

THE COMPLEXITIES OF ONLINE LEARNING AMONG THE STUDENTS OF STAIN MANDAILING NATAL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstrack

This research aims to identify the complexity of online learning of STAIN Mandailing Natal students in the pandemic covid-19 era. The type of research used is a survey method with random sampling data collection techniques of active students in the 2020-2001 school year. Data collection is used through google forms with descriptive statistical analysis techniques. The results of the study found the complexity of online learning of STAIN Mandailing Natal students summarized in several categories, namely, geographical conditions do not have good internet connectivity; lack of ability in the use of gadgets; learning methods are less interactive because they rely on learning through WhatsApp, and; The burden of presumption is too high

Keywords: Complexity; online learning; students

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kompleksitas pembelajaran daring mahasiswa STAIN Mandailing Natal era pandemic covid-19. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode survey dengan teknik pengumpulan data random sampling mahasiswa aktif tahun ajaran 2020-2001. Pengumpulan data digunakan melalui google form dengan teknik analisis statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menemukan kompleksitas pembelajaran daring mahasiswa STAIN Mandailing Natal terangkum dalam beberapa kategori, yaitu, kondisi geografis tidak mempunyai konektivitas internet yang baik; kurang cakap dalam penggunaan gawai; metode pembelajaran kurang interaktif karena mengandalkan pembelajaran melalui WhatsApp, dan; beban penugasan yang terlalu tinggi

Kata Kunci: *Kompleksitas, pembelajaran online, mahasiswa*

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PENDAHULUAN

Initiating a concept of learning from the most principal level to a substantial one is not something new in the field of education. Learning are commonly accepted as the core of an educational institution encompassing all aspects, such as institutional leadership; work force, which includes teachers and lecturers; students either at schools or universities; facilities and infrastructure; a financial system; as well as time management (Rukajat, 2018). Therefore, it is argumentative enough to later characterize learning as the heart of an educational institution. Learning efficacy serves as a tangible indicator of an educational institution system (Bararah, 2017).

In this pandemic era, this discourse of learning has become a 'mystery' which is no longer common nor relevant to the long understood and practiced educational theory (Setianto, 2020). The covid-19 pandemic that has taken place since mid-2019 has obsoleted all theories, experts, values, as well as educational practices (Tjahjadi, Paramita, & Salman, 2021). Restrictions on activities to diminish the virus transmission have a far-reaching impact not only on the public's economy, mobility, and services, but also education system (Bloom, Wit, & Jose, 2005; Sumarni, 2020). Almost without exemption, all activities need to adapt to the prevailing conditions.

So far (2021)—as in other countries— the government has made every effort to overcome the covid-19 pandemic even to the most remote communities of the Indonesian society (Haitami & Rengganis, 2021) from limiting public activities (Miharja, Salim, Nachrawi, Putranto, & Hendrawan, 2021), vaccination (Joyosemito & Nasir, 2021), providing direct cash assistance (Sutanto & Hardiningsih, 2021), to devising new education policies (Winata, Zaqiah, Supiana, & Helmawati, 2021). Surely, overburdening the government with the above tasks is not fair even though they still leave room for criticism (UNESCO, 2020).

Not only in learning, various institutions ranging from the regional and central government to religious organizations such as the MUI (Sholeh, 2020), together hand in hand have been educating the public in response to the covid-19 pandemic. As accumulated in SPRIPIM POLRI, there are at least 31 regulations with 38 Police Telegram Messages found in the central instruction manual (SPRIPIM POLRI, 2021), starting from the Health Quarantine Regulation, PSBB (Large Scale Social Restrictions), financial regulation during the coronavirus pandemic, task forces, emergency status reinforcement, prohibition of international entry, tax incentives, disinfection, adjustment of the ASN work system, 'mudik' ban, and other corresponding regulations in regional levels.

Learning, which are principally held in a public space, are in the spotlight of the dilemma in educational policy making. Learning is not only crucial but also contains a struggle for values that must prevail. Because learning is regular and crowded in nature, it naturally becomes the object of activity restriction regulations imposed by the government (Murfi,

Fathurrochman, Atika, & Saiva Jannana, 2020; Winata et al., 2021). The consequences of this decision are in turn shouldered by educational institutions, which in their operation require the direct involvement of educators to continue to explore a more efficient form of education.

The term learning, whose implementation was previously interpreted as being facilitated by educators (teachers-lecturers), has become more complex. This issue is of course even more dilemmatic than the issue of the quality of educators in Indonesia (Hilmy, 2017). Until now (08/2021), studies at elementary and secondary levels with the novelty of 'preparedness' and 'learning' have reached more than 6,000 themes. The majority of their findings contain minimal results by only identifying learning issues in various educational institutions. Even though it is phenomenological in nature, the urgency of this type of research has at least left a new trail and mapping for education practitioners, especially educators and policy makers, to not turn a blind eye.

Universities with all their potential human resources are considered the most prepared in dealing with shifts in education patterns caused by the covid-19 pandemic. If the alternative world of education is currently online-based, this expectation is surely normative considering the high percentage of students using internet (97%) (Kurniawati & Anita, 2013; Saputra, 2019). Online learning problems in elementary and secondary education levels, such as the lack of internet media and literacy, are naturally resolved at the university level. This fact serves as a considerable resource for universities to effectively implement (online) distance learning.

Unfortunately, the percentage of internet users among students is not immediately accompanied by an increase in the quality of its use (Nudiati, 2020; Rahmadi & Hayati, 2020). The issue that emerged afterwards was internet addiction, which affected many aspects of students' lives (Basri, 2014; Rahmadi & Hayati, 2020). Internet as a student's academic 'need' and addiction as a problem in turn become contradictory and need immediate solution. The internet is representative of the development of science that is impossible to ignore, but at the same time it brings psychological dependence, which is the opposite of the first aspect.

The all-encompassing internet opens up opportunities for anyone to access various desired trends, ranging from news platforms, journals, videos, games, as well as scientific and academic activities. This reality pointed out to at least one thing; that the internet has become a common phenomenon and is applicable not only for elementary but also university levels.

Learning from the internet in essence does not have to be administered by educational institutions, but it can be conducted in an open space by any groups – not only by students – to find any information they need (Gafar, 2008; Hidayat, Rohaya, Nadine, & Ramadhan, 2020). However, as an educational system, the academic process needs to decide to determine the learning patterns to use in this changed world. Singapore, for

example, during this covid-19 pandemic maximizes the Singapore Student Learning Space as an online learning platform (Alison, Chan See Mun & Hironari, 2019; Hung, Huang, & Tan, 2020; Nopraenue S. Dhirathiti, 2020). The use of this platform becomes a state policy to be implemented by all educational institutions from elementary to tertiary levels. This application has become the new educational standard of Singapore's education in the last three years (2021).

In Indonesia, the development of E-Learning has received quite considerable attention either under the management of corporations, affiliates, and universities, or integrated in an application/web system as an available medium. This condition surely occurs considering the need to carry out learning, a necessity that cannot be halted due to the pandemic. Offers to participate in various platforms such as Ruang Guru, Zenius, HarukaEdu, Arkademy, Quper, which are generally based on guided education are widely promoted without any pretensions (D. M. K. Nugraheni, A. Kusumawardani, B. Noranita, S. Adhy, 2021; Panjaitan, Shidiq, Pratiwi, & Yokhebed, 2021). This space is clearly so open considering the high number of internet users in Indonesia, which is estimated to reach 202.35 million or 76.8% (APPJII, 2017).

The above quantification of internet users actually serves as a social notification to be managed independently in the form of a digital society. This includes the shifts in learning patterns as activities for educated circles which should also be proportional to the internet user data. At the university level, so far efforts have been made to support the government's program in online learning. The government declared *Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh* (PJJ) or Distance Learning with the hope that learning can take place at least in a form that closely resembles face-to-face learning.

From 2020 until the middle of the second half of 2021, online learning was simulated directly in all educational institutions from urban to remote areas (Arkiang, 2021). The most serious impacts are of course found at the level of primary and secondary education. not only did the online learning system fail in its application, but more precisely it was 'impossible' to implement. Reports from the research at the local and regional levels presented arguments for incompetence, ineptitude, inefficacy in online learning, which were aimed at institutions, teachers, parents, and students (Baety & Munandar, 2021; Roni Hamdani & Priatna, 2020; Sutisna & Widodo, 2020). This reason is surely contrary to the data on internet users in Indonesia.

This 'accusation' certainly became a negative stigma against digital literacy in the world of education. "Users, who are not able to use". The research data is actually also reflected in many Indonesian universities. This highest educational level is considered the most aggressive in implementing online learning policies by initiating various forms of learning activities, ranging from the use of the E-learning Academic System

(SIAD) to other innovative online learning systems, such as the use of social media and interactive applications.

Under certain conditions, the Covid-19 pandemic in turn highlights the competence and preparedness of Indonesia's national education in the era of digital literacy (Rohmanu, Muafiah, Rahman Hakim, & W Damayanti, 2020). In a phenomenological study, the comparison of national higher education institutions resulted in a high number of disparities (Muh Yusram Massijaya, Evi Damayanthi, Nadjadji Anwar, 2019). Therefore, the universal nature of education regulations in reality put an end to the autonomy and decentralization of education in various regions. This fact is then stimulated so as to create a public perception that educational structure in Indonesia have foundational defects on a national scale. As a result, the development of education again starts from the capital and instructional forms are formulated in isolated areas that have gone unnoticed.

STAIN Mandailing Natal is the only higher education institution in Mandailing Natal. Before assuming its 'State' status, this university has at least gone through 3 (three) phases of system change. First, in 2000, as the initial step of formation under the auspices of the foundation headed by the Regent of Mandailing Natal (H. Amru Daulay), it was named STAIM (Mandailing Natal Islamic High School). Back then, the campus had 2 (two) departments, namely Pendidikan Agama Islam (Islamic Religious Education) and Muamalah, with operational permits number K.I/PP.00.93/001/2001. In this era, its management was under direct responsibility of the Regent of Mandailing Natal. Second, in 2006, through the Plenary Session of the Madina House of Representatives, the nomenclature BLU-STAIM was used. Third, the management system was returned to the foundation based on PP (Government Regulation) no. 18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatus, by which universities were not allowed to be managed by the Regional Government. This foundation was consequently led by Commissioner General Saud Usman.

Efforts to improve the system were then continued with the submission of status change to *Pendidikan Tinggi Negeri* (PTKIN) or State Higher Education. On January 25, 2018, through Minister of Religious Affairs' Regulation number 4 of 2018, STAIM officially changed its status to 'State' with the nomenclature *STAIN Mandailing Natal*, running two departments, PAI and Sharia Economic Law (HES). During its tenure as a private institution, it has undergone 4 (four) leadership changes; Ir. H. Masruddin Dalimunthe (2000-2009); Drs. H. Muhammad Yusuf, M. Si (2009-2011), Drs. Ahmad Sulaiman Nasution, MA (2011-2012), and H. Anshor, MM (2012-2016). In 2019, STAIN Mandailing Natal team (Asrul Hamid and others) succeeded in submitting 14 new study programs, namely Arabic Language (BA), Sharia Economics (ES), Islamic Family Law (HKI), Quran and Tafsir Science (IAT), Hadith Science (IH), Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI), Sharia Business Management (MBS),

Da'wah Management (MD), Islamic Education Management (MPI), Arabic Language Education (PBA), Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD), Sharia Banking (PS), English Language Education (TBI), and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education (PGMI).

In terms of the complexity of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is quite essential to study STAIN Mandailing Natal by using geographical approach. Located at the end of the border between North Sumatra and West Sumatra, and therefore becoming an administratively isolated area, this region is a link between the two. Geographically, in the official release of BPS (Central Agency on Statistics) of Mandailing Natal in the 2018's Village Development Index (IPD) based on 5 (five) dimensions, namely basic services, infrastructure conditions, transportation, public services, and village government administration, it is stated that there are 89 (23.60%) underdeveloped villages, 268 (75.86%) developing villages, and 2 (0.53%) independent villages (Hamidi, n.d.).

Among the relevant conclusions from the BPS report above are the fact that there are 13 (56.52%) sub-districts without high-schools, 1 (4.35%) without a market, 11 (43, (43, %) with only 1 (one) market, 1 village (Sopo Sorik) with no electricity users, 58 (14.25%) without lighting in the main road, 7 (1.72%) impassable by four-wheeled vehicles, and 19 (4.67%) with slum settlements unsuited for habitation (Natal, 2019). This condition concludes at least 4 things. First, Mandailing Natal community has low mobility due to the difficult access to a large number of its areas; second, it has limited educational access due to its remote rural settlements; third, it has a slower economic growth than the neighboring districts such as Sidempuan, Tapsel, and Pasaman; fourth, its modernization of education is unlikely to be completed in the near future.

In terms of education, Mandailing Natal is more well-known for its *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). This region is referred to as 'the city of *santri*' because it has the largest *santri* community in Sumatra, 21 Islamic boarding schools with 21,874 students (Nasution, Ikbal, & Pohan, 2021). Apart from religious factors, Islamic boarding schools are in great demand because of their financial flexibility, which can be afforded by various layers of society. As mentioned in the university biography, the majority of STAIN Mandailing Natal students indeed come from the *santri* community. At this point, the contextualization of *pesantren* learning becomes a particular consideration in the implementation of learning at STAIN Mandailing Natal while slowly evolving to keep up with the modern technology-based learning systems.

STAIN Mandailing Natal with the above geographical conditions seeks to accommodate the local community in their pursue of higher education. It is not surprising, therefore, that more than 90% of STAIN Mandailing Natal students come from local areas (Muhammad Ikbal, Ali Jusri Pohan, 2021). This fact is mainly caused by the relative affordability of its education costs, the minimal competitiveness in the selection of study

programs, its relative accessibility without having to leave the city, as well as high regional educational qualifications. These factors have always been associated with the quality and capacity of the students, because STAIN Mandailing Natal as of now is still not the 'first choice' for the middle class in pursuing higher education, as evident in the insignificant increase of prospective students' interest despite its current 'state' status.

Along with this, the change in status to a state Islamic college has brought in more than 120 new state-employed lecturers from various domestic and foreign universities. In addition to the system change, the teaching force also experienced up to 90% shifts and changes. At this stage, two communities meet in one forum, namely a community of lecturers equipped with modern educational experience having to deal with the students in the classical education culture and underdeveloped geographical conditions. These two communities then received a test when faced with the Covid-19 pandemic condition that required the implementation of online learning.

This study aimed to describe the acceleration (of lecturers) and dissemination (of students) in STAIN Mandailing Natal by examining the complexity of students in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The dynamics of online learning need to be described for several reasons. First, this study is still the only online learning survey study at STAIN Mandailing Natal during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. Second, it mapped the students' competencies and formulated learning efficiency. Third, it evaluated learning. Fourth, it reduces the complexity of the students. Fifth, it contributed to the self-evaluation educational report of the college's P2M (Center for Community Service). Sixth, it described qualifications and generalizations by taking into account the potential of STAIN Mandailing Natal students in a comparative study of Indonesian higher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this research is qualitative. The data qualification was collected through an online survey based on the character and the construct of the research (Morissan, 2012). Data collection was conducted using Google form for the reason of practicality. The research population was all STAIN Mandailing Natal students in their third to seventh semesters from approximately 16 departments. The data was collected using a random sampling method where every student was offered the chance to fill out the survey form (Rangkuti, 2017). Within the specified time limit, the research was able to gather 206 respondents with the following characteristics.

Table 1. Research Respondents Characteristics

Semester	Total	Percentage
III	90	43,68%
V	52	25,24%
VII	64	31,06%

The questionnaire on the complexity of online learning contained several sections, including first, self-identity, parental information, and address; second, attitudes in online learning; third, identification of technological expertise; and fourth, identification of the experience of online learning, such as the applications, methods, and accessibility. In terms of analysis, the researcher used descriptive statistical techniques, that is, presenting the data in clusters that can be understood. The information is presented in tabulated form, graphics, and diagrams without inferencing from the wider cluster. This presentation is more efficient for summarizing reports and data tidiness and can provide more comprehensive information from the data set.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The technology has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, becoming a new pattern in human activity either in offices, education, markets, or daily interactions, and in turn becoming the standard of reference for information. Apart from the economy, education is the most affected by this pandemic. The education pattern that had long been implemented has changed considerably into a 'new system' which strives to continue to ensure the proper implementation of the educational process while carrying the burden of learning efficiency.

The complexity of education, which used to be fixated on the dynamics of the teachers, students, materials and methods, now has a new form that immediately requires education that is adaptive to technology. This phenomenon clearly requires hard work since it involves the potential and struggles between economies, geographical conditions, and wavering human resources. The online learning system at STAIN Mandailing Natal is no exception. The sudden implementation of the online learning strategy encountered several important dynamics as shown below.

1. Geographical Conditions and Internet Connectivity

Online learning is defined as conducting learning in an active interaction system between lecturers and students. An interaction can only take place if an access is available to support its implementation. In the case of the students in Mandailing Natal, the majority of them live in underdeveloped village zones, which makes internet connection hardly accessible.

ALAMAT DALAM KECAMATAN
206 jawaban



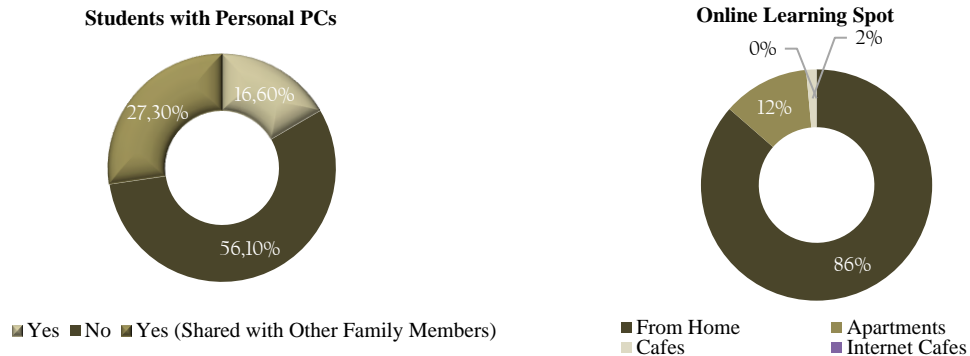
The largest percentage (36.9%) of the students of STAIN Mandailing Natal live in Panyabungan District, the only area with a high development rate. Meanwhile, the second largest percentage (11.7%) of the students live outside the Mandailing Natal Regency. This finding indicates that the majority of the students inhabit underdeveloped villages with poor internet coverage. This reason is reflected in the responses on items related to internet network connectivity in the students' respective areas. 54 (26%) students answered that the network was 'Always' unstable during online learning. This negative value was supported by as many as 86 'Often' responses (42%). The accumulation of 'Sometimes' and 'Never' responses which amounted to 31% (66 responses) did not seem to solve the problem of internet network connectivity among the students.

The problem of internet connectivity to this day has not received enough attention. Several attempts have been made by the students, such as locating certain spots to get connected and switching SIM-card providers. This step is certainly not sufficient for learning efficiency because the majority of the students learn from their homes during online learning by relying on personal networks and data. Difficulty in accessing the internet due to geographical conditions was the main barrier to the implementation of the interactive learning process between lecturers and students.

Another element that accumulates from the complexity of access is the availability of learning devices. Geographical conditions and connectivity problems are actually the basic elements of economic development in an area. Accordingly, it is common knowledge that the majority of STAIN Mandailing Natal students do not have access to personal computers. The only device they use in learning is a cellphone. This of course will present challenges for classrooms with assignment-based learning methods.

It is common for STAIN Mandailing Natal students to complete their assignment/papers in an internet cafe and to rely on the team work. Apparently these two schemes disappeared during online learning, when the assignment had to be completed individually and many villages where the students live are not equipped with computer rental places or internet cafes. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the students to work on their

assignments/papers using mobile phones by downloading mobile word processing application. This practice is so familiar among the students since a large number of assignments are often given as individual work.

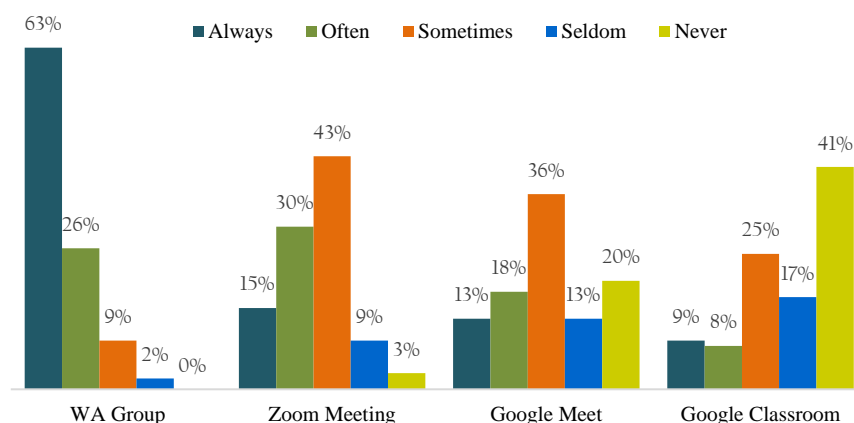


The necessity of online learning certainly does not mean turning a blind eye to the arising issues. The institution in this case tried to mitigate some of the problems above, among others by giving each students and lecturers 30 GBs of regular internet data (Mulawarman, 2020). This assistance is a government's effort to maintain the course of education in Indonesia in the pandemic era. The research confirmed that nearly 100% of STAIN Mandailing Natal students received this assistance. Although not regularly, the internet data assistance did not seem to totally eliminate the students' learning issues, but the region's geographical location that makes internet access necessary interactive learning almost unavailable is quite complicated to overcome.

2. Learning Process

Learning activities are at the core of an educational institution. Therefore, the quality of an educational institution is considered to be good if all the components of learning, ranging from the teaching staff, the method selection, the use of media, and evaluation systems, function effectively and efficiently. This pandemic era, the learning system has evolved, and accordingly the aforementioned components have transformed into new construction in the learning system.

During the online learning, the policy imposed by STAIN Mandailing Natal appear to be flexible in many ways. The tertiary institution did not strictly require the students to use its e-learning platform (<https://spada.stain-madina.ac.id/>), which had been available long before the Pandemic. This web application was scarcely used during online learning due to its lack of interactive interface. This Spada web application only comprises assignment and assessment systems. The distribution of online learning applications used by the students can be seen in the following diagram.

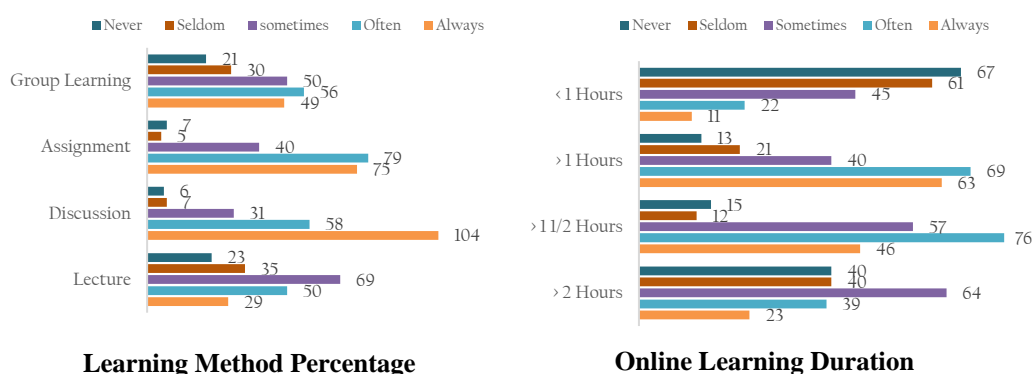


In the learning process, the lecturers at STAIN Mandailing Natal in general directed their students into interactive and direct learning. Considering the many obstacles in video interaction, the method used predominantly was WhatsApp Group conversation. The survey results revealed that 89% of the students stated that they 'always' or 'often' used WhatsApp during direct learning. Video conference applications such as Zoom Meeting and Google Meet were used only in several classes even though in small percentage.

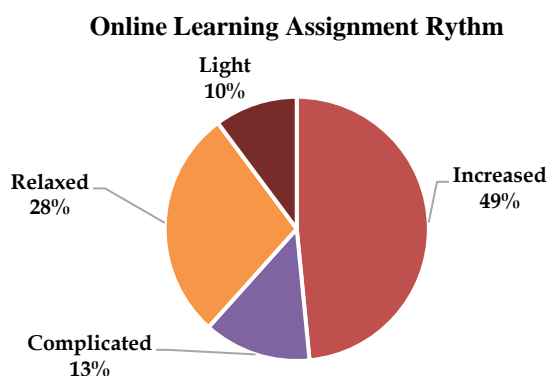
Given the unstable internet connection, the use of WhatsApp in online learning is considered more viable and more practical since it could involve all learners even though there was always a time delay in interaction when waiting for replies. Many learning experiences through the video conference applications revealed that learning issues were often caused by internet connectivity, which resulted in such issues as low attendance, difficult material distribution, students' missing the assignments, and so on. In the end, WhatsApp group became a solution to the interaction between the lecturers and the students especially when clarifying the lessons during video conference learning.

Learning via WhatsApp are initiated by sending voice notes to the group. After listening to the voice note, the students are given the opportunity to have a discussion in a text conversation or using voice note. At this point, attendance is also checked by evaluating the students' involvement in the discussion. This is carried out in the duration of approximately 1 to 2 hours, depending on the issue that arises. Frequently, a discussion extends beyond the course periods on the same WhatsApp group. Therefore, it is not surprising that a discussion on WhatsApp Group produces more than 60 chat scrolls.

In this pattern, the learning patterns tend to be conducted in three methods, namely lectures, discussions, and assignments. The results of the survey of duration and methods of learning at STAIN Mandailing Natal during Pandemic can be seen below.



Discussion and assignment methods took the largest portion of responses with the 'always' category in each learning. Discussion as an academic tradition is implemented more intensely during the pandemic, not only during lectures, but also through WhatsApp group at any time. As a result, the students experienced learning even if they were not in the classroom. Likewise, long before the pandemic, assignment has become one of the cultures of the learning system in Indonesian higher education. In addition to promoting independent learning, assignment train the students to be more critical of the problems they encounter. The assignment rhythm increased rapidly during online learning at STAIN Mandailing Natal.



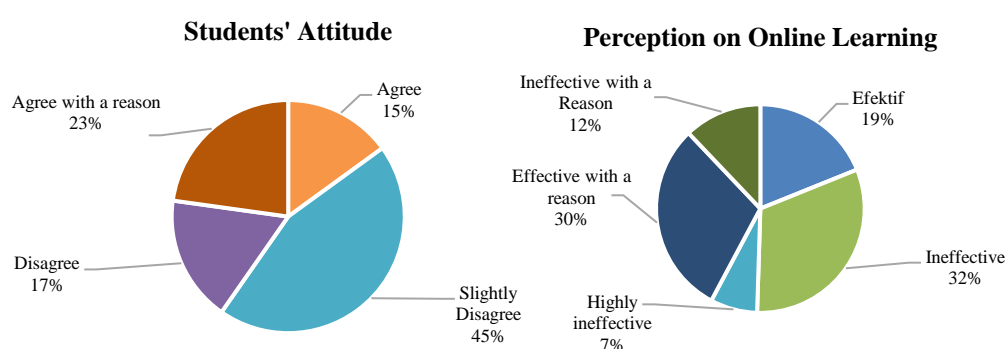
During online learning, the assignment is one of the effective methods of instruction to help the students to continue learning at home. This fact is evident from the result of the survey, in which 49% of the students stated that the tasks given increased during online learning. In this case, the tasks were relatively given assignment every meeting. However, the assignment rhythm was relatively relaxed and light, and could be completed even if only using a smartphone.

Another common occurrence during the pandemic is the increasingly intense line of communication between lecturers and students. The students could communicate effectively with their lecturers at any time. The survey produced a fairly positive results, in which almost 90% of the students mentioned that it was easier to communicate with their lecturers during online learning than during face-to-face learning.

3. Students' Perspective and Point of View

This section is important to be described considering the fact that the online learning of the Pandemic era relatively received a negative reception among students, including those at STAIN Mandailing Natal. This view is not without reason; until the end of 2021 there was no valid data regarding the spread of Covid-19 in Mandailing Natal. This of course aroused the students' suspicion. Because of this, educational institutions such as *pesantren* decided to continue to carry out face-to-face learning. The attitude of these *pesantrens* was considered proactive in nurturing optimism in the midst of society which should also have been displayed by STAIN Mandailing Natal.

This view was spoken out in multiple occasions by the students at the office of academic affairs of STAIN Mandailing Natal, but was always rebutted by Government Regulations on distance learning. This attitude of the students was clearly illustrated by the results of the survey below:



The categorization of online learning attitudes above illustrates that the total percentage of 'disagree'-'slightly disagree' responses is 62%. This negative view is much lower than the percentage of 'agree' responses, which is only 15%. In this case, 23% of the students stated that online learning was positive under certain circumstances. Along with this, the students' approval to online learning is directly comparable to the learning effectiveness. 58% of the students gave their negative responses (very ineffective - ineffective) to online learning. Only 19% of the students reviewed this process positively (effective). Besides, 12% of the students gave their approval to the effectiveness of online learning.

Furthermore, the main issue in online learning predominantly conducted through the WhatsApp application was concerning the level of the students' determination either during learning or when required to spare some time to study. Since the online learning was relatively not interactive, almost 100% of the students admitted to not sparing any time in particular to learning. Obviously, they could participate in online learning while carrying out daily activities without interrupting the learning process. This practice was in turn counter-productive in terms of

students' independence. In addition, the overall complexity of online learning in STAIN Mandailing Natal can be organized as follows.

Table 2. Types of Complexity of Online Learning

No	Actual Type
1.	Not understanding the subject matter
2.	Not participating in the course of learning
3.	Difficulty in clarifying lessons
4.	Consuming large internet data
5.	Uncertain GPA value
6.	Frequently missing the assignments
7.	Lack of participation in discussion
8.	Inactive participants
9.	Low attendance rate

Online learning experience for approximately 2 years clearly has relatively impacted the learning process. It created new experiences and serious technological education while fostering the awareness of the educational gaps in Indonesia. One of the impacts of technological education is that online learning is now a new alternative learning system that might be a solution to the absence of lecturers in the classroom. Its flexibility in terms of time and place made it increasingly favored in the teaching-learning process.

CONCLUSION

Online distance learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic in many aspects has resulted in many dynamics. The term 'preparedness' becomes a burden for almost all institutions, ranging from elementary to tertiary levels. In line with this, the issue of 'efficacy' becomes the institutional differentiation in evaluating whether an educational institution is able to accommodate the digital literacy.

Online learning at STAIN Mandailing Natal relatively ran normatively during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. This is because some of the inevitable learning complexities. Among the important factors include, first, the lack of stable internet connection in the rural geographical conditions of the underdeveloped villages in which the majority of the students live; second, the students' low ability to operate learning devices; Third, the students' poor economic level preventing them from acquiring the necessary learning devices; Fourth, the lack of interactive learning methods; Fifth, the excessive amount of assignment, and sixth, the students' difficulty in keeping up with periodical evaluation system.

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