

# **ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERCEPTION OF FINAL EXAMINATION USING ONLINE TAKE-HOME EXAM (THE) (A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAMINATION)**

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## **Abstract**

The use of take-home exam (THE) on an online basis becomes an examination mode that Universitas Terbuka entails in its distance-education system during the outbreak of the COVID-19 to make a final evaluation of students' course knowledge and mastery. The exam application is equipped with guidelines and instructions that have been introduced in an online socialization prior to implementation. The application fits into a very good category in terms of its usability and accessibility, corresponding well to the environment of UPBJJ-UT of Makassar. In this study, students' perception of the implementation of final examination using online take-home exam fits into a very good category in average. Students are also in favor of the accessibility of downloading questions within the length of time they are allowed to take, and the ease with which students upload the answers to the application. Qualitative method using descriptive analysis in percentages was adopted, with the instrument including Likert-scale questionnaire and interview. The population involved the students of UPBJJ-UT of Makassar during the academic year 2022.1, from which random samples of 300 students were taken by distributing questionnaires on Google Forms. In the use of online final take-home examination, the core tenets of academic integrity policy persist; students download, upload, and then sign the pact of academic integrity, plagiarism, and ethical codes of examination. In a psychological standpoint, students are emotionally attached with their commitment to conforming to the exam regulations. The minimum penalty for those who are caught cheating would be an E (Error) on the exam. Results show that: (1) students' sense of self-determination to abide with the entire session of online final take-home examination on a given schedule and within the expected length of time fits into a very good category: (2) the application effectively corresponds to students' needs and expectation of carrying out final examination during the COVID-19 pandemic: and (3) in terms of its accessibility, the application competently extends the access to final examination to wider groups of students particularly those in rural areas that lack Internet service. This in turn leads to the flexibility with which the evaluation of student accomplishment and competence in one semester is conducted. In general, students respond in favor of the use of online take-home exam. This indirectly allows students to nurture a sense of self-determination to look up information in the module in order to substantiate their arguments and rationales behind their answers. In essence, online take-home exam presents a very effective tool for evaluating student achievement of competence in a given course.

Keywords: online THE, accessibility, integrity, flexibility, self-determination

## 1 INTRODUCTION

As an assessment for students' competences and learning outcomes in a given course throughout a semester, Take-Home Exam (THE) embodies an examination scheme that runs online in which students are allowed to download questions from a platform provided by Universitas Terbuka (UT) and complete them at home or any location of their choice with internet connection. They generally have between six and twelve hours to submit their answers into the platform. UT adopts Take-Home Exam as a remote assessment in its distance-education undertakings. A number of journals and research work including Ahmad, I. F. (2020) delved into assessment models in distance education in both general and specific sense, which include online-based assessment, portfolio assessment, and independent assessment.

Students have access to a take-home exam on [the.ut.ac.id](https://the.ut.ac.id) where descriptions of the exam including the list and schedules of final examination are posted. They may upload their answers to [sia.ut.ac.id](https://sia.ut.ac.id) using their examination card (Kartu Tanda Peserta Ujian or KTPU). A decent model of take-home exams touts the merits of nurturing students' cognitive development effectively as they have the academic liberty of building arguments by reflecting on readings and lecture notes when answering questions independently without pressures. Prior research works expounded core findings that take-home exams alleviate anxiety rates and other psychological pressures closely associated with final examinations. These findings also attested to the merits of take-home exams when it comes to students' capacity of self-regulated learning, free thinking, and innovative thinking in solving questions (Bengtsson, 2019); and Myyry & Joutsenvirta, 2015). Take-home exams also promote opportunities for better cognitive skills and avert feelings of frustration in an inherently stressful condition. With these merits, UT has made the transition to take-home exams that make up its learning evaluation system.

For take-home exams that are typically open-book tests, it is essential that students understand academic integrity policies and strictly comply with them. Exam questions and answer booklets (Buku Jawaban Ujian or BJU) are downloaded from and uploaded to <https://the.ut.ac.id>., which also features the list of courses and test duration. Each course typically calls for a standard of a twelve-hour period. In the take-home setting, students of UT generally conform to the highest standards of academic integrity and embrace the honor codes to protect their academic dignity. Specific practices of take-home exams including looking for examination timetable and exam length for each course, downloading questions, and uploading answer sheets (BJU) are automatically controlled by a system. While they have benefits, take-home exams come with

challenges. One of the most common struggles for students going into take-home exams is late submissions. When a student properly starts a take-home exam but fails to upload the answer file(s) within the deadline, it will be taken as ineligible and thus marked as a failing grade. During registration term 2022.2, out of 5372 students attending take-home exams, 91% (4871 students) had the answer files uploaded successfully as opposed to 9% (501 students) who did not.

In a take-home exam setting, each student is assigned to directly download the exam questions on <https://the.ut.ac.id> in accordance with a given course and the assigned date and time written on KTPU (Examination Card). Each student has his or her own password to log in and download the questions. It is important to note that the take-home exam will officially begin once the question files are downloaded. Students must begin, complete their answers in BJU (answer file), and submit it based on the course and its code along with the downloaded question file on <https://the.ut.ac.id>. As aforementioned, a penalty for late submissions may mean that a student fails the final semester examination. However, students of UT-Makassar have shown self-reliance to take control of carrying out take-home exams and become active participants. The practices of take-home online mode for final semester examinations deal with common questions as to how do students perceive a take-home exam, what are the upside and the downside, and what is it like to experience the exam? Vast majorities of students are in high favor of a take-home exam and provide feedback that it is easier than its in-person counterpart. Owing to a small amount of psychological pressure, students are empowered to think freely and share their own thoughts on a given question. Students may also quote materials from a source text to underpin their thoughts. In the registration term 2022.2, participation levels of take-home exams fit into 87%, indicating a very good category in terms of students' self-reliance in submitting BJU according to a given timeframe.

Firmantyo, T., & Alsa, A. (2016) identified a negative association between academic anxiety and academic integrity among students in exam environment. The accomplishment in take-home exams requires more attention to arguments that students gain from readings of modules and other text sources. They have academic freedom to substantiate the readings in a free manner while gaining more experience and insights to support their understanding and analysis of a problem and to make decisions based on a proper problem-solving method. The core tenet of take-home exams closely relates to a sense of purpose that equips students with agency to

foster their own knowledge and ideas in an examination freely and independently. These provide exposure to opportunities for good grades and academic excellence.

Academic integrity, self-reliance, and capability are therefore vital to exam success in a take-home setting. Students are assigned to participate in distance-learning skills training (PKBJJ) to nurture their understanding of the practices of final semester examination. In addition, student orientation (OSMB) and workshop materials provided in Exam Clinic aim to promote academic integrity among students of UT and help them become acquainted with final-semester exam procedures. These activities offer important sessions that navigate them into distance education, and specifically help them become familiar with Academic Honesty Policy to avoid academic misconduct such as cheating, plagiarism, and sharing one's work with others when collaboration is unpermitted. In this light, Sholehah, M. N., Bubdiyono, A. E., & Muliawan, P. (2023) mentioned character education to promote social, emotional, and ethical development of students. In essence, character education embodies a positive act that influences students' personality.

Students are found responsible for cheating when excessive similarities in answers are detected by a plagiarism-check system. In this scenario, the student who copied answers and the one who intentionally let him or her copy are subject to the same academic penalty. Take-home exams heavily depend on the values of students' self-reliance and conviction with a strong and clear message about the great importance of nurturing academic integrity within online-exam environments. For take-home exams, students are assigned to download the examination script and integrity pact, and sign the code of conduct before they submit the answer files or BJU on <https://the.ut.ac.id> according to a given timeframe. Guangul, F. M., Suhail, A. H., Khalit, M. I., & Khidhir, B. A. (2020) identified major challenges facing distance-examination assessment, i.e., academic dishonesty, infrastructure issues, the range of learning outcomes, and students' commitment to diminishing the likelihood of academic misconduct.

At UT's digital ecosystem, students are called upon to become well acquainted with the practices of take-home exams, which frequently raises questions as to how online supervisions ensure that students complete the test without recourse to cheating. This has become the most critical challenge facing digital proctoring in the attempt of thwarting collusion and misconduct in online examinations. D'Souza, K. A., & Siegfeldt, D. V. (2017) argued that the proper methodologies to detect online-examination misconduct call for tremendous time and effort in light of the many forms of academic dishonesty in online education. The framework in which

misconduct is detected incorporates a model commonly used in each phase and deals with data collection and analysis necessary to build on a high-technology system.

The present study sheds light on students' psychology and emotional attachment to the obedience to the code of honor, integrity pact, and their willingness to complete an examination individually without assistance from others. The study specifically aims to observe (1) students' self-reliance in attending the whole array of final semester examination on a take-home basis within a given timeframe, (2) students' integrity in carrying out the examination without proctor supervision, (3) the service of final semester examinations in a take-home mode prior to and post COVID-19 as part of the fulfillment of students' need and expectation, and (4) students' accessibility of final semester examinations in a take-home mode in remote areas.

The flexibility that comes with take-home examinations is exceedingly instrumental in student evaluation at UT and students' academic accomplishment throughout one semester. In general, students' responses are in high favor of a take-home mode for conducting final examinations, which indirectly cultivates their self-reliance as they are allowed to refer to modules (open book) to augment their arguments. This in turn reinforces self-evaluation as a measurable tool for accomplishing competence in a given course.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The study entailed descriptive qualitative research using percentages. Sampling provided equal opportunities for all members of the population regardless of study programs and took into account students' accessibility of take-home final examinations in 2022.2 at UPBJJ-UT of Makassar. 300 students were selected as samples using purposive sampling in which the researchers selected the students who directly engaged in the examination. Snowball sampling was also adopted to provide rich and relevant data for the qualitative inquiry. Three techniques of data collection were used to obtain valid data, i.e., distributing online questionnaires on Google Forms, conducting in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis fit in componential analysis.

## **3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Take-Home Examinations at UT Makassar**

Based on the evaluation of take-home examinations of 2022.2 in terms of student participation, a small percentage of the students did not recognize take-home examinations and the procedures, and hence failed to submit answer files within a deadline. Digital ecosystem at UT

calls for a transformation of student service to establish students' understanding of conducting final semester examinations in a take-home mode. Students' adeptness in navigating through take-home final examinations fits in descriptive analysis as Table 1 shows.

*Table 1. The Number of BJU (Answer File) Submissions in 2022.2 UT Makassar*

No	Category	Number	Percentage
1	Those who successfully uploaded BJU	4871	91%
2	Those who failed or did not upload BJU	501	9%

Data of Exam Registration at UT Makassar (2022)

The total number of students attending take-home examinations is 5.732 for 2022.2 registration term at UT Makassar. These students major in a variety of study programs. 91% (4.871 students) confirmed compliance to the procedures and code of conduct as they met the deadline for BJU submission, while 95% (501 students) either missed the deadline or failed to submit BJU owing to technical errors. Based on the interviews, the failure is due to (1) students' unawareness of examination timetables as they did not download examination card, indicating non-attendance, (2) submission past a deadline marked as late, and (3) technical issues including slow internet connection that caused delays in submission to <https://the.ut.ac.id>.

Data of students attending take-home examinations are classified in terms of the number of courses as Table 2 shows below.

*Table 2. Number of Students Attending Take-Home Examinations in Terms of Courses in 2022.2 UT Makassar*

No	Category	Number	Percentage
1	Those who successfully uploaded BJU	9807	87%
2	Those who failed or did not upload BJU	1463	13%

Data of Exam Registration at UT Makassar (2022)

The total number of students attended take-home examinations in terms of the number of courses is 11.270, indicating that an individual student may have registered for up to four courses that were designed for take-home examinations within one semester. Of 11.270, 87% (9807 students) were well aware of the practices and procedures of take-home examinations and thus submitted BJU successfully within the time limit. 13% (1.463 students) did not submit BJU for the aforesaid reasons, i.e., unawareness of final examination dates and deadlines for lack of examination card, late BJU submissions, and technical errors due to connection issues.

### 3.2 Student Perception of Take-Home Examinations

How students perceive take-home examinations represents their emotional attachment to the willingness in conforming to the code of conduct, integrity pact, and the principles of self-reliance in carrying out the test without resorting to others' assistance. In a specific sense, students' perception of the shift into the online take-home setting can be classified into several terms; (1) demonstrating self-reliance in completing the whole array of take-home final examinations based on a given schedule and timeframe, (2) signing integrity pact to confirm the commitment to the code of conduct for take-home examinations without proctor supervisions, (3) the extent to which the whole services of take-home final examinations prior to and post COVID-19 pandemic fulfilled student need and expectation, and (4) the accessibility with which remote students attained take-home final examinations.

Table 3. Student Perception of Take-Home Examinations at UT Makassar 2022.2

Interval (%)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
< 70	Poor	0	0
70 - 79	Fair	6	2
80 - 89	Good	14	5
90 - 100	Very Good	280	93
Total		300	100

Of 300 student samples, 93% (280 students) carried out the whole array of take-home examinations appropriately and submitted their work within a given time limit, thus fitting into a very good category and indicating that take-home final examinations may serve as a convenient alternative to in-class final examination at UT. The remaining percentage of a given sample may account for students' difficulties in navigating through examination procedures and regulations that were treated as examination failure most notably concerning late submission, internet issues, and students' lack of understanding of the befitting size for file uploads.

Numerous benefits of take-home examinations may have led to positive perception among student samples. As take-home examinations take place on online resources, students no longer have to relocate or commute. Another significant benefit is its open-book nature where more emphasis is added on high-order thinking skills that promote problem-solving models while students refer to resources as references to answer questions. As Bloom's taxonomy suggests, these skills internalize analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to build on an argument. Students reflect on readings of modules and integrate them into other sources to elaborate their answers.

In this sense, they are encouraged to do wider reading and higher thinking around a topic based on the modules and other sources to arrive at an answer or solve a problem. In addition, take-home examinations take advantage of ICT literacy and time-management skills.

*Table 4. Overall Perception of Take-Home Examinations*

Statistics	
Samples	300
Range	52.0%
Minimum	65.0%
Maximum	98.2%
Mean	86.3%

A mean of 86,3 indicates outstanding student perception that demonstrates critical reflection of how take-home examinations were carried out in an excellent quality on the portal site <https://the.ut.ac.id>. Dynamic capacities for technology and science development have identified opportunities to shift into digital modes of evaluating learning outcomes. The perception of cultivating take-home examinations with relevant learning resources is critical to the effectiveness of evaluating final semester examinations. This in turn results in the enhancement of students' knowledge and understanding and thus leads to desirable learning outcomes. The flexibility of time and space, cost-effectiveness, and decrease in exam stress also contribute to these outcomes.

Table 5 lists the categories of students' digital skills navigating through take-home examinations on the website <https://the.ut.ac.id>.

*Table 5. Frequency of Students' Skills to Access Take-Home Examinations*

Interval (%)	Category	Frequency	Percentage
< 70	Poor	0	0
70 – 79	Fair	6	2
80 – 89	Good	12	4
90 – 100	Very Good	282	94
Total		300	100

When asked about the information source of take-home examinations, a vast majority of samples, i.e., 282 students (94%), pointed to examination card (KTPU) downloaded from <sia.ut.ac.id> and <https://the.ut.ac.id>. This group expressed great satisfaction with the ease with which information sources containing guidelines for take-home examinations are located. 12 students (4%) claimed that they did not receive complete information of take-home examinations on time, while the remaining 6 students (2%) did not attend the examination because they missed exam dates and deadlines, though they were cognizant of the procedures



and regulations. These present findings are justified by interviews that highlighted findings on how respondents discovered the information of take-home examination with answer options including official UT website, Instagram, official Facebook of UT Makassar, Pokjar (study group) administrators, and regional officers (PJW).

### **3.3 Discussion**

#### *3.3.1 Student Perception of Take-Home Examination*

Student perception of the service quality of take-home examinations defines how students feel and evaluate the undertakings of take-home examinations. The indicators with which student perception is measured include clarity of exam script, sufficient practice guidelines, accessibility, sufficiency of standard exam lengths, and the ease with which students download and upload files. One of the core components in teaching-learning endeavors is evaluation—without which learning progress and success is hardly measurable (Tam, A. C. F., 2022). Student perception of take-home examinations includes thoughts on the type and difficulty degree of exam questions, timeframe, benefits and challenges, website design, and the pedagogical implication. Buckley, A., Brown, D., Potapova-Crighton, O., & Yusuf, A. (2021) tapped into the discussion of the important benefits of take-home examination over its traditional counterpart and stipulated that students need support to understand assessment requirement in order to best govern their time and effort.

The quality of examination heavily captures the spectrum of student performance and defines learning achievement and the quality of teaching materials. Associating evaluation with learning outcomes is so essential that students are able to measure their progress and achievement. According to Gamage, K. A., Silva, E. K. D., & Gunawardhana, N. (2020), take-home examination in an online mode is a new experience adopted by many universities. However, the likelihood of various types of academic misconduct is high, posing a major challenge in upholding academic integrity. It is therefore crucial to evaluate the standard practices of various universities in maintaining their values of academic integrity.

Take-home examinations closely align with students' higher-degree thinking skills as they demonstrate high cognitive skills that generate analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to arrive at answers. These three domains are often referenced as the top levels of the hierarchy in Bloom's taxonomy. Based on interviews, respondents revealed that take-home examinations, despite its open-book mode, give grounds to these three domains. A citation is mandatory when a student

refers to a piece of information that he or she derived from a referent source to provide stronger and more reliable answers. This in turn hones students' referencing skills that become instrumental in elaborating arguments around a question topic in a given course. Arvanitis, A., & Kalliris, K. (2020) discerned moral integrity and moral consistency in a different sense, but found them interrelated in moral cognition, emotional development, and motivation. In this sense, one achieves moral integrity when he or she acts based on an internal moral system that corresponds to the principles of emotional domain and motif. It also aligns with one's interaction with his or her surroundings on the basis of the Theory of Self-Determination.

An open-book take-home examination begins with statement items that navigate students toward the understanding of the problem of a question, which entails insights into a thinking structure within which students arrive at comprehensive answers with a sufficient range of knowledge and skills. Khan, M. A., Vivek, V., Khojah, M., Nabi, M. K., Paul, M., & Minhaj, S. M. (2021) weighed in on the perception of electronic examination based on pedagogy, validity and reliability, affective factors, practicability, and security. Online-exam environment takes advantage of flexibility, which makes it more beneficial than its paper-based conventional counterpart. The role of technology that deters cheating behavior in an exam situation is evident as it detects two identical answers to the same question. Students are psychologically attached to the integrity pact and code of conduct signed with a stamp duty. For academic breaching, a student is subject to a penalty of error grade (E). In this light, Ariana, Y., & Satwika, P. A. (2022) integrates character education into the conception of academic misconduct; character education nurtures religious values, obedience, honesty, and responsibility in students' personality that results in sensitivity to discouraging academic misconduct, and instead sustaining the values of integrity and responsibility.

Self-assessment allows students to reflect on and critically self-evaluate the degree to which they have made progress in their learning trajectories. This empowers their self-confidence after gaining high-level understanding and mastery around major concepts of the discipline in modules (BMP) for examination. It is essential that they gather readings through the materials in a given semester prior to final semester examination. It is also imperative that they capture and organize a great deal of information in a systematic and structured manner. Şenel, S., & Şenel, H. C. (2021) viewed take-home examinations in a positive light as students can improve their level of peer interaction and teacher-student interaction. Take-home examinations are

therefore more preferable for students in higher education on account of their opportunities to measure their academic achievement in a unique and reliable manner.

In contrast to its in-class counterpart, final semester examination in a take-home mode allows a more extended period to submit. However, it is important for students to familiarize themselves with the number of questions and strategize their approach to plan how to answer and how to allocate time between questions to get the desired result. They should also take into account the specific exam date and time when they are likely to carry out a series of other activities. Answer sheets alongside the downloaded exam script that have been scanned are submitted to <https://the.ut.ac.id>. In a broader sense, higher education should take academic education as seriously as character education in the undertakings of take-home examinations. Maryam, N. S. (2023) argued that character education provides students with five basic tenets of Pancasila—religion, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation. Each value does not exist on its own, but is rather interrelated, creating a dynamic spectrum of unity. When it comes to analyzing interview data, the respondents concurred that: (1) the description, picture, text, and answer option in each question item were clear and explicit; (2) instructions were given properly for the questions; (3) students did not have trouble scanning the answer sheet (BJU) and submitting it to the application; (4) the length in which students need to complete and submit the exam (i.e., 12 hours), which counts once exam script is downloaded, was sufficient; and (5) though typically unsupervised, students managed to locate distraction-free space with sufficient internet connection. In addition to flexible exam environment, take-home examinations provide students with flexibility in time management. Take-home format for examination, as Bayu, M. U. P. (2019) put it, seeks to gauge students' summative achievement while serving a pivotal role in exam experience by enabling a new way to nurture cognitive development and thinking skills through the experience of self-regulated learning in a given course.

### 3.3.2 *Accessibility*

Despite its general effectiveness, accessibility and technical domains are still considered a work in progress. With the shift into take-home setting, great importance attaches to student training to navigate learning content through the Internet and technology tools. UT Makassar has consistently provided community program through Support Service for Distance Learning (LKPBJJ) with socialization approaches on various social media such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Instagram, and UT web to promote students' media literacy in utilizing take-home

examinations, particularly those who have never carried out an examination in a take-home experience.

In terms of accessibility, guidelines of take-home examinations on the.ut.ac.id were perceived comprehensive and operable by students who navigated its content in an understandable manner. This was evident as the students discovered satisfaction when they advanced from preparation to the actual exam. Conforming to this, finding revealed a mean of 96% of student participation in take-home examinations, and interview data captured outstanding exam results among the average number of students. It is advisable that UT Makassar explores the importance of consistent socialization plans that bring about both theoretical and practical understanding of take-home examinations in a sustainable manner in each registration term.

In terms of academic integrity, there is an apparent tendency of academic misconduct when an exam is not proctored. Hidayat, M. N. A., Sumarwati, M., & Mulyono, W. A. (2020) claimed that while students demonstrate self-confidence, honesty, motivation, self-reliance, and academic achievement, they may still be vulnerable to the violation of academic integrity. In general, students' positive responses to take-home examination heavily correspond to its flexibility in assisting them in self-evaluating their academic achievement throughout one semester. This indirectly fosters their self-reliance as they have access to resources to look for answer choices that draw on strong arguments. Bengtsson, L. (2019) postulated that take-home examination becomes a preferable mode of assessment as it promotes taxonomy of higher-order thinking skills and provides extended periods for reflective thinking. This mode also conceptualizes constructive alignment theory and shifts assessment into a learning activity.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

- a. The effectiveness of take-home examinations that generated outstanding perception among students in general is characterized by the flexibility that allows students to self-evaluate their academic achievement throughout one semester and independently nurtures their higher-order cognitive skills that encapsulate analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- b. The extent to which students demonstrated self-reliance in attending a whole array of take-home examinations within the specified timeframe fit into a very good category, indicating that they experienced excellence or an outcome that met their need and expectation.

- c. Student satisfaction was also associated with the accessibility, time flexibility, assessment quality, academic trust and honesty, and students' technical preparation for take-home examinations at UT Makassar.

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