

# Lecturers and Students Challenges and Perception of Online Reading during COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract:- This study aims to understand lecturers and students challenges and perceptions of online reading during COVID-19 pandemic. The population of this study was lecturers and students of MKU Universitas Hasanuddin. Questionnaires were administered to seven lecturers and 202 students to observe the challenges. In addition, series of interview were done to seven lecturers. The findings showed that four challenges are faced by lecturers in online reading course. These challenges are challenges in preparation, technical issues, students' lack of focus and engagement, and students' limited access to teaching medium. Similarly, students also experience four challenges that are lack of motivation, incapability to interact with peers, incapability to focus, and technical issues. Lastly, both lecturers and students have positive perceptions and attitude towards online reading course.**

**Keywords:- Reading Course; Online Learning; Pandemic, Perception, Students Challenge..**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since its wake in late 2019, Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 has ravaged the entire world. The contagious disease has spread to multiple countries without control. To stop the transmission of the disease, countries across the globe have imposed strict public health measures. People then are forced to abandon their usual pre-pandemic life and adapt to what is called as new normal.

Several public health measures have been taken and strictly followed by countries across the globe to stop the transmission of the disease. The implementation of social distancing regulation has led people to avoid gathering in large groups, maintain one-meter physical distance from one another, and avoid gathering in confined and poorly ventilated rooms. People are also regulated to wear protective gears including face mask, gloves, and face shield to avoid spreading or being contaminated by the virus. These public health measures have led several countries to impose series of lockdowns, curfews, and travel bans to limit people movement.

Dubbed as the new normal, people and institutions entered the new way of life without prior preparation and understanding. Among the most impacted points are the education institutions. Schools and universities are forced leave their traditional and conventional face-to-face interaction in classrooms since the conventional learning environment broke the rules of gathering in large numbers, physical distancing, and room ventilation. However, the advancement and transformation of technological innovation has brought educational institutions from instead of abandoning and ceasing learning activities to switch to learning with distanced interaction.

Considering the ongoing pandemic situation in Indonesia, Ministry of Education and Culture has required schools and universities to hold teaching-learning activities from home. Especially for universities, activities that cannot be fulfilled or done online can be scheduled at the end of the semester. To aid students with online study, The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture offered social assistance in the form of phone credit and internet data bundles. Similar subsidies are also granted by universities to their students. In line with the Ministry, starting from academic year 2020/2021 Universitas Hasanuddin has declared all academic activities to be proceed online.

However, the practice of online learning has its own difficulties. The availability of infrastructures and stable internet connection has always become the main issues for online learning in developing and geographically diverse countries. In addition to those general problems, several courses are also experiencing distinct difficulties when they are taught online. The emerging problems are not limited to course materials and practices, but also to how the classroom is managed. Therefore, the present research aims to discover how the online classrooms are managed, particularly reading classroom in MKU Universitas Hasanuddin[1]. In brief, the purpose of this study was to find an answer to the following research question; 1) What are the challenges faced by lecturers in managing online reading classroom?, 2) What are the challenges faced by students in online reading classroom?, and 3) What are the

lecturers and students' perceptions of online reading classroom?.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

During the COVID-19 pandemic, immediate and unprepared change from conventional way of learning to online learning has brought the interest of many researchers. Some of the researches are explained below.

Nugroho et al. observed teaching procedures for translation course and determine students' perceptions of the learning procedures in the course[2]. Rahman & Weda have also done a research to find students' perception in two universities in Makassar[3]. Using a qualitative model, the researchers employed field observations and questionnaires to answer the research objectives. They observed that the lecturer used Google Classroom for handling theoretical assignments, Google Meet for material discussion, and OmegaT for translation exercise. They found 80% of respondents are not satisfied with the online lecture however, 90% of respondents show positive perceptions on the use of Google Classroom and OmegaT. Beside that, to translate text, students can also utilize Google Translate, a free multilingual machine translation tool provided by Google[4].

Blizak et al. in their exploratory study investigated Algerian university students' impressions of the rapid switch to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic[5]. They conducted an online survey with close and open-ended questions to 380 students of Faculty of Chemistry and Hydrocarbons, University of Boumerdes. They found that students have negative perceptions on online learning. They also opined that students' reluctance is rooted in the disruption of internet, the absence of virtual laboratory, stress, and lack of interactivity.

Aji, Ardin & Arifin explored the perceptions of teachers and students at Parahikma Institute on blended learning as media learning during the coronavirus pandemic. Nine students and three lecturers participated in a semi-structured interview. Both teachers and students reported positive benefits of blended learning, such as effective learning, autonomous learning, and flexibility. However, the participants also reported disadvantages they encountered including poor internet connection, incomprehensible learning materials and inadequate experience in online learning[6].

Khan et.al.[7] conducted a quantitative study on 184 university students with aim to examine students' perceptions and readiness of online-learning system adopted by their university. The objectives were sought by means of online questionnaire from June to August 2020. The findings showed students' positive perception of online

learning and thus their acceptance of the adopted learning method as it provides freedom to engage with teachers and peers. In addition, the availability and easy access to study resources lead students to have positive attitude.

The mixed method study by Mishra, Gupta, and Shree[8] aimed to reveal the different forms of teaching modes employed by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they examined the challenges faced by both teachers and students during online teaching-learning process as well as their perceptions. Seventy-eight faculty members and 260 students were sampled for descriptive survey. Also, 20 teachers and 20 students were selected for semi-structured interviews. As for their first objective, they found that the most used learning platform is the university-provided LMS. Also, despite the challenges such as network connection, both teachers and students have a positive perception of the online learning[9].

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Participants

Seven of reading lecturers from MKU of Universitas Hasanuddin will be selected as the participants of the research. In addition, students from each lecturer will also be taken as participants. The participant of this research is limited to lecturers and students that have took part in online reading classroom.

### 3.2. Instruments

#### a) Questionnaire

Questionnaire list was employed to obtain data from both lecturers and students. The questionnaire was comprised of 40 questions using Likert scale. The scale is comprised of four points of answers; strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire was administered to figure out lecturers and students' perceptions of online reading learning.

#### b) Interview

The interview was employed to collect data from lecturers. The interview list was comprised of 10 of open-ended questions. The primary aim of the interview list was to discover challenges faced by lecturers and students in online reading classroom.

### 3.3 Procedures

This research employed qualitative method to discover the challenges faced by lecturers and students in online reading classroom and to discover the lecturers and students' perceptions of online reading learning. The first step of the data collection process was administering questionnaires to lecturers and students. Then, interview was done to the lecturers and students.

**IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 Findings**

Based on the gathered data, the SPSS Test Output for Students and Lecturers Perceptions are as follows

**Table 1. SPSS Reliability Test Output for Students Perceptions**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,954	40

From the output table above, 40 questionnaire items addressed to students had Cronbach's Alpha's of 0,954 > 0.60 and therefore, it can be concluded that the overall questionnaire items on students' perception are reliable and consistent.

**Table 2. SPSS Reliability Test Output for Lecturers Perceptions**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,911	40

From the output table above, 40 questionnaire items addressed to lecturers had Cronbach's Alpha's of 0,911 > 0,60 and therefore, it can be concluded that the overall questionnaire items on Lecturer's perception are reliable and consistent. The criteria of each question are Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA).

**Table 3. Motivation and Confidence**

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I have prior experience in online learning			3	4
I have prior experience in managing and teaching online classroom			3	4
I am motivated to start an online reading course			4	3
I am confident in using online learning tools			4	3
I have no problem in switching and adapting to online reading course	1	1	3	2
I have no problem in adjusting my teaching mode to online learning	1	1	4	1
I have no problem in managing teaching time of online reading course	1	1	2	3
I have no problem in modifying teaching materials	1	1	3	2

Based on Table 3, the response showed that every respondent have prior experience in online learning and have strong motivation and confidence to partake in online reading classroom. However, difficulties in conducting online learning remain present. Two lecturers (28.5%) indicated that they have problems in switching and adapting to online learning. Similarly, two lecturers also stated that they encountered problems in adjusting teaching mode, managing teaching time, and modifying teaching materials.

**Table 4. Influence**

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I can carry out the learning process without significant problems		1	4	2
I can deliver learning materials with ease		1	4	2
I can deliver specific reading topic with ease			4	3
I can get the students to understand the learning materials with ease			5	2
I can get the students to understand the assignments with ease		1	4	2

As seen on Table 4, almost all of the respondents agreed that they can deliver the learning materials and specific reading topic with ease to their students. However, one lecturer (14.2%) still faced significant problems in carrying out the learning process. By being specific into the problem, one respondent (14.2%) posed difficulties in getting students to understand their assignments.

**Table 5. Difficulties**

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
Compared to conventional classroom, I find it difficult to engage with students	1	1	5	
Compared to conventional classroom, I find it difficult to increase students' engagement	1	2	3	1
Compared to conventional classroom, I find it difficult to increase students' motivation	1	3	2	1
Compared to conventional classroom, I find it difficult to assess students' achievement	1	3	2	1

Table 5 shows the comparison in difficulties encountered by lecturers in conventional reading classroom and online reading classroom. Contrary to the conventional classroom, 71.4% of the lecturers stated that it is difficult for them to engage with students. In addition, 57.1% of them stated that it is similarly difficult to increase the engagement of their students. Furthermore, slightly less than a half of the respondents (42.8%) find it difficult to motivate students and to assess students' achievement.

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I can deliver the topic: reading for pleasure, without difficulties in online reading course		2	4	1
I can deliver the topic: reading comprehension skill in online reading course			4	3
I can teach students how to do scanning technique in online reading course			3	4
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing scanning			4	3
I can teach students how to do previewing and predicting in online reading course			3	4
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing predicting and previewing			4	3
I can teach students how to guess unknown vocabulary & word meaning in online reading course		1	2	4
I can properly direct and assess students in guessing unknown vocabulary and word meaning		1	3	3
I can teach students how to determine the topic and main idea of a paragraph in online reading course			2	5
I can properly direct and assess students in determining the topic and main idea of a paragraph			4	3
I can teach students about patterns of main idea in online reading course			2	5
I can properly direct and assess students in recognizing patterns of main idea			5	2
I can teach students how to do skimming technique in online reading course			2	5
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing skimming			5	2
I can teach students how to make inference in online reading course			3	4
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing making an inference			5	2
I can teach students how to summarize in online reading course			4	3
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing summarizing			6	1
I can teach students how to read faster in online reading course			4	3
I can properly direct and assess students in practicing reading faster			6	1

Table 6. Teaching Satisfaction

Table 6 shows lecturers' satisfaction of their online reading course. All of the respondents stated that they are satisfied with how they deliver their learning materials and how they manage their classroom. Furthermore, one lecturer (14.2%) stated that their teaching management is not improved following several online reading courses.

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I am satisfied with how I deliver the learning materials			6	1
I am satisfied with how I manage the reading classroom			6	1
My online teaching management is improved after several online courses		1	4	2

Table 7. Teaching Experience

In Table 7, lecturers experience in delivering specific learning materials are presented. In general, almost all of the topic of reading course can be delivered and taught properly by lecturers. Similarly, lecturers can properly direct and assess students in these topics. However, some topics were delivered with difficulties.

Two lecturers (28.5%) stated that they cannot deliver the topic *reading for pleasure* without difficulties. Similarly, one lecturer stated that it is difficult to teach students how to guess unknown vocabulary and word meanings. Furthermore, one lecturer also stated that it is difficult to direct and assess students in the topic: guessing unknown vocabulary and word meanings.

#### b) Students Questionnaire

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I am motivated to participate in online reading course	3	36	136	21
I have no problem with learning reading online	9	67	105	15
I can enjoy the course of online reading course	2	38	134	22
I am confident in using online learning tools		46	125	25
I am confident to initiate communication with lecturer and peers using online tools	6	52	120	18
I am comfortable to communicate using online tools	9	43	115	29

Table 8. Motivation and Confidence

Based on Table 8, the researcher identified that 80% of the students are motivated to participate in online reading course. However, the number decreased to 66% when it comes whether they have problem with online reading course. Furthermore, 80% of the students enjoyed their ongoing reading course. This positive attitude towards online reading course is further showed by their confidence in using online learning tools (76%), their confidence in initiating communication (70%), and their comfortability in using online tools (73%).

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I can properly follow the course of online reading course	19	25	149	3
I can properly correct my mistakes when learning reading online	2	53	111	30
I can properly understand the learning materials when learning reading online	7	57	111	21
I can properly understand the assignments and complete them	0	43	123	30
I can properly share my ideas during online reading course compared to in classroom	11	86	81	18
I can easily get the learning materials	1	48	109	38

**Table 9. Learning Autonomy**

In terms of their learning autonomy, students showed a strong learning independence. 76% of the students stated that they can properly follow the online reading course and 72% of them are capable of correcting their own mistakes. Moreover, 75% of the students stated that they can easily have the access to the learning materials, which can be understood by 67% of them independently. Similarly, 78% of the students declared that they can understand and complete their assignments independently. However, contrary their confidence and comfortability, half of the students stated that they cannot properly share their ideas in online reading classroom compared to in conventional classroom.

**Table 10. Learning Focus**

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I can focus to the online reading course easily	7	81	101	7
I am not distracted by other activities during online learning	20	99	69	8
I am not distracted by other online activities during online reading course (ex: checking social media)	27	92	64	13

In regard to their learning focus, slightly more than a half of the students (55%) claimed that they can easily focus to their lecturers during online reading. The number is decreased to 39% each, when it comes to not being distracted by another activity and not being distracted by other online activities.

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I set my personal expectation for the online reading course	2	39	128	27
The online reading course is aligned with my expectations	6	66	112	12
The materials for the online reading course are equal in quality to conventional reading course	7	59	116	14
I am satisfied with how the learning materials were delivered	3	50	119	24
I am satisfied with how the online reading course was managed	5	52	124	15

**Table 11. Learning Expectations**

Table 11 showed students' expectations of online reading course. 79% of the students stated that they have personal expectation of how the online reading course would be and 63% of them see the online reading course aligned with their expectations. In terms of the quality of the learning materials, 66% of the students stated that the materials they received in online reading course is equal in quality with those received in conventional reading course. In regard to their satisfaction, 73% of the students are satisfied with how the learning materials were delivered. Similarly, 69% of the students are satisfied with how the online reading course was managed.

Questions	SD	D	A	SA
I can understand the topic: reading for pleasure, without difficulties in online reading course	2	48	125	21
I can understand the topic: reading comprehension skill in online reading course		38	141	17
I can understand how to do scanning technique in online reading course		31	136	29
I can properly practice scanning		31	142	23
I can understand how to do previewing and predicting in online reading course	1	29	142	24
I can properly practice predicting and previewing		26	146	24
I can understand how to guess unknown vocabulary and word meaning in online reading course	2	53	125	16
I can practice guessing unknown vocabulary and word meaning	1	45	133	17
I can understand how to determine the topic and main idea of a paragraph in online reading course	1	31	144	20
I can practice determining the topic and main idea of a paragraph		29	145	22
I understand patterns of main idea in online reading course	2	40	130	24
I can practice recognizing patterns of main idea	2	37	128	29
I can understand how to do skimming technique in online reading course		26	139	31
I can practice skimming		37	130	29
I can understand how to make inference in online reading course		42	139	15
I can practice making an inference		47	134	15
I can understand how to summarize in online reading course		28	150	18
I can practice summarizing	1	29	151	15
I can understand how to read faster in online reading course	1	35	134	26
I can practice reading faster	2	26	147	21

**Table 12. Learning Experience**

In terms of students learning experience, in general they showed positive attitude towards the topics of their lesson. In every learning topics, more than two thirds ( $\geq 72\%$ ) of the students stated that they can understand the learning topics and can put the topics into practice with ease. However, there are several learning topics that they cannot easily understand and practice. 28% of the students stated that they cannot understand how to guess unknown vocabulary and word meaning in online reading course. Similarly, 24% of the students cannot practice making inference.

## 4.2 Discussion

### a) Lecturers' Challenges

Based on the results of the interview, the current study found that teachers experienced several challenges in presenting online reading course. The first of the challenges is in the preparation, which is unlike in conventional reading course, online reading course required more preparations. Based on the interview, the lecturers stated time they need to a lot of time to prepare the classroom because they need to adapt the materials from face-to-face interaction to virtual interaction.

Despite having prior experience in online learning, preparing the materials and equipment for online reading course is not an easy task. Lecturers are required to ensure the availability of the digitalized version of the course book and need to ensure the materials can be easily accessed by the students. Li & Irby[10] similarly stated that generating new materials or adjusting materials from face-to-face classes to online setting can be very challenging.

The second challenge is the technical issues that come with online learning. These technical issues are including problems with internet connection and the medium used for learning. The lack of adequate internet connection has become a recurring problem in this present study and similarly to previous studies. Aji, Ardin, and Arifin[11] similarly found that the lack of internet connection is a significant problem for teacher when teaching.

The lack of adequate internet connection can lead lecturers to be less understood by students. Poor audio-video conference resulted from unstable internet connection can make students less interested to partake in learning. Moreover, the medium used for learning can be similarly problematic. The lecturers argued that the use of laptop or mobile phone led students to be less engaged. The constant exposure of the electronic devices and the size of the screen can hinder students' engagement.

The third challenge is the lack of focus and engagement from students. This challenge can be traced back to the previous problems of electronic device exposure. The lecturers stated that sometimes they are faced with students that turned off their screen or muted their voice in classrooms. This lack of engagement is problematic because learners' participation and interaction has a crucial importance in language learning, given it is face-to-face or online learning[12].

Online learning has the advantage of eliminating learning barrier of time and cost which makes it possible to reach knowledge as it becomes more accessible. However, it is not fully correct in the context of this research. The last challenge discovered in this research is the limited access to teaching medium. One lecturer stated that students often do not have equal access to the medium used in online reading course. Students can often cannot access or have problems to properly access and use the learning medium.

This problem of access to learning materials has also been encountered by Aboderin[13] who found that the lack of equality in students' access to e-learning facilities and tools is problematic to the course of online learning. This challenge not only hinders student from having a proper understanding of the materials but also limit them from the opportunity of learning. Therefore, this circumstance puts students that lack the ability to access learning materials in a disadvantageous position compared to those with easy access[14].

### b) Students' Challenges

Similar to the challenges faced by lecturers, there are four main theme of challenges observed from students based on the result of the interview. The first challenge is the lack of students' motivation. Unlike lecturers who are confident and motivated to participate in online reading course, students are not always motivated. Students' motivation at least is influenced by several aspects.

The first aspect is the exposure to the learning devices. Students often find themselves not motivated to participate in online reading course, or any online course, mainly because the time that they have spent on learning. When students are exposed to their devices for too long, they claimed that their eyes become tired and made them to be less engaged with the course. This statement mirrors the challenges faced by lecturers in which students engagement is impacted by laptop or mobile phone exposure. The second aspect that influences motivation is the topic of the course. Based on the interview result, students claimed that they can get less motivated on certain learning topics.

The second challenge is students interactions to their peers and to their lecturers. Arkorful & Abaidoo[15] stated that the adoption of e-learning could provide opportunities for relations between learners. Wagner et al, in Arkorful & Abaidoo[15] also stated that e-learning opens the opportunity for interactivity between students and teachers. However, the present study found otherwise. Students claimed that they cannot properly interact with their peers. Their rationale is mainly because of the lack of initial face to face interaction between them. Without prior real life interaction, students get themselves in an awkward situations to be closely engaged with their peers. Similarly, this problem also applied when students are interacting with lecturers.

The third challenge is students inability to focus with the course. Since most of the students learn from home, they can get easily distracted by what is going on around them. The study by Adedoyin & Soykan[16] also showed that family members, friends, and or pets may cause disruption or diversion of online learners' attention during the online teaching and learning process. Students are also prone to be digitally distracted by notifications from their social media.

The fourth challenge is technical issues. Similar to lecturers, students are also prone challenges from internet connections. Students often find themselves clueless of what is the core purpose of the topic being delivered. This problem often resulted on students misunderstanding the

topic and the assignments given them. The problems with internet connection are also experienced by students in the study from Aji, Ardin, and Arifin[11]. Their students commented that the lack of adequate access to internet made them miss the learning materials.

### c) Lecturers and Students' Perceptions

In general, both lecturers and students have positive perceptions and attitude towards the online reading course. This finding mirrors Mishra, Gupta, and Shree[8] who found that both teachers and lecturers are having a positive perception of online learning. Lecturers are having both high motivation and confidence to start online reading course. They also have no problems with modifying, switching, and adapting their learning materials and learning style to the new learning mode. In addition, lecturers are also capable of delivering their specific learning topics without many difficulties as can be seen from Table 7. Lecturers' positive perceptions and attitude can also be seen from how satisfied they are with their performance in online reading course as can be seen from the result of interview.

Similarly, students shared the same perceptions and attitude as their lecturers. Despite the problems they could encounter during online reading course, students are having high confidence and motivation to participate, as seen in Table 8. Similarly, despite students sometimes can be easily distracted their environment and lack of focus, the online reading courses they participated in are in line with their expectation (Table 9). Moreover, they are satisfied with the learning materials and the reading course management. This finding mirrors what Khan et.al., [7] found that the availability and easy access to study resources led students to have positive attitude. Finally, their positive perceptions and attitude can be seen on how receptive the students are to the topic materials and assignments delivered to them.

## V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study concludes that both lecturers and students encountered challenges before and during online reading course. The first challenge faced by lecturers happens as early as in preparation. Lecturers are required to spend more time and prepare materials and equipment appropriate for online reading course. Furthermore, lecturers also encountered technical issues i.e. unstable internet connection and learning medium, lack of focus and engagement from students, and limited access to teaching medium.

Students encountered almost identical challenges as their lecturers. The first challenge is on their motivation that constantly change depends on the time students have spent on their devices and the topics they are about to receive. The second and third challenges are on their incapability to interact with their peers and lecturers freely and on their incapability to remain focus during the course. The last challenge is technical issues such as internet connection that resulted on students misunderstood the learning materials and assignments. Finally, both lecturers and students have positive perceptions and attitude toward online reading

course. Both are capable of performing their duties to deliver lectures and receive lectures.

For future researchers, it is suggested to employ another research instrument. By only using two research instruments, namely interview and questionnaire, the researcher found that this research is still lacking on some aspects and was not done thoroughly or comprehensively. So, it is suggested to employ direct observation to truly experience how the online reading courses are implemented. The number of lecturers participated in this research is too small. Only seven lecturers were taken as samples for this research, in contrast to 202 students. Therefore, the researcher suggests that for future research the number of lecturers should be increased so that more data can be obtained.

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