



DIFFICULTIES IN ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: PERCEPTIONS OF EFL STUDENTS OF UIN ALAUDDIN MAKASSAR

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Abstract: Preventing the COVID-19 spreading and transmitting widely, the educational institution has forced to make transition from conventional learning to online learning. The adaptation of online learning has presented many difficulties. Students in online learning faced difficulties that they might never encountered before in a traditional teaching and learning environment. This research investigated the difficulties in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic according to students' perception. The method of this research is qualitative and the instruments used were questionnaire and interview involving ten participants from the fifth semester students at EED of UIN Alauddin Makassar. The findings show that all the participants had difficulties during online learning and those difficulties affected their learning performance. There are nine areas of online learning difficulties; (1) difficulty to focus due to distractions, (2) problem with internet connectivity, (3) difficult to understand learning content, (4) lack motivation due to absence face to face contact, (5) various learning method employed by lecturers, (6) slow personal devices, (7) lack of technical skill in using online learning, (8) limited broadband data, and (9) difficult to work in group.

Keywords: difficulties, online learning, students' perception

Abstrak: Mencegah penyebaran dan penularan COVID-19 secara luas, lembaga pendidikan terpaksa melakukan transisi dari pembelajaran konvensional ke pembelajaran daring. Adaptasi pembelajaran online telah menghadirkan banyak kesulitan. Siswa dalam pembelajaran daring menghadapi kesulitan yang mungkin belum pernah mereka temui sebelumnya dalam lingkungan pengajaran dan pembelajaran tradisional. Penelitian ini mengkaji kesulitan dalam pembelajaran daring selama pandemi COVID-19 menurut persepsi siswa. Metode penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dan instrumen yang digunakan adalah angket dan wawancara yang melibatkan sepuluh partisipan dari mahasiswa semester lima EED UIN Alauddin Makassar. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa semua peserta mengalami kesulitan selama pembelajaran online dan kesulitan tersebut memengaruhi kinerja belajar mereka. Ada sembilan bidang kesulitan belajar online; (1) sulit untuk fokus karena gangguan, (2) masalah konektivitas internet, (3) sulit untuk memahami isi pembelajaran, (4) kurang motivasi karena tidak adanya tatap muka, (5) berbagai metode pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh dosen, (6) perangkat pribadi lambat, (7) kurangnya keterampilan teknis dalam menggunakan pembelajaran online, (8) data *broadband* terbatas, dan (9) sulit bekerja dalam kelompok.

Kata Kunci: kesulitan, pembelajaran online, persepsi siswa

Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic throughout the world intensely altered almost all aspects of life, and Indonesia has not been an exception to these shifts. Preventing COVID-19 from spreading and transmitting widely, world leaders have developed super-strict rules. World Health Organization (2019) has recommended some standards such as social distancing and physical distancing. In Indonesia, "large-scale social restrictions" were adopted in March 2020 due to the increasing number of people infected with COVID-19. Following this new adaptation, other rules were regulated in the form of working from home for workers, praying from home, and homeschooling for students ranging from the early childhood education level to higher level (Regulation of Indonesian Government No.21 2020, 2020). This is in line with the Prophet Muhammad advice in the following hadith:

مِنْهَا تَخْرُجُوا فَلَا بِهَا وَأَنْتُمْ بَارِضٌ وَقَعَ وَإِذَا تَدَخَّلُوا، فَلَا بَارِضٍ بِالطَّاعُونَ سَمِعْتُمْ إِذَا

Meaning:

“If you hear a plague in an area, then do not enter it. But if there is an epidemic where you are, then don’t leave that place.” (Hadith by Bukhari).

Changes in learning systems force educational institution to make the transition from learning in classroom to school from home (SFH) or online learning. Online learning allows teachers and students to change the way learning and delivery of information varies greatly (Syauqi et al., 2020). It is the acquisition and the use of knowledge distributed and facilitated primarily by electronic means (Wentling et al., 2000). Online learning can refer to completely virtual lessons, meaning there is no physical contact involved, but it can also include blended courses that mix face-to-face and virtual meetings, such as face-to-face courses with complementary activities performed on the internet outside the classroom (Ferreira et al., 2018). Students and teachers participating in online learning can have the flexibility of time and place on various platform (Abubakar & Tsuraya, 2021).

The implementation of online learning process is closely connected with students’ and facilitators’ readiness to work in digital environment. The presence of COVID-19 has forced the process of learning and teaching to be conducted virtually utilizing electronic means such as computer, laptop or mobile phone (Kaharuddin, 2021). Both students and teachers depend on the network and electronic devices to ensure the process of online learning going well. The lack of resources, such as good network and adequate electronic means, can be a challenge during the execution of online learning. Online learning requires a lot of resources and careful planning to achieve learning objectives (Dhull & Sakshi, 2017).

The suddenly application of SFH has presented many challenges, especially in the availability of facilities. The obstacle to appear are related to the absence of students in online classes due to the unsupporting networks and the inability of students to purchase internet data due to economic problem driven by the impact of COVID-19 (Kaharuddin et al., 2020). Various problems have included the provision of school infrastructures, bad networking, as well as the cost of purchasing expensive data packages, so often students are late in collecting and completing assignments, and even understanding the material has become a significant problem for students (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). These drawbacks of implementing online learning are worried to be learning barriers and difficulties experienced by students during SFH.

In addition, the challenge faced by educational institution is not only the lack of resources but also the need to change strategies, content, and curriculum into an online format. In addition, teachers are demanded to have competence to work in a digital educational environment because it has been found that instructors or teachers have a significant effect on learners’ satisfaction with an online learning system (Almazova et al., 2020). The incompetence of teachers to organize digital environment and to redesign learning content that fit with online learning will cause difficulties faced by students during learning activities.

Based on the explanation above, the transition from conventional learning to SFH or online learning has brought out many learning difficulties. Students in online learning faced difficulties that they might never encountered before in a traditional teaching and learning environment, and these difficulties could have a negative impact on their learning performance (Settha & Intharaksa, 2016). Furthermore, students were dissatisfied with online learning and had difficulties in understanding online lectures (AL-JARF, 2020). Students also reported that online learning had many challenges than traditional learning.

There are eight areas of online learning difficulties; (1) problem with internet connectivity, (2) various learning method employed by lecturers, (3) limited broadband data, (4) slow personal devices, (5) difficulty to focus due to distractions, (6) lack motivation due to absence of face to face contact, (7) difficulty to understand learning content, and (8) lack of technical skill in using online learning (Chung et al., 2020). The challenges that cause difficulties in online learning are classified into five areas; (1) technological constrain, (2) distractions, (3) instructor’s incompetency, (4) learner inefficacy, and (5) health issues (Muthuprasad et al., 2021).

Further, the implementation of online learning in UIN Alauddin Makassar, especially at the English Education Department, has not been an exception to the problems explained by researcher.

Therefore, this study examined how the perceptions of the fifth semester students at the English Education Department (EED) of UIN Alauddin Makassar toward difficulties during COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods

This research was descriptive qualitative which refers to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative, visual, and non-numerical data to find insights in certain phenomenon (Mills & Gay, 2016). Perception is subjective, so using this kind of research method is very appropriate. This study aimed to describe what are the students' difficulties in online learning based on students' perception.

The sample was selected in a small number of individuals so that the individuals chosen were good key informants who contributed to the researcher's understanding about the students' perception towards difficulties in online learning. The sample were selected through purposive sampling technique. The subject of this research was 10 of fifth semester students at the English Education Department of UIN Alauddin Makassar consisting of three males and seven females who meet the criteria. The reason of choosing the fifth semester students was they were one of affected party of learning changes due to large-scale social restriction driven by COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, they had experience traditional in-class learning before they faced the shift to an online environment, so they can feel the differences of these two learning environment.

The instruments of this research were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions. The questionnaire was given to the participants to find out their difficulties in online learning during COVID-19 pandemic. The close questions investigate the students' difficulties in online learning; while the open questions uncover additional difficulty faced by the students. The interview was used to clarify further about the difficulties.

The data analysis technique for close-ended questionnaire was the percentage descriptive analysis. Percentage descriptive analysis is applied to know the percentage of every factor based on the respondents' assessment score with formula as follows:

$$DP = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\% \text{ (Ali, 1994)}$$

Where:

DP : Percentage Description

n : Total of Respondent Value

N : Total of the Scores

The result of the percentage was used to the determine the level of occurrence of each difficulty found through interview. The result was also analyzed descriptively in narrative form to get final conclusion; while, the data analysis technique for interview consisted of three concurrent flows of activity, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Saldana, 2014).

Result and Discussion

The data regarding students' difficulties in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic were obtained through questionnaire. The questionnaire began with preliminary question which consisted of two items to know that the students faced difficulties in online learning and those difficulties affected their learning performance. The following table shows the respondents to the preliminary questions.

Table 1. Preliminary questions

No	Items	Number of Respondents	
		Yes	No
1.	Students faced difficulties.	10	-
2.	The difficulties affected learning performance.	10	-

Based on the table above, all the respondents recognized that they were facing difficulties in online learning during the Pandemic of Covid-19. Moreover, they also claimed that the difficulties that they experienced affected their learning performance during the current phenomenon.

Further, the difficulties in online learning investigated through questionnaire were based on eight difficulties in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; (1) problem with internet connectivity, (2) various learning method employed by lecturers, (3) limited broadband data, (4) slow personal devices, (5) difficulty to focus due to distractions, (6) lack motivation due to absence of face to face contact, (7) difficulty to understand learning content, and (8) lack of technical skill in using online learning (Chung et al., 2020). So, there were eight items as representations of eight difficulties mentioned above and there was one question to find out additional difficulty if any.

The eight items of online learning difficulties as well as the question of the additional difficulty are described sequentially, as follows:

Table 2. Online learning difficulties

No.	Difficulty	Frequency				n	DP = $\frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$
		SD	D	A	SA		
1.	Difficulty to focus due to distractions	-	1	5	4	33	82,5%
2.	Problem with internet connectivity	1	1	6	2	29	72,5%
3.	Difficult to understand learning content	-	3	5	2	29	72,5%
4.	Lack motivation due to absence face to face contact	1	1	7	1	28	70%
5.	Various learning method employed by lecturers	-	4	5	1	27	67,5%
6.	Slow personal devices	1	3	5	1	26	65%
7.	Lack of technical skill in using online learning	-	6	4	-	24	60%
8.	Limited broadband data	2	4	3	1	23	57,5%
Additional Difficulty							
9.	Difficult to work in group						

A. Difficulty to focus due to distractions

Table 2 shows that 90% of the respondents admitted that they had difficulty to focus due to distraction with “agree” and “strongly agree” was chosen by 50% and 40% of the respondents. Similar to Azlan et al. (2020), students found it was challenging to focus because of distractions. The distractions appeared due to the absence of a favorable environment to study at home (Kapasias et al., 2020), so study at home was not working well for students (Al-Nofaie, 2020). The difficulty to focus due to distractions, admitted by the respondents as one of difficulties during online learning, was also reinforced by the reason which said that the respondents were annoyed by noise in their environment, as follows:

“My environment is a noisy environment, so when I followed online learning I found it difficult to focus” (R.1).

“I didn't focus on paying attention to the lecturer explanation because of the distraction from the surrounding environment” (R.3).

“My surrounding is very crowded” (R.5).

In addition, other reasons were also conveyed by the respondents, as follows:

“There were many temptations from outside during the online learning process” (R.6).

“I totally agree with this, as I was often distracted by my little cousins when I studied online” (R.7). “

I often felt uncomfortable and disturbed by a lot of activities around me which caused me always avert my eyes and cause me not to focus on lectures” (R.10).

To sum up, the majority of the respondents admitted that they had difficulty to focus due to distractions. The main distraction was the noise from their environment as stated by the respondents, also the other respondents conveyed that the distractions came from home activity, family, and even from themselves due to temptations to do anything else.

B. Problem with Internet Connectivity

Table 2 shows that 80% of the respondents admitted that during online learning they had problem with internet connectivity in which ‘agree’ option is the most preferred by the respondents about 60%, then followed by “strongly agree option about 20%. In contrast, 20% of the respondents disagree with the problem meaning that they didn’t experienced internet connectivity problem during online learning.

In addition, this data is strengthened by the statements from respondents which said that they experienced internet connectivity problem during online learning, especially those who lived in village or in unsupportive network area as stated by the respondents:

“I was more often in the village during online learning and the network in my village sometimes had problems” (R.4). “In my village, it’s very difficult to get network access” (R.5).

“Because in my living area, the network is very inadequate” (R.8).

During online learning, students were facing problem related to poor internet connectivity (Kapasia et al., 2020) and thus struggling with online learning (Adnan, 2020). In fact, this problem led to the absence of students in online classes (Kaharuddin et al., 2020). Also, Association of Commonwealth University (2020) reported that the most frequently cited challenge to online learning was accessibility of students (AL-JARF, 2020). Even though, in general, the quality of internet connectivity in rural areas was much lower compared to urban areas (Azlan et al., 2020), the problem with internet connectivity was not only experienced by those who lived in village but also experienced by respondent who lived in city:

“I live in city unlike some friends who returned to their respective villages, but it was possible that sometimes when I studied virtually I had internet connection problems” (R.2).

In addition, this problem extremely interfered the process of online learning as the respondent stated:

“Sometimes when I joined online learning, my internet connection was lost which made me go in and out of online learning applications, even the voice of the lecturers when they were explaining was sometimes not audible” (R.3).

“One of the main problems that I and other students encounter was a slow internet network. Technical problems such as intermittent sound and stopped video caused learning to be ineffective and neither I nor the other students could fully absorb the information conveyed by the lecturer” (R.10).

Furthermore, according to the perceptions of the respondents, they faced difficulty and had to struggle in online learning due to internet connectivity problem. The speed and the reliability of internet connectivity were not homogenous made online lessons uncondusive (Azlan et al., 2020). This problem highly affected the process of online learning and prevented the students from properly absorb the material explained by lecturers during online learning.

C. Difficulty to understand learning content

Table 2 shows that 70% of the respondents admitted that during online learning they had difficulty in understanding learning material in which ‘agree’ option is the most preferred by the respondents about 50%. In contrast, 30% of the respondents disagree with the problem meaning that they didn’t found it difficult to understand learning content.

Students had problem in understanding subjects material during learning in online environment (Efriana, 2021). In particular, students had difficulty to comprehend the content of synchronous online lectures(AL-JARF, 2020). This was reasonable considering that students had poor internet connectivity,

so the learning process might be interfered. Related to difficulty to understand learning content experienced by the respondents, they stated:

“Because my network and environment are not good, it was difficult for me to understand the subject matter” (R.1).

“Because sometimes, I didn't focus when online learning took place so it's difficult to understand the material” (R.4).

“When learning online, receiving material had difficulties both in terms of delivery and reception” (R.6).

“The difficulty in understanding the learning material came from the ineffective explanations provided by lecturers via online” (R.7).

“The learning material taught is difficult” (R.9).

Contrary with the statements above, other respondents stated:

“Because sometimes lecturers explained learning according to example of student experience around them, so students were related to it” (R.3).

“I didn't feel that way” (R.8).

To sum up, the majority of the respondents inferred that they had difficulty to understand learning content during online lectures. This difficulty was mainly caused by the network problem that disallowed both lecturers to deliver and students to receive material properly. In addition, the difficulty of the material itself and the lost focus when online learning took place were among the causes of the problem.

D. Lack of motivation due to absence of face-to-face contact

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the respondents (80%) agree that they unmotivated due to absence face to face contact during online learning in which “agree” option is the most preferred by the respondents about 70%. In contrast, there was 20% of the respondents disagree with the problem meaning that they didn't experience lack motivation due to absence face to face contact in online learning.

Motivation of the students to study in online learning environment is a crucial determinant to the learning success and is strongly influenced by interaction in online class (Baber, 2020). The lack of proper interaction with lecturers and peers during online learning was among the challenges faced by students (Adnan, 2020). In addition, the respondents revealed that they felt unmotivated during online learning due to absence face to face contact as evidenced by the following statement:

“The absence of face to face contact with lecturers and friends made me less motivated and felt bored in online learning” (R.1).

“The absence of face to face contact with friends and lecturers can reduce learning motivation. And in my opinion, online learning can increase students' laziness in learning” (R.2).

“I would pay more attention to lessons when it's face to face, during this online learning I often lacked focus” (R.4).

“When online lectures I felt less motivated because every day I only met the gadgets that I used for lecture, without someone who could motivate me” (R.10).

Related to this, the respondents stated reasons why they unmotivated during online learning:

“During online lectures, lecturers gave motivation very rarely” (R.7).

“Online learning was not conducive and I felt shy to ask questions especially to the lecturers, so I lacked motivation in online learning” (R.9).

In comparison, the respondents who disagree with the problem were not affected by the absence of face to face contact, as they said:

“Learning from home, only distinguished by the place” (R.3).

“Honestly, I like learning online” (R.8).

According to the explanation above, the lack interaction with lecturers and peers caused students feel unmotivated during online learning. Consequently, the majority of the respondents experienced lack motivation during online learning because there was no face to face contact with lecturers and

peers and preferred offline learning. Lecturers rarely gave motivation students and feeling shy to ask during online learning were the other reasons mentioned by the respondents.

E. Various learning methods employed by lectures

Table 2 shows that 60% of the respondents admitted that during online learning they had difficulty because of too many learning methods employed by lecturers in which 'agree' option is the most preferred by the respondents about 50%. In contrast, 40% of the respondents disagree with the problem meaning that they didn't experienced difficulty due to various learning methods employed by lecturers.

The implementation of online learning is closely connected with lecturer's readiness to work in digital environment, and inability to use active teaching methods was an issues during online learning (Baber, 2020). The data of various learning methods used by different lecturers as a difficulty in online learning was evidenced by the statements of the respondents as follows:

"Because a lot of online learning methods were applied by lecturers, I got confused in following them. Especially if the method I had never encountered before" (R.1).

"Because sometimes there were some lecturers who used a new method and we had never faced that method so I found it a bit difficult to adapt" (R.4).

"The various online methods provided by the lecturers made me face difficulty, especially when giving assignments using different methods, it was difficult for me to understand them" (R.10).

The respondents inferred that the various learning method, especially if it was a new one, used by lecturers brought confusion to them as they had to adapt with the learning (Syauqi et al., 2020). So, the various online learning used by different lecturers made the students had to face many different online methods in every subject. This was arguably why the students had difficulty with the problem because they had to adapt with many learning methods.

In comparison, some respondents stated that they didn't face difficulty and could deal with the various learning method:

"It's okay if each lesson used a different method, because each learning goal to be achieved was different" (R.3).

"there has been no lecturer who has a difficult teaching method" (R.7).

To sum up, the majority of the respondents had difficulty because lecturers used too many different methods during online learning. It made the students experience difficulty in learning and doing assignment, especially when lecturers used new methods that the students had never encountered. Further, the lecturers need to be more effective in preparing and delivering online learning contents so the objective of online learning can be achieved.

F. Slow personal device

Based on Table 2 above, 60% of the respondents admitted that they had problem with slow personal device during online learning in which "agree" option is the most preferred by the respondents about 50%. In contrast, 40% of the respondents disagree with the problem meaning that they had adequate device during online learning.

Online learning requires adequate hardware, software, and connectivity facilities to maintain the process of learning (Dhull & Sakshi, 2017), and students who lack of that facilities may find it difficult to follow instructions (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Related to problem with slow personal devices during online learning, the respondents stated:

"The laptop that I used for online learning often turns off, so I preferred to use phone. However, the phone that I used had also experienced delays and lags, making it difficult for me to learn online, especially in collecting assignments that had limited time" (R.1).

"Usually, my laptop or gadget had to access many things at once, which caused my learning media to be slow" (R.3).

"If I used my laptop during zoom or meet, my laptop often loaded and exited zoom by itself" (R.4).

"Often my laptop experienced lag when doing virtual meetings" (R.6).

According to the statements of the respondents, they experienced slow personal devices during online learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Students with outdated technological devices might find it hard to meet up with some technical requirements of online learning. This did not happen only to those who used phone as commonly happened due to its limitations but also to those who used personal laptop. Further, the problem was really a burden for students during online learning because their devices often delayed, even forced closed the learning application.

G. Lack of technical skill

As shown in the given table, it is obviously seen that the majority of the respondents didn't have problem with technical skill during online learning with percentage about 60%. In contrast, the rest of them admitted that they had problem with lack of technical skill during online learning.

To ensure the process of online learning, students must not only know how to follow the face-paced of online learning, but also need to have technological skills to learn from online lectures (Adnan, 2020). Related to this problem, the respondents conveyed that they have good technical skill, as follow:

"I have good skill in operating gadgets when learning online." (R.6)

"I didn't feel that way." (R.8)

"I have adequate technical skill in online learning." (R.9)

Contrary with the statements above, several respondents revealed that they had difficulty in using particular application, as they stated:

"Sometimes there were some applications that I did not understand, such as zoom application (share screen)" (R.1).

"Sometimes there were several lecturers who gave assignments but the way the assignments were collected was difficult to understand and requires us to used several applications" (R.4).

"Sometimes there were applications that lecturers gave for online lectures but I found it difficult to use" (R.10)

As a response to statements above, if students had problem they got help from each other (ÖZTÜRK, 2021), in this interconnected with following statements:

"We can just look on the internet for how to use the learning media, or ask friends who might understand more about it. So, there's no excuse not to know." (R.3)

Therefore, the majority of the respondents inferred that technical skill was not a barrier during online learning because of their adequate skill in using online learning. Several respondents might find difficulty in using several applications ordered by lecturers, but, as mentioned by the other respondents, this difficulty could be solved by searching on internet or asking friend on how the use of those application.

H. Limited broadband data

As presented in the table above, it is found that 60% of the respondents disagree with limited data as a barrier during online learning in which 40% of the respondents chose "disagree" and 20% of the respondents chose "strongly agree". Contrary, the rest of the respondents (40%) agree that during online learning they experienced limited broadband data.

Further, as a response to the inability of students to purchase expensive internet data due to economic problem driven by COVID-19 (Kaharuddin et al., 2020), the students received data internet assistance regulated by the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag). So, limited data internet was not a barrier experienced by respondents during online learning, as they revealed:

"I used unlimited monthly quota and also received quota assistance from the Ministry of Religion that was more than enough" (R.1).

"I received internet data assistance from Ministry of Religion" (R.2).

"I received internet data assistance from the Ministry of Religion, so it was very helpful" (R.3).

"I used wifi and received quota assistance from Ministry of Religion" (R.9).

Interconnected with the respondent 1, another reason was conveyed by the other respondents which said they used monthly unlimited quota.

"I had not experienced internet data limitations" (R.4).

"Because I bought monthly and it's not too burdensome for me" (R.8).

In contrast, several respondents stated that they needed more internet data due to high internet usage, as follow:

"My internet quota usage was very high" (R.5).

"Sometimes the internet quota was not enough for a month" (R.6).

Briefly, the majority of respondents stated that during online learning they didn't experience limited broadband data because they received internet data assistance regulated by Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) which very helpful for them. In addition, several respondents used wifi and unlimited monthly internet data to overcome limited internet data. Even though, several respondents inferred that it was not enough due to high internet data usage. This finding is in line with Tsuraya et al. (2021) that limited data leads to the difficulty in online learning.

I. Additional difficulties: Difficult to work in group

In addition to the eight items of difficulty mentioned before, the researcher provided the ninth question in form of open questionnaire to find out additional difficulty experienced by students. The researcher found there were two additional difficulties mentioned by the respondents.

First, the respondents faced difficulty in group work during online learning, as they stated:

"Difficult to coordinate during group work. Many of my friends didn't care about doing assignments, let alone group assignments, if they knew that there was one who could do the work alone" (R.1).

"Lack of learning interest especially in group assignments due to its limitations" (R.4).

"When there were courses that we worked in groups, I found it difficult to discuss with my group" (R.10).

The students had difficulty, even could not do group work during COVID-19 pandemic (ÖZTÜRK, 2021). This was explained by the statement mentioned by respondents which reflected two main reasons, namely the limitation in online learning and student performance issues. The inability of the students to meet face to face as one of online learning limitation disallowed students to communicate and coordinate properly. Also, students had to face the issues regarding team members such as lack of interest in group work and the passiveness to work in group, so the students had to adjust to that. Additionally, related to the comments mentioned above, Wildman et al. (2021) mentioned the challenges in group work during COVID-19 pandemic were geographical differences among students, team member performance issues, and outside influence.

Second, the respondents said that they experienced sleepiness during online learning, as follow:

"Another difficulty was that students felt sleepy and bored with the atmosphere at home, which was different from the campus atmosphere which tended to be more variative" (R.6).

"Often I was sleepy because there was no direct interaction from the lecturer, and the feeling of sleepiness was very difficult to hold which caused me to always felt asleep during online lectures" (R.7).

The sleepiness experienced by student was caused by unsupportive environment and the absence of direct interaction from lecturers. Unsupportive environment reflected to existence of distractions that made students difficult to focus (point 1). Then lack of focus led to sleepiness as the sleepiness is recognized as a sign of being not concentrated (Hvidsten & Wilhelmsen, 2018). In addition, the concentration has positive correlation between learning motivation, so students who did not concentrate were unmotivated (Basri et al., 2020). The lack of motivation due to absence of face to face contact (point 6) is interconnected with the reason which said sleepiness caused by the absence of direct interaction. Thus, sleepiness mentioned by the respondents as difficulty in online learning was recognized as an effect of two difficulties explained in point 1 and 4.

Therefore, the finding regarding difficulty to work in group was recognized as an additional difficulty to the eight difficulties mentioned before. Otherwise, sleepiness experienced by students was not recognized as additional difficulty as it was an effect of two other difficulties mentioned before, namely difficulty to focus due to distraction and lack motivation due to absence face to face contact.

Conclusion

Preventing the COVID-19 spreading and transmitting widely, the educational institution has forced to make transition from conventional learning to online learning. The adaptation of online learning has presented many difficulties. Students in online learning faced difficulties that they might never encountered before in a traditional teaching and learning environment. The present study examined students' perception to the difficulties in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the explanation above, it was concluded that the difficulties faced by the students during the COVID-19 pandemic are ordered as follows; (1) difficulty to focus due to distractions, (2) problem with internet connectivity, (3) difficult to understand learning content, (4) lack of motivation due to absence face to face contact, (5) various learning method employed by lecturers, (6) slow personal devices, (7) lack of technical skill in using online learning, (8) limited broadband data, and (9) difficult to work in group.

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