

The EFL Students' Perception of the Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic and New Normal Era

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the EFL students' perception and expectation of the online learning of the online learning during Covid-19 pandemic and new normal era. This research applied quantitative and qualitative descriptive with survey method. The participants were the English education study program students consisting of fifteen participants at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. In this research, the researchers conducted interview and questionnaire to obtain the data. The result of this research showed that online method was the best solution to be applied change the offline class based on the condition nowadays, but still ineffective in the application. Another result showed that in the implementation of online learning during this pandemic era there was some obstacles found and need more improvement to make learning process more effective. In brief, online learning is relatively good with several obstacles that require improvement. Thus, it is recommended to create a good learning platform that can be applicable in current situation. So that, it is recommended that online learning should be planned, implemented, and evaluated to minimize problems and maximize the achievement of learning objectives.

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Expectation; Improvement; Online Learning; Pandemic Era.

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1. Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has spread since the beginning of March 2020. Thousands of people have been exposed to this virus in a short time because it can spread quickly in society and has fatal consequences for health, and can even claim lives. Consequently, various government policies were carried out to break the chain of the spread of covid 19 such as lockdown and PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Beskala Besar) while maintaining social and physical distancing, wearing masks, washing hands with soap, and doing activities from home.

Almost all sectors are affected and are experiencing a severe crisis, one of which is in the world of education. All levels of education in the country are affected by this virus, from the lowest level, such as kindergarten, to the highest level of the university (Akbulut et al., 2020; Aswad et al., 2019). Various regulations from the relevant government continue to be updated along with the development of this virus. so that all elements, such as teachers, staff, and lecturers, must adapt to the new style of giving and receiving learning in schools and campuses (Churiyah et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2019).

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has established procedures for the distance learning process through online learning methods. This approach utilized technology devices such as personal computers, laptops, and smart handphone with the internet based. In the learning process, teachers and lecturers used various platforms to deliver the material from their own place, such as zoom, google classroom, quizzes, teams, kahoot, etc. This learning system continues until the current new normal era (Azhari & Fajri, 2022; Anggawirya et al., 2021).

Distance learning by online methods has several advantages and disadvantages that affect the learning process and outcomes in schools. Teachers or lecturers who used to be monotonous and conventional with the same learning methods and media are now being brought to a new era. They have to use media and methods that involve technology.

All levels of education in the country are affected by this virus. from the lowest level such as kindergarten to the highest level of the university. Various regulations from the relevant government continue to be updated along with the

development of this virus, so that all elements such as teachers, staff, and lecturers must adapt to the new style of giving and receiving learning in schools and campuses (Ezzatpanah et al., 2022; Djalante et al., 2020; Cooke et al., 2019). The most challenging for teachers or lecturers is they have to design and deliver the material differently and interactive (Rapanta et al., 2020; Sukmawaty et al., 2022; Bawawa et al., 2021). The students must also learn in a new style, unlike they used to. Therefore, teachers or lecturers must choose the right method of teaching their students in covid 19 pandemic and the new normal era (Hanafi et al., 2021; Minhaji et al., 2022; Khaerana et al., 2022).

This present study has strong connection with previous studies. Several of those previous researches namely Adnan and Anwar (2020) in their research regarding the students' perspectives on online learning amid the covid-19 pandemic. This research study examines the attitudes of Pakistan higher education students towards compulsory digital and distance learning university courses amid Coronavirus (covid-19). Undergraduate and postgraduate were surveyed to find their perspectives about online education in Pakistan. The findings of the study highlighted that online learning cannot produce desired results in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, where a vast majority of students are unable to access the internet due to technical as well as monetary issues. Adnan and Anwar' s research has a similarity with this present research on its research objective that the both of these researches focus on investigating the students' perception toward the use online learning during covid-19.

Besides, Owusu-Fordjour (2020) revealed some challenges students encounter in the closedown of schools due to the outbreak of the pandemic Covid-19. Students are unable to study effectively from the house thus, making the online system of learning very ineffective. Again, parents are incapable of assisting their wards on how to access online learning platforms, neither can they entirely supervise the learning of their children at home without any complications. It came to light that the pandemic has harmed their learning as many of them are not used to effectively learning by themselves. The e-learning platforms rolled out also pose a challenge to the majority of the students because of the limited access to the internet and lack of the technical know-how of these technological devices by most Ghanaian students. The study recommends that students should be introduced to innovative and offline e-learning platforms to supplement classroom teaching and learning and also be of benefit to students who may not have access to internet connectivity. This previous study asked regarding the students' perception on online learning in terms of the difficulty level of online learning access. It is similar with one of questionnaire terms in this present research.

In line with two previous studies, Bahasoan et al.,(2019) had conducted research aims to determine the effectiveness of online learning during the covid -19 pandemic. The result of data analysis obtained from filling student questionnaires can be concluded that the online learning system carried out during the covid-19 pandemic is effective and inefficient. Effectively implemented because of the conditions that require online study and inefficient because the costs incurred move when compared with offline lectures. This previous study connects with this present research that investigating about the obstacles in using online learning.

It is not an easy job to adjust quickly and pick the right method for the students because if the method chosen does not suitable and makes students uninterested, the learning process will useless. Based on this issue, the study conducted by present researchers. It aimed to investigate the students' perceptions and expectations of online learning in the pandemic and new normal era.

2. Methodology

This research is a quantitative and qualitative descriptive study using survey study methods. A survey study explores and investigates contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Tight, 2016). The research focused on what students faced during the covid-19 pandemic and new normal, where the students had to adapt to the new learning environment.

Participants were students of the English education study program, faculty of teacher training and the education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare consisting of fifteen students in the first semester. The participants were selected because they were still transitioning from high school to college. So, it quickly caught their point of view about the phenomena.

The study utilized online questionnaires via Google Forms based on the likert scale. The Likert scale is a five (or seven) point scale that allows the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement (Likert, 1932). This current study adapts the theory by including four closed-ended answer choices to avoid bias or hesitation in responding to available questions. Besides it also did interviews via WhatsApp chat to observe unique and essential responses from the questionnaires. The list of questions in the questionnaire and interview was adapted from

Bahasoan (2020). The researchers applied semi-structured interviews to take more data from the respondent with just several main questions. Based on the twenty-five main questions, the researchers will take more data from respondents with other questions still connected to the main questions.

The questionnaires were analyzed using an analysis from Rensis Likert. In contrast, the interview data were processed based on Creswell's stages of data analysis, where the first thing is collecting the data from the WhatsApp application. After that, the data will be reduced to help the researcher analyze data from preparing raw data (transcript and field note) to making conclusions from descriptions/ themes. In brief, the quantitative data were collected from distributed questionnaire and the qualitative data were collected from interview section.

3. Result and Discussion

This session deals with the findings from questionnaires and interviews. Each part of result of questionnaire and result of interview is described in detail in following session.

3.1. The Questionnaires Result

Two types of questionnaires distributing to the students. Three data were students' responses to online learning based on four close-ended likers scales including students' learning method during pandemic era, students' satisfaction level, and students' understanding on learning material. While one was about the students' answers to obstacles in online learning during pandemic era.

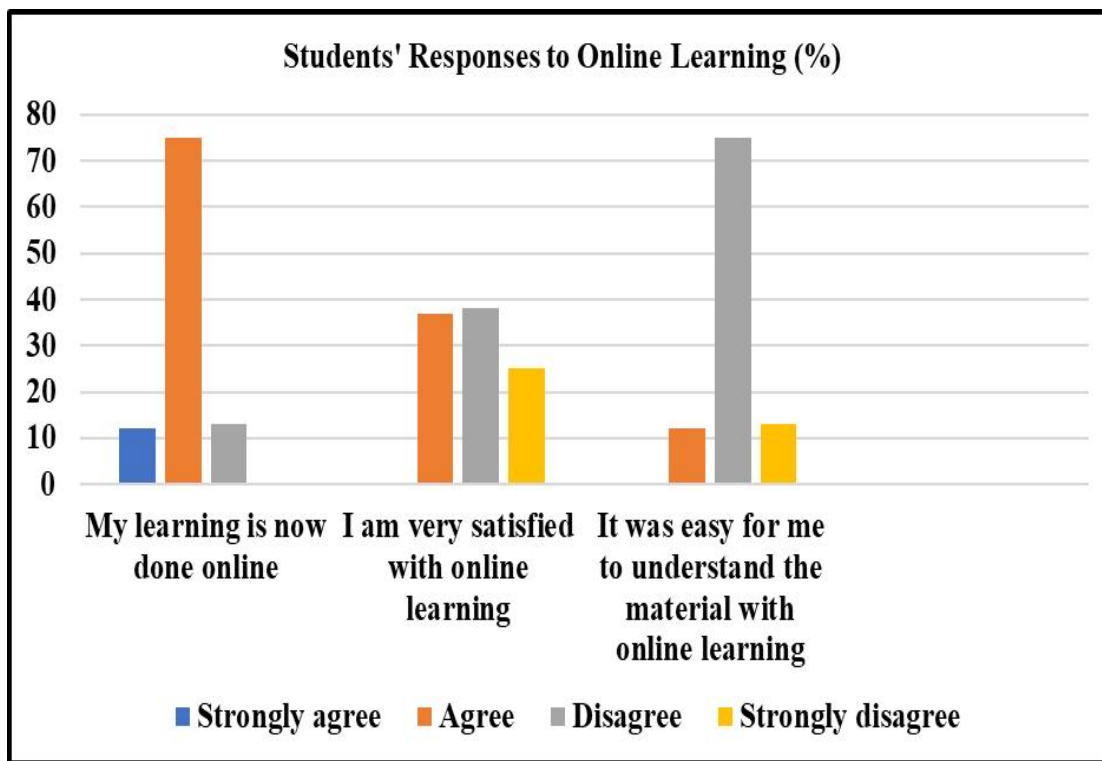


Figure 1. Students' Responses to Online Learning

The diagram displayed students' responses based on three distributed questions. In responding to the question "my learning is now done online," 12% strongly agree, 75% agree, 13% disagree, and no student answered strongly disagree. In responding to the question "I am very satisfied with online learning," no student answered strongly agree, 37% agree, 38% disagree, and 25% strongly disagree. While, in responding to the question, "it was easy for me to understand the material with online learning," no student answered strongly agree, 12% agree, 75% disagree, and 13% strongly disagree.

Based on the data, it is concluded that all participants in this research did the learning process by online method during the pandemic era, which most students felt unsatisfied with online learning due to some considerations. They also said that it was not easy for them to understand the material through online learning. The obstacles they found are

displayed below. This data indicates that during covid-19 and post covid-19, the students learned by using online learning system and they found difficulties to understand English learning materials.

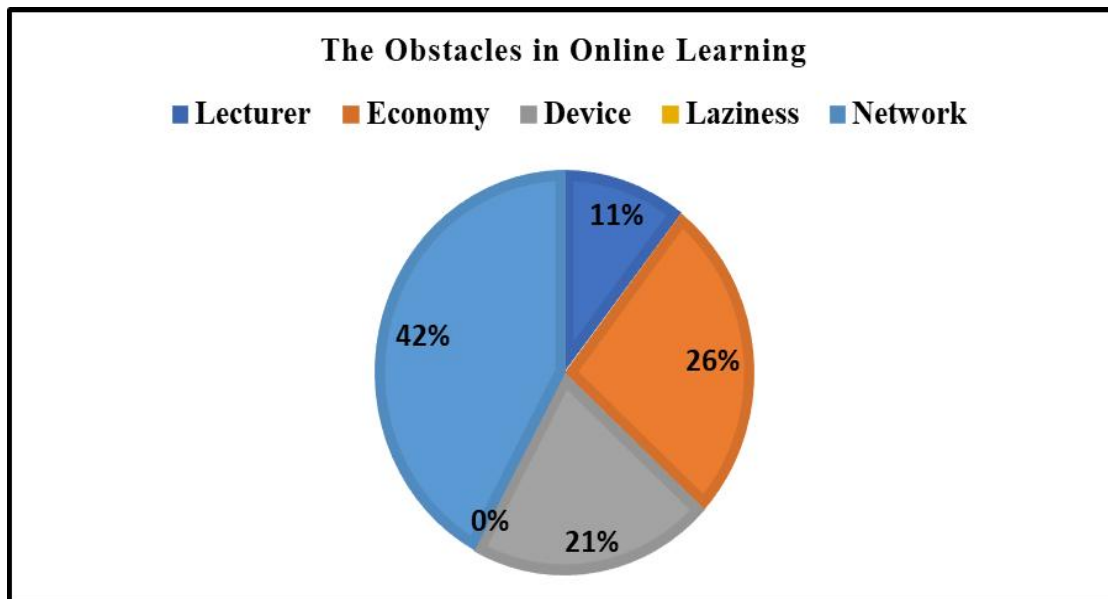


Figure 2. Students' Responses to the Obstacles in Online Learning

The data showed that the main problem encountered by participants in online learning is unstable internet access. From the graph, eight participants (42%) chose network as the main problem. Another big obstacle was the economy, which five participants (26%) responded this factor. The last two obstacles were the device and the lecturer aspect. It indicates that the obstacles in online learning perceived by students are influenced by five aspects namely lecturer, economy, device, laziness and network. Among these five aspects, the network aspect is regarded as significant obstacle of the students in accessing online learning. It means that the most disturbing one is internet connectivity. This internet connectivity must be stable and good. If the internet connectivity is unstable and low so that it certainly makes the students could not join maximally the teaching and learning process handled via online system. Therefore, Networks as the basic access for the students to join the online class. Moreover, the internet access in their living place made them hard to join optimally the online class. It was caused by their residence is far from urban areas and its network was very low. In brief, they have low internet connectivity that caused them difficult to access online learning systems including learning materials and learning tasks.

3.2. The Interview Result

The data obtained through interviews on students' perceptions and expectations of online learning were then presented in a descriptive qualitative manner based on the responses given. The data from this interview are used to support the data from the questionnaire.

The first analysis is on the question "Is this the first time you face an online learning process when you entered university". From the data obtained researcher knows that all the participants had never done an online class before. All the participants said that it was their first time learning through the online method when they came to the university where they had never learned in their school, course, or another previous learning place.

The second analysis is on the question "is online learning the best method to apply during a pandemic and new normal era?". From the data, six participants said "yes, but less effective and four participants say "yes, because it is suitable for this situation". These participants supported the online method because this is the best method than being exposed to a virus. Another one participant stated, "no, it is not effective". So, the researchers conclude that most of the participants did not support the online method during the pandemic. Based on the data, it is concluded that most participants enjoy offline learning more than online. However, there are no other options.

The third analysis is about "how do you learn during this pandemic covid 19 and the new normal era?" From this question, three students responded that the method they used was a blended combination of online and offline methods. Besides, five participants said online and they said it was less effective for them. Almost all the participants said online

and they feel uncomfortable with it. Some of them argued the online method is not effective for them, due to some reasons like the time being limited, and also there were some students who felt hard to use the application. It resulted in them to be difficulty getting the point from the material that the lecturer delivered to them in the online class. So lecturer needs to give more attention to the application they used in teaching online classes during this pandemic and new normal era.

The fourth analysis is “what is the application you have used in online learning?”. Based on the interview, it was found six main applications that lecturers always use when teaching students in online learning. They were WhatsApp Group, Google Meet, telegram, google classroom, teams, and zoom. Based on the data, WhatsApp Group or WAG was a widespread application among students and lecturers. Almost every online class was started by WhatsApp group. It became the most used application for interacting with the students or the place for the lecturer to send the material or task to the students. It makes WhatsApp group become the most used application than the other applications.

The fifth analysis is “which is the most suitable application for you?”. Responding to this question, they stated that the most favorite applications for online learning were WhatsApp Group, Google Meet, Telegram, and Zoom. Google meet is the most favorite application; eight participants chose google-meet. Next were zoom and WhatsApp. While the last was the telegram group. They stated that these four applications were better than the others. Zoom and google meet became the most suitable because, with these applications, the participants can see each other even if it is just by online media. For WhatsApp and telegram, the participants said these applications be easier to use because it has been a long time since they used them. That is why they do not need to adapt to it anymore.

The sixth analysis is “which one is the most not suitable application for you?”. Students said that Edmodo was hard to use because this application was still new for the participants. Another is googling classroom because the way to use this application is more complicated than other applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, and zoom. However, two participants said there was no unsuitable application for them. They felt enjoyed all applications that the lecturers choose for them. Giving material through Edmodo would be a new job for lecturers. In comparison, they have to be more prepared especially in delivering the material and the media they use in teaching.

The seventh analysis is about “is the delivered material easy to understand for you”. Participants said sometimes the material was easy to understand but sometimes it was so hard to get the point. It was because there some lecturers did not give a clear explanation about the materials and then give exercises. As the impact, it made the participant feel bored and hard to understand the material. Another reason came from one participant. He said that it was hard to understand the material because of the unstable internet connection.

The eighth analysis is based on the question “do you feel suitable with this online method?”. Three participants stated feeling not suitable but they just follow the stream and adapted to it, because there are no other options. Other participants said they are not comfortable because the application they use is still new for them and they need to adapt first to the application before getting the material. Two participants said they were suitable with that application but after a long time doing it, they got bored with the method. These answers support the result of the questionnaires.

The ninth analysis is based on the following question “explain about your obstacles in the online learning”. Same with the questionnaires’ result, some obstacles appeared in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new normal era. They were networks, economy, devices, and lecturer aspect. Networks, as the only access for the participant to join the online class. Sometimes the networks get bad and disturb the online class process of the participants.

The ninth analysis is based on the following question “as a student, what is your hope with this online learning?”. Firstly, three participants said they hope the lecturers be clearer in explaining the material of their subject. Some lecturers never gave a good explanation about the material taught so the participants could not get the point from the material delivered. It was hoped the lecturers became more attentive to their students in online learning. Other students also said they were bored with the method and media that lecturers used in teaching. Participants said, in the beginning, they felt excited. However, after a long time and several meetings, the lecturers used the same media and methods that made them bored. As an impact, it is difficult to get the point of what they were learning. Almost all the participants want to direct learning again at the campus, it is because they thought this online learning was not effective anymore.

From the questionnaire, it was found that during the covid 19 pandemic and the new normal era, all participants learned through online media. Most participants felt unsatisfied. The data showed some obstacles in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new normal era. The first and the most disturbing one is networks. Networks, as

the only access for the participant to join the online class, become the main problem because not every time the networks are good. Sometimes the networks get bad and disturb the online class process of the participants.

The second is the economic problem of the participants. To enter the online class, the participants have to have a quota, and the quota for the online class is not accessible. The participants have to buy it. Some students said that it is not always easy to purchase quotas. Other participants also expressed that their family level is not always easy to buy if we run out of quota.

Another obstacle is due to device aspects. The participants' devices were less available to support the lecturers' application in teaching. The result is the participants are late in accepting material and left behind by the others. The last one is the problem with the lecturer. The lecturers' lack of explanation makes it difficult for students to understand the material. Lecturers always distributed many tasks without a clear explanation first. In addition, lecturers' attendance rate during teaching hours is less. Participants said some lecturers did not come or begin the class on the schedule. So, the participant has a lousy assessment of the lecturer.

Participants claimed that the way to understand the material in this online learning is utterly different from offline class. Online learning makes students difficult and does not get the point for the material delivered. The impact of that situation makes participants uncomfortable in learning. They felt unsuitable with the method, and the participants got bored and lazy to join the class.

Another aspect was the level of appropriateness of participants with the applications they use. Some participants felt it was unsuitable for lecturers' applications in teaching. However, not all participants perceive the same point of view. Some argued that all applications were ideal for them. They felt comfortable and easy in accepted the material from the lecturer. Thus, it depends on the lecturers' material delivery method to stimulate the students' motivation. Lecturers must be more creative and give more attention to the participants. Lecturers should pay more attention to the participants, especially in the way they teach the participants and the media they use in teaching during the pandemic and new normal era. The participants want the lecturer to explain the material more clearly and give more explanations before assigning a task to participants. The methods, of course, the participants will be easy and can be more understand the material delivered by the lecturer.

At the same time, most of the participants want to change back to an offline class. They think learning through offline methods or face-to-face meetings is better than online. The participants said the online method is tedious, and some said it is useless. They join because there are no other options. That is why the lecturer needs to investigate the students' needs more, especially in this new normal era. Based on the explanation above researcher concluded that student expectations and online learning are not in line. This is based on the number of complaints that arise from students.

The researchers compare this present research with the previous researches. There are four previous researches that have been done before and will be compared with this present research result. The first research comes from Adnan and Anwar (2020). They have conducted research that wants to examine the attitudes of Pakistan higher education students towards compulsory digital and distance learning university courses Amid Coronavirus (covid-19). The research surveyed undergraduate and postgraduate to find their perspectives about online education in Pakistan. The findings of the study highlighted that online learning cannot produce desired results in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, where a vast majority of students are unable to access the internet due to technical as well as monetary issues.

In line with previous research, which the main obstacle in the applied online method in teaching during a pandemic is internet access and the economic level of the participants of the research. Even though, this research found another obstacle in the application of online learning during the pandemic. It was the device capability of the students this also shows that different from the previous research the participants in this research look more capable in terms of the economy than in previous research.

So, this research found the same result as the previous research that the main problem in applying online learning during pandemic COVID-19 was the economic level of the students. Even though, the difference was the economic level in the previous research was not the same with the participants in this research. The participants in this present research did not get much problems from their economic level. However, the main problem for them during online class was the unstable internet connection.

The second is Bahasoan's research. This research also found that online learning is recommended to be applied during this pandemic era. This research found that online learning is effective because there are no other options except

the online method. Another finding in previous research said that online learning is inefficient to apply because the applications of this method made cost to learn more to the learner than the offline learning before the pandemic. It is similar with Bahasoan (2019) the online learning is ineffective because this research also found that during online learning in this pandemic era needs costs to learning getting much than before the pandemic.

Besides, this research also founded that online learning become ineffective because elements that take a part in it were not ready yet. The element mean by researcher was the lecturer or teacher, the students, and the other elements like faculty staffs. This research found that some lecturers used applications that made the learning process hard to be adapted. Another aspect was about the attendance of lecturers in the online class still categorized low, sometimes there was lecturer late starting the class or moving their class to another day that is not same in the schedule. For the students, some of the students did not know how to operate the applications that the lecturer used in teaching an online class. The effect of the situation was the students did not get the point from the learning material, so that the learning process was not successful.

In line with the present research which this research found that during this pandemic era the learning process becomes harder for the students. It is similiar with third previous research namely Fordjour's study (2020) about the main problem is the background of the students, where the majority of the students are categorized as poor. So, it is hard for them to study from home because there are so many obstacles. Besides that, in this research similar to Fordjour (2020) the participants in this research get hard to study because some of them cannot always buy quota for the online class. Another similar finding was the result that the students getting hard to operate the applications that the lecturer used.

So, these research findings are almost the same as Fordjour (2020). The main difference between this research and the previous from Fordjour was the level of participants in this research was fewer of participants. Another aspect is the economic level of the participants from previous and this research. In the previous research, the participants were poor and hard to do the online class, but in this research not all of the participants are difficult about the economic.

The fourth is research conducted by Surani and Hamidah (2019). Stated that the perception of students in online learning is relatively good with several obstacles that require improvement. So that, it is recommended that online learning should be planned, implemented, and evaluated to minimize problems and maximize the achievement of learning objectives.

The present research has similarities with the previous research in some aspects. The present research found that the participants are willing to part in an online class because they think there are no other options. The obstacles found in the previous are almost the same, where the main problem is the networks. Besides that, the other obstacles found are also similar to what the researcher found in this research. The main difference except for the total of participants and the locations was the way in collecting the data. In this research, the researcher collected the data via WhatsApp and google Forms. in the WhatsApp application the researcher collected the interview data. Besides, google form was used to collect the interview data.

Based on the previous discussion, the researchers concluded that the students' expectation on learning English during the covid-19 pandemic era was good for the situation nowadays, but ineffective in the application. It is because in the application of online learning there are still many obstacles that appear with the application of the method. So, the next researches are expected to investigate deeply the obstacles that were found and can give a solution for all obstacles that were found in the next researches.

5. Conclusion

Online learning during the pandemic era of covid-19 is the best solution. But, the implementation of the method still needs more improvement and more investigation into the student's needs. Because based on the research findings, the students expected the online learning as soon as possible could be changed into offline learning system. However, it was an effect of covid-19 pandemic that the students were hard to understand online learning during the pandemic era of covid-19. From this point of view, the researchers concluded that through the implementation of online learning made the students found several obstacles. One of big obstacles is low internet connectivity. Although, in the era, the online learning system as regarded as the best solution. But, the implementation of the online learning method still needs more improvement and more investigation into the student's needs.

Moreover, the online learning system that implemented during covid-19 pandemic caused the students got difficulties to understand the material from the lecturer. Besides that, the researcher also found that students expected a better learning environment if online learning will continue. Therefore, it is important to solve problems caused by the

obstacles that have been found, such as bad networks during the learning process, finance, and the methods used are not right on target.

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