

Investigating Learners' Experiences And Perspectives Towards The Distance Academic Interaction In Arabic Webinars

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Abstract

Since mid-2020, mostly caused by the Covid-19 outbreak which forced almost all academic activities involving massive participants to be cancelled due to health and safety reasons, the webinar suddenly became a very famous activity among learners. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the learners' experience and perspective in this type of academic interaction, especially in Arabic webinar activity. Since this kind of interaction has become an upward trend that is applied massively by almost all institutions, observing it through a cross-sectional survey could be significant research. Thus, we use mixed (quantitative and qualitative-descriptive) methods to explore not only the perspectives of the participants but also to describe their experiences. It starts by providing data from survey results, classifying, analyzing, and presenting the analysis. Based on the recorded learners' experience, it can be noticed that the Arabic webinars held by various Arabic language academies and institutions across the world were considered quite effective and efficient. Even though there are still many obstacles and shortcomings, especially from a technical point of view, this kind of web-based seminar can be one of the promising alternatives for Arabic learning when the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. Most of the participants were satisfied with the performance of the Arabic language webinars they have participated in, indicated by a high score in the general assessment.

Keywords: Learners' Experiences; Arabic Webinar; Distance Learning; Online Academic Interactions

المخلص

منذ منتصف عام ٢٠٢٠، بسبب جائحة كوفيد-١٩ الذي أجبر تقريبًا جميع الأنشطة الأكاديمية التي تنطوي على مشاركين هائلين لأسباب تتعلق بالصحة والسلامة، أصبحت الندوة الافتراضية عبر الإنترنت فجأة نشاطًا مشهورًا للغاية بين المتعلمين. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في تجربة المتعلمين ومنظورهم في هذا النوع من التفاعل الأكاديمي، لا سيما في نشاط الندوة العربية على الإنترنت. نظرًا لأن هذا النوع من التفاعل أصبح اتجاهًا تصاعديًا يتم تطبيقه على نطاق واسع من قبل جميع المؤسسات تقريبًا، فقد تكون مراقبته من خلال الاستبيان دراسة مهمة. وبالتالي، فإننا نستخدم طريقة مختلطة (كمية ونوعية - وصفية) لاستكشاف وجهات نظر المشاركين عن الندوات

وكذلك لوصف تجاربهم، بدأ من توفير البيانات من نتائج الاستبيان والتصنيف والتحليل وتقديم التحليل. وبناءً على تجربة المتعلمين المسجلة، يمكن أن نلاحظ أن الندوات الافتراضية عبر الإنترنت العربية التي نظمتها العديد من أكاديميات ومؤسسات اللغة العربية في جميع أنحاء العالم كانت فعالة للغاية. على الرغم من وجود العديد من العوائق وأوجه القصور، يمكن أن يكون هذا النوع من الندوات على شبكة الإنترنت أحد البدائل الواعدة لتعلم اللغة العربية عندما لا يزال جائحة كوفيد-19 مستمرًا. كان معظم المشاركين راضين عن أداء ندوات اللغة العربية عبر الإنترنت التي شاركوا فيها، مما يدل على ارتفاع درجاتهم في التقييم العام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تجارب المتعلمين؛ ندوة عربية افتراضية؛ ندوة عبر الإنترنت؛ الدراسة عن بعد؛ التفاعلات الأكاديمية

INTRODUCTION

The online learning manifested in the web-based seminar (webinar) in the Covid-19 pandemic era is now one of the most popular activities among learners, in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility in its participation all over the world (Li & Lalani, 2020; Huang et al, 2020; Lieser et al, 2018; Sulisworo, 2020). Almost all institutions -during this pandemic outbreak- organizing this kind of activity, especially in the field of education (schools, universities, etc.). Therefore, this activity, of course, is also massively organized by higher education institutions concerned with the field of Arabic in Indonesia, as if they are competing to execute web-based Arabic seminars in various fields, including education, linguistics, literature, and others. A couple of conveniences perceived by organizers and participants are considered to be the main cause of the proliferation of activities like this.

Based on information reported by various mass media in Indonesia (Alfarisi, 2020), it shows that almost every Arabic language program from some universities organizing this activity with various objectives, including to develop and expand the horizons of Arabic language as well as promoting and uplifting the name of the institution to the wider range of social-academic relations, both nationally and internationally. However, research on webinar activities, especially in the field of Arabic from the perspective and experience point of view of the participants, still needs to be elaborated more broadly because it still escapes the attention of many people.

Arabic distance learning is not something merely new (Aosh, 2001; Redkin & Bernikova, 2014). There are dozens of online learning platforms and institutions serving Arabic as one of their commodities (Kennedy, 2020), both in one-way learning by reading and listening to materials and videos, or in a reciprocal way by directly interacting with selected instructors who guide the participants. Nevertheless, this kind of learning activity is seemingly not as famous as an ordinary (offline) learning method. Online learning cannot provide many of the informal social interactions between learners and instructors (Loeb, 2020). This could be a kind of a blessing in disguise. On the one hand, many people have been affected by this pandemic, but on the other hand, it has forced

academic spaces which usually require relatively high costs to become very affordable for most groups, only by relying on smartphones and adequate Internet quotas.

Webinars is an online-synchronous learning activity because it enables simultaneous and direct interaction between speakers (lecturers) and students (students) at the same time (Sheth, 2020; Arivananthan, 2015; Ebner & Gegenfurtner, 2019). Ebner & Gegenfurtner (2019) argued that descriptively, webinars are more effective in increasing student understanding compared to online-asynchronous and face-to-face learning. However, this satisfaction is directly proportional to a supportive learning environment such as the availability of the Internet and computer devices. Regarding comparisons between academic interactions in classrooms and cyberspace, Bernard et al (2004) have compared distance learning with learning or instruction in classrooms. The results show that distance learning through a variety of available applications is rated as superior to classroom instruction. However, it also depends on the method applied, that in general, mean achievement effect sizes for synchronous applications favored classroom instruction, while effect sizes for asynchronous applications favored distance education (Bernard et al, 2004; Bernard et al, 2009).

Hoke et al (2018) investigated the effectiveness of webinars in implementing proven school health strategies and described a webinar delivery approach to improve school health efforts. They concluded that webinars could provide relatively viable teaching and educational methods for school personnel interested in strategies for improving the school's health environment. This research requires further research to determine the best strategy for promoting webinar engagement. In line with this research, Wegner et al (2019) also researched the field of health education entitled: webinars to continue education in oral and maxillary surgery. Participant satisfaction was evaluated by employing an online questionnaire on a series of twelve webinars streamed over the internet. The results of the questionnaire show the positive attitude of the participants towards this kind of webinar. Participants noted that the webinar allowed for a relatively adequate transfer of knowledge.

In the context of enlivening the research related to the webinar, this research was conducted to investigate experiences and perspectives of various groups of Indonesian Arabic learners -including students, teachers, and lecturers- regarding the distance academic interaction, particularly those relating to Arabic web-based seminars -known as webinar-, ranging from its literature, linguistics, and learning strategies. In few recent months, mostly caused by the Covid-19 outbreak which forced -almost all academic activities involving a massive crowd of participants to be delayed due to health reasons, the webinar suddenly became a very famous activity among learners and educators -including Arabic. Surprisingly, since in recent months, web-based seminars began to emerge one by one organized by various institutions. To investigate the participants' experiences of long-distance academic interactions of the Arabic webinar, we conducted a broad survey of Arabic observers, including teachers, lecturers, and students from various institutions. It is hoped that the results of this research can be used practically by anyone who wants to hold a webinar, whether for Arabic or in other fields of study, properly and well-organized.

METHOD

In this study, a cross-sectional survey was implemented. The participants are coming from various academic backgrounds and degrees such as students, teachers, and lecturers of Arabic. Level of education obtained, professions or status, years of study (specifically for students), institutions, and areas of expertise of the participants are components of the academic background considered in this research. The collection of responses for this survey was held in June-July 2020, a time when web-based seminars (webinars) are in high enthusiasm by various groups of Arabic observers in Indonesia. This survey was conducted online due to its efficiency and the riskiness of the Covid-19 pandemic condition which made it impossible to conduct face-to-face sampling.

This study relies on a questionnaire through participants' observation. The questionnaire is composed of four parts: (1) participant's academic background - including profession, level, institution, and their interest of study, (2) experience, (3) perspective based on their experience, and (4) suggestions or considerations. The participants were asked to provide answers to the questions and were expected to submit their perspectives and suggestions on several statements related to the Arabic webinar execution which they have been attending, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak at the beginning of March 2020. Therefore, the Likert scale is highly relied on to measure perspectives, attitudes, and opinions from a group of various respondents (participants) of this study. With this scale, participants were asked to complete the questionnaire that required them to indicate their level of agreement with a series of questions (Likert, 1932; Boone & Boone, 2012; Joshi et al, 2015).

This questionnaire covers 26 questions consisting of 8 experience questions (E1-E8), 20 perspective questions (P1-P20), 5 suggestions or considerations based on the participant's experience (S1-S5), and a question about average assessment (rating). The perspective questions or statements in this topic are extracted and labeled as: positive sentiment -representing the satisfaction felt by the Arabic webinar participants through agreement towards P1-P9; negative sentiment -representing the disappointment felt by the participants through agreement towards P10-P15; and ideal sentiment -representing the perspective of several ideal conditions from the participants through agreement towards P16-P20.

To measure participant's perspectives -as mentioned before- we used the Likert scale, hence the answers of questions P are labeled with the scale of 1-5 points representing a strongly disagree (1) to a strongly agree (5). The perspective score ranges from 20-100 points - the higher the score obtained indicates a higher level of agreement. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha is employed (Cronbach, 1990; Bryman & Bell, 2007; Taber, 2018; Bonet & Wright, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this perspective questionnaire reached 0.7, showing good reliability (Taber, 2018). All question items and answer choices are presented in **Table 1** as follows:

Table 1. The Statements Towards Webinar

Questions	Answers
<i>Experience</i>	
1. E1. Have you ever participated in an Arabic webinar?	Multiple choice: Yes; No
2. E.2 If Yes, how many Arabic webinars have you participated in (especially during the COVID-19 pandemic)?	Dropdown; 1;2;3;4;5; more than 5

3. E3. In what scope have you participated those webinars? Checkboxes: Regional; National; International
4. E4. In what field of study have you participated the Arabic webinar? Checkboxes: Arabic Language Education; Arabic Linguistics; Arabic Literature; Arabic Skills; Arabic Corpus; Arabic Research Methods; Arabic Translation; Writing Arabic Articles; Others
5. E5. What is the language of instruction used in the webinar? Checkboxes: Arabic; Indonesian; Mixed (Arabic - Indonesian); Others
6. E6. What is web or video conference tool used in the webinar? Checkboxes: Zoom, Google Meet; Webex; Skype; Others
7. E7. What are the factors or motivations that make you interested to attend the language webinar? Checkboxes: Topic; Speaker; Organizer; Scope; E-Certificate; Cheap (Free); Others
8. E8. If you haven't, are there any plans or wishes to take part in an Arabic webinar in the future? (specifically, for those who have never participated in a webinar) Multiple choices: Yes; No; Uninitiated

Perspective: Positive

9. P1. (Arabic) Webinars can be attended anywhere and anytime (p) Strongly Disagree - SD (1), Disagree - D (2), Neutral - N (3), Agree - A (4), Strongly Agree - SA (5)
10. P2. Attending Webinars is more cost-effective (compare to offline seminars) (p)
11. P3. Webinars allow us to be able to interact directly with many other participants at once (p)
12. P4. Attending Webinars can build or expand professional networks (p)
13. P5. Webinar activities can be easily documented, so we can watch again any time if needed (p)
14. P6. Webinars can be attended while doing other work (multitasking) (p)
15. P7. Speakers or panelists in Arabic-Webinars master their presentation materials well (p)
16. P8. Lectures in Webinars are relatively effective and easier to understand (clear and concise) (p)
17. P9. Webinar participants are relatively obedient and condition themselves (p)

Perspective: Negative

18. P10. Webinar activities are vulnerable to technical problems (e.g. unstable connection, power outages, low-bat gadgets, and running out of Internet package) (n)
19. P11. Webinar activities are vulnerable to non-technical problems (e.g. heavy rain, crowded, and disturbed by nosy friends) (n)
20. P12. Webinar activities are vulnerable to exploitation by irresponsible parties (data hackers) (n)
21. P13. Attending Webinars with a Web/Video Conference application consumes Internet quota very quickly (n)
22. P14. Lectures in Webinars tend to be monotonous and boring (n)
23. P15. Communication between participants and presenters of the Webinars was not ideal (n)

Perspective: Neutral

24. P16. A good and reliable Internet connection is required to attending Webinars (neutral)

25. P17. To run properly, the host of Webinars must always be focused and have multitasking abilities (neutral)
26. P18. The organizers need to create a WhatsApp group to convey information about Webinars needed by participants (neutral)
27. P19. The organizers need to ensure technical readiness (audio & video) from the presenters to minimize obstacles during the event (neutral)
28. P20. The organizers need to convey the rules in detail a moment before the Webinars activity take place (neutral)

Suggestions

29. S1. If you agree (or strongly agree) to P4, in your opinion, how to build or expand the professional network through the Arabic-Webinar? Short or long answer text
30. S2. If you agree (or strongly agree) to P13, in your opinion, what is the ideal length of time (duration) for a Webinar activity to avoid spending too much Internet quota?
31. S3. If you agree (or strongly agree) to P14, in your opinion, what are your suggestions so that the lecture delivery in a Webinar is not monotonous and boring?
32. S4. If you agree (or strongly agree) to P15, in your opinion, how can the speaker-participant communication be well established in the Webinar?
33. S5. If any, please submit your suggestion so that the Arabic-Webinar execution in its various fields of study will be even better in the future

Average Rating

34. From 1-10, give the average rating of all Arabic webinar activities you have participated in! Linear scale (1-10)

As previously stated, we used a comprehensive questionnaire to gather information from Arabic webinar participants regarding their experiences, perspectives, suggestions, and general assessment. Participants' responses that showed their experiences, attitudes, and perspectives towards the distance academic interaction in the Arabic webinar were illustrated with frequency and percentage. NVivo application is also employed to code the responses of participants collected in terms of their sentiments towards the distance academic interaction in Arabic webinars.

Thus, the researcher conducted an elaboration and review of the data that had been collected from the answers of the webinar participants to the questionnaire - as well as the data collected in this study in the form of textual information. According to Liu (2010), textual information could be broadly categorized into two main types: facts and opinions. Facts are objective expressions about entities, events, and their properties, while opinions are usually subjective expressions that describe people's sentiments, appraisals, or feelings toward entities, events, and their properties (Liu, 2010; Riesman & Glazer, 1948).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When we close the survey, which has been going on for approximately two weeks since the questionnaire was distributed in mid-June 2020, 137 participants of Arabic observers were contributed to this research -coming from various academic backgrounds. Considering from participant's level of academic degree, based on the latest data recorded

in this survey, participants with master's degrees were the most participants (69.4%), while the rest of them (10.7%) had doctorate degrees, undergraduate degrees (8.3%), and students (11.6%) who have not yet received an academic degree. Based on their status or profession, 44.6% of all participants are university lecturers, while the rest of them (38%) are students and (17.4%) Arabic teachers who teach in several schools in Indonesia.

Table 2. Distribution Of Participants

Factors	Parameters	N
Academic Level	Bachelor	13
	Master	89
	Doctoral	13
	No-Degree (Bachelor Student)	22
Profession	Students (Bachelor & Master)	61
	Teacher	22
	Lecturer (University)	54
Expertise (of Arabic)	Education	111
	Linguistics	12
	Literature	10
	Other	4
Institution	University	121
	Schools	16
Total Number of Participants		137

Based on the recorded participants' experience through their answers to E questions (E1-E8), it shows that 89.1% (124) of total participants in this survey had participated in Arabic web-based seminar (webinar), while the rest of them (14) had never taken any Arabic webinar, but the majority of them (90.2%) -who have never participated- committed to taking part in a webinar in the future if the event caught their attention. According to the number of attendances in the Arabic webinars, most of them (38%) have participated in more than 5 Arabic webinars. The highest motivation of the Arabic webinar participants was related to the title or topic of the webinar that was attended (86.2%), while subsequently influenced by the speakers (80.2%), affordable cost (mostly free-entry) (59.5%), and e-certificates availability (56%) -if we calculate the percentage it is not even 100% due to the options to choose more than one answer through checkboxes is provided.

Furthermore, in terms of the scope of the events participated, national Arabic webinars held by Arabic study programs from various universities in Indonesia occupy the highest percentage (84.7%). "Zoom" is the most popular web conference application used in the Arabic webinars (95.2%), while the language of instruction is mostly mixing Arabic and Indonesian by turns (91.2%). This mixing code is employed to make it easier for participants -especially novice Arabic learners- to understand what is presented by the speakers and at the same time so as not to eliminate the participants' impression that the event is ideally delivered in Arabic.

Table 3. List of Participants Experiences Participating in Arabic Webinar

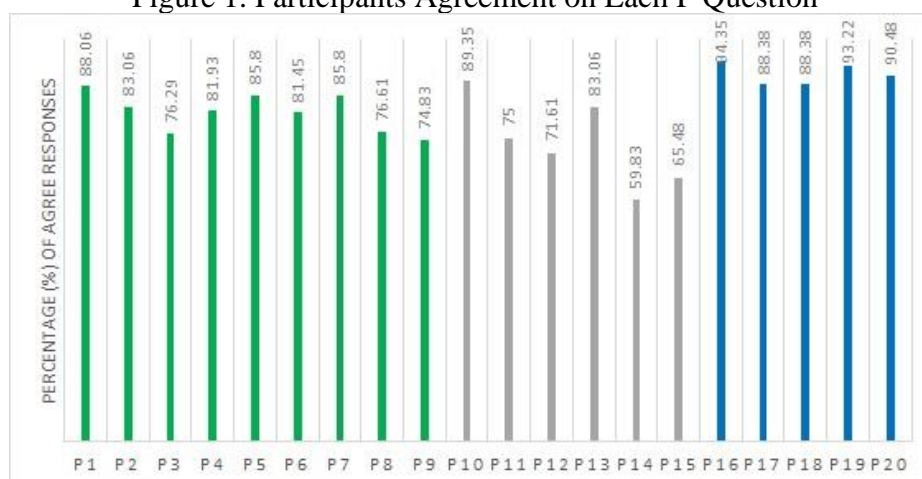
Experience Points	Answers	Percentage (%)
Participation	Presence	89.8
	No Presence	10.2
Number of Attendance	More than 5 Times	37.1
	One Time	16.1
Scope	National	84.6
	International	48

Field of (Arabic) Study	Language Education	82.9
	Linguistics	52
	Language Skills	50.4
	Research Methods	35
	Academic Writing	29.3
Webinar Platform	Zoom	95.2
	Google Meet	45.2
	Cisco Webex	8.8
Language of Instruction	Mixed (Arabic-Indonesian)	91.1
	Arabic	39.5
Motivations	Seminar Topics	85.6
	Speakers	78.4
	Free-Entry	60.8
	E-Certificate	56
Desire to be Attend. (Never Participated-only)	Yes	92

Note: The sum of percentage is not even 100% due to several questions that enable participants to choose more than one answer through checkboxes is provided

Participants' perspectives on long-distance academic interactions in Arabic webinars in this study were calculated with the Likert scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) based on their answers to all of the P questions (P1-P20) submitted in this questionnaire that had been widely distributed. As the result, all participants responses to P questions are in the range of 59.83 to 94.35 points with an average total score of 81.65 points (SD: 6.16) showing a good level of their agreement towards P statements -which if it is converted into a percentage, the number remains the same as result point because the highest score each participant can get is 100 points (5 * 20 questions). If the total score of each participant is converted back to the scale of 1-5, then participants who agree (with an average score of 4) are 121 (87.68%), and who is neutral or hesitant (with an average score of 3) as many as 3 (2.17%), thus, participants classified as not stated due to their absence in Arabic webinars are 14 (10.14%). Furthermore, when we specified from the percentage of agree and (strongly agree) responses to all questions P, it is known that the average response of participants was 81.64%, with the lowest percentage being 59.83% (item P14) and the highest was 94.35% (item P16)

Figure 1. Participants Agreement on Each P Question



Note: This response is also classified in three parts of sentiments (perspectives) - positive (P1-P9), negative (P10-P15), and ideal (P16-P20), to measure the level of

participants satisfaction with the management and execution of distance academic activities in Arabic webinars during this new normal era. Based on the recorded responses, the average percentage (%) of each sentiment is reaching 81.53, 74.05, and 90.96 respectively.

The data is then explained based on the academic background variables of the participants. It is known that the average yield obtained by each parameter in the variable described has a various range of gap points, although not as many (ranging from -1.65 to +3.62 with an overall point average of 81.65).

Table 4. Participants responses towards P1-P20 by academic variables

Variables	Parameters	Points	Range of Gap
Levels	Bachelor	85.27	+3.62
	Master	81.08	-0.57
	Doctorate	82.09	+0.44
	Student (No-Degree)	81.79	+0.14
Professions	Student	81.85	+0.2
	Teacher	82.65	+1
	University Lecturer	81.02	-0.63
Expertise (in Arabic Fields)	Education	81.70	+0.05
	Linguistics	80	-1.65
	Literature	82	+0.35
	Other	-	-

Note: The range of the gap is measured by comparing the points obtained for each parameter with the average points overall. Based on the results of these calculations we decided not to calculate variations based on the combination of these parameters in a hierarchical way, because the range of the gap points also did not contribute significantly.

In this survey we also included several questions related to the suggestions from the participants regarding the execution and management of Arabic webinars based on their perspectives and experiences to make a better and more conducive Arabic webinar in the future through S1-S5 questions -which 4 of all S questions are related to participants perspectives and their agreement to several questions P. S1 linked to P4 dealing with the way to expand the professional network, S2 linked to P13 regarding the ideal length for a webinar activity in participants perspective, S3 linked to P14 dealing with the way to convey a lecture so that participants do not feel bored, and S4 linked to P15 dealing with the way for an ideal participant-speaker communication, while S5 is a general suggestion regarding organizing Arabic webinars. From the recorded responses of the questionnaire, it is known that not all participants provide suggestions or opinions related to the webinar activities they have participated in -the questions regarding the suggestions are not mandatory, especially those who have never participated. The suggestions regarding the distance academic interaction of Arabic webinars are summarized based on the most frequent opinions in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5. Participants suggestions towards distance academic interaction

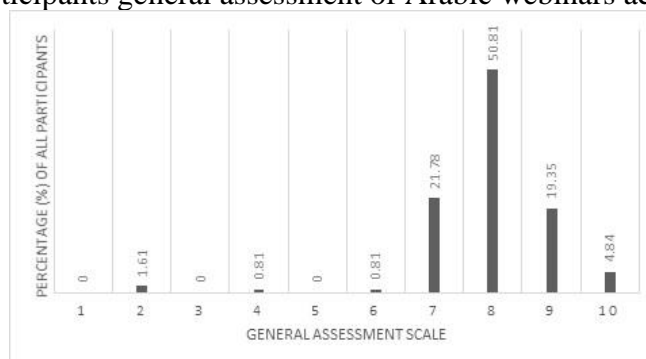
Suggestions	Frequent Answers	Percentage (%)
S1; Expanding the professional network	Get intense communication after the webinar (personal or group)	63.64
	Make a research collaboration	13.64
	Taking part in regular Arabic webinar	13.64
	Others	9.09

S2; Ideal length of a webinar activity	1 hour	29.59
	1.5 hours	20.41
	2 hours	35.71
	Others (less than an hour or more than 2 hours)	14.29
S3; The way to make a presentation not being bored	Straight to the point	22.81
	Interspersed with some entertainments (e. g. jokes & quizzes)	21.05
	Need to be more creative and interactive	43.86
	Others	12.28
S4; Ideal participants-speaker communication	Open more opportunities (times) for participants to ask	34.09
	Questions need to be well compiled and responded	20.45
	Occasionally greet the participants and interact through chat rooms	13.64
	The moderator must be able to bridge the communication well	20.45
	Others	11.36
S5; General suggestion	Need a better technical preparation	24.67
	Choose an up to date topics and qualified speakers	15.58
	Recorded and streamed on a YOUTUBE channel	12.98
	Straight to the point of presentations (no need for welcome speech)	9.09
	Arabic webinar must be a regular and sustainable activity	12.98
	The materials are shared right before presentations	10.39
	Surveying prospective participants	7.79
Others	6.49	

Note: We summarized all suggestions in general, without grouping based on participants' variation. A more detailed explanation is presented in the discussion section.

In the last part of this questionnaire, a general assessment is engaged to provide an overall score related to the execution and management of Arabic webinars activities that have been carried out by several institutions (Arabic study programs) concerned with the development of the Arabic language in various fields. This assessment was done to illustrate the satisfaction of the participants with the long-distance academic interaction that took place during and after the Arabic webinars -which almost all participants (96.78%) were satisfied with the performance of the Arabic language webinars, indicated by scores ranging from 7 to 10.

Figure 2. Participants general assessment of Arabic webinars accomplishment



DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, considering from the variable of respondents who have participated, the respondents holding master's degrees and working as lecturers were the most respondents in this survey (**Table 2**). It shows that this kind of profession requires its practitioners to always upgrade their knowledge from time to time for sure (Ibrayev, 2014). The seminars on the Arabic language, especially those that are almost all in the web-based activity in this Covid-19 outbreak period, are widely attended by Arabic lecturers to broaden and deepen their knowledge, especially those related to new things and up-to-date matters following their fields of expertise.

From all of the respondents who have attended the Arabic webinar, in terms of the number of attendances, on average, they have attended more than five Arabic webinars (37.1%). This implies several things, especially related to their motivation in participating in those webinars. Several factors cause this Arabic web-based seminar to become a very popular activity among the Arabic learners, which even when we compared it to offline seminars as usual the participants are on average far higher (especially during this pandemic period). The topic of the seminar, the figures, and the expertise of the speakers were still the main attraction of the participants to attend the webinar. This shows that the enthusiasm of learning of webinar participants, with all its limitations, was quite high, although the "affordable" factor and the availability of free e-certificates contributed to a significant attendance rate. (**Table 3**).

Zoom is still a widely used application for Arabic-language webinars. The massive use of this application during the pandemic -which is also called the "Zoom bombing" phenomenon - because it has a simple user interface, easy to use, and relatively inexpensive (free to use every 40 minutes) (Carman, 2020; Sherman; 2020), even some institutions have started subscribing this application in the premium version so it can accommodate a large number of participants and unlimited webinar time. In terms of the language of instruction, the mixing Arabic and Indonesian by turns is in the highest result (91.2%). This mixing is employed to make it easier for participants -especially the novice Arabic learners- to understand what is presented by the speakers and at the same time so as not to eliminate the participants' impression that the event is ideally delivered in Arabic.

As stated in the findings, the participants' perspectives and attitudes towards organizing Arabic webinars were calculated using a Likert scale (1-5 points) based on the results of the participant's responses to the statements (P1-P20) contained in the questionnaire. The result shows that the participants' responses reached an average of 81.65% of total points indicating their agreement towards P statements. Approval of the statements in the questionnaire is divided into three parts, (1) a positive perspective that contains statements that support the implementation of Arabic webinars with an average of 81.53%, (2) negative perspectives containing statements that do not support the holding of language webinars Arabic reaches 74.05%, and (3) the neutral or ideal perspective which contains statements related to ideal conditions in the activities of an Arabic webinar reaches 90.96%. If these three parts are compared, the participants' responses to statements regarding the ideal conditions of a webinar and also the positive perspective on holding a webinar look superior, so it can be concluded that from the participants' point of view, the Arabic webinars conducted by several Arabic language institutions were carried out well, even though, of course, there are some obstacles,

shortcomings, and ideal conditions that still need to be working on (so that the next webinar will be better).

When it is reviewed from the percentage of points earned on each of the P1-P20 questions, the highest agreement score is in P16 (94.35%) which states that lectures in Arabic webinars are relatively effective and easier to understand (clear and concise). This shows that the participants of the language webinar do not find it difficult to understand the materials presented by the speakers in the webinar even though they are not present face-to-face like in normal conditions. The lowest percentage of points of agreement was at P14 (59.83%) which stated that webinars could be attended while working on other work or in other words, it was done in multitasking. This shows that although this webinar can be followed anytime and anywhere - if the device and internet connection are available, the participants do not agree if the webinar activity is interspersed with other work. They think that participating in Arabic webinars also requires good focus so that the material presented by the speaker can be understood properly.

There are also a couple of questions related to suggestions and opinions (S) on organizing language webinars which we also include in the questionnaire. The questions related to these suggestions include 5 things: (S1) expanding professional network, (2) ideal length of time of a webinar activity, (3) the way to make a presentation not being bored, (4) the ideal participants-speaker communication during the webinar, and (5) general suggestion for a better Arabic webinar in the future. The results of the responses from the participants are presented based on the most frequent opinions or suggestions in table 5.

Regarding the S1 question -about expanding professional networks, the most suggestions or opinions from participants are to get an intense communication after the webinar has been done. Intense communication can be realized in many ways, one of them is by creating a WhatsApp group consisting of professionals and experts in the field of Arabic, which is expected through this group to exchange information, share knowledge, and so on. The second-largest suggestion is to conduct collaborative research. Of course, meeting with some experts in the field of Arabic in this forum also possibly allows the emergence of research ideas, so that research collaboration between institutions can also be an alternative to develop professional networks in the field of Arabic (Lee & Bozeman, 2005). The statements that represent the findings include:

- *Creating a WA group so that they can share everything about Arabic so that the webinar participants get closer and our knowledge will increase*
- *By creating a WhatsApp or Telegram group, participants can communicate with each other, exchange ideas and views, and carry out research collaborations*

Regarding the S2 question -about the length of time to take an Arabic webinar, most of the participants felt that two hours was the most ideal time, not too short and not too long. According to them, it is a necessity to provide a sufficient Internet quota to take part in a webinar, but this must be paid off because we don't have to pay more for accommodation. As for the S3 question -about how to deliver presentations, most participants wanted the presentation to be more creative and interactive so that the participants would not feel bored or even sleepy when they were paying attention to the presentation of the material in the presentation. One of the statements that represent the findings include:

- *Whether a webinar is boring or not depends on the speaker; if the speaker could convey the material well, not-so-complicated, funny, and could master the situation, the webinar will also be fun and not boring*

Furthermore, regarding the S4 question -about the ideal participant-speaker communication, most participants felt that the committee or organizers needed to provide more time and opportunity for them to be able to ask questions and discuss during the webinar because they felt they did not have enough time and opportunity to ask questions and conveyed his ideas in the forum because in an Arabic webinar time usually runs out with only the presentation of material from the speakers. In addition, what is equally important is the ability of the moderator to properly bridge communication between participants and presenters. If the moderator does not have good communication skills, it will disrupt the course of the event or even give a negative image to the organizer (Pfeiffer, 1998). One of the statements that represent the findings include:

- *Hosts or moderators must be alert in responding to incoming questions, both direct questions and those submitted via group chat. In addition, the organizers should be able to provide opportunities for participants to ask questions. The time for the questioning session is at least the same or even longer than the presentation of the material.*

Regarding the last question (S5) about general suggestions for a better webinar implementation, we note that there are a couple of suggestions that the organizers can make, including the need for better technical preparation. Technical problems, such as an unstable internet connection, running out of Internet quota in the middle of the event, the microphone not being heard clearly, and so on. Good preparation, especially from a technical point of view, will have effects on the smoothness and success of the webinar. In addition, other suggestions that were also conveyed by the participants included the selection of well-qualified speakers and up to date topics, organizing Arabic language webinars regularly and continuously, records and streams a webinar activity on a YOUTUBE channel, straight to the point of presentation (no need for long welcome speech), and so on. Here are some statements regarding the general suggestions:

- *Speakers, hosts, and anyone else with a role in the webinar enters the room at least 30 minutes before the webinar activity begins. for checking audio, video, and anything related to event readiness.*
- *Ensure that all participants take part in the webinar according to the agreed rules. In addition, you should provide a streaming or recording channel on YouTube*
- *There should not be too many events like normal formal events (normal), such as welcoming speeches so that each speaker is given sufficient time to explain the material.*

Lastly, we also carry out a general assessment to find out the level of satisfaction of the participants with the implementation of language webinars that are organized by various Arabic Language Institutions or institutions. The results show that with all the strengths and weaknesses, in general, the most of participants (96.78%) are satisfied with the performance and implementation of the language webinars they have participated in as presented in figure 2. This is shown by the enthusiasm of the webinar participants who often exceed the predetermined capacity. Of course, this satisfaction is directly proportional to the good facilities and services provided by the organizers, such as the

availability of e-certificates and relatively affordable (even free) participation fees. In addition, as participants, they do not need to spend excessive accommodation costs, especially if the seminar is held outside the city or even abroad.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it can be noted that the Arabic web-based seminars held by various Arabic language institutions across the world were considered quite effective and efficient. This kind of web-based seminar can be one of the promising alternatives for Arabic learning when the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing and has not ended. Almost all participants (96.78%) were satisfied with the performance of the Arabic language webinars they have participated in, indicated by scores ranging from 7 to 10. Although there are obstacles and deficiencies in several aspects, especially the need for supported devices and reliable Internet connection, at least these online academic spheres can provide a wonderful impression in terms of Arabic learning in this New-Normal era. As discussed above, academic interaction in Arabic Webinars is quite an effective and wise choice for educational institutions to hold and serve various seminars with the all limitations of access to the crowd in the context of physical distancing rules, as well as the right choice for learners to keep their enthusiasm for learning during Covid-19 pandemic.

This research is intended to explore the perspectives and attitudes of Arabic webinar participants regarding their experiences in long-distance academic interactions which have become a trend in the realm of education during the current Covid-19 pandemic, so of course, this study is still limited from the participant's point of view. Thus, it is better if this research still needs to be developed from another perspective or point of view, for example from the point of view of the organizer to find out their motivation in holding the webinar or even to compare the two perspectives (participants and organizers) to find common ground between expectations and realities in the implementation of Arabic language webinars.

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