

# PANDEMIC PORTRAYED: LEARNING STYLE IN ONLINE LEARNING

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a big challenge to all aspects, as what happening in learning process. It makes us to respond quickly on how to adapt the learning process with the current situation. In learning process, it is not allowed to have a crowd in a room such as in a classroom, if it is done, as if there is a reactive person of Covid 19, he/she may transmit that virus to the people in that classroom. So in adapting and minimizing the risk of transmission of Covid 19, online learning is chosen to cope it.

Online learning has also been carried out in nearly all parts of the world since the pandemic. Elements of education are needed in order to promote learning such that it stays successful even without face-to-face interaction. Teachers or lecturers as key feature of formal education are expected to respond to the introduction of learning that initially used traditional face-to-face approaches and moved to online learning. As happening in University of Muhammadiyah Jambi, when it was declared that all learning process must be done virtually, all the lecturers immediately replied. They created an online education development plan, addressing the delivery of teaching, online classroom administration and oversight, and learning evaluation elements. They were also advised to use suitable learning platforms that they are familiar with. Yet, even all preparation had been prepared well; it didn't mean that those worked effectively. It is necessary to bear in mind the various forms of learning styles in the development of online learning.

Learning style is one of the key variables that decides how students learn and has a major impact on student learning strategies, which further influences their learning outcomes. It refers to how students obtain, store and extract information. Through online learning, there were some problems found especially in learning English for students of University of Muhammadiyah Jambi. As we know that, this pandemic makes learning process done virtually. By preparation side, everything had been prepared well. The materials are designed interestingly so that students are not bored while online learning process. Not only that teaching technique is also considered as well as possible for the same goal. But, the result is not really satisfying. It seems from the tasks that are given; some of them still do the task incompletely and far from the expectation. Sometimes the students' work is not responded as what have been asked. And the surprising one is their final grade is not the reflection of their progress. For example, in learning process she/he seemed very pay attention in absorbing the learning material, but for the quiz given in the next

week, her/his grade is not really good, and it is also contrast to the final grade that she got a good grade. By these issues, it seems there is a question on how actually their learning style through online learning.

## 1. Online Learning

Various terminologies have been used in the literature to explain online learning. As a result, developing a generic description is challenging. Online learning is as an innovative approach for delivering instruction to a remote audience, using the Web as the medium (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004). Today's concept of online learning, however, includes more than just the presentation and delivery of materials through the Web; it also includes the student who uses the Internet to access learning material and communicates with the course, teacher, and other students. It includes the learning process, which should be assisted by the student in order for the learner to gain and develop information and evolve from the learning experience (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004; Dietinger, 2003; Wentling, Waight, Gallaher, Fleur, Wang & Kanfer, 2000).

Online learning has many benefits for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It helps students to study and view materials at their own speed and in the way that best suits their needs in terms of time and technique. As opposed to conventional classes, it offers multimedia materials that provide immediate access to content and input from others.

However, the online learning environment presents significant obstacles for both students and teachers. Some students might not be experienced enough to choose the most effective routes to go about learning the targeted knowledge (Hsu, Lin, Ching & Dwyer, 2009). While, teachers only change the old experience and methodologies to the online version, they only think it will work as well as offline class. Then, Ewest (2009) adds it is no surprise, that many teachers struggle to capture students' learning style, despite the fact that they are "one of the key components of the e-learning world."

In order to minimize the obstacles above and maximize the benefits of online learning there must be some ways that need to do. Educators must tailor their instructional methods to the needs of their students. They need to enlarge their experience and knowledge on how to teach in online version. In other words, they have to have un-monotonous atmosphere in teaching in avoiding students of lack motivation in learning. It can be done by knowing how their students learning style.

## Learning Style

The definition of learning style is very various depend on researcher perspective. Such as Naserieh and Sarab (2013) who defines that learning styles explain how an individual processes information. This definition reflects that one student may have different process to extract information which is different to another student. Barmeyer (2004) adds that learning style is as a mechanism through which learners deal with difficulties and challenges in their learning. This theory completes the previous one, not only to process information but also students is able to challenge themselves when they get trouble in obtaining the information. And Gantasala (2009) defines that learning style refers to how students view, communicate with, and react to the learning environment based on perceptual, affective, and psychological characteristics. To sum up learning style is the fact that students vary in terms of what mode of teaching or study fits well for them.

Different individuals learn differently (Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2015). The difference might be existence because of gender, age, culture, etc. This particularly faced by higher education students. This affects to their learning style. They might better to learn visually, orally, so on. And there are four types of learning style based on VARK models; visual (V), auditory (A), read/write (R), and kinesthetic (K).

Learning style affects to learning achievement. Concerning to this, educators should consider it and design the effective learning activities and environment to increase student engagement. As same as Vaseghi, et al., (2012) who state that educators should understand the variations in learning styles among students and improve students' learning strategies for good learning.

## METHOD

This research is using descriptive qualitative method. It was conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Jambi. The population of this research was 1<sup>st</sup> semester of Management Department students in the academic year 2020. There were three classes; R.B1, R.A7 and R.B3. All of classes were taken to be the sample so that the result will be more representative.

This research used the questionnaire as the instrumentation. Because the condition was not allowed to share the questionnaire face to face, so the questionnaire was typed using google form. And the link of it was sent to the students. When completing the questionnaire, the respondent will read the question, understand it, and then offer answers to the questions. Neil Fleming's The VARK (visual, audio, read/write and kinesthetic) Questionnaire version 8.01 was used to evaluate learning types. It was translated into Indonesian to make easier students to choose the option. This questionnaire is a sensory modality for learning something. These four learning modalities represent the students' backgrounds during the learning process. This questionnaire contains 16

questions, each with four choices. Each query has four choices (A, B, C, and D) that correspond to the form of learning style. The researcher obtained the findings by calculating the number of answers from the test object using a description of the Google form.

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