, particularly in disciplines that require practical experience. The purpose is to gain a comprehensive view of how online learning, particularly practicum, is perceived so that it may be utilized as a reference in policymaking later. It is expected that there will be a solution related to appropriate learning patterns for lecturers and vocational students during the pandemic.

This research problems formulation are as follows:

a) How do vocational lecturers perceive online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?

b) How do vocational students perceive online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. METHOD

This research is descriptive quantitative (explorative) by describing the results of the study qualitatively and showing the percentage of responses from the respondents. The aim is to find out the perceptions of lecturers and vocational students regarding online learning during the pandemic. The research subjects are lecturers and vocational students in Bali. The data collection technique used is a survey, with a questionnaire used as the main instrument. The questionnaire will be created using the Google Forms application. The questionnaire used will be developed independently based on the results of reference studies related to the theory of technology acceptance, ease of use of technology, usability of technology, and obstacles to using technology. The aim is to explore the perceptions of lecturers and students regarding online learning during the pandemic.

Due to self-development, the questionnaire will be validated by 3 ratters. Reviewers will be sought from expert of assessment, learning technology, and education. The ratters were given questionnaire item assessment format, which adapts the item assessment format from [31]. The criteria to determine the validity of the contents of the questionnaire are relevance, clarity, and simplicity. The assessment score consists of numbers 1 to 4 with the following explanation:

a) Relevance (1=irrelevant, 2=item needs revision, 3=relevant but needs minor revision, and 4=very relevant)

b) Clarity (1=unclear, 2=item needs revision, 3= clear but needs review, 4=very clear)

c) Simplicity (1=simple, 2=item needs revision, 3=simple but needs revision, 4=simple)

In addition, the questionnaire was tested on a minimum of 30 people to see how easy it was to fill out, how long it took to fill out, how clear each item was, and

how easy it was to gather and analyse the findings. This assessment was more qualitative in tone, with the goal of determining the challenges of implementation in the field as well as the problems of respondents filling out the questionnaire. Afterwards, the questionnaire was constructed with yes and no answer options, statements with a response range in the form of a perception on a Likert scale of 7, and questions with input in the form of reasons for choosing the perception response. Demographic data of respondents was also explored for further analysis.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' Perception

Not all students are adept at adapting to new situations. The majority of responders (43.3%) were neutral; 21.1% found it simple, but many others found it challenging (31.6%).

In term ease, a total of 48.4 percent (46 respondents) disagree that understanding the delivery of material becomes easier when made online. Only 7.4 percent (7 responders) agreed with this statement. The majority of respondents (60%) believed that the ease of completing tasks was the same whether they were done offline or online. Only 13.7 percent (13 respondents) agreed that online tasks have become easier, while 21.1 percent (20 respondents) disagreed. The same response was also stated regarding the ease of getting input/score. The majority of respondents (58.9%) stated there it was the same between online and offline learning, while 13.7% believed it was more difficult, and only 20% agreed. In terms of the ease of carrying out the practicum, 61.1 percent (58 respondents) perceived it grew more challenging. Only 8.4 percent (8 respondents) believed that implementing practicum during a pandemic has become relatively easier. In general, the majority of respondents (42.1 percent) do not believe that adopting online learning during a pandemic makes studying easier. Others (40%) believed it was the same, with only 7.4% indicating it was easier. Learning online, according to the majority of respondents, was not easier than learning offline. Using technology did not inherently make learning simpler for them.

In term of usefulness, the use of online learning does not automatically make respondents more innovative and creative in learning. As many as 31.6% of respondents disagreed if they became more creative and innovative with online learning during a pandemic. Only 16.8% agreed with the statement submitted in the questionnaire. The Majority of respondents (47.4%) believed neither online nor offline learning provided changes in terms of creativity and innovation in learning.

Surprisingly, majority of the respondents (44.2%) did not perceive any improvement in term of effective and

efficient learning skills, with only 12.6% respondents gained benefits. Similarly, in terms of learning productivity, 40% respondents believed that they were less productive during online learning compared to the offline one. Only 8.4% respondents perceived usefulness of online learning. Still, the majority of respondents (46.3%) considered their productivities are likely has no difference during and before pandemic. Up to 41.1% respondents perceived that their learning skill was not increasing, while only 10.5% respondents perceived increasement. In general, the benefit of online learning during pandemics were not likely perceived by the respondents.

Figure 1. Words Cloud of Students' Perception on Online Learning during Pandemics

In term of future intention to apply online learning, the majority of respondents stated that they would not engage in online learning in the future. This is acceptable given that students have not yet had the opportunity to experience the ease and usefulness of the technology, particularly during the pandemic. Respondents perceived that online learning during the epidemic was tedious (repetitive) and had failed to improve creativity, productivity, or learning skills. Respondents stated they would choose offline learning for practicum over online learning in the future.

In term of efficacy, the majority of respondents believed they could search (68.5%), store and retrieve material (60.1%) for learning purposes. Most respondents (61.1%) also believed that they were able to download and install learning applications. Some respondents also have a high perception of creating and using social media accounts (35.5%) and LMS (51.6%) to support online learning. In term of creativity, 35.8% respondents also have high efficacy of producing multimedia in the form of photos, videos, audio, and texts to support learning.

Students' main view of online learning is that it is boring, which was confirmed by open-ended questions as shown in Figure 1. Another perception is that online learning is associated with online/virtual activities that rely on the internet and technology, necessitating the use of a reliable internet network and quota. During the pandemic, online learning is still regarded as ineffective, unfocused, inefficient, demanding, bothersome, and difficult. Students perceive online meetings using applications (such as Zoom or Google Meet), homework, and virtual presentations as the main activities. The sole difference between online and offline learning activities is the delivery medium. Boredom and laziness arise from the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of learning process.

Figure 2. Words Cloud of Students' Perception on Online Learning during Pandemics

Students' major complaint regarding online learning is the lack of an adequate internet connection (see figure 2). Furthermore, internet quotas, scheduling study sessions, comprehending materials, communication, assignments, and practices are some of the challenges students experience when learning online. Other issues raised were difficulties socializing, conducting group work, discussing, adapting, self-evaluation, as well as adverse home situations, laziness and boredom, looking at layers for too long, and inadequate facilities and learning aids. The difficulties encountered can be described as basic requirements for online learning that are not being addressed due to the pandemic.

3.2. Lecturers' Perception

Most respondents from lecturers (56.3%) stated that it was easy to adjust to online learning. The greatest convenience is felt in terms of giving assignments (53.1%), giving assessments (40.6%), and preparing materials (40.6). There were 62.5% stated difficulties in

carrying out the practicum. When it comes to delivering the information, lecturers are split between those who find it easy (28.1%) and those who find it difficult (28.1%). (37.5). Despite these advantages, respondents are still undecided on whether online learning is simpler than offline learning.

In terms of perceived usability, 56.3 percent of respondents believe that online learning is beneficial. In online learning, 43.8 percent of respondents feel more creative and imaginative, and 43.8 percent feel their teaching skills have improved. In terms of productivity, however, respondents were split into two groups: 31.3 percent agreed and 34.4 percent disagreed. Despite the fact that it is beneficial, over half of the respondents (40.6%) believe they have not been effective in delivering online learning.

3.3. Discussion

During the pandemic, advances in the usage of online learning were only felt by lecturers, while most of the potential benefits of online learning were not felt by students, particularly vocational students. Practicum is the most significant barrier to online learning that both lecturers and students face.

Although lecturers recognize the value and convenience of online learning, students' desire, skills, and productivity in studying have not been maintained or increased. This can be demonstrated in students' perceptions of online learning's low easiness and usefulness.

This aligns with Saukah's viewpoint [32], which claims that poor quality online learning is one of the causes of students' learning losses. Saukah further stated that learning achievement is declining not only as a result of online learning, but also as a result of the poor quality of its implementation. Offline learning that is not maintained with highest quality standards will be the same as online learning that is not of high quality.

One of the causes of the inadequate quality of the implementation is believed to be a lack of readiness in the preparation of online learning as a result of the 'instant' implementation.

4. CONCLUSION

The process of accelerating the use of technology in education is increasing during the pandemic. Lecturers and students should benefit on this momentum. Its adoption is contingent on how much benefit/usability and convenience can be gained from using technology in the classroom. It is not enough to have high efficacy to ensure that the implementation is of high quality. Lecturers' intention to adopt online learning in the future should be considered a viable option. Regardless of whether students are motivated to use online learning in

the future or not, lecturers should be able to demonstrate the convenience and use of online learning. Furthermore, sooner or later, the use of technology in education will become more prominent. These changes will require lecturers and students to adapt. The lecturer's primary responsibility is to ensure that the quality of the implementation can be maintained in all settings, including offline, online, and blended. Lecturers must reconsider their roles in the era of technology-assisted learning.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mahardika and Parma designed the study. Dharmayasa, Irwansyah, and Heryanda carried out the survey and analysed the data. All authors shared ideas on the findings and discussions. Mahardika, Parma, and Andiani wrote the paper with input from all authors

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