

# The students' Perspectives towards Online Learning during the Pandemic Covid-19 among 5 top Asian Countries

*by Gunawan Tambunsaribu*

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## The students' Perspectives towards Online Learning during the Pandemic Covid-19 among 5 top Asian Countries

Gunawan Tambunsaribu and Lisbeth Sirait

### INTRODUCTION

In connection with distance learning for the past 2 years, the researcher wants to know the problems experienced by students in various countries in Asia. According to <https://leverageedu.com/>, there are 10 best countries to study in Asia for international students. They are Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, China, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and India. However, in this study, researchers only chose 5 countries in Asia as data sources, namely Indonesia, Singapore, China, Japan, and India. The main reason for choosing these 5 countries as data sources is because these 5 countries are included in 5 of the top 10 countries in education in Asia. The second reason for choosing these 5 countries is because the researcher found articles related to the problems in the author's research.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive research method. This research describes two main things namely kinds of barriers and the same common barriers experienced by students in online learning among 5 top Asian Countries during the pandemic Covid-19.

#### Research Problems

There are two problems in this research, they are a) what are the barriers encountered by students in 5 top Asian Countries during Online Learning during the Pandemic Covid-19? And b) what are the same common barriers experienced by the students among the 5 top Asian countries?

#### Research Significance

Based on the research problems above, this research aims to find out the barriers encountered by students in 5 top Asian Countries during Online Learning during the Pandemic Covid-19 and to find out the same common barriers experienced by the students among the 5 top Asian countries.

#### Research Limitation

There are some limitations of this research.

1. This research only focuses on the barriers encountered by students in 5 top Asian Countries, not all the countries in Asia.
2. This research data used secondary data from some previous researchers as his primary data. It means that this is library research.
3. This research only focuses on the student's perspective, not including the teachers' perspective.

#### Research objectives

This research wants to recap some general information about students' experiences in online learning during Pandemic Covid19 in 5 top Asian Countries. This research also wants to find out

the common barriers experienced by students during online learning among 5 top Asian Countries during the pandemic Covid-19.

### **Research Data**

The data are taken from some researchers' findings who conducted research related to the experiences of students in online learning during the pandemic Covid19 in 5 different countries in Asia namely **Indonesia, Singapore, China, Japan, and India.**

### **Data collection**

1. Researchers are looking for information about the names of countries that are ranked in the top 10 in the field of education.
2. Then the researcher looks for articles written by researchers from the 10 countries mentioned above.
3. After the author found articles related to problems in distance teaching.
4. The researcher then reads the articles in detail.
5. Because the researcher only found 5 complete articles from the 5 countries in Asia, the author decided to take research data from these 5 articles.

### **Data Coding**

The researcher uses line-by-line coding.

1. Researchers read each of the 5 articles that have been selected by the author.
2. While reading, the writer marks the sentences containing information about the problems experienced by students in that country.
3. After reading these 5 articles. Then the author typed the data into a word document sheet on the laptop.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher uses thematic analysis.

1. The author analyzes the data according to the similarities in the problems experienced by the students from the 5 countries.
2. Researchers determine the category of each common problem.
3. Then the researcher explained each category of similarity problems.

## **LITERARY REVIEW**

### **Online Learning**

Offline learning has been implemented globally in all countries since the outbreak of the Covid19 virus in early 2022. The use of technological devices is increasing from year to year. Online learn<sup>16</sup> must use the technology used to be able to learn remotely. Online learning is in<sup>24</sup> form of audio and video. Audio and video recordings can be played through technological devices such as televisions, laptops, computers, mobile phones, and other devices. Online learning can take the form of asynchronous and synchronous. Learning materials can be in the form of the web, multimedia, simulations, games, and other forms of collaborative learning.

Distance learning has replaced<sup>3</sup> face-to-face learning with online learning.<sup>7</sup> Face-to-face learning requires students and teachers to be physically present and interact actively in the learning

process. on the other hand, distance learning does not require the physical presence of teachers <sup>21</sup> students in the classroom but only meets and interacts with the help of technological devices. Allen and Seaman in Hiltz & Turoff (2005) stated that “By 2004 at least two million higher-education students in the U.S. were engaged in distance education utilizing various ALN technologies where whole classes can engage in a continuous discourse and group project work independent of time, place, and synchronous constraints of participation”.

Most universities nowadays have developed their learning method using the combination of online classes and traditional classes. During the pandemic Covid-19, almost all educational institutions performed their teaching and learning activities in <sup>10</sup> line mode. Hannay & Newvine in Keengwe and Kidd (2010) in their research conducted in <sup>an American university</sup> stated the <sup>students</sup> signed in both traditional and online courses. They found that the students preferred taking online courses rather than traditional classes.

People nowadays should think that the emergence of online learning is a good change in the academic field. Through online learning, anyone can do <sup>17</sup> learning process at any place and anytime (Maeroff, 2003). In addition, it was found that <sup>online learning has been</sup> effective in developing <sup>the students'</sup> learning outcomes, <sup>the student's</sup> attitudes toward learning, and the student's satisfaction with learning (Palloff & Pratt, 2001).

Online learning is <sup>4</sup> also called distance learning. According to Wilde and Hsu (2019) in conducting online <sup>teaching and learning process</sup>, the students, <sup>as well as the</sup> teachers, are physically distant from each other. They need technological devices to interact and facilitate <sup>20</sup> them to share the learning materials like in a traditional class (Bower et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2020). In the <sup>online learning</sup> process, the students as well as the teachers use <sup>22</sup> various online material sources such as online journals, e-books, and emails and online learning <sup>platforms such as Zoom Meetings, Google Meetings, Microsoft Teams, and</sup> others.

### **Blended Learning <sup>15</sup>**

Nowadays, <sup>blended learning</sup> and <sup>hybrid learning</sup> models are used interchangeably (Dziuban et al., 2018; Watson 2008). A <sup>hybrid learning model</sup> <sup>3</sup> is a combination of face-to-face learning with an <sup>online learning</sup> model (Hall & Davison, 2007). Oliver and Trigwell (2005) stated that <sup>blended learning</sup> uses <sup>the combination of two things</sup> <sup>23</sup> the traditional learning model mixed with the e-learning model and the online learning mixed <sup>with the face-to-face learning</sup> model.

Mixed learning (hybrid) is a new learning phenomenon by carrying out the teaching and learning process using a mixed model or often referred to as a "hybrid" model. Many schools and colleges have implemented a hybrid learning model during this transition period. On many campuses today, lecturers discuss with students asynchronously to expand their discussions beyond the traditional form of class (face-to-face). Some of the teaching materials are carried out in a synchronous or asynchronous model and some are carried out in classrooms by physically meeting face-to-face.

<sup>2</sup> It can be said <sup>that online learning is a learning</sup> process <sup>that</sup> replaces <sup>traditional face-to-face</sup> classes with distance classes that we know today as "online learning". <sup>During the Covid-19</sup>

pandemic, Education classes from the most basic schools to higher education levels or universities have conducted distance learning. In online learning classes, learning is attended by teachers and students can be face-to-face in a synchronous mode. Synchronous mode means that students and teachers meet face-to-face through the monitor screen of the technology device they are using at the same time. In addition to the synchronous mode, distance learning can also be done in asynchronous mode. Asynchronous mode means that students and teachers carry out the teaching and learning process and interact not at the same time and without face-to-face through a virtual screen.

### **Online Learning Barriers**

In online learning systems during the pandemic Covid19, there are some barriers encountered by students. The barriers experienced by the students towards the online learning method regarding to online learning platforms that have an unappealing interface for the students. In addition, the majority of students could not access a stable internet connection and they also had some financial constraints. (Prasetyanto et al., 2022). In the online learning process, there are some problems that students faced. The problems related to technological devices, students' financial problems, learning resources, educators' skills, and some problems derived from the students' living conditions (Baticulon et al., 2021).

Other barriers experienced by the students towards the online learning system ranged from the students' fears of using online platforms, students' emotional condition in facing online exams, and accessibility to technological devices (Tay et al., 2021). In addition, the students' frustration in doing online assignments and the student's presence to attend the synchronous learning mode are also problems faced by students in online learning (Dutta, 2020).

In an online learning system, unclear instructions given by teachers, lack of technology hardware and an internet connection, and the ability to afford technological devices used in the online learning process affect the interest of students in the learning process (Hung et al., 2003; Gayatri, 2020). The barriers such as the social distancing condition, low access to computers or tablets, the poor administration of the educational institutions, and low skills of teachers to substantially support the student's learning through the use of digital technology are also some barriers that students experienced in the online learning system (Nae, 2020).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Based on the data gained from several previous researchers, the researcher found out same barriers encountered by the students in 5 Asian countries. The researcher then categorized the same barriers into four groups namely technological device barriers, learning system barriers, Internet accessibility barriers, and students' outer and inner motivation.

#### **3.1 Technological Device Barriers**

After doing line-by-line coding, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis to define these technological barriers encountered by the students in 5 Asian countries. The following

information contains the same barriers related to the use of technological devices in the online learning system by students in Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, China, and India.

- a. Some students cannot afford technological devices due to their parents' financial problems.
- b. Some have to borrow their neighbors' or friends' devices in order to be able to join and access the online learning platforms especially when the learning is conducted synchronously.
- c. Due to the students' problems in owning personal technological devices, they cannot actively join online learning and difficult to access materials to support their study.
- d. Some cell phones do not support to installation of some learning platforms. Thus, some students cannot such a high-price technological device due to the student's financial problems.
- e. Another problem caused by the use of technological devices is that the view to the screen causes eyestrain to the student's eyes.

### **3.2 Learning System Barriers**

Related to the learning system barriers, the following information contains the same barriers encountered by students in the online learning system in 5 Asian countries namely Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, China, and India.

- a. Some students find that learning platforms used are not attractive—unappealing media for them to study.
- b. Some students find uninteresting in online learning because they cannot interact actively, such as in a traditional classroom, with their classmates and their teachers. The online learning system makes them passive and sleepy.
- c. Some students find that some of their teachers are not interactive in teaching them which leads the students to be passive and bored with online learning.
- d. Some students find that some of their teachers give them unclear instructions about their exams or assignments.
- e. Some students find that some of their teachers give material/learning content without clear instructions or unclear directions that make them confused and not understand what the topic is about.
- f. Some students find that some of their teachers give overloaded tasks/assignments to them that make them late to submit or send their work.
- g. Some students still lack skills in operating such high-tech devices that they are using in online learning. The students are not accustomed to using online learning devices.

### **3.3 Internet Accessibility Barriers**

Related to the internet accessibility barriers, the following information contains the same barriers encountered by students in the online learning system in 5 Asian countries namely Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, China, and India.

- a. Some students who are living in suburbs or remote areas cannot access an internet connection.
- b. A bad internet connection always makes the students feel stressed that they cannot study actively in synchronous learning.
- c. Some of the students living in remote areas have to climb or hike mountains or hills to get an internet connection so that they can access the online learning platforms and the online study materials as well.

### **3.4 Students' Outer and Inner Motivation**

Related to the students' outer and inner motivation, the following information contains the same barriers encountered by students in the online learning system in 5 Asian countries namely Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, China, and India.

- a. Some students find that the noise coming from their surroundings disturbs them while studying online.
- b. Due to the less motivation and disinterest of the students in online learning leads them to be lazy to do assignments, late in submitting work; and seldom open the camera while attending a synchronous online class.
- c. Due to the unaffordable technological device, they find some distractions while using sharing devices with their siblings or from the owner of the device they are using.
- d. Due to the unconducive condition of their surroundings, some students feel uncomfortable while studying online.
- e. Some students feel unmotivated in online learning because their parents do not support them with their needs for technological devices.
- f. Some students have dropped out of school due to their parent's financial crisis affected by the spread of Covid19.
- g. Some students feel stressed and frustrated that they feel falling behind with the other students who have been supported by high-tech learning devices.
- h. Some students feel disinterested in online learning that they cannot meet physically with their classmates and their teachers.

### **Discussion**

From all the barriers written above, all 5 Asian countries mentioned have the same barriers experienced by some students while attending online learning. It means that each of the countries whether one country has provided high technological devices or not, not all students can afford the devices. In addition, each of the countries still has the same problem regarding getting a high or fast connection to the internet. It shows that all 5 countries still have poor or bad internet connections in some areas, especially in suburban and remote areas. The 5 countries also have the same barrier experienced by the students regarding learning systems used by educators while teaching their students in online classes during Pandemic Covid19. It shows that not all educators or teachers are well-prepared in providing good learning systems and learning materials given to their students in online classes. The external and internal barriers coming from the students themselves also become the same barriers to the students in online learning. Some of the students from the 5 Asian countries experienced the same problems such as poor environmental conditions, less interaction with classmates and teachers, less motivation, and low interest in studying online.

### **CONCLUSION**

From many students' perspectives on the barriers that they were experiencing while studying online, the researcher grouped the barriers into four categories. The barriers related to the devices used in the online learning process such as laptops/tablets, personal computers, and cellular phones are grouped into technological device barriers. The barriers the students experienced regarding the platforms, media, methods, materials, exams, and assessments in online learning

are grouped into learning system barriers. The internet accessibility barrier is related to such bad internet connection or low internet connection. Whereas the barriers related to the environmental condition, interaction, motivation, and interests of the students are grouped into the students' inner and outer motivation.

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