Why Do Not Students Turn On Their Cameras during Online Classes

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Abstract

Since several higher education institutions do not compel students to turn on their webcams during online sessions, professors assert that they have adopted this practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic-related shift in instructional activities. They were considering the current research intended to determine the reasons behind students' decision to conceal their identities during online classes and provide potential solutions for enhancing the educational process's sustainability. We specified that the usage of video cameras in class was optional but encouraged out of consideration for the pupils. However, several of our instructors and students remarked that they did not utilize their cameras as often as they would have liked by the end of the semester, decreasing the educational experience. We surveyed students to ascertain why they chose not to activate their cameras. Students do not switch on their webcams during online lectures to engage in other things concurrently. Numerous hypothesized explanations, including the most frequently mentioned concern about personal appearance, were confirmed. Additionally, being concerned about other people and the physical location visible in the background and having a sluggish internet connection were issues. Turning on the camera throughout the educational process offers several benefits, including assessing students' level of knowledge and directing their attention to the lesson, fostering communication and emotional development, and preventing outdoor activities during the learning process.

I. Introduction

The world is currently being hit by a dangerous virus pandemic, namely the coronavirus. The virus is hazardous because it attacks the respiratory system. The Corona Virus can cause mild respiratory system disorders, lung infections, and even death. Viruses that emerged around the end of 2019 came from Wuhan, China. The virus spreads so fast that 6.2 million people worldwide were exposed to the virus when this article was written.

In the development of the world of education, especially after the rolling reforms, new phenomena have arisen in educational institutions, which are schools that use the term Integrated Islamic Schools (Titik, 2010: 42). The school is essentially aimed at helping parents teach good habits and add good character, also given education for life in society that is difficult given at home. Thus, education in schools is actually part of education in the family, which is also a continuation of education in the family (Daulay in Ayuningsih, W. et al. 2020).

The Indonesian government and other nations have launched several approaches to prevent the spread of the illness. This coronavirus interferes with daily activities or works in Indonesia, whether in work, education, or other fields. Currently, the world's education system is undergoing significant changes in a virus pandemic. The COVID-19 epidemic forced the closure of educational institutions, affecting education significantly. The shutdown of education is necessary to prevent students or teachers from contracting the coronavirus by studying at home. Especially in Indonesia itself, the Indonesian government has made. It is a relatively recent decision in the field of education. The closing of educational institutions has impacted about 600 million students globally (Goyal, 2020). Under normal circumstances, what is studied by students or students face to face with teachers or lecturers in class will be online learning at home or called an online learning system at home.

As expected, worldwide concerns about the shift to online teaching and learning are reflected in research. Teachers must train students using online learning platforms during the lockout (Abidah, Hidaayatullaah, Simamora, Fehabutar, & Mutakinati, 2020). Raju (2020) suggested that creative teaching methods are necessary for continuing education and overcoming mental tension and anxiety associated with the lockout. As a result, examples of effective practices have been provided, solutions to difficulties confronting higher education institutions have been offered to encourage others, and various techniques for supporting students' emotional needs during times of distress have also been discussed. The breakout of COVID-19 triggers a digital revolution in higher education through online lectures, teleconferencing, digital open books, online assessments, and interaction in virtual worlds (Strielkowski, 2020). Maybe some schools or universities already had a learning system like that before the coronavirus spread. Nevertheless, some others may not be implementing this system in the high education environment, especially schools in small towns in Indonesia. The world health agency (WHO) has also announced that the corona virus, also called COVID-19, is a global threat worldwide. The outbreak of this virus has an impact especially on the economy of a nation and globally. These unforeseen circumstances automatically revised a scenario that was arranged in predicting an increase in the global economy. (Ningrum, P. et al. 2020)

Students and faculty no longer engage in a physical, educational setting but rather a virtual one. Thus, the personal habitats of both instructors and pupils have been abruptly invaded by the microphones and cameras of the gadgets they use to participate in educational activities. Several studies have shown that the delivery of material by video conference or virtual by activating the camera or displaying the face of the teacher or lecturer of online learning will be more effective. Considering the right microphone and sound combination was also essential to maintain that the academic discourse was captured clearly, and other colleagues upgraded their webcams and lapel mics. (Dwivedi, 2020). Activating the camera gives a psychological impression to students that they have received a source of knowledge and are being guided by their lecturers, rather than a simple narrated slideshow.

At the pandemic outbreak, the need to have cameras on during online lectures was already in place in the university education system. Pupils who refused to activate their cameras were marked as absent. Students expressed dissatisfaction with this topic since there were several instances in which the gadgets used by learners to participate in class were not equipped with cameras. In these instances, there was no way to keep them open. As a result, the instructors' assertion that pupils must have their webcams available has been provisionally deleted, as has penalized those who violate this regulation via the pupil's absence. On the other hand, online education no longer requires students to keep

their cameras turned on throughout online sessions to be deemed present. Nevertheless, they were required to perform duties provided by the teacher and respond to inquiries. As a result, university policies seek to promote pupils' involvement in the educational process while minimizing the stress and anxiety generated by cameras.

In certain universities, lecturers and students were required to utilize webcams during online courses through internal regulations, but in other universities, no such decision was taken. As a result, students have switched off their webcams during lectures and seminars. Students' online behavior of not turning on their webcams during online sessions has resulted in widespread teacher discontent. As a result, educators communicated at institutional meetings that students frequently conceal their faces during online sessions, demotivating them to instruct.

For example, most lecturers prefer to maintain eye contact with their students during online sessions to see the teacher and have the experience of being in a physical classroom. At the same time, pupils abstain from utilizing their cameras. The research mentions several factors contributing to this behavior, including the fact that "students' webcam-usage behavior was behaviors to unique ideas and sentiments, course features, and it varied by specific groups. Based on considerable research, the authors concluded that the invisible online presence had become a global phenomenon for students who opt not to use their webcams until required, coining the phrase generation invisible.

Abate (2021), Bedenlier (2021), and Luo (2020) had conducted a study of distance learning in education during the coronavirus pandemic. Generally, the results of their research stated that in traditional classroom education, the teacher could easily perceive or obtain the students' engagement by observing them. Most teachers maintain visual contact with their students throughout online classes to ensure that students see the teacher and experience being in a real classroom. At the same time, pupils abstain from utilizing their cameras. According to the study, "students' webcam-usage behavior was related to unique ideas and sentiments. The absence of such feedback from the expressions and behaviors of the students attending the lesson impacts distance education. They believe that all students should turn on and share their camera's internet recordings. As a result of such widespread use of online educational platforms, the transmission and efficiency of networks have deteriorated owing to the intense use of bandwidth required to link professors and pupils visually. As a result, participant attention is diminished, and it becomes more challenging to supervise pupils during lectures. With this perspective in mind, this research aimed to determine why students turn off the camera during the teaching and learning process and the difficulties associated with learning during this lockdown amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Research Method

The descriptive survey approach was utilized to conduct this study. The descriptive survey technique is a type of study conducted on a collection of items to elicit a description of the events within a particular population. The current study is an online survey of 231 students from West Java and Central Java, Indonesia. An online survey was performed from September 20 to October 18, 2021. Students were issued structural surveys through WhatsApp and email, utilizing the Google form. Before taking part in online surveys, participants provide their full consent. Two hundred and thirty-one students completed the study thoroughly. To better comprehend the distribution of research participants, descriptive statistics were used. Simple percentage distributions are used to measure students' learning status, study style, attitudes toward educational decisions, and issues

related to locking. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to conduct all analyses (SPSS Version: 25).

III. Result and Discussion

The first research objective was to determine students' perceptions and reasons for keeping their webcams off during online classes.

The findings analysis (Figure1) reveals that the highest share of respondents agreed "to a very modest extent" to have their webcam on during online classes (12.7%). According to the percentages recorded, this category was followed by those who agreed "to a moderate extent" (59.3%). On the other end of the spectrum, others stated that they "mainly" and "very much" disagree with keeping the webcam on (22.9% and 5.1%).
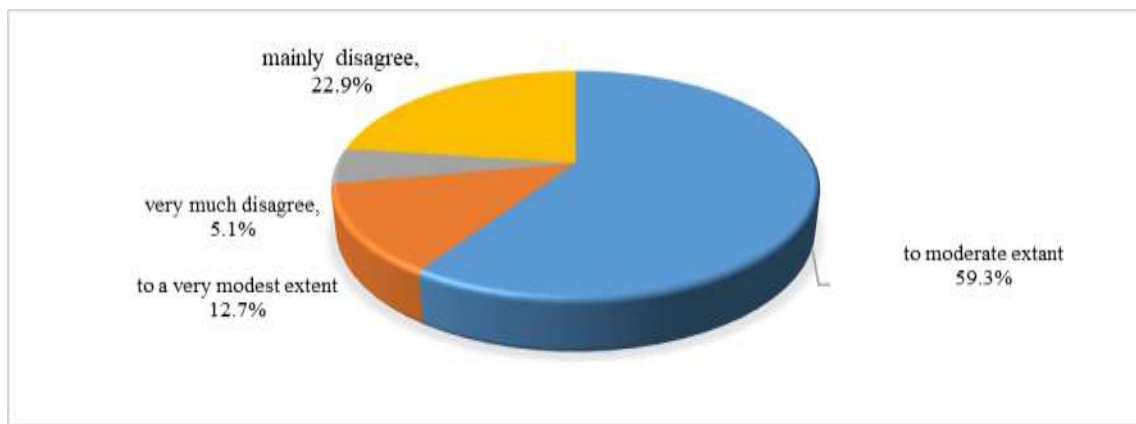

Figure 1. Students' opinions about keeping their cameras on during online classes.

In terms of determining students' comfort level with displaying their faces during online classes, a 10-step scale question includes the questionnaire, with 1 representing the least amount of comfort and 10 representing the most amount of comfort. Ratings 5 (25.0 percent) and 7 (22.0 percent) received the most significant percentage values, followed by ratings 8 (18.0 percent), in comparison to the scale's center point (rating 5) with relatively identical percentages for those who feel at ease in front of the camera and those who do not.
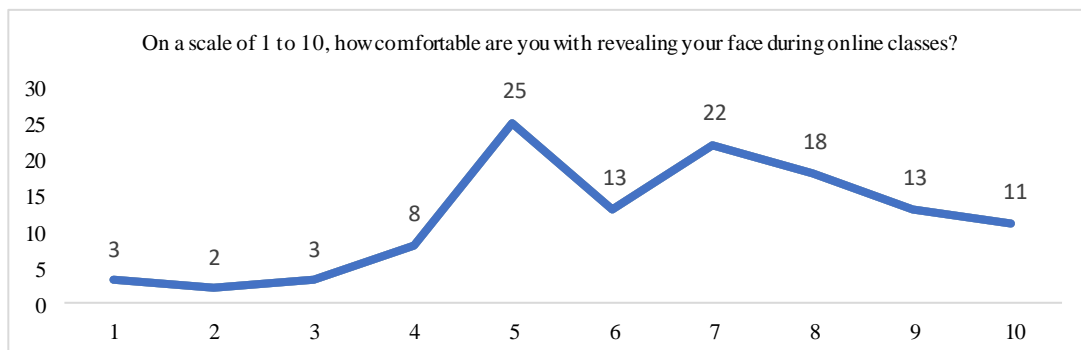

Figure 2. Students' degree of comfort with revealing their faces during online classes.

Additionally, we attempted to know why students keep their webcams turned off during online classes. Two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to elicit these responses. The first asked the responder to justify their colleagues' behavior, whereas the second asked the respondent to explain their own. Understanding these motivations can serve as the basis for regulatory actions to address this behavior observed among students participating in online classrooms. As illustrated in Figure 3, respondents believed that their colleagues' primary reason for not turning on their webcams during online classes is to engage in other activities concurrently during online lectures (45.8 percent). They were followed by anxiety/fear of being exposed/shyness (19.5 percent). Another reason is the problem with the camera device on cellphones and laptops (14.4 percent). In addition, they desire to maintain the privacy of their home/personal space (13.6 percent).
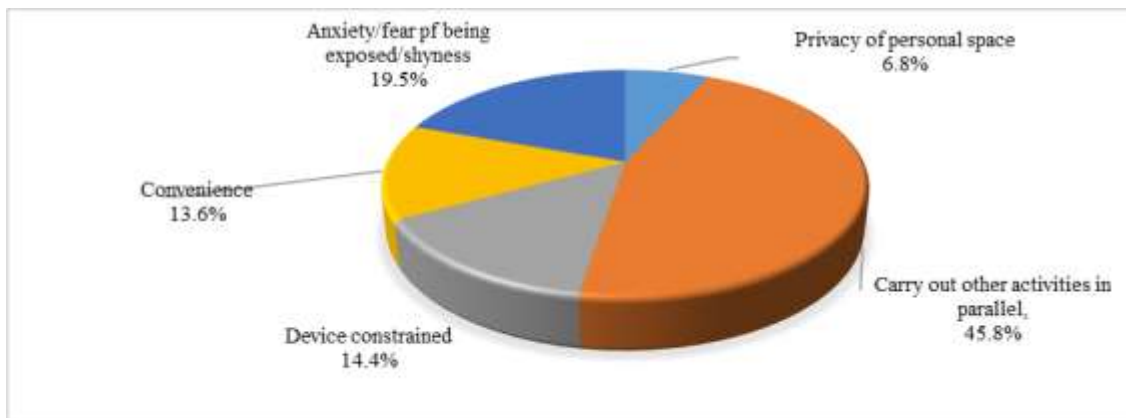

Figure 3. Students' reasons to keep their cameras turned off during online classes.

Calculating the approximate number of lectures and seminars during which students keep their webcams on, as well as the reasons behind this behavior. Although students are not required to do so, there have been instances when they wanted to have their webcams on while engaging in educational activities. Thus, the second research objective was to ascertain the estimated number of lectures and seminar/laboratory activities students leave their cameras on and the factors contributing to this behavior. According to the graph (Figure4), the majority of students go to their webcams during nine lectures (15.3%), followed by those who leave their webcams during five courses (14.4%). Nonetheless, it appeared as though certain teachers were requesting that students keep their webcams on during online classes with, as indicated by their responses to the question, "approximately how many courses are you required to keep your webcam on?" While they were not required to do so, several students decided to leave their webcams throughout online classes. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the explanations behind this behavior. The data results indicated that the primary reasons for these choices were respected for the teacher, facilitating discussion/better interaction with the teacher, and demonstrating that they are present and attentive in class.
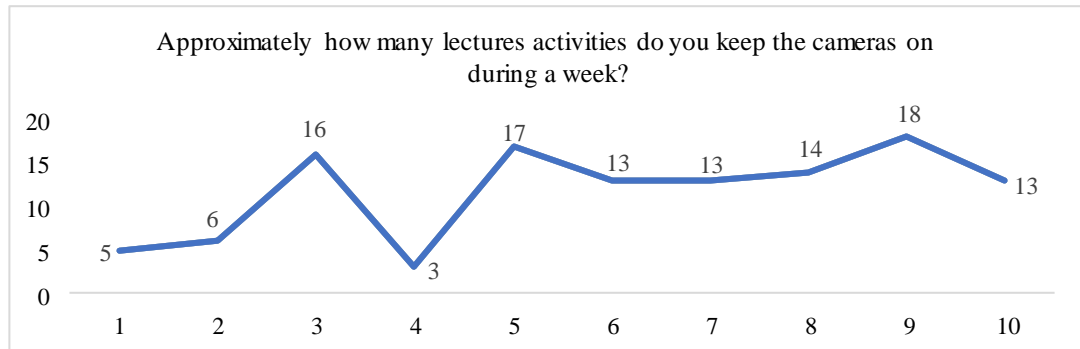
Approximately how many lectures activities do you keep the cameras on during a week?

Figure 4. Number of lectures activities when the cameras are kept on.

The environment/space in which students engage in educational activities is critical. Our study found that 82.4 percent of students had a dedicated area exclusively for online education in their houses. As illustrated in the figure below (Figure 5), space provided, on average and above average, for most respondents' home privacy and the privacy of the individuals they live with. The proportion of respondents who responded that these features are given "to a minor or very minor extent" was less than a fourth of the total sample.
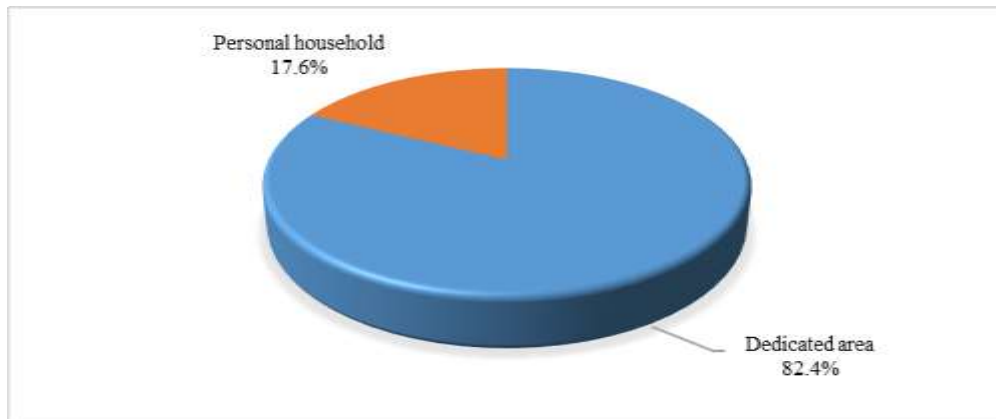

Figure 5. Characteristics of the environment in which students participate in online classes.

As illustrated in the figure below (Figure 6), the majority of students (75.4 percent) participated in online classes using a mobile phone a laptop (24.6 percent). While the mobile phone is generally regarded as an inadequate device for taking online courses in the technical field, an unexpectedly high number of students use their mobile phones to attend classes regularly due to its small screen size. One possible explanation is that they lack other equipment, with the mobile phone acting as their primary means of accessing online educational activities.
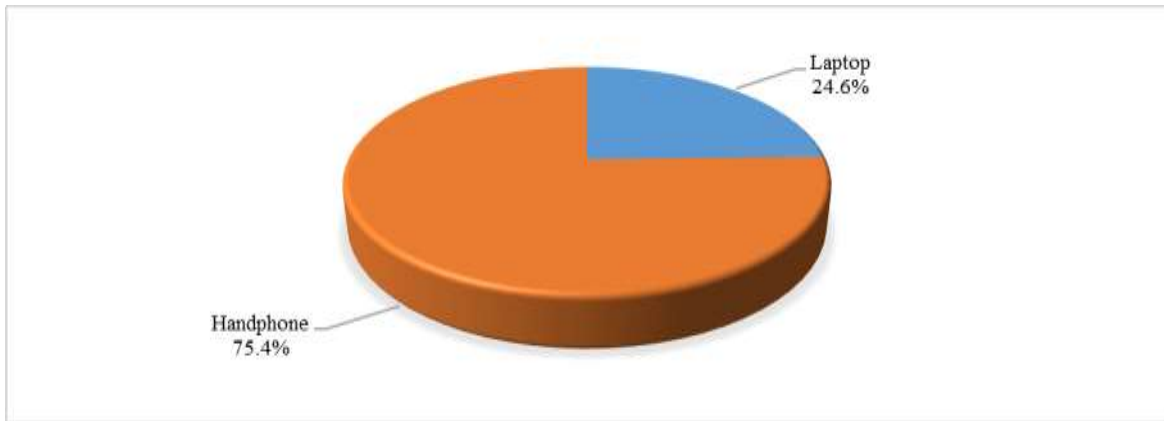
Figure 6. *A device used to attend online classes.*

Additionally, the research ought to ascertain students' behaviors while engaging in instructional activities in an online context. A surprising finding is that the student only listens to presentations made by lecturer educational activities. The students reported that they participate in other activities during their online education. When asked what other activities they do apart from online classes, most respondents answered that they have to help their parents (31.4 percent). The housework they have to do is washing dishes, washing clothes, and helping their mother in the cooking process. Work on other topics (22%), or eat/drink coffee/clean (16.1 percent). Other activities such as utilizing a mobile phone for various applications/games (11.9 percent) searching for information on the Internet were added to the list (10.2 percent).
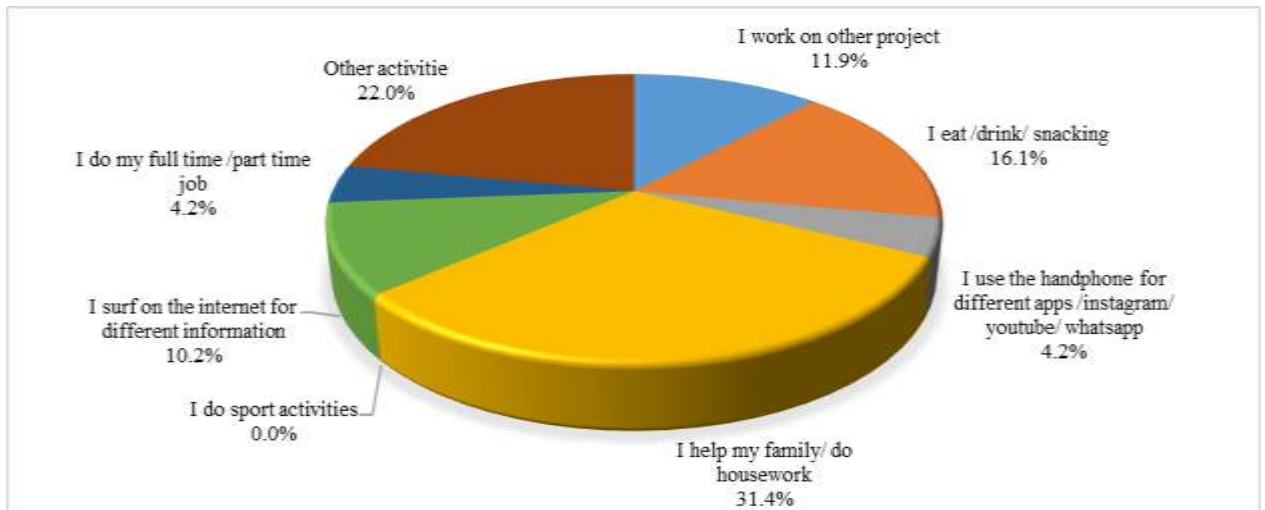

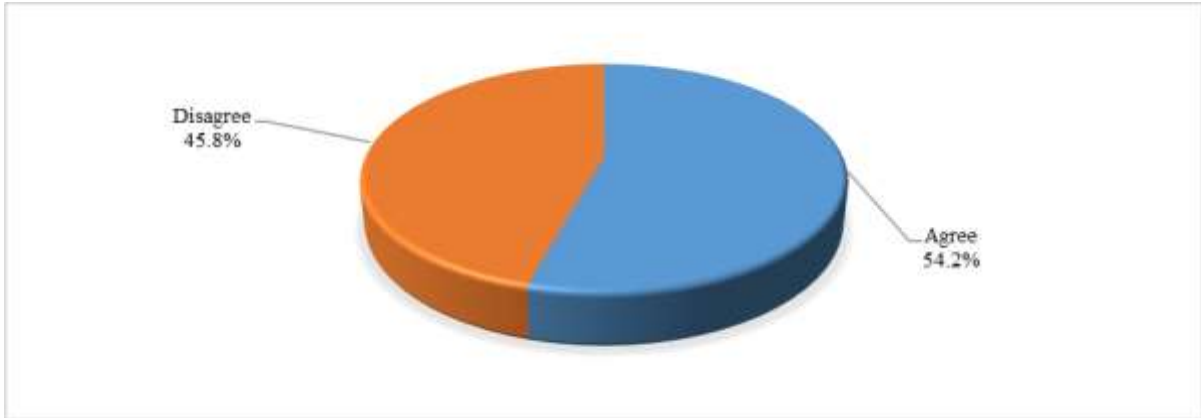*Figure 7*. *Parallel activities are carried out during online classes.*

Figure 8. Turning on the camera will make the lecture material easier.

When asked to respond to a question by the teacher, pupils claimed that they always have their camera on. Respondents admitted to sometimes engaging in this behavior, while the other admitted never opening the camera. Students think that online lectures by turning on the camera will make the lecture material easier to understand (54.2 percent). They believe that activating the camera is a form of participation, like in a discussion. On the other hand, 45.8 percent of students think that starting the camera does not make the lecture material easy to understand. They argue that there is no correlation between activating the camera and the lecture being easier to understand.
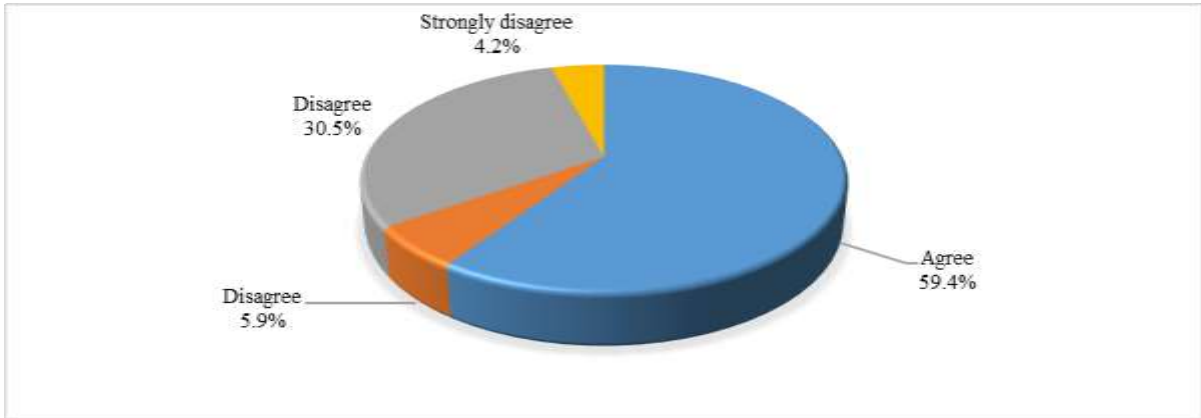

Figure 9. Students' perspectives on the mandate to turn on cameras during online classes

Activating the camera during online courses is a method of involving students in their education. However, students frequently purposely switch off the camera during lectures. While not all students engage in this behavior, it is less ethical. All students stated that they agreed with the lecturer requiring the camera to be activated during lectures. Otherwise, it was considered absent (59.3 percent). 30.5 percent of the students disagreed with the policy. They stated that as long as they participated in the online lecture room, it was part of their participation in the lecture. The issue of a weak signal is why many advocate purposefully turning off the camera, leading pupils to believe that it is impossible to switch on the camera when the signal is weak. This explanation creates quite a quandary over whether or not it is permissible to turn off the camera while recording. Additionally,

the procedure for activating the camera is not specified. Some lecturers insist that the camera be activated, while others impose no such requirement. The researchers in this study describe students' perspectives of their obligations to start the camera during lectures or risk being deemed absent.
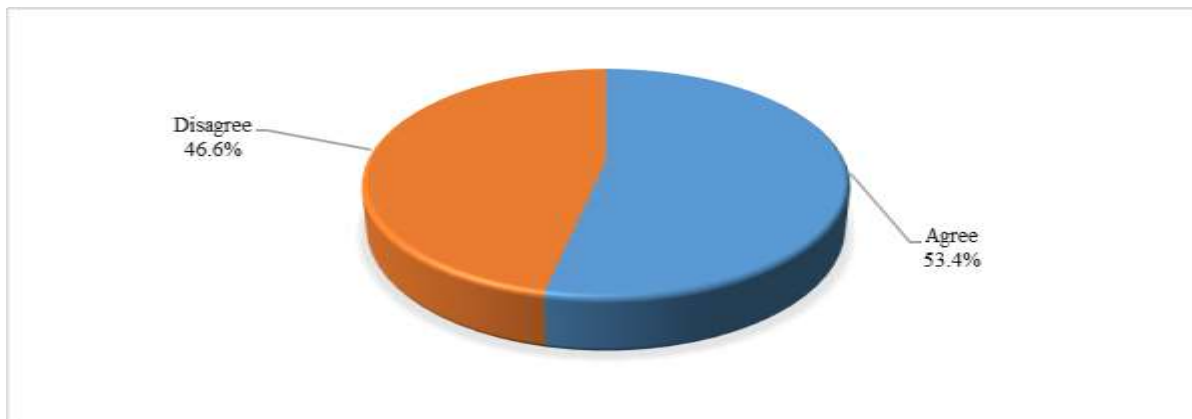

Figure 10. Students' perspectives on turning off the camera save internet data quota.

In addition to signals, internet data quota is a mandatory thing to take online lectures. More than half of students, 53.4 percent, chose not to turn on the camera to save data quota. They think that the data quota will run out faster if they depend on the camera. When the lecture takes place, we turn on the camera. However, if there are problems with the cellphone or laptop camera, please ask the lecturer for permission. Some lecturers do not require students to turn on the camera. Nevertheless, if the lecturer wants to do a question session, the next step is if the student wants to ask, the camera must be in mode.

When the present online education system is adjusted, new issues occur. What professors and lecturers find concerning is that practically all school pupils and students turn off their cameras when studying online via Zoom Meetings or Google Meet. The students reasoned that they might minimize their internet allowance by activating the features camera. Not only that, many students who are not prepared to attend courses, such as being unprepared and untidy, are frequently misunderstood by professors or lecturers. Maia, Berta Rodrigues, and Paulo César's (2020) research demonstrate that students tested during the pandemic era have significantly greater anxiety, sadness, and stress levels than students evaluated during regular periods. The findings indicate that the epidemic has a detrimental psychological effect on pupils. However, the professors attempted to make sense of this. However, few pupils or students take advantage of professors' or lecturers' forbearance and trust by engaging in illegal behavior. On the other hand, switching on the camera during the lecture has implications for the positive impact generated, such as assessing student comprehension and attention to learning, establishing communication, establishing emotional attachments, and avoiding outside activity learning processes. The benefits of turning off the camera while learning include the following: First, alleviating the burden of quotas and poor signal constraints; Second, increasing self-confidence, as each person's level of confidence varies; some are more confident off-camera, while others are more confident with on camera.

Many works of literature on education assert that pupils can only pay attention to classroom information for a limited period. Students' attention spans in class are typically about 10-15 minutes. Lecturers and students are separate in an online learning environment. Due to the geographical separation between lecturers and students in online

learning, lecturers are unable to supervise student actions directly, and hence there is no guarantee that they are paying attention to education (Wilson & Korn, 2007; Bunce, Flens, & Neiles, 2010; Szpunar et al., 2013). Students' propensity to engage in various other activities is well-documented in online education. There is much evidence demonstrating that when students use laptops or other internet-connected devices, they spend a significant amount of time on non-academic activities. Numerous studies indicate that this propensity has a detrimental effect on learning results, yet it is complicated to manage, particularly in online programs (Lepp et al. 2019; Alghamdi et al., 2020; Schmidt, 2020).

In the context of bold learning based on video conferences conducted by educators and followed by students from their respective homes, lecturers and students are in different locations. It creates space constraints that make it difficult for lecturers to observe what students are doing during learning. The absence of a physical lecturer makes students feel that there is no pressure to pay attention to the ongoing lectures. In addition, due to network limitations, students are allowed not to activate the camera, making it increasingly difficult for lecturers to unite students during learning. It is not easy to ensure that students pay attention to the learning material when online lectures. Connection to the internet network allows students to access different content simultaneously and distract them from learning, including social media. Many studies have assessed that social media can interfere with the learning process. (Andersson, Hatakka, Grönlund, & Wiklund, 2014; Purvis, Rodger, & Beckingham, 2016; Hollis & Was, 2016). Doing two or more things simultaneously (multitasking) in learning is common, especially in lectures. Participating in education while doing other activities, such as assignments in other courses, divides students' attention, so the learning experience is not optimal. It can affect learning outcomes and overall student performance in lectures.

IV. Conclusion

Turning on the camera during the lecture has implications for positive impacts such as measuring the level of understanding and student focus on lessons, creating communication, creating emotional bonds, and avoiding activities outside the learning process. However, it should also be noted that there are positive impacts of turning off the camera during learning, namely, First, reducing the burden of quotas issued and poor signal constraints, Second, increasing self-confidence because a person's level of confidence is different, some are confident, and some are off-camera. More satisfied with on camera.

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