



## **ENGLISH STUDENTS' SELF-RESILIENCE AND CHALLENGES IN DISTANCE LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, learning has shifted from offline to online, affecting pupils' learning resilience and the complexity of learning obstacles. As a result, the focus of this study is on English students' resilience and the obstacles they experience during distance learning. This study used qualitative methodologies and included 20 English students who were purposefully chosen as participants. They were questioned in accordance with the study's objectives. An interactive model was used to analyse the interview data. The data suggest that in remote learning, students' self-control is lacking. They are under psychological duress. Their physical state was deteriorating, and several of them were experiencing headaches. They are mentally bored and unable to concentrate, and they cannot enjoy learning due to a lack of social interaction. Furthermore, students encounter issues connected to internet signals, budgeting to meet internet demands, and difficulty in locating learning resources during remote learning, all of which are classified as examples of poor technical competence.

**Keywords:** Distance learning, Self-resilience, Challenges in distance learning

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Covid-19 epidemic, which has spread to 215 nations worldwide, poses unique challenges for educational institutions, particularly universities (Bryson & Andres, 2020). To combat Covid-19, the government has made it illegal for individuals to congregate, enforcing social and physical distance, wearing masks, and constantly washing hands. The government has forced universities to hold lectures or study online instead of face-to-face (traditional) lectures through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud Dikti Circular Letter No. 1 of 2020). Universities are being pushed to become more capable of organizing distance learning (Yudiawan et al., 2021).

During the Covid-19 emergency, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia requested that all institutions offer learning facilities, assisting the government and the general people in learning from home, working from home, and implementing social limitations to break the cycle of Covid-19 spread. During the Covid-19 emergency, the Directorate General of Higher Education also called to institutions with autonomy to give flexibility in implementing distant learning. Distance learning is a type of lecture that may be utilized as a remedy during the COVID-19 epidemic. According to Wang (2021), one of them is using a Home Learning system or studying at home. Many unorthodox techniques may be chosen by employing various learning media such as e-learning, Google classroom, zoom, and other apps. From the other perspective, the remarkable advancement of human civilization may be seen from the use of electronic learning media (Lin, 2017). Distance learning is learning via the Internet and is characterized by accessibility, connection, flexibility, and the capacity to produce numerous sorts of learning interactions (Al-Balas, 2020; Alea, 2020). Cheng (2020) found that using the Internet and multimedia technologies to provide information can transform how knowledge is delivered and be a viable alternative to traditional classroom learning. Distance learning is defined as learning that uses the internet to bring students and lecturers together to conduct learning exchanges (Cheng, 2020; Dietrich, 2020).

Distance learning necessitates the use of mobile devices such as smartphones or Android phones, laptops, desktops, tablets, and iPhones to access knowledge at any time and from any location (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). For a few years, distance learning has been a need in education (Arrosagaray, 2019; Cacheiro-Gonzalez, 2019; Chang, 2016). Learning in the age of the industrial revolution necessitates the use of distance learning. The use of mobile technology in educational institutions has a significant impact, including attaining distant learning objectives (Gómez-Rey et al., 2016). The usage of various media can also aid the application of distance learning. Virtual classrooms, for example, employ instant messaging platforms and programs like Whatsapp. Even social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram may be used to study online. Students and learning resources (databases, experts/instructors, libraries) are geographically separated or even far distant but may communicate, interact, or cooperate either directly/synchronously or indirectly/asynchronously through distance learning (dos Santos & Cechinel, 2019).

After all, distance learning is challenging to implement since there will always be pedagogical and technological barriers that instructors or lecturers and pupils or students would encounter. For example, Huang (2019) found that distance learning poses a management issue for instructors. According to Gómez-Rey et al. (2016), distance learning tends to cause disparities in views and expectations between teachers and students. According to research done by Wei et al. (2015), distance learning is challenging to attain if three significant elements are not met, including the essence of the utility or usefulness of the platform utilized, the perceived ease of utilizing the platform, and a supportive learning environment. Students, on the other hand, will have issues with learning resistance. Bobyliev (2021) agrees that students may feel under stress if a sound pedagogical framework does not govern distance learning. This is understandable since distance learning involves a change of learning modalities, pedagogic concepts, teaching and learning techniques, and how students are treated. As is customary in offline learning, teachers are familiar with and educated in treating pupils with care (Banihashem et al., 2021). However, with distance learning, all components of offline learning are required to engage in the change to an online mode, posing challenges for instructors and students. As a result, students' learning resilience might plummet. In light of this, the purposes of this study are to understand two foci: 1) how resilient are English students throughout distance learning? And 2) what are the challenges that English students face when it comes to distance learning?

## METHOD

The naturalistic paradigm (Creswell, 2007) was used as a giant lens in examining research findings of this study. To put it another way, this was a qualitative study (Ary et al., 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012). This study employed qualitative method, particularly descriptive research design. This study had two primary goals. First, it aimed to learn more about English students' distance learning resilience. Second, it probed into the difficulties that English students faced during distance learning. Twenty English students from a university in Bengkulu, Indonesia, were purposively recruited to join this study as the participants. They were selected according to some criteria. First, they had been experiencing distance learning. Second, they were easily accessible in both face-to-face and online ways. Third, they were willing to take part in this study.

The data of this study were gathered through interviews. The interview questions were oriented towards two key themes: resilience in distance learning and the barriers that participants experienced during distance learning. Subsequently, the interview data were analyzed using an interactive model as recommended by Miles et al. (2014). This interactive model guided the data analysis process via four steps: data gathering, data compaction, data display, and generating conclusions. As previously explained, the data were obtained from online interview procedures via the Whatsapp video calls. This was done in light of the circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 epidemic, which prevented the researchers from meeting and interviewing the participants face-to-face. Interview data were classified based on representative themes, which were related to data compression. All interview data were classified on the basis of the emerging themes, so that the data could be presented in the form of a conceived information arrangement. The data

were provided in the form of conceptualized explanations based on their themes. Each data explanation included the extracts from various transcripts of interviews. The most representative transcripts were chosen to reflect all of the raw data. In the end, all data were summarized in an easy-to-understand but scholarly manner.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Distance learning Media

In general, distance learning conditions at the educational institution in this study make use of a variety of platforms and distance learning apps, including websites (quizzes, etc.), YouTube and other video sharing sites, Google Classroom, Webex applications, tik-tok and Smule, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet. Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet are among the most popular apps. The most popular app, of course, is WhatsApp because it is the cheapest and does not require a solid connection to use. According to them, video conferencing consumes a lot of data capacity, but online chats using instant messaging programs do not.

### Students' Resilience in Distance learning

Because the interview procedure took place when the PSBB policy was adopted, data on English students' resilience in participating in distance learning was obtained through interviews mediated by video calls. There are numerous elements that characterize the state of English students' resilience in distance learning, based on the findings of interviews linked to this topic. The following were the themes: 1) Students were sad psychologically, their eye health had deteriorated physically, and they had headaches. 2) Students' physical resilience deteriorates, lowering their psychological well-being. 3) Students are bored mentally. 4) Students find it challenging to focus psychologically. 5) Students' psychological quality suffers due to their lack of participation in the social component while studying.

The first topic of the interview data (psychological elements of students being depressed, physically deteriorating eye health, and having headaches) is portrayed in numerous representations of the complexity of students' physical and psychological issues when learning online. The following passage from an interview exemplifies this complexity:

*Physically, I'm in good shape. Meanwhile, I'm under strain from a psychological standpoint since the time between completing one activity and beginning the next is so short (Angraini through WA video call on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*Physical circumstances, particularly eye health, fluctuate dramatically throughout distance learning. Furthermore, in terms of psychology, it is possible to feel sad and easily panicked. Students who are enrolled in distance learning frequently use their cellphones. This, of course, has health implications. If you gaze at your smartphone screen for too long, it's possible that you won't become sick from the corona virus, but rather from being exposed to cellphone radiation for too long. Not to mention the fact that the online method can lead to a drop in student morale, as shown by the number of students who fall asleep in class (Apriani through video conference on December 23, 2020).*

*Physically, I am still strong for the first month, but my physical condition has deteriorated recently; the first indication is that my eyes are painful and red, maybe due to the light from my cellphone or laptop. Meanwhile, due to a backlog of assignments and pressure from instructors to fulfill task deadlines, my psychological health is deteriorating rather than improving (Ismail through WA video conference on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*Mentally, I was a bit sad due to the numerous chores, stress, and trouble managing time; physically, I began to have regular headaches and sleeping difficulties (Apriani through WA video conference on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*I dislike distance learning both physically and psychologically. Physically, I can't take the lethargy that strikes me from time to time as a result of numerous lectures given while lying down. Similarly, when confronted with a circumstance like this, we must become more self-reliant and adept at regulating our emotions. However, it is obvious that, in order to get maximum comprehension, the lecturer must use the appropriate teaching methods, which include not just giving assignments without explanations, summaries without attention, and papers without prizes. As a result, there is a high density of commitments, which is juxtaposed with unmet demands and unbroken duties. As a result, I am mentally upset by this learning situation (Hariansya through WA video chat on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*My physical and psychological resilience when studying online during this epidemic era is pretty strong, Alhamdulillah, but not for psychic resilience; in fact, I believe the reverse is true because psychological resilience is not always ideal with distance learning and this pandemic issue. Many factors impact the factor, and many lessons that many people do not comprehend contribute to a poor psychological state (Amelia through WA video call on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*The bottom line is a whirlwind (Fajri through WA video conference on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

The interview transcript above briefly describes that in distance learning, they experience psychological pressure, experience decreased eye health, experience headaches, experience decreased learning discipline, experience difficulties in distance learning because many instructions and learning assignments are not very clear. This is in line with (Carrillo & Flores, 2020) argument that students will tend to experience a decrease in psychological and physical quality in distance learning if distance learning processes and systems are not controlled in ideal learning managerial principles. The second theme of the interview data (students' physical resilience decreases, causing their psychological quality to decline) is illustrated in the following interview transcript:

*I feel tired physically and psychologically, because the material from the lecturer is difficult to understand. Therefore, I just started everything with a sincere intention to study, because everything starts with an intention, innama'amalul bin intention (Hasanah, Friday, January 8, 2021, via WA video call).*

*My resilience during the pandemic has decreased a bit and it is quite tiring because there are so many tasks. You could say it's difficult but it's still doable (Mentari, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*Physical and psychological resilience is somewhat poor because in terms of physical health, students, of course, rarely do activities because many stay at home and rarely do strenuous physical activities. Meanwhile, psychologically, I feel disturbed because of the pressure of being confined in the house (Shaputri, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*Physically, I cannot stand it because I am tired of constantly staring at the cellphone screen. Psychologically it is also not effective because it is difficult to understand the material (Novita, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*It really drained my physical and psychological resilience (Rahmah, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*My resilience is quite strong because psychic can affect my physicality, so to be honest, during distance learning I was dropped for two weeks maybe because of the burden on my mind and often staying up late doing assignments (Mutmainatun, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

The material in the interview transcript above reflects the decreasing state of student resilience in distance learning. As previously stated, students are physically and psychologically exhausted due to the complexity of the distance learning process, experience a loss of physical strength due to a lack of movement, are psychologically depressed due to being isolated from social life, find it difficult to understand material due to psychological nuances that are not ideal, and feel the effect that physical endurance has on them. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Wang (2021), in which one element of the findings shows that, in addition to technology-related issues, distance learning also causes health issues for students. The following transcript illustrates the third topic of the interview data (psychologically, pupils are bored):

*Learning on the internet is extremely tedious (Manda, through video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*I thought it was enjoyable when I initially started learning online, but as time went on, I became bored. My physical stamina is adequate, but my mental health is deteriorating. I believe this is due to the fact that there are too many jobs, and some of them are not properly stated as to how to do them (Lestari, via video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*I'm bored, I'm bored (Majid, A., through video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*I am really worried since there are so many duties and boredom as a result of being at home and not knowing when the epidemic period will finish (Soleh, via video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*Despite the flexibility of distance learning, it has a negative influence on students' passion for studying. Many students are regularly found lounging at home, with schoolwork building up and barely being completed. However, because this is a government rule aimed at preventing the spread of the corona virus, it must be followed with integrity (Siregar, through video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

According to the excerpt from the interview transcript above, there are several reasons why students are bored with distance learning, including the fact that it is associated with many assignments, lecturers' assignments are not always clear in their specifications, and students' learning conditions at home encourage them to be lazy. This situation arises because the distance learning system is a new method for lecturers and students, resulting in these difficulties. According to (Y. Wei et al., 2019), to prevent the negative impacts of distance learning, three requirements must be met: the substance of the platform's usefulness is recognized by teachers and students, the perceived simplicity of using the platform, and an ideal distance learning environment. These three requirements do not appear to be met in the distance learning system, resulting in psychological dissatisfaction and boredom among students. The following interview transcript describes the fourth topic of the interview data (psychologically, pupils have trouble concentrating):

*Studying online during this epidemic is really difficult for me. The signal was first obstructed, and I couldn't focus since there were so many distractions at home (Novika, through video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*I don't feel like I'm in the right frame of mind (Adriani, via video conference WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*Because there are so many barriers, I am not that resistive or fond of distance learning during this epidemic." However, as a result of following health standards, I realize and will ultimately have to deal with the issues that have arisen (Lapenia, via video call WA, Friday, January 8, 2021).*

The above interview transcript demonstrates English students' low distance learning resilience, as seen by the fact that students find it challenging to focus when studying online due to numerous interruptions at home. Their psychological attitude now opposes distance learning. According to (Fandiño, 2020), distance learning circumstances influence low learning motivation due to the complexity of distance learning, which tends to divert students' attention from their studies. In addition, the following interview transcript illustrates the fifth topic of the interview data (students' psychological quality declines due to restricted engagement in the social dimension while studying):

*In terms of physical resilience, I don't think anything has changed or in other words right now I'm in a normal condition. But when it comes to psychology, I don't feel strong because to be honest, since the pandemic started, I've been feeling lonely (Puri, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*Physical resilience is good, thank God. Because at home, no one is infected with the COVID-19 virus, maybe it will be different when compared to offline/face-to-face lectures where we will not know there is a COVID-19 virus around us. Psychic resilience may be poor because it cannot mingle with fellow friends, especially discussing material in lectures becomes difficult because it is blocked by the network (Jamaat, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

*For students' physical resilience, I think students experience a lot of difficulties because of several things, one of which is very erratic lecture hours and this will certainly greatly affect students' physical resilience, not to mention if there are lecturers who give assignments in the form of making videos, it will be very difficult. affect the physical health of students. Then for psychic resilience in learning, I think students have a lot of pressure to study during a pandemic. Starting from the adjustment of distance learning, then the situation where it is not possible to meet friends while studying will of course add to the burden on students' minds (Rahmadania, Friday, January 8, 2021, via video call WA).*

Students' resilience in distance learning declines, as seen by the interview transcript above, where students feel psychologically lonely owing to their kind of learning, which tends to have a social dimension, and they experience a loss in physical quality due to demanding lecture assignments. This is understandable, given that students' learning styles were previously based on the K-13 curriculum (Setyono & Widodo, 2019), which included social competence, religiosity competence, and student critical thinking competence. (dos Santos & Cechinel, 2019) have addressed training in offline learning principles. However, when the learning mode shifts to online, all previously listed abilities will be difficult to investigate. The online system must be adopted immediately because the epidemic makes it impossible for lecturers and students to investigate these competencies. Because of the instantaneous nature of distance learning, the learning flow now focuses solely on the stage of system and process adaptation.

### **Challenges Experienced by Students during Distance learning**

The following data revealed the challenges that English students face when it comes to distance learning. Three themes represent the entire data linked to this topic: 1) signal restrictions, 2) financial constraints to acquire internet quota, and 3) challenges in locating references in the distance learning process. This is shown in the following interview transcript for the first theme (signal constraints):

*The availability of internet services is a challenge for distance learning. Some students utilize cellphone connections to access the internet, while others use WiFi. Many students went home after our university established a distance learning strategy. They have trouble getting a cellphone signal while they are in their particular locations, even if the signal they do get is very weak. In the use of distance learning at this university, this is a challenge in and of itself. When internet services are inadequate and professor instructions are poorly comprehended by students, distance learning has flaws (Ningsih through video conference on December 23, 2020).*

*The biggest issue for students returning to their hometowns is a shaky internet service (Hasanah through WA video call on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

*In certain cases, the challenge of signal interference is caused not only by students, but also by lecturers. As a result, learning is ineffective (Wardani through WA video conference on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

The preceding interview transcript demonstrates that internet signal issues are a concern for students and instructors. In terms of the internet signal difficulty, students have because half of the students at this university come from other cities. When a distance learning policy is implemented, they often go home and complete their distance learning from their respective homes. Because many students report that the internet signal in their region is difficult to obtain, this circumstance exacerbates internet signal issues. The availability of technology and proficiency in utilizing technology will affect the success of distance learning, as (Chang, 2016) has shown. The following interview transcripts highlight the second topic of the interview data (financial limitations to acquire internet quota):

*Besides having a difficult signal, I personally have problems in the budget for buying a larger internet quota than usual because for lectures sometimes I have to use several applications that consume a fairly large amount of internet quota (Dayang, Friday, January 8, 2021, via WA video call).*

*Another challenge faced is the obstacle in financing online learning. Students revealed that to take part in online learning, they had to pay quite a lot of money to buy internet data quota. According to them, learning in the form of video conferencing has consumed a lot of data quota, while online discussions through instant messaging applications do not require a lot of quota (Lapenia, 23 December 2020, Via video call WA).*

*My problem lies in my inadequate quota (Novita, Friday, January 8, 2021, via WA video call).*

*What is certain is that I lack internet quota, because I live in a village and the signal is very bad. So, cheap cards with affordable prices don't have a signal in my village. As a result, I have to use a card that costs quite a bit of money, while the quota from the campus is only given once for a month and now its validity period has expired (Mentari, Friday, January 8, 2021, via WA video call).*

Based on the interview transcript above, it can be seen that students feel constrained in financing to buy internet quota. Since distance learning has taken place, student spending has undoubtedly increased. It can be seen that most students tend to use quota instead of wifi to access the internet. Furthermore, related to the third theme (the difficulty of finding learning resources for distance learning), one of the students informed as follows:

*I have enough signal speed, but my issue is that it is difficult to locate literature sources to use as references while doing projects. Because there are occasions when there are no references to be found in internet libraries (Shaputri through WA video conference on Friday, January 8, 2021).*

The hurdles mentioned by Shaputri in the transcript above are not obstacles because online references are difficult to come by, but rather an obstacle to students' technological competency, which is sometimes lacking. Of course, if you know how to utilize the internet effectively, you will have access to an infinite number of learning resources. (Thongsri et al., 2019) stressed that students' ability to use technology such as the internet and other distance learning programs is the most critical component in their success in distance learning.

## CONCLUSION

This research uncovered two pieces of data: English students' distance learning resilience and the challenges they face when studying online. In terms of student learning resilience in distance learning, English students' learning resilience has reduced and deteriorated. This is demonstrated in two ways: first, the psychological features of sad students, and second, their physical eye health deteriorates, and they feel headaches. Second, pupils' physical resilience deteriorates, resulting in a decline in psychological quality. Third, pupils are bored mentally. Fourth, kids find it challenging to concentrate mentally. Fifth, students' psychological quality suffers due to their lack of participation in the social component while learning. Furthermore, English students had issues with internet signals, 2) financial restrictions in purchasing internet quotas, and 3) difficulty locating references in the distance learning process, all considered poor skills. technology for students.

More studies are needed to identify ways to increase students' distance learning resilience and overcome technological, psychological, and psychological barriers to distance learning.

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