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Online learning drawbacks during the Covid-19 pandemic: A psychological perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at finding out the psychological effects that have been drawn by the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic on university students. The approach implemented in carrying out this study was a descriptive qualitative approach. There were 140 students involved as respondents. The instrument used was a questionnaire set that was generated from Wiles (2020). Before proceeding with data collection process, the validity of the instrument was checked, and the items were valid. Then, the data were analyzed using Interactive Analysis as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The result shows that from the seven mental effects raised from increased screen time, the students admit that they most likely feel fatigued (100%), they experience physical pain such as headache, shoulder sore, eyesore, and others (100%), they have bad time management (98.6%), they feel isolation being drawn from their classmates (68.6%), and they experienced uncertainty about the lecturer's explanation during the online classes. Hence, it is suggested that there is a special unit to care about the students' mental health during online learning in this pandemic.

1. Introduction

Toward the beginning of April, the Indonesian government set a strict approach through the guidelines of largescale social limitations to lessen the spread of Coronavirus. Continues advances are taken to restrict the spread of the infection through the limitations on human movement. In education, learn and teach from home method is implemented. In any case, it cannot be denied that although there are various actions taken by the government to diminish transmission of Coronavirus,

the virus will still be there, bringing about sporadic conduct. The fact about stress and anxiety in concern to the virus outbreak was also found. One study by Wang et al. (2020) found that 16.5% detailed side effects of moderate to serious sadness; 28.8% said indications of moderate to the extreme level of stress, and 8.1% announced moderate level of anxiety. Moreover, Wang et al. (2020) also found that in the initial fourteen days after the anxiety and stress, women were announced encountering higher pressure, nervousness, and sadness contrasted with men. In accordance with research that says Covid-19 influences a few people inwardly, they experience the dread of getting the infection, feeling defenseless, and high pessimistic situation (Kumar & Somani, 2020).

The pandemic that has lasted for eight months by the time this paper was written and has put the world's educational system on a maneuver. The teaching and learning situation change at a rapid pace. Both teachers and students need to adapt fast to conform to this situation. However, the enormously rapid change leads to a crisis where all teachers and students experience profound burnout and fatigue. This is because the teaching and learning system has changed into online learning at the complete stage. Online learning means that there is absolute screen time, more focus and motivation needed, but more procrastinations also happen. This pandemic has additionally severe affected higher education as colleges and universities are closed during the lockdown measures. Albeit higher education organizations rushed to carry on online-web-based learning, these terminations influenced learning and assessments for both teachers and students in any country. Maybe above all, the emergency brings up issues about the values offered by a university within the educational substance. To remain relevant, universities will need to reinvent their learning environments so that digitalization expands and complements student-teacher and other relationships (Schleicher, 2020).

This study aimed at finding out the psychological effects that happen as the results of online learning on students. There have been several studies on this topic. First, it is a study by Irawan, Dwisona, and Lestari (2020). They studied the effect of online learning on students' psyche. The method employed was qualitative phenomenology in where the researchers learn a case as a phenomenon. The data collection was done through phone call interviews with 30 students at Mulawarman University. The result showed that the effects of online learning are boredom, anxiety, and mood swings. Next, it is a study by Moawad (2020) at King Saud University. The data were collected by using instruments distributed to the students from various majors at the university. The key stressors found were exams, assignments, lecture time, home settings, online platforms, and uncertainty. And the result shows that the majority of the students were stressed mostly by the uncertainty. This stressor is related to the starting and the ending of the class, the fairness of the evaluation, and the struggle to understand the teacher. The other study mentioned in this section was conducted by AlAteeq, AlJhani, and AlEsa (2020). The study was a cross-sectional survey carried out in Saudi Arabia on 367 students living in the country. The sociodemographic characteristics, perceived stress, emotions, and concerns during the pandemic were set as the criteria for facing the changing learning system. The result unveils that the students show a moderate level of stress and there is a significant correlation between high level of stress and female.

From the elaboration above, it was found that the study about the use of digital learning during the pandemic has gone sporadic. However, there are still limited studies looking at the mental effects that digital learning brings on students. Thus, this study focused on finding out the effects of

mental related to online learning in a university in Aceh, Teuku Umar university. This is set as the novelty of this study as there has not been any research on it at the Teuku Umar University, Aceh. The research question formulated in this study is "what are the psychological effects of increased screen time faced by students at Teuku Umar university?".

Literature Review

Psychological Effects of Lockdown and Social Distancing

For humans, isolation plays a significant effect on the human's psyche. A study examined about 10 million Google surveys in relation to the progressions in psychological wellness search a while after the lockdown. Subjects are more accentuated with tension, negative musings, the state of being restless, and self-destructive ideation expanded significantly before the lockdown (Jacobson et al., 2020). Then, a study in British involving 27 members surveyed five the group focuses during the lockdown and social distancing. The social separation brought about critical negative effects on emotional well-being and prosperity within a short timeframe of such implementation strategy, primarily for those with economic issues. Diminished social association, financial misfortunes, and routine changes prompted toward the mental effect, loss of motivation, loss of significance, and diminished self-esteem (Williams et al., 2020).

Another study involved 683 young people in the US which was carried out fourteen days after the lockdown. The result indicated that commitment to social detaching was not absolutely connected with their emotional wellness. Notwithstanding, explicit inspirations for social separating were identified with various mental issues. Youth were reported to face greater anxiety and more prominent tension manifestations in daily life. The individuals who occupied social distancing because they are told to do so revealed more burdensome indications (Oosterhoff et al., 2020).

Regarding the mental effect of this social seclusion, it is essential to be further discussed. Since this is phenomenal and unpredicted for human experiences so that there is practically no record of its outcomes. Social detachment will likely expand dread, nervousness side effects, dejection, and discouraged mind-set. Human beings are social creatures, free of identity or social foundation, and keeping up segregation for an extensive stretch may make critical mental trouble. The financial burdens of the pandemic, with a huge number of positions lost, increment in neediness and imbalance may highlight these sentiments. This effect might be ever more grounded in developing nations such as Indonesia, for patients or the individuals who live in nursing centers, the destitute, individuals with mental problems, as well as for those in the educational domain.

The pandemic has a tremendous effect on monetary especially for students in low-class families. Financial strain, while not related to social distancing, has been found to introduce a critical danger to mental prosperity. Students in low-class families need to work to support their needs in online classes. Online classes need internet data that they need to buy. Besides, they mostly do not have any device such as mobile phones, laptops, or other devices that help online learning. As a matter of fact, the government has moved the learning system onto a digital platform. These are not accessible to the students, especially the individuals who are destitute and live in a lot of economic inconveniences. For students in families facing various financial issues, online schooling seems to be a

struggle. Even if they can survive it, they will likely have mental tension from achieving it because there are other staple necessities that they need to fulfill (Joseph, 2020).

As cited in Wiles (2020), students who are carrying out online classes face profound increased screen time. This leads to an abnormality in their routine that can manifest holistically in their mental well-being. There are seven challenges that are possibly faced by students during online classes. First, they experienced fatigue. Fatigue is more common than we can imagine. It happens without any symptoms and leads to mental health issues. Second, they tend to have headaches or other kinds of physical pain. Third, they demotivate from doing tasks that are given by their teachers. Fourth, they tend to experience avoidance and procrastinate their tasks. Fifth, they become careless in time management including other routine activities such as eating, sleeping, doing household chores. Sixth, they generate a feeling of isolated because they do not meet other friends or people. Last, they barely understand what the lecturer or friends said during online classes. This is because the situation is completely different from person-to-person dialogue where they can read the gestures, voice pitch and intonation, facial expressions, and other features that can be used to help them in comprehending the learning materials.

Online Learning

Information Communication Technology or ICT underpins the learning process by the utilization of text, pictures, and sound and so that, every individual can make their story and take part in an inside and outside learning (Pounsford, 2007). For example, lesson explanation through digital learning remains as one innovation that is situated to exploit students to focus on the learning substance and to assist teachers to employ ICT beneficially in their classes (Robin, 2008). Regardless, the utilization of digital learning does not ensure that powerful learning cycles happen in a class (Lowenthal & Dunlap, 2007). There is proof to support that digital lesson explanation is more successful than a virtual face-to-face-talk-based learning in ICT instructional system (Yang & Wu, 2012). This is because students can access and initiate toward learning exercises, content survey, picture browsing, and so on. Besides, this learning system also allows high level of privacy (Nam, 2016).

In concern to learning autonomy, students are given full control and self-governance to uphold a more prominent feeling of independence and the individuals in managing the orders, expectations, and direction in contributing toward the teaching and learning process. The supports in learning autonomy and lesson structure are key factors in emerging intrinsic motivation in the digital learning system. However, when these two factors are left alone, the intrinsic motivation is low. Indeed, the learning outcomes with the use of online learning can be achieved, but in achieving the learning autonomy, the autonomy support and lesson structure are important. So that, it is a good postulation to combine these elements so that greater learning outcomes are possible to achieve (Van Loon, Ros, & Martens, 2012).

Teaching methodologies that are commonly used in online learning are task-based learning, problem-based learning, Web-based learning conditions, Educational games, Authentic learning, and so on. In addition, the online learning context supporting factors are collaboration, cooperation, digital combination, open educational practice, and internet participation. As Syahputri and Idami

(2019) added that even textbooks for students in this era should be embedded with digital audio and pictures.

2. Methods

This study was conducted by implementing the descriptive qualitative approach. This approach should be implemented when a straightforward portrayal of a situation is wanted. It is a methodology that is extremely helpful when researchers need to know, with respect to functions, who were included, what was included, as well as where and how things occurred (Creswell, 2013). The study involved 140 respondents who are students at Teuku Umar University, Meulaboh, Aceh, Indonesia. The respondents voluntarily answered a close-ended questionnaire set that was developed based on the increased-screen shortcomings criteria by Wiles (2020). The questionnaire set was distributed using *Google form* in the Indonesian language to ease the responding process and to avoid misinterpretation, then the respondents were supposed to answer 'yes' or 'no'. Later, the data were analyzed using interactive analysis as suggested by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014). The steps are data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that appear in the data set. Data display which contains the data analysis that is happening in the natural setting to enable the researchers to draw a conclusion. Last, it is the data verification where the researchers use the result from the previous steps as well as other theories to ground conclusions. Table 1 shows the questionnaire items. There are seven items in the questionnaire set. these items were checked for their validity using *Pearson Product Moment (r)* and all of them are valid ($\alpha = 0.05$, $r_{xy} = 0.926 > r_{table} = 0.754$). and for the reliability, *Alpha Cronbach's test* was utilized, and the value was $r = 0.811$.

Table 1. Questionnaire Set

No	Effect of increased screen time for me	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Fatigue		
2	Headaches and other physical pain		
3	Demotivation		
4	Withdrawal and procrastination		
5	Bad time management		
6	Feeling isolated		
7	Uncertainty to what the lecturer/friends explain during the class		

3. Results and discussion

After the data collection was done, the data has undergone the condensation process. What was condensed in the data set were the information about the respondent's gender, academic year, and average screen time. These variables are not specifically included in this study. So that, the data that were included were only the ones related to the mental effects on increased screen time during the online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the data display is depicted in Figure 1.

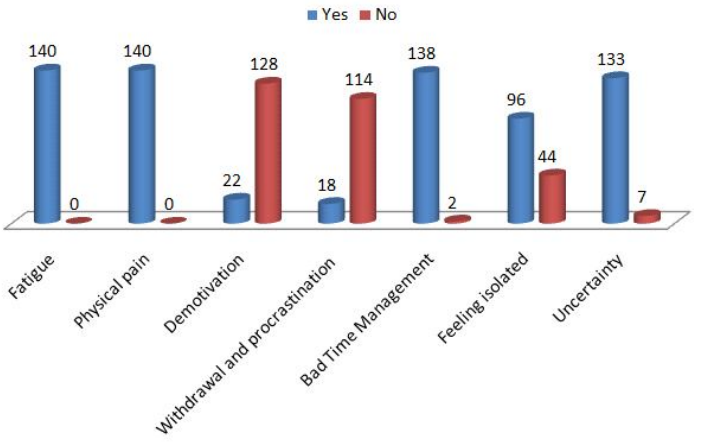

Figure 1. Result on the effects of increased screen time

From Figure 1, it can be seen that the first item asking about whether the students experience fatigue or not. The whole respondents (140 respondents) answered yes. They felt fatigued as the effect of the increased screen time. This is as urged by Stilic & Viner (2018) that increased screen time on a daily basis is related to higher energy intake that can lead to fatigue, poor dietary habits, and obesity. Next, the second item was asking about whether they feel physical pain such as headaches, eyesore, and shoulder sore. As supported by Mathers, et.al (2009) that excessive use of electronic media can manifest in health complaints. Their study found out that 925 adolescents who have excessive screen time (3 hours 16 minutes on average daily) are associated with psychological distress, poor health status, poor behavior, and anxiety. All of them (140 respondents) chose the answer yes. This means that the increased screen time can lead to physical disease too when it is carried out in the long run.

Later, the third item was asking about whether they lose their motivation, which means they have no motivation in finishing the assignments from their lecturer. the majority of the respondents answered no for this item (128 respondents), whereas there are only 22 respondents who answered yes. In this case, it is as suggested by Van Loon, Ros, and Martens (2012) that instead of getting demotivated, students can feel more motivated when they realize the autonomous learning that now lays in their hand. As autonomous learning awareness emerges, intrinsic motivation will also raise. Then, on the item asking about withdrawal and procrastination, most of the respondents also answered no. This means that the majority of the students do not commit any social withdrawals and they do not procrastinate the tasks given by their lecturers. There are 18 students who greed that they procrastinate while the other 114 students do not agree on this premise. This is also supported by Van Loon, Ros, and Martens (2012) that when the students possess autonomous learning, they tend to develop their own motivation that let alone the withdrawals and procrastination.

Next, the fifth premise was about whether the respondents experience ruin in time management. They lose track of time because of the increased screen time. The effect also goes upon other routines such as bedtime, mealtime, and house chore time. Hence, 138 respondents admitted that they experience collapses in time management as the effect of the increased screen time. However,

there are 2 respondents who did not experience such a collapse. Wu et al. (2017) reported that more than 2-2.5 hours of screen time on a daily basis can lead to low life quality including sleep deprivation. So that, other than sleep time management such as daily time tracking can also be considered as the effect of daily high screen time. The sixth item in the questionnaire was asking about whether they feel isolated because they have not met their classmates. Besides, the interaction with strangers also decreased as they spend more time learning at home. 96 respondents said that they felt isolated because of the social distancing and learn from a home model but 44 respondents admitted that they do not feel isolated. This is in line with Jacobson et al. (2020) that isolation for human beings can lead to stressful situations, bad thoughts, and anxiety. This happens because human beings are social beings who need to make interactions with one another.

Lastly, the item is asking about communication uncertainty. There are 133 respondents who answered yes that they have a problem in understanding the lecturer's explanation during the online class. They are not sure whether what they understand is the points that the lecturer tries to deliver. Additionally, if there are some friends asking questions or responding to the lecturer's questions, the feeling of uncertainty also appears as the bulking problem. However, there are 7 respondents who did not experience uncertainty in communication during the online classes. Additionally, as stated by Sundarasen, et al. (2020) that uncertain communication during the online class can lead to a lack of confidence in doing their exams, semester completion, and graduation. Besides, the students also need to complete house chores and take care of their siblings in the middle of the online classes. This situation even adds more anxiety levels to the students.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

As the research question which is stated in the earliest section has been answered by the result so that the conclusion can be drawn. It can be concluded that from seven effects that are drawn from increased screen time as adapted from Wiles (2020), there are five major effects that are confirmed by the students at Teuku Umar University, Meulaboh, Aceh, Indonesia. The effects are fatigue, headaches, and other physical pain, bad time management, the feeling of isolation, and uncertainty about what the lecturer or friends explain during the class. The other two factors which are demotivation and procrastination are not the effects of excessive screen time experienced by the respondents. They can still control their motivation in learning, and they do not procrastinate the assignments given by the lecturer.

The implication of this study is that the idea of providing a mental health unit in every educational center to help students with some mentioned psychological burdens. It is seen as a necessity because the online learning model is still likely to go on longer progress. Besides students' mental and physical health, it also affects students' future career and motivation that, of course, will bring greater impact to our society. Henceforth, this study is not without limitation. It only involved a small number sample (140 respondents). This means that the result is narrowly contextualized in implication. A deeper discussion involving a larger number of samples are cordially suggested for future research.

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