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## Students' Attitude Towards Distance Learning

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### Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sudut pandang pembelajaran jarak jauh oleh mahasiswa Diploma Politeknik Perkeretaapian Indonesia. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi attitude mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran jarak jauh, kelebihan dan kekurangan pembelajaran jarak jauh. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk mengungkap sikap mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran jarak jauh. Partisipan penelitian penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester lima yang mengikuti program pembelajaran jarak jauh. Berdasarkan data yang telah dianalisis, dapat disimpulkan bahwa sikap mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran jarak jauh secara keseluruhan positif. Dan kelebihan pembelajaran jarak jauh adalah 1) Lebih efektif belajar mandiri, 2) Lebih mudah mengatur waktu 3) Lebih mengenal teknologi, dan 4) Fleksibilitas. Sedangkan kelemahan pembelajaran jarak jauh adalah; 1) Siswa lebih sulit termotivasi dan merasa bosan, 2) Sulit bersosialisasi dengan teman dan mendapat masukan dari dosen secara langsung, 3) Lebih banyak teori daripada praktik, 4) Sulit fokus dan banyak gangguan seperti koneksi internet atau pemadaman listrik, dan 5) Lebih banyak tugas yang diberikan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Attitude, Covid-19, Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh.*

### Abstract

*This article aimed at knowing the attitude of distance learning to the Diploma students of Indonesian Railway Polytechnic. The objective of the study was to explore the students' attitude towards distance learning, the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning. The method used in this study were both qualitative and quantitative method to reveal students' attitude towards distance learning. The research participants of this study were the fifth semester students. After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that based on the result of the study that has been analyzed, it was seen that the students' attitude towards distance learning was overall positive. And the advantages of distance learning are 1) More effective to learn independently, 2) Easier to manage the time 3) More familiar with the technology, and 4) Flexibility. While the disadvantages of distance learning are; 1) Harder to feel motivated and students' boredom, 2) Difficult to get socialized with friends and to get feedback from the lecturer directly, 3) More theoretical then practical, 4) Hard to focus and many distractors such as internet connection or black out, and 5) More tasks and assignments.*

**Keywords:** *Attitude, Covid-19, Distance learning.*

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## INTRODUCTION

By March 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid 19 a pandemic. During this time, schools and universities either shutdown or moved teaching and learning process from face-to-face into distance learning. Online teaching is not a new thing, but in 2020 most of teaching and learning process based on distance learning to prevent the spread of corona virus. As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, there has been an increasing move towards teaching online because of shutting down of schools, colleges and universities for an indefinite time as the only option left (Martinez, 2020). By this time, everything changes. The students are forced to move from offline into online teaching, which is not familiar for some students. It will be not easy for those whose daily learning using traditional or face to face learning process to move on distance learning directly.

As stated by Lindner and Dooley (2005), Distance learning is as the type of education that is appealing to learners whose responsibilities do not allow them to take advantage of traditional and face- to – face methods. It also means that teaching and learning process is not face-to face, the students and the teachers are not meet in the same place, but it is done virtually and disseminated over the internet. Another thing that needs to prepare in distance learning is about the platforms that will be used for teaching and learning process. There are many platforms that can be used for distance learning. Most of schools and universities are now having their own E-learning platforms to cover distance teaching. The other platforms that usually used by teachers/lecturers are google classroom, google meet, webex, zoom, quizzes, whats app, telegram, or even quizziz or trello used to cover distance teaching. The changing from traditional to virtual approach however cannot replace the direct interaction but due to the spreading Corona virus, it becomes a way to solve teaching and learning process which is too risk to have direct interaction. Lederman (2020) justly stated that due to the COVID-19 crisis teachers and students both find themselves in the situation where they felt compelled to embrace the digital academic experience as the summum bonum of the online teaching learning process.

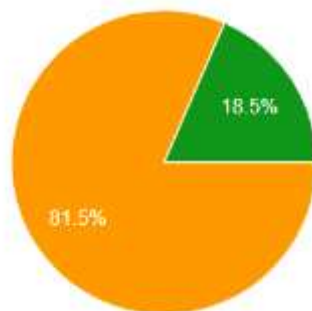
Based on that situation, it needs to know the students' attitude on distance learning during the first semester of distance learning. It also aimed to know the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning viewed from students' attitude. And it also needs to evaluate about what the teachers need to do to improve teaching and learning process on distance learning itself.

## METHOD

This study used both qualitative and quantitative method to reveal students' attitude towards distance learning. Mixed method was used with the reason to provide a more comprehensive comprehension of the research problems (Fraenkel et al., 2011). This method was conducted in order in two stages. Therefore, the explanatory design was used. With this design, the research began to analyze the data quantitatively and it was followed up by qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2014). The sample of this study was 27 fifth grade students of Indonesian railway Polytechnic by purposive sampling. The questionnaires were regarded as a suitable technique for collecting the data since it could involve a large number of respondents effectively (Dawson, 2007).

The data collection used in this study was students' information forms that include questions related to distance learning and likert scale questionnaire about the students' attitude towards distance learning.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**



**Figure 1. Percentage Of Student Responses About Distance Learning And Face-To-Face Learning**

Based on the result that is done, 81.5% students responded that offline teaching is better or much easier than online teaching. And 18.5% responded that online teaching is better. The reasons why the students think that offline teaching is a way better than offline teaching are: (1) they are still need to adapt the changing between the previous routine to the new one. (2) there are some distractions during distance teaching such us the internet connection. However online teaching is disseminated by the internet 100%, when the connection is not good, the students also cannot join the meeting and didn't get what they supposed to get. The result shown above is aligned with some studies conducted in evaluating distance learning. The study found no significant difference between online learning and in-class or off-line learning, and may even enhance the undergraduate learning experience (Pei & Wu, 2019).

**Table 1. The Result About The Students' Ability To Understand The Material Delivered Through Distance Learning**

		Frequency	Percent
How is your ability to understand the material delivered through distance learning?	Very good	3	11.1
	Good	12	44.4
	Bad	11	40.7
	Very bad	1	3.7

To know the ability to understand the material delivered through distance learning, the result can be seen in this cart. Based on this chart, it can be seen that 44.4% of the students think that when they have teaching online, they understand the material delivered by the lecturers well. While 40.7% of the students feel that by teaching online, their understanding in the material given is bad. Only 3.7% of the students feel very bad in understanding the material given by the teacher. And 11.1% stated that their understanding to the material given by the lecturer online is very good.

The reason why they think it is quite bad in understanding the material through distance learning where they cannot focus on teaching and learning process, most of it just sitting and starring at the monitors, feeling sleepy and the connection of the internet is sometimes unstable. It distracts the distance learning of course. And those who stated that they have good understanding in online teaching, the reasons are when they focus on the online class, they will easily understand it, because the power point/materials delivered in such a good and interesting way.

**Table 2. The Result About The Students’ Ability To Understand The Material Delivered Through Offline Teaching/Face-To-Face.**

		Frequency	Percent
How is your ability to understand the material delivered through face-to-face learning?	Very good	14	51,9
	Good	6	22,2
	Bad	5	18,5
	Very bad	2	7,4

The chart stated that 51.9% of the students understand the material very well, while 22.2% of the students stated they understand the material well, 18.5% stated have a bad understanding, and 7.4% stated very bad in understanding the materials.

It happens because in Indonesian railways polytechnic, the students provided 60% of the materials in practical way, and 40% theories. So it will be very easy for them to have offline classes better than online. When the have face-to-face teaching, they can delivered directly what they don’t understand and gets the feedback directly from the lecturer, while in online teaching, it needs to focus more and need time to get the feedbacks from the lecturers when they want to ask, such as sending emails/through chat message. They need to wait for the feedback from the lecturer.

**Table 3. The Result About The Students’ Boredom In Distance Learning**

		Frequency	Percent
What do you feel when you have distance learning?	Very interesting	3	11,1
	Interesting	11	40,7
	Boring	7	25,9
	Very boring	6	22,2

The next is about students’ boredom in distance learning. 40.7% of the students stated that online teaching is interesting. 11.1% stated it is very interesting. 25.9% feel bored with distance learning. And 22.2% feel very bored with online teaching.

The reason why they think that distance learning is bored because they cannot interact directly with the lecturers or even with their friends, so they get less motivation in teaching and learning process. And sometimes the lecturers give the materials with a traditional method or strategies such as lecturing during the distance learning, So they feel bored just staring and listening to it.

And the is more practical is needed for the students of Indonesian railways polytechnic, so it will be different when they just get the practical videos rather than doing it directly in the laboratories /train simulators.

But in the other hand, the students also feel that distance learning is quite interesting when they got some quizzes in such as different platforms or interesting strategies. It boosts students’ motivation to learn online. Related to the consistency of the students in joining the distance learning, 96.3 % of the students were following the class, but 3.7% were not attending to the class intensively due to the technical factors such as internet connection, poor connection and internet quota or even black out. Not all of the students are located in the city. Some of them are in suburban or even in the village, so it will be more difficult for them to get good connection to the internet.

Some of previous studies stated that Most students reported that their main challenge was the internet connection thus, this issue has to be resolved in order to provide maximum online learning experiences for the students. As ruled out by LeLoup and Ponterio (2002) as well as Chantel (2002), internet accessibility is the backbone of online learning.

Based on the data collected from the students, there are advantages of distance learning. Those are:

1. More effective to learn independently
2. Easier to manage the time
3. More familiar with the technology
4. Flexibility

This study aligned with the previous study that revealed distance learning allows more access in the field of education and flexibility for students (Holly, 2009; Lowert & Pector, 2014).

Beside the advantages of distance learning, this study also collected the data about the disadvantages of distance learning.

1. Harder to feel motivated and students' boredom
2. Difficult to get socialized with friends and to get feedback from the lecturer directly
3. More theoretical than practical
4. Hard to focus and many distractors such as internet connection, black out, and etc.
5. More tasks and assignments

The result of this study similar to the study conducted before, that stated distance learning implementation may have reduced socialization or communication between students when compared to a traditional classroom (McKenna, 2018). The internet connectivity is one of the disadvantage that stated in this study. It is in line with the previous study that stated Students receiving education within distance learning for the first time have stated that the courses are not effective since they are not easily comprehensible. They also indicated that they had difficulty finding computers and accessing the Internet (Köprülü : 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study that has been analyzed, it was seen that the students' attitude towards distance learning was overall positive. And the advantages of distance learning are 1) More effective to learn independently, 2) Easier to manage the time 3) More familiar with the technology, and 4) Flexibility. While the disadvantages of distance learning are; 1) Harder to feel motivated and students' boredom, 2) Difficult to get socialized with friends and to get feedback from the lecturer directly, 3) More theoretical than practical, 4) Hard to focus and many distractors such as internet connection or black out, and 5) More tasks and assignments.

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