

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS INTERACTION NEEDS IN DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES AND ONLINE TUTORIAL ASSIGNMENTS

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ABSTRACT

As one of the services of online tutorial activities, this learning assistance service must also be able to provide interactive communication facilities between tutors and students. Achieving maximum value through this activity will be able to increase the acquisition of good final semester exam scores. The contribution of online tutorial grades can be obtained through students' activeness in discussions and assignments. The basis for giving online tutorial grades is the results of submitting or uploading discussion responses in each online tutorial session with a minimum set of criteria. The problem of this study is the lack of feedback from tutors to students in online discussion forums. To address this issue, a descriptive method was used to identify and describe the consequences of not providing stimulus in the online tutorial discussion forum for the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course at the Open University during the 2022.1 registration period. The results of this study revealed the need for greeting messages and the availability of reminder facilities for students regarding tutor responses in discussion forums.

Keywords: assignment grades, discussion responses, online tutorial, online tutorial

INTRODUCTION

Learning evaluation is a very important aspect in an educational institution. The way to evaluate learning is periodically so that the results of the evaluation can be used as material or reference in improving the next learning process. Online tutorial activities require students to be actively involved in the learning process. Active involvement by students as tutorial subjects should be realized by students as a way to increase the value of students' participation or activeness in discussion activities and online tutorial assignments.

This is a measure of the sensitivity of students' responsiveness in discussion activities and assignments to the value given by the online tutorial tutor. The basis for

awarding online tutorial grades is the upload of discussion responses in each online tutorial session with minimum predetermined criteria, such as the inclusion of a description of the discussion response, sharpness in analyzing the given case, and writing reference sources or references according to the thematic ideas of the discussion case.

Distance Education is a form of teaching and learning process service that is carried out remotely through the use of various communication media. Distance Education provides higher education services to community groups or students who cannot attend face-to-face or regular education and expand access to student learning reach.

Distance Education is a means to help people who have various limitations in gaining access to education. Data in 2018 shows that Indonesia's education participation rate is still relatively low at 32.55%, although it has an increasing trend compared to the previous year of 30%, but it is still far from the national target (Seftiawan, 2018).

Distance Education is expected to encourage and improve the quality of learner participation at the higher education level, because distance education is characterized as open, independent, complete, and uses information and communication technology (ICT). Through the distance education system, everyone can gain access to quality education without having to leave their family, home, work, and not lose career opportunities.

Realistically, distance education is needed in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, so that it can compete with other universities that do not implement distance education. Distance education is an educational innovation, because it can be reached by all groups and is relatively cheaper with the concept applied, namely blended learning together or face to face online. Distance education is also a learning concept that is considered the most efficient and cuts some costs, because it does not require room and room supporting facilities such as the use of LCD, laptop, air conditioning, and so on.

As a form of learning program innovation, distance education still needs to pay attention to the quality of learning, because the quality of the process is a very important indicator, because it affects the output and outcome of learning. In maintaining and improving the quality of learning, it is necessary to provide supporting learning tools such as online learning facilities. The superstructure aspects that support learning are learning tools, curriculum, tutorial activity design, unit of tutorial activity, scoring guidelines, exercises, discussions, assignments, tutors, and others.

The implementation of the learning process through online tutorial classes is believed to have not provided a portion for students to assess the quality of learning and performance to the fullest. One of the reasons is that not all students have responded to

discussions and assignments after receiving responses from tutors, before the grade upload limit is closed by the existing time limit. This is the reason why this study was developed to make a significant change in the grading of learning evaluation through online tutorials. Therefore, a new formula is needed that allows students to interact actively with the tutor.

Until now, the quality of distance learning has become an important highlight in the educational environment. Innovative learning programs and making it easier for people to access must be balanced with adequate quality, so as to produce greater outputs and outcomes. One of the ways that can be done to maintain the quality of learning is by evaluating learning tools both in terms of superstructure and infrastructure must be done regularly.

This includes online tutorial activities that have not provided facilities for students to obtain information about tutor's feedback when responding to responses or assessing students' work. The facility in question is a direct and popular notification program through students' mobile phones.

The reason for choosing cellular phones as the intermediary medium for response notifications in online tutorials is because this media is still considered familiar, easy to use, and is always near students (users). Based on these reasons, students consider that cellular phones are very important to be used as a medium of communication in the online tutorial learning process, especially when students need to know about notifications about responses and grades given by tutors.

Thus, the objectives to be achieved in this study are to determine the frequency or level of students' participation in accessing online tutorial activities, the reasons for students to reconfirm the responses given by tutors in the online tutorial discussion comment column, and the need for notifications about responses and grading of discussions and assignments in online tutorial activities.

To achieve optimal grades in discussion forums and assignment work, students should see or access back the sessions they have opened, filled in, and uploaded. However, in reality, students are not aware of any comments submitted by tutors in the discussion forum. Presumably, students think that everything they have done in the discussion forum and uploaded answers to tutorial assignments is enough.

In fact, with the comments from the tutor, it can be seen whether or not there is a lack of material that should be included. If they happen to re-access and find the tutor's comments, they have the opportunity to improve their discussion responses or upload their answers to the assignments, so that they can get better grades. All this can be done

if the deadline for each session has not closed.

If students have and can do this properly and according to the schedule of each session, then it is likely that there will be a change in tutor performance in terms of concern and desire to always ensure efforts to improve students' learning evaluation results through online tutorial activities.

The existence of online tutorial tutors becomes very central because they contribute to the success of the students' learning process. In addition, students will also feel satisfied if the results of their work are in accordance with the efforts they have made. Thus, the aspect of students' satisfaction becomes one of the most important factors, because the main stakeholders of higher education institutions are students, so the main orientation of the institution is to create the quality of educational programs that can build satisfies from students (Khasanah, 2012).

In accordance with the explanation of Romero, Andia, Velarde, and Huaraca (2022) which states that as many as 73.8% of students assess that the virtual classes they follow can improve the quality of communication and help the exchange of information between students and lecturers (tutors). As many as 71.4% considered that the use of virtual classes made them more efficient and safe in carrying out or participating in asynchronous learning activities, such as those carried out in online tutorial learning.

On this basis, the learners in Romero, Andia, Velarde and Huaraca's research acknowledged that there was a higher percentage of them who considered that the use of virtual classes had positively influenced their asynchronous learning process. The recommendation from their research is the need to continuously improve the skills in the use and utilization of information and communication technology for virtual learners. Thus, there needs to be a synergistic effort between students and tutors so that tutors have the opportunity to provide good learning evaluation assessments.

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of feedback from tutors to students in online discussion forums. A descriptive method was used to identify and describe the consequences of not providing stimulus in the online tutorial discussion forum for the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course at the Open University during the 2022.1 registration period. Therefore, a reminder or notification system from tutors to students regarding tutor responses in the discussion forum is necessary.

METHODS

The research procedure consists of several things, such as research subjects, methods, variable operationalization, data collection techniques, and data analysis

techniques. The population who became research respondents were students who were registered as participants in the online tutorial of the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course at the Open University for the registration period 2022.1 class 5 with a total of 50 participants. The social, economic, and age backgrounds of students were ignored, so purposive sampling was used on the grounds of student homogeneity. The heterogeneity aspect lies only in the existence as Open University students who take the same course, namely Sociology of Mass Communication.

Students in this class were considered capable of answering the questions posed through the questionnaire due to their involvement in face-to-face tutorial classes, both as active and passive participants. The research method used is descriptive which is intended to determine and describe the existence or absence of an effect imposed on the subject under study which is carried out factually and carefully (Sakaran and Bogie, 2017).

Data collection activities are carried out by distributing questionnaires containing a list of questions that have been compiled according to the events in the online tutorial class, which are then distributed to respondents. In accordance with the method used, namely descriptive, the analysis technique used is descriptive analysis. How to analyze the results of filling out the questionnaire is through the stages of collecting, compiling, explaining, and interpreting the answers to the questionnaires that have been distributed.

RESULTS

The results of the study explain matters directly related to the learning process of Open University students who take part in online tutorials in the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course. This research has been carried out in accordance with the schedule involving 50 students. At that time, the number of questionnaires distributed was in accordance with the real number of participants in the online tutorial of the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa class 5 course, which was 50 people. The questionnaire began with a basic question about the frequency of student participation in online tutorials.

The following are the results of the student questionnaire and its analysis, arranged according to the order of questions in the questionnaire. Of the 28 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, 12 people mentioned the number 3 times accessing the online tutorial of the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course in each tutorial session. This number or frequency is good because they give the reason for re-accessing is to find out whether there is a response by the tutor to their work. In addition, they also wanted to find out updates on events in each session, which were experienced by classmates in the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course.

The reason for knowing the event updates in each session is to find out the latest things conveyed by the tutor, warnings given by the tutor if a violation occurs, and students' efforts to avoid mistakes that have been made by other friends. The types of updates that many students get in the interaction in the tutorial class of the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course are the need to include sources or references in presenting arguments, the correct procedure for writing responses, and the average score given by the tutor to the work that according to student understanding is good, which is at least 85.

The types of warnings delivered by tutors include the importance of including sources or references in providing responses, not allowing plagiarism of the work of friends in one tutorial class, and quoting certain texts without including sources. These three types of warnings are considered reasonable and become an important thing to always remember to avoid mistakes. Furthermore, knowing the mistakes that have been made by other friends is one of the ways or tricks learned by students not to be repeated or repeated by them.

In addition, 13 students stated that they accessed the online tutorial class twice in one session. They argued that this number was to submit a discussion response and find out whether or not they had responded, getting a discussion grade from the tutor. If they had, they would not access the session even if the tutor responded once. They stated that they only needed the value of the discussion responses and did not care about the events that happened in class. They also admitted that they deliberately did not read the presentation or responses delivered by the tutor to other friends, and considered it not a personal matter that concerned them.

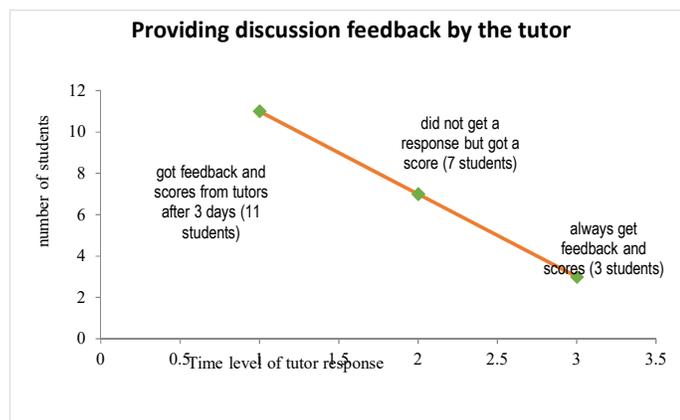


Table 1 Average response time

Next, there were three students participating in the online tutorial for the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course who only accessed each tutorial session once. They said that

they only gave enough discussion responses for the reason of getting a discussion grade. They believed that they would always be given a discussion grade by the tutor, did not care about class events, and did not read the tutor's response in the discussion class of each session (as shown in table 1).

The next question was about the ability to respond to discussion responses in online tutorials. It asked how quickly students uploaded discussion responses, responded to tutor comments, and rewrote discussion responses. Of the 28 students who filled out the questionnaire, 11 students stated that they gave a response to the discussion of the online tutorial class of the Sosiologi Komunikasi Massa course no later than Wednesday or three days after the discussion material was uploaded in the tutorial class, so they also got a grade after Wednesday or the third day after uploading the discussion material by the tutor. And as many as 17 people sent discussion responses on Friday or the fifth day after the tutor uploaded the discussion material for each session (table 2).

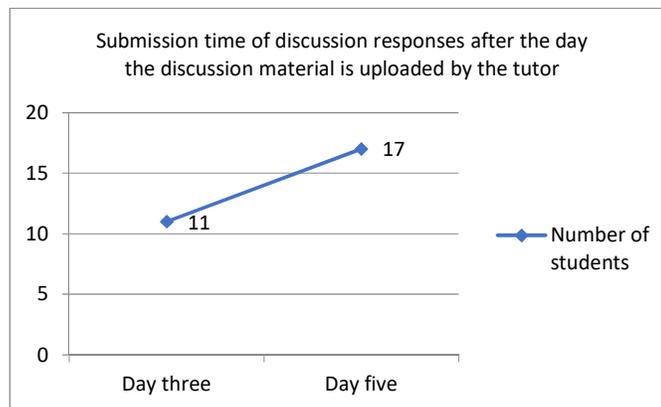


Table 2 Submission time of discussion responses by students (after tutor uploads discussion materials)

The reason they chose Wednesday or three days after the discussion material was uploaded was that they usually had the opportunity on that day. The next reason was to wait for other friends to respond to the discussion and use the response material as a reference for preparing their own responses. The last reason was the need for time to find answers for their responses to be uploaded, as well as determining appropriate sources or references.

In response to the tutor's comments or responses, 18 students answered that they did not get any responses or answers from the tutor. They admitted that they only received marks in the discussion of each session. Meanwhile, 7 students admitted that they only received feedback from the tutor once, while the remaining 3 students said that they

always received feedback or answers from the tutor (table 3).

Through table 3, the following can also be explained. A total of 9 students answered that they uploaded their discussion responses on the fifth day or Friday of each week of the online tutorial session on the grounds that they were waiting for other friends to upload their responses and they had an idea of the response model to be uploaded so that it would not be too wrong. As many as 4 students stated in the second week

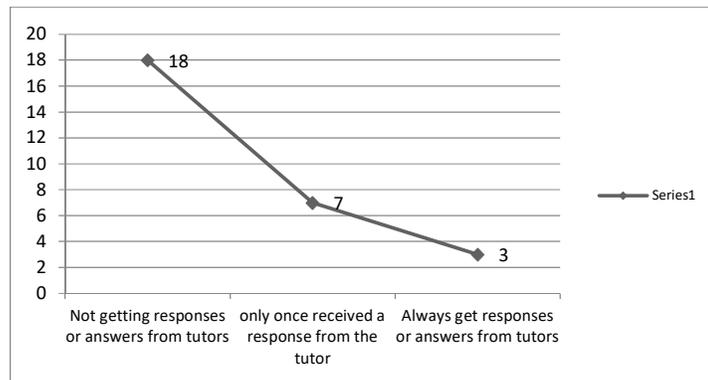


Table 3 Tutors' responses to students' discussion submissions

after the discussion material was uploaded because 4 other students provided discussion responses at the end of each discussion session with the excuse that they were just trying to fill in and send responses in order to get a discussion grade. They did not really care about the quality of the response content because they were already pressed for time.

When answering the question about responses to comments submitted by tutors, 22 students admitted that they never responded again to answers or responses submitted by tutors. The reasons for this were that they did not have time to respond again (21 people), they did not feel the need to respond again (4 people), and they responded but did not want to continue the discussion and were about to move on to the next session (3 people). This can also be seen in the following table 4.

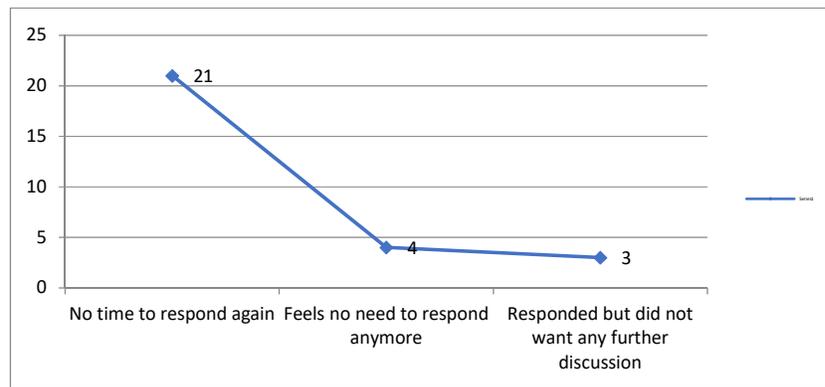


Table 4 Students' attitude towards comments/responses delivered by tutors

The next question was about how students get information on whether there is a response from the tutor (Table 5). Of the 28 students who sent back their questionnaires, 23 students only relied on the online tutorial facility to find out whether there were any responses, grades, or comments given by the tutor, while the rest stated that they did not do anything to find out what happened in the tutorial class because they thought the session was over (5 people).

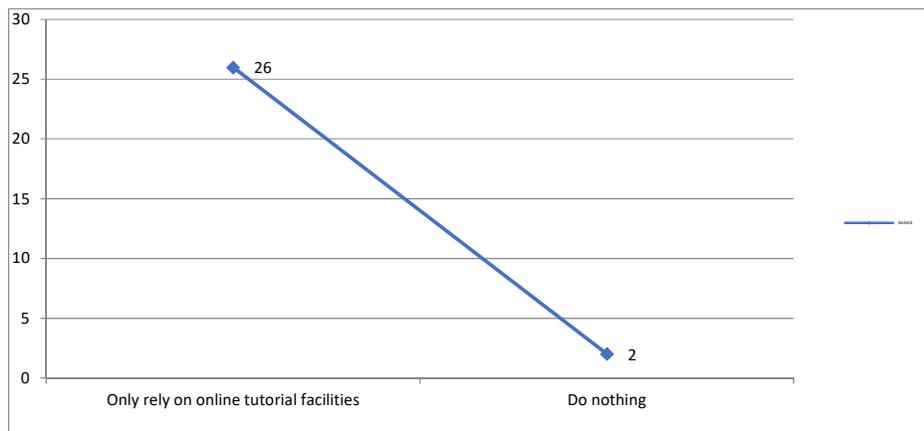


Table 5 How students get information on whether or not there is feedback from tutors

Furthermore, regarding whether or not it is necessary to develop a reminder media for students when there is the latest information or responses from tutors, 26 students said that it is necessary so that they know the latest things that happen in their online tutorial class (table 6). As many as 2 students answered that they did not know whether or not the reminder media was needed.

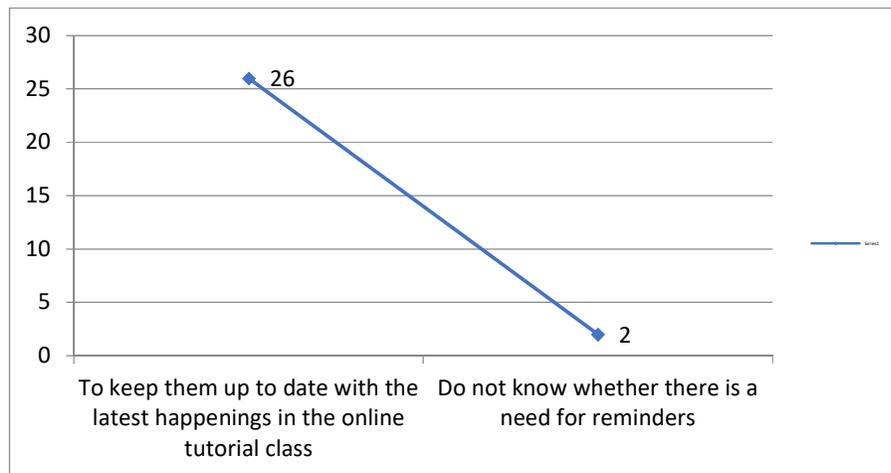


Table 6 Reasons why students think there is a need for information about tutor responses

In terms of the type of reminder media, they expect messages through the WhatsApp application (WA) which can be a medium for mediating messages if there are new things happening in the online tutorial class, including in this case responses, grades, and comments from tutors or colleagues in the class (26 people). As many as 2 students answered that they did not know the type of media that was suitable for mediating online tutorial class information (Table 7).

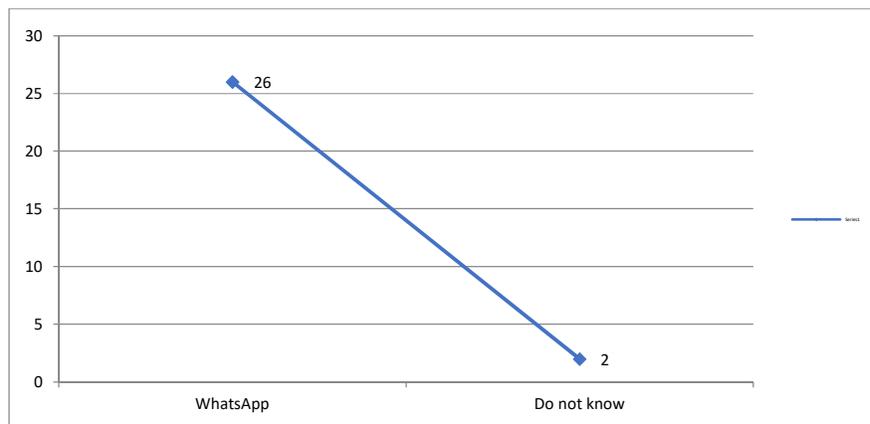


Table 7 Types of media reminders of tutor feedback or grades

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The conclusions that can be conveyed in this research report are as follows.

1. Although the learning concept at the Open University is self-directed, students still need guidance for academic activities such as online tutorials.

2. Students want to know about the development of the discussion forums in online tutorials quickly so they can respond to the tutor's requests promptly.

The suggestions that can be conveyed are as follows.

1. In online tutorial activities, there should be greeting messages to encourage students to stay active in monitoring the development of discussion forums.
2. It is necessary to provide reminder facilities for students regarding the tutor's responses in the discussion forums.

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