

## Japanese Language Learning Consistency in the New Normal Era

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### ABSTRACT

*This research was motivated by the pandemic which resulted in many restricted outdoor activities. The existence of restrictions on outdoor activities caused changes in behavior in the community and had an impact on reducing physical activity. Government regulations to strictly maintain health protocols as well as changing the learning system from face-to-face to virtual, affected the consistency of Japanese language learning in the digital era (new normal). This study is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to determine the consistency of Japanese language learning in the digital era (new normal) and to determine whether interest in learning Japanese has decreased or even increased in the digital era (new normal). The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative method using a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire distributed using WhatsApp groups and e-mails. The subjects of the research were courses that held Japanese language learning. Data were obtained by distributing questionnaires, both open and closed questionnaires. The number of respondents are as many as 4 courses that open Japanese language learning online. The analyzed data shows that learning at the course remains consistent which means that the interest of Japanese language learner enthusiasts who take part in learning at the course does not change by looking at the percentage result of 100%. However, the next analyzed data got the answer that the learners increased if referring to the table of analysis results which showed a percentage of 75%.*

**Keywords:** *Consistency; Japanese language learning; new normal*

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### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19, which is spread throughout the world as well as in Indonesia, requires the education system to change its teaching methods, from offline learning to online learning. The pandemic has changed people's lifestyles in carrying out their daily activities, especially activities related to education. The education world was most significantly affected. Learning that was originally able to meet face-to-face but the pandemic made learning begin to change. One of them is learning using applications without the need for physical meetings. It also targets tutoring courses or Japanese language courses in Surabaya. In Surabaya and its neighboring areas, there are many places for tutoring, especially places for quality Japanese language courses. These

courses provide services to people to learn Japanese for those who cannot learn Japanese formally at an official or state educational institution. By participating in on-site learning, they can gain Japanese language skills for their needs such as for school, for work or just a hobby. This study aims to determine the consistency of Japanese language learning courses in the new normal era, to determine whether learning remains consistent during the pandemic, and to determine whether the number of Japanese language learner enthusiasts remains or decreases or even increases in the new normal.

### ***Definition of consistency***

According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI, 1995), the word "konsistensi" (consistency) has the meaning of constant, unchanging, obeying the principles, or steady. Consistency can also mean conforming. It can also be said that consistency is determination and stability (in action) (1995:520). Consistency is also described as something that individuals do in the same way for a long time (KBBI, 2016).

Consistency is an activity that is believed in principle and is sustainable and carried out regularly. As Evertson puts it in Leonard (2013), consistency means maintaining a common expectation for appropriate behavior in an activity unaffected by external changes.

In his book, Harianto (2008) argues that "consistency comes from the word consistent, meaning fixed, aligned and appropriate". Consistency is a situation that describes obedience and harmony between concentration, speech, and behavior. Consistency cannot arise by itself without the desire or willingness or seriousness within the individual.

Cahya (2008) in his book discusses that "Consistency is a component of each individual's assets". Consistency proves that what we choose to do repeatedly to make it a habit. Consistency means doing the same thing constantly to achieve goals and aspirations, even though there are many obstacles that must be passed. Consistency is the main term that is a big reflection of how strong the authority of the dialogue that individuals do every day, as humans who relate reciprocally with other humans to convey messages to meet their needs (Aisyah, 2021).

Consistency is something someone does to do something consistently, regularly, continuously so that it becomes something very important in life. Consistency is an effort to continue to do something until the expected final goal is achieved (Leonard, 2013).

According to Nashori (2011: 175), "self-consistency is the power to maintain our moods and behavior so that we have experience and are continuously concerned with our beliefs, paying attention to things that are very valuable". By trusting the treatment that has been done, we must be sure of the results we will get.

From the opinion of several experts, it can be concluded that consistency is an action taken by an individual continuously over a long period of time so that it becomes a habit that gives rise to consistency.

### ***Definition of learning and instruction***

In the KBBI, etymologically, the word "belajar" (learn) means to work hard to get skills or expertise (KBBI, 1998). Other experts say that the definition of learning is a process or effort made by everyone to obtain the desired changes such as changes in behavior, both in the form of cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and positive values as an experience from various materials that have been studied (Djamaluddin, 2019: 6).

According to Saron et al in Musfiqon (2011), learning is the development of new insights, skills, and behaviors or behaviors which are individual interactions with information and the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, another expert, Sadirman, still in Musfiqon (2011: 3), said that learning is a complex thing that happens to everyone and lasts a lifetime, from birth to the end of life.

Meanwhile, according to Fudyartanto in Baharuddin et.al (2015), to learn has 4 meanings, namely 1) to gain knowledge comprehension, or mastery of through experience or study, 2) to fix in the mind or memory; 3) to acquire through experience, and 4) to become in former of to find out. From this description, it can be said that learning has the meaning of gaining insight or mastering insight through expertise, gaining experience, and obtaining or discovering information. So, it can be concluded that learning has the basic meaning of activities and mastery of something.

Baharuddin et.al (2015) state that learning is a bonding process or link between students and teachers as well as learning resources in a learning area. In an educational context, learning can be concluded as a teacher delivering material so that students can understand or master the content of the material to achieve certain facts, such as the cognitive/knowledge domain, affective/attitude domain and psychomotor/skills domain.

According to Djamaluddin (2019), learning, which is identified with the word "mengajar" (teaching), comes from the basic word "ajar" which means instructions given to people so that they are known (imitated) given the prefix "pe" and the suffix "an" becomes "pembelajaran" (learning), which means the process, action, way of teaching or teaching so that students want to learn.

Learning can be said as an interaction process carried out by learners and educators. In other words, learning can be referred to as a process to help students learn well.

### ***Japanese Language Learning***

Japanese is the language used to communicate with Japanese people in all parts of the country, including Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku and Okinawa. This language is used as a liaison language for people throughout Japan. Japan only has one language, namely Japanese but it has various dialects. Because it is the only language, Japanese is the official language. Japanese became a foreign language in many countries because of the advancement of the Japanese industry at that time so that people studied Japanese to be able to absorb the knowledge they had.

The foreign languages learning in Indonesia, especially for Japanese language, began to develop rapidly since 1981, especially in the city of Surabaya. Over time, Japanese was introduced as an elective subject. The development of learning Japanese has a positive impact. This can be seen from the number of students who intend to study at a higher level at universities. Japanese learner enthusiasts are increasing year by year, both majoring in education and pure science programs. In a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation in 2012, Indonesia was ranked second out of all countries in the number of people learning Japanese in the world. If it is seen at the longer term, there is an increase of 16 times compared to the survey in previous years (*Apa Sih Manfaat dan Pentingnya Ikut Tes Bahasa Jepang JLPT?*, 2018). This is what encourages the emergence of course places to meet the need for Japanese language learning in addition to formal educational institutions.

By the background of the increasing number of Japanese language enthusiasts and each having their own goals and since the Japanese language was introduced and entered as a subject in high schools and even universities, many quality language courses began to appear, serving the community who needed a certificate as a condition to fulfill their needs.

Just as English has a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) program to measure a person's ability to master English, in Japan, there is a test called JLPT, an abbreviation of Japanese Language Proficiency Test. The JLPT test is known as the *Nihongo Noryoku Shiken*

or popularly abbreviated as NS or *Noken* since 1984 (*Apa Sih Manfaat dan Pentingnya Ikut Tes Bahasa Jepang JLPT?*, 2018) .

The Japanese language competency certification standard, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), has been developed since 1984 and has become the standard for Japanese language competency certification worldwide since 1984. JLPT certification is generally required to continue studies or work, both in Japan and Japanese institutions and companies in general outside Japan. In addition, JLPT can also be used as a requirement to apply for scholarships, to apply for jobs, to advance in career paths and to measure our language skills.

Referring to the JLPT certification, the JLPT test consists of five levels, namely: level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4, and level 5, level 1 being the highest level and level 5 being the lowest level. Related to the certificate, many people learn Japanese to fulfill their needs related to those described previously. So, in Indonesia, especially Surabaya, many courses have sprung up to get supplies in participating in the JLPT which will be used for their individual interests. This is done because the official institution may not be able to accommodate the number of students who want to acquire Japanese language skills. In addition, it is individuals who do not have enough time to study at official institutions for one reason or another.

### ***Learning in the digital era***

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit the world for almost two years, is no exception in Indonesia, causing the learning system to change from face-to-face learning to virtual learning. This change forced educators to look for other alternatives in teaching methods. There are several strategies that teachers can use as learning models, including blended learning, distance learning, mobile learning, and virtual learning environments.

Heinze A. and Procter C. in Hendarita (2012) state that blended learning is a combination of several learning strategies and delivery techniques that are expected to maximize the learning experience for its users.

There are three models in the development of blended learning according to Haughey in Hendarita (2012), namely: the web course model, the web centric course model, and the web enhanced course model. The web course model is the use of the Internet for teaching purposes, in which the implementation between teachers and students is carried out through virtual without the need for physical meetings.

The Web centric course model is the use of the internet or cyberspace by combining distance learning and traditional learning. Learning materials can be provided either through

several ways, one of which is through social media. The web-enhanced course model focuses on the quality model of the student's ability to master the material carried out with the help of the virtual world. Therefore, teachers are expected to improve their ability to master IT so that teaching and learning activity runs smoothly.

There are 3 basic levels in the ICT-based blended learning model (Ramsay, 2001):

- 1) Looking for information, the students seek information independently with the assistance of the teacher as a facilitator;
- 2) Obtaining information, in groups or independently, the students seek, master, and can connect pre-existing opinions or thoughts to be communicated or re-explained;
- 3) Synthesizing knowledge, the students can rearrange the knowledge they have gained from discussions, as well as the acquisition of facts or reports (Hendarita, 2012).

The five main keys of blended learning, among others, are:

- 1) Live Event, the teaching and learning process is carried out online or directly but virtually, meaning without meeting physically.
- 2) Self-Paced Learning, combining independent learning with implementation anywhere and anytime.
- 3) Collaboration, collaboration between teachers and fellow teachers and collaboration between students.
- 4) Assessment, teachers or educators are expected to be able to combine various kinds of assessments both synchronously and asynchronously.
- 5) Performance Support Materials, teachers/educators ensure that the materials can be accessed online or offline.

Distance learning is learning that is carried out without physical contact, or commonly called virtual learning. Distance learning, as it is commonly referred to as Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh (PJJ), is often also referred to as learning using applications that have been in operation for a long time and it is not something new operated. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No.109 of 2013 defines distance education as teaching and learning activities that are carried out virtually using IT applications to communicate (Gulthom in Yeliany, 2021).

Distance learning can be implemented between students and teachers together at the same time, even though each student lives in different region. Learning like this will be able to take place effectively if the necessary facilities are available properly. In distance learning, an educator or teacher is expected to have the ability to operate technology media as well as the ability as an administrator and as a communicator, even though their space as a teacher with distance learning

is very limited.

The term distance learning is used specifically to distinguish two educational terms as in distance education and higher education. The technical term of distance learning can also be defined as a teaching activity, which does not require the physical presence of students or face to face in a study room. In distance learning, it has been stated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003, concerning the "National Education System", which is formulated in detail in CHAPTER VI Paths, Levels and Types of Education in the Tenth Part of Distance Education in Article 31. However, because of the virus that hit the world and then the government required to change teaching methods using internet media, that is when distance learning began to emerge as one of the methods that became known even though it was actually not new thing (Yeliany, 2021).

Mobile learning, according to Darmawan in Aripin (2018), is one option for implementing learning that can be carried out anywhere and anytime. Mobile learning can be defined as a facility or service that provides information through IT in general to learners and provides educational content that helps in gaining understanding without questioning place and time (Tamimuddin, 2007).

Cabanban in Aripin (2018:2) defines that M-Learning is a type of e-learning that provides educational content and learning support materials through wireless communication devices. This system cannot replace the role of the teacher at any time but can be used as a means to complement teaching and learning activities in both high schools and universities.

M-Learning has advantages and disadvantages according to Sarrab in Aripin (2018:2), the advantages of M-Learning include; can be operated anywhere and anytime, devices that are too mobile are affordable for more individuals, smaller size is lighter, student center, accommodates distance learning, maximizes interaction, and more followers (students). Meanwhile, the disadvantages are processor power, memory load, monitor screen, power supply, I/O components, different User Interface (UI) provided, different mobile platforms, and different hardware creators.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a tool used by educational institutions, as well as universities and colleges to require teachers/tutors to manage their plans and exchange words with students (*Sistem Pembelajaran Daring, PEPI Terapkan Virtual Learning Environment*, 2020).

The existence of COVID-19 has led to the minister's new policy by replacing conventional

learning into online or virtual learning. This learning utilizes social networks to carry out its learning, including internet users, using applications such as video teleconferences, audio visuals, and others. Changing activities that are usually carried out with new activities requires a long process, but educators must immediately adapt to new methods so that the teaching and learning process can run optimally and students can still get material according to the established curriculum. The biggest challenges and obstacles that teachers encounter in situations like this are those who are not ready to change their habits to learn to use online or virtual methods.

Meanwhile, the obstacles experienced by students are no less complicated. They are less responsive to the material presented by the teacher/educator. Educators/teachers also still have difficulty in providing evaluations, while students have different levels of understanding in receiving explanations. Another obstacle faced by students is signal interference from their respective places of residence and the lack of quota they have due to the economic limitations of their parents.

Learning is an interaction between an educator/teacher and students/students, to achieve certain goals. Therefore, what is expected is to minimize obstacles from both the educators/teachers and the students so that learning runs smoothly despite using several learning methods.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method using a descriptive approach. In her book *Prosedur Penelitian*, Arikunto (2006) explains that the research method is a method that can be used by researchers to obtain the data needed in a study and is also used as a guide in carrying out research. This research is a qualitative research. Moleong (2010) explains that qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, action and others.

This research was conducted in Surabaya by involving some considered high-quality courses, held between December and January 2021. Respondents were 4 Japanese language courses in Surabaya. Questionnaires were given or distributed using IT such as Whatsapp groups and e-mails. Data obtained from the returned questionnaire from respondents. Respondents for this research were language courses in Surabaya that were affected by the pandemic, which held or opened Japanese language courses. The list of questions is in Table 1 in the form of statements submitted to respondents totaling of 4 famous Japanese language courses.



**Tabel 1.**List of Statements Submitted to Respondents

Object	Statement
Language Courses	1. Learning is held online
	2. Course students increase during the pandemic
	3. Less students during the pandemic
	4. Provides online services
	5. Always provides discounts on tutoring packages
	6. Holds an admission test

The next action is to compile a data table that points to the results of the questionnaires that have been sent previously, then the responses from the respondents are obtained. Furthermore, a descriptive qualitative method was broken down to get a picture of the consistency of learning activity or Japanese language teaching in the Digital Era (new normal).

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In the following, the results of the research will be described by referring to the available tables which can show that Japanese language learning at the course during the pandemic remains consistent by referring to the results of the questionnaire analysis of respondents listed in the following tables.

**Tabel 2.**Learning is Held Online

Alternative Answers	F	%
Yes	4	100%
No	-	-
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that online learning is carried out at the course during the pandemic. This can be seen from the results of the responses from the respondents which resulted in a percentage of 100%, ensured that learning is indeed held fully online.

**Tabel 3.**Course Students Increase During the Pandemic

Alternative Answers	F	%
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above shows that the number of course students increased by looking at the results

of the questionnaire which showed the percentage of respondents' answers, which amounted to 75%. There was also a course which stated that their students did not increase. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire as much as 25% during the pandemic, even it tends to decrease, but the results of the questionnaire cannot be said to have decreased significantly because it is only 25%.

**Tabel 4.** Less Students During the Pandemic

Alternative Answers	F	%
Yes	1	25%
No	3	75%
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, the number of course students decreased during the pandemic in one of the 4 courses as respondents by looking at the percentage results which amounted to 25%. Based on the results obtained, the percentage is 25%. It shows that the number of students can still be said to be consistent or not significantly reduced.

**Tabel 5.** Provides Online Services

Alternative Answers	F	%
Yes	4	100%
No	-	-
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, online services are provided throughout the course because during a pandemic or in the digital era, all activities are expected to be carried out using digital applications face-to-face virtually, with 100% presentation results. This is done in addition to minimizing the transmission of the virus to other people as well as an appeal from the government so that the implementation of learning is carried out by other methods.

**Tabel 6.** Always Provides Discounts on Tutoring Packages

Alternative Answers	F	%
Yes	2	50%
No	2	50%
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the respondent's data analyzed shows that there were 50% of the language courses that offer discounts on guidance packages or provide discounts. However, there were also 50% of the courses that do not provide discount. Courses that

provide discounts have the reason that by giving discounts, it is hoped that students who study at their place will be more enthusiastic and more active in learning.

**Tabel 7.** Holds an Admission Test

<b>Alternative Answers</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%
<b>Answers</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

From several courses that became respondents, there were 75% answered that they held an admission test. The admission test is to place the students into the group that has been determined according to the results of the admission test. There were also courses which do not apply the admission test, which means that students who have registered can immediately enter the course learning.

#### *Consistency in learning Japanese language in the digital era (new normal)*

Based on the results of the analysis with reference to the table, it can be concluded that the Japanese language learning in the courses that were the respondents in this study showed a consistency by looking at the percentage results obtained by 100% in online learning. A percentage of 75% stated that course students increased during the pandemic. Furthermore, even though the table shows that students in the course have decreased by a percentage of 25%, this is not significant. So, it can still be concluded that the learning in the course remains consistent. This consistency occurs on the grounds that they need Japanese language skills as a support to get the *Noryoku Shiken* certificate or JLPT test for both school and job applications.

#### *Japanese language learner enthusiasts increase in the digital era (new normal)*

Courses enthusiasts in Surabaya, especially in the current digital era, are not decreasing but increasing, although not all courses have increased demand. If it is referred to the table of analysis results which show a percentage of 75%, it can be concluded that the interest has increased. Furthermore, as many as 100% of courses carry out online learning and as many as 50% of course places provide discounts with reasons to attract more prospective students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of data analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that the results of the research that has been carried out are as follows:

1. The consistency of Japanese language learning in course places can be said to be consistent because the number of students who take the course is the same even though the learning is carried out using online learning.
2. Japanese language learner enthusiasts in language courses are increasing because new student admissions are held all the time and it shows a significant increase because there are courses that get an increase of more than 50%.
3. During the pandemic, students continue to study Japanese because to fulfill their needs they get a certificate as a condition for continuing school and for applying for jobs.

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