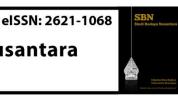


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BLENDED ONLINE LEARNING CULTURE IN AN INDONESIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstrak

Wabah COVID-19 menyebabkan semua sekolah dan perguruan tinggi ditutup. Berdasarkan himbauan pemerintah agar seluruh kegiatan belajar mengajar dilakukan dari rumah melalui platform online atau daring untuk menekan penyebaran COVID-19. Situasi ini telah merubah budaya belajar menuju budaya belajar online (Kim, 2020). Hal tersebut juga mendorong pengajar untuk menerapkan metode pembelajaran daring campuran (blended online learning) selama pandemic. Penelitian ini untuk menyelidiki pengaruh penerapan pembelajaran campulan secara daring (blended online learning) selama pandemi terhadap perkembangan keterampilan bahasa Inggris murid, persepsi murid tentang manfaat, keterbatasan, dan saran penerapan pembelajaran daring campuran (blended online learning) selama pandemi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif untuk pengumpulan data dengan menggunakan kuesioner daring yang berisi 34 skala-Likert dan tiga pertanyaan terbuka. Responden adalah 86 mahasiswa di pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia. Data dianalisa menggunakan SPSS 22 untuk mengetahui reliabilitas, rata-rata, dan standar deviasi data. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan mendengar, membaca, dan kosa kata dipengaruhi oleh penerapan pembelajaran daring campuran (blended online learning) selama pandemi. Para murid juga merasa bahwa penerapan pembelajaran daring campuran (blended online learning) dapat mengembangkan keterampilan internet dan computer serta mereka dapat belajar secara mandiri. Selain itu, masalah utama dari penerapan BOL adalah konektivitas, diikuti oleh preferensi menggunakan buku daripada materi daring. Implikasi pedagogis mencakup kebutuhan murid untuk terbiasa dengan pemecahan masalah teknis dan memberikan pelatihan pembelajaran daring yang tepat terkait dengan bagaimana cara belajar secara efektif di pembelajaran daring campuran.

Kata Kunci: Budaya Pembelajaran Daring Campuran; Pandemi COVID-19; Virtual Learning Management

Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak caused all schools and tertiary educations to be closed. Based on the government's regulation that all teaching and learning activities should be carried out from home through online platform to reduce the expansion of the COVID-19 outbreak. This pandemic situation has changed learning culture in general (Kim, 2020). This condition also encourages lecturers to apply the blended online learning (BOL) method during a pandemic. This present study explores the effect of implementing the blended online learning during pandemic on the development of English language skills, students' perception concerning benefits, limitations, and suggestion of implementing the blended online learning during pandemic. This research used quantitative method for the data collection by using online questionnaire containing 34 Likert-scale and three open-ended questions. The participants were 86 students in an Indonesian tertiary education. The data were analyzed using SPSS 22 to know the reliability, mean and standard deviation of the data. The result revealed that the development of listening, reading and vocabularies skills were mainly affected by implementation of blended online learning during pandemic. The students also perceived that they could develop internet and computer skill and self-paced learning. Moreover, the major problems of implementing the blended online learning included connectivity, followed by preference for hard books than online material. Pedagogical implication includes the need for students to be familiarized with solving technical problems and providing proper online learning training associated with how to learn effectively at blended online learning.

Keywords: Blended Online Learning Culture; COVID-19 Pandemic; Virtual Learning Management

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia has had a significant impact on various aspects of life. It also encourages the government to make various changes and renewal policies rapidly and quickly, especially in the education sector. One of the policies was learning process from home or study from home (SFH) to support the regulation of government to stay at home and apply physical distancing as an effort to reduce the expansion of the COVID-19 outbreak. This condition has changed the learning culture across the globe (Kim, 2020). Learning culture here is defined as a set of academic values, roles, assumptions, attitudes, and patterns of behaviors common to the learners' culture (Flowerder and Miller, 1995). The regulation of online learning also encourages most of the teachers to take advantage of the current rapid development of technology by incorporating technology or internet to teaching and learning process so that they can continue to carry out the learning process in the middle pandemic using online digital platforms in teaching and learning process. Besides, Hweet et al. (2016) mentioned, "in this current learning process can be characterized by the ability of students to develop technological skills to utilize information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately."

The development of ICT has made a major contribution in the educational sector, which is the learning and teaching process has developed from face-to-face conventionally to more free and modern. The impact of ICT on education was mentioned Rosenberg in his book:

"The development of ICT will lead in five transformations in the learning process, these are learning: (a) from training to demonstration, (b) from classroom to anywhere and anytime, (c) from paper to online, (d) from physical facilities to networked facilities, (e) from sequence to real-time." (Rosenberg, 2001, p.7)

ICT is also very helpful in the education sector during a pandemic, especially in Indonesian tertiary education. The teaching approach through blended learning becomes inevitable in today's teaching and learning process.

Nowadays, the learning process can be carried out in two learning methods integrated with ICT, namely e-learning and blended learning or blended e-learning or in this study is called blended online learning. Both blended e-learning and blended online learning are commonly used interchangeably. The notion of blended learning has generally been defined as the integration of face-to-face and online instruction (Graham, 2013; Sahiruddin, 2019). Brew (2008) also stated that "blended learning environment can create more effective learning experience." Other definition of blended learning also define Bath and Bourke as they mention:

"Blended learning is the integration of ICT effectively into the learning model to improve the teaching and learning experience for students and lecturers by enabling them to engage in ways that would not normally be available or effective in their usual environment, whether it is primarily face-to-face or distance mode." (Bath & Bourke, 2010)

The online teaching itself can be either synchronous or asynchronous or a combination of the two. However, the COVID-19 pandemic across the world requires new model of blended learning to become blended online learning (BOL) or blended online pedagogy. This model employs online face-to-face synchronous learning, for instance via Zoom, Google Meeting, and other virtual meeting platforms with asynchronous learning to maximize the online learning participation and learning outcome during pandemic situation nowadays (Su, 2020). This study focuses on an emergent variation of blended learning known as blended online learning, where it conveys synchronous online learning via web conferencing to enhance otherwise asynchronous online courses.

Previous studies have explored the traditional model of blended learning. For instance, Wright (2017) confirmed that students were 16% motivated and 17% were interested in faceto-face and online learning methods. It was influenced by several factors, such as personality, study habits, time efficiency going to campus, internet network constraints. However, the study also stated that online learning could not be said to be better than face-to-face lessons. In other research, Talis, et al (2018) found that students of English Education Department in Makassar Muhammadiyah University gave a positive perception and interest in the experience of the blended learning method in English Language Teaching (ELT). In terms of studies working on new blended online learning, Famularsih (2020) investigated that implementing elearning in English classroom during a pandemic was considered very effective and efficient by students. However, there are still some obstacles such as internet connection and the number of assignments given rather than the interaction between lecturer and student. They also can improve English language skills well, especially in reading, writing, and vocabulary. Aboaqye, et al (2020) illustrated several factors showing significant challenges in online learning during the pandemic, including accessibility, social, lecturer, academic, and generic issues. Khrisnapatria (2020) found 56% of students had good perceptions regarding elearning amid the COVID-19 outbreak. It was influenced by students' knowledge and experience in using e-learning. However, a little is known about the perceptions of students in EFL setting in regard to blended online practices during covid-19 pandemic nowadays, particularly in an Indonesian context.

Therefore, this study is one of the attempts to explore students' perceptions of English language skills, benefits, limitations and suggestions for improvement of the blended online learning environment during pandemic in Indonesian tertiary education. This study used quantitative method in analyzing the data gathered from online questionnaires that were distributed to students in one of Indonesian tertiary educations. This present study is intended for teachers to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the blended online learning method so that it can help improve techniques and methods in the learning process and reduce limitations during learning during a pandemic. The questions being addressed are: 1. How are

students' perception toward the effect of implementing blended online learning on the development of English language skills during COVID-19 pandemic?, 2. What are students' perception regarding the benefits and limitations of implementing blended online learning during COVID-19 pandemic?, and 3. What are students' suggestions to improve the implementation of blended online learning in the department during COVID-19 pandemic?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted to examine the effect of blended online learning in improving English language skills and also to find out the students' perceptions regarding the benefits, limitations, and suggestions for improving implementation of blended courses in the department during pandemic. The design of the study was quantitative in nature since the data analysis dealt with quantifying the data gathered from questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). Data collection was conducted by distributing online questionnaires to potential participants. Eighty-six (n=86) students enrolled in study program of English literature in one of state universities in Indonesia voluntarily participated in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from Al-Zumor et al. (2013) with items categorized into two parts. The first part was quantitative data contained 34 Likert-type statements to identify the development of students' language areas, benefits, limitations, and suggestions for improving their e-learning experience. The second part contained three open-ended questions to elicit broader answers regarding students' perception.

Descriptive statistics were conducted to report the data collected. It also provides a simple summary of sample and size, along with simple chart analysis to explain social phenomena. In more detail, the data were analyzed using SPSS 22 software. The reliability of the instrument was at Cronbach's alpha 0.90, demonstrating that the questionnaire had a high level of internal consistency on the scale used for the samples. Descriptive statistics in terms of mean and standard deviation was also calculated. Then the second section was analyzed descriptively to complete from the quantitative data obtained.

RESULT

Perception toward the effect of implementing blended online learning on the development of English language skills

The first concern of this study was to investigate students' perception toward the effect of implementing blended learning on the development of English language skills. This study revealed that listening skills were at the highest average value (3.80), followed by reading skills (3.63) and vocabulary (3.56) (see Table 1). According to students' perceptions, the three skills were the most benefited from the integration of the blended online learning method through ZOOM meetings and Learning Management System (LMS). Other areas of skill,

namely writing, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, speaking. These skills were categorized into responses (Not Sure) by students with a degree of uncertainty in descending order as shown in the table above.

Table 1 Students' Perceptions of the Effect of Blended Learning on the Development of English

Language Skills.

	SI	SDA DA		UD			Α		SA	- Mean	Std.	
	N	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)	ivieari	Dev
Listening	2	2.3	10	11.6	10	11.6	44	51.2	20	23.3	3.80	1.00
Reading	3	3.5	10	11.6	17	19.8	41	47.7	15	17.4	3.63	1.01
Vocabulary	1	1.2	12	14	22	25.6	38	44.2	13	15.1	3.56	0.93
Writing	2	2.3	15	17.4	23	26.7	32	37.2	14	16.3	3.41	1.04
Grammar	4	4.7	18	20.9	17	19.8	38	44.2	9	10.5	3.34	1.06
Pronunciation	2	2.3	22	25.6	25	29.1	31	36	6	7	3.18	0.97
Spelling	3	3.5	20	23.3	28	32.5	27	31.4	8	9.3	3.17	1.01
Speaking	5	5.8	27	31.4	24	27.9	26	30.2	4	4.7	2.96	1.02

Perceptions toward the benefits of blended online learning

The second concern of this study was to scrutinize the students' perception of the benefits of blended online learning they have experienced. This study demonstrated that as shown in Table 2, two prominent statements showed in high rank of benefits, including the development of students' computer and internet skills (3.75) and students' perceptions that they have been able to learn self-paced in their own way (3.53). Students have been able to create a learning atmosphere as desired so they can develop computer and internet skills, but it seems that students have not utilized often online platforms, such as Zoom meetings and online LMS properly. It can be seen from the last seven statements which showed the uncertainty of student responses when they were asked with the statements, such as whether blended online learning made more confident in speaking English, whether blended online learning was interesting and useful, and the degree to which blended e-learning encourages a better effective time use than conventional class. They were also sceptical of the effectiveness of using online learning management system to provide authentic material, useful feedback and improve communication between students and lecturers.

Table 2 Students' perceptions regarding the benefits of blended learning.

	SDA		DA		UD		Α		SA		Mean	Std.
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	Mean	Dev
Develop computer and internet	4	4.7	7	8.1	13	15.1	41	47.7	21	24.4	3.75	1.05
Self-paced learning	7	8.1	8	9.3	21	24.4	31	36	19	22.1	3.53	1.13
Authentic material	0	0	13	15.1	32	37.2	32	37.2	9	10.5	3.38	0.84
Useful feedback	2	2.3	10	11.6	52	60.5	16	18.6	6	7	3.19	0.83
More confident online	6	7	16	18.6	34	39.5	22	25.6	8	9.3	3.13	1.00
Effective use of time	13	15.1	16	18.6	27	31.4	21	24.4	9	10.5	2.98	1.18
Interesting and useful	6	7	21	24.4	38	44.2	19	22.1	2	2.3	2.91	0.91
Improves communication	5	5.8	31	36	32	37.2	17	19.8	1	1.2	2.83	0.98
More effective modes	7	8.1	32	37.2	26	30.2	20	23.3	1	1.2	2.72	0.96

Limitations or constraints of blended online learning

In addition to the benefits of blended online learning, this study was designed to assess the constraints or limitations of blended online learning. According to Fageeh (2011, p.31) investigating the limitations of using online learning management system from students' perception can show significant insights regarding experience and e-learning inhibiting factors. This study found that the highest-rated limitations were internet connection problems (4.06) followed by students preferred learning from hard book rather than the course website (3.56). The other limitation categorized was uncertainty (Not Sure). These are related to the natural tendency that online learning management system which is considered less effective during pandemic, technical problems encountered, social isolation, difficulty instruction from teachers and online learning management system, facilitating cheating, and access to personal computers.

Table 3 Student's perceptions of the limitations and problems of Blended Learning.

	SDA		DA		UD		Α		SA		Moon	Std.
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	- Mean	Dev
Connectivity major problem	1	1.2	11	12.8	8	9.3	9	10.5	57	66.3	4.06	1.21
Preference for books (hard)	2	2.3	11	12.8	24	27.9	15	17.4	34	39.5	3.56	1.12
E-learning less effective	0	0	5	5.8	36	41.9	26	30.2	19	22.1	3.47	0.86
Technical problems faced	3	3.5	18	20.9	20	23.3	23	26.7	22	25.6	3.38	1.13
Social isolation	3	3.5	15	17.4	25	29.1	27	31.42	16	18.6	3.38	1.07
Difficult and frustrating	3	3.5	19	22.1	23	26.7	27	31.4	14	16.3	3.23	1.07
Facilitates cheating	4	4.7	18	20.9	33	38.4	22	25.6	9	10.5	3.19	1.04
Difficult Bb instructions	3	3.5	25	29.1	47	54.7	10	11.6	1	1.2	2.96	0.75
No computer access	33	38. 4	35	40.7	11	12.8	6	7	1	1.2	2.51	1.17

Suggestions for improvement toward blended online learning

The last concern of this study was to explore students' suggestions toward the practice of blended online learning. This study demonstrated that the highest-rated suggestions given by students were solving technical problems (4.32), followed by providing proper training (3.93) and increasing the number of e-learning labs (3.86). In addition, the result also revealed uncertainty among students regarding a reward to distinguished users, decreasing blended hours and increasing blended courses.

Table 4 Students' suggestions for improving the Blended Learning experience.

	SDA		DA		UD		Α		SA		Mea n	Std. Dev
	N	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)	Ν	(%)		
Solving technical problem	0	0	1	1.2	5	5.8	19	22.1	61	70.9	4.32	0.93
Providing proper training	1	1.2	6	7	15	17.4	28	32.6	36	41.9	3.93	1.04
Increasing number of labs	0	0	5	5.8	13	15.1	46	53.5	22	25.6	3.86	0.84

Rewarding the distinguished	2	2.3	3	3.5	49	57	20	23.3	12	14	3.46	0.82
Decreasing blended hours	0	0	16	18.6	35	40.7	22	25.6	13	15.1	3.46	1.03
Increase blended courses	4	4.7	20	23.3	36	41.9	21	24.4	5	5.8	3.05	0.94

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that students showed unsatisfied perception of blended online learning during the pandemic. The first finding reveals about the impact of the development of English language skills bought by blended online learning during covid-19 pandemic that students have been positively affected by the implementation of blended online learning during pandemic. The mostly affected skills are listening and reading skills Listening skills are believed by students to be more dominant in terms of its positive impact because students are exposed to extensive listening and required to note important points of material during the online virtual meeting (for instance Zoom Meeting) before working on assignments posted on the virtual learning management (VLM) page. Furthermore, the high reading skill score is also observed to be influenced by the online material provided, mostly in the form of e-books, so students are pushed to read and understand the material carefully. The third positive impact of blended online learning is vocabulary development. Vocabulary is influenced by the development of listening and reading skills during learning so that students encounter some new vocabulary from the material obtained and it enriches their vocabularies. This finding is similar to the one reported by Famularsih (2020, p.119) who found that "students can improve vocabulary, reading, and writing skills during online learning. This is due to limited challenges in the online learning process".

This study also demonstrates that e-learning can develop students' computer and internet skill, and it makes students able to learn within their own pace. Dealing with this finding, Alzumor (2013) explained that intensive contact with technology during learning, such as VLM absolutely can develop students' computer and internet skills because they are learning by doing. In addition, flexibility and the freedom to learn wherever and whenever are some of advantage of BL for students (Melboourne, 2012; Talis et al, 2018). In addition, this study shows that most of students perceive that the benefits of e-learning during pandemic are saving cost or learning in a cheap way, flexibility in place and time during learning and teaching process so they can prevent the expansion of the COVID-19 outbreak, and they can improve basic computer skill and be more confident for delivering their ideas or opinions.

Meanwhile, the students' perception toward the limitations of BL during pandemic are slow internet connectivity as a major problem. This condition has made students perceive their preference of study over the book rather than from the course website online materials. As a result, for pedagogical implication, teachers should consider those two limitations before the

implementation of blended online learning in tertiary education. Lecturers must consider to choose the right and effective use of VLM, the availability of an internet connection, and students' conditions and situation during teaching and learning activities during a pandemic (Famularsih, 2020 p.119). In addition, other challenges in online learning is the existence of technical problem such as the device does not support the VLM or application, socially isolated, feel frustrated when using e-learning, cheating opportunity, miscommunication and misunderstanding regarding the materials.

Furthermore, from the students' perceptions concerning benefits and limitations from blended online learning, this study shows that students perceive of more various limitation than the benefits. Students are still not familiar with the application of blended learning. This is in line with Krishnapatria's (2020, p.7) research finding that "students actually like the implementation of blended online learning, but the method actually has the opposite effect on students. It was affected by the students' insight and experience of using e-learning. E-learning is actually good news, but in the early phase, it can also evoke a risk that the results in dismay at the end for students.

This study also looks for any suggestion from the students as to improve the application of blended online learning. Students suggest that teachers facilitate solving technical problems, providing proper training, and increasing numbers of labs, so that the students can create a conducive learning atmosphere and a comfort during blended e-learning. Giving free internet data for every student or reducing virtual meeting time are also recommended so that students do not need to worry about running out of internet data during online learning. Students also suggest teachers to avoid too many assignments given for the course and recommend teachers to do recording during virtual meeting classes and posting it in virtual learning management used so that students do not miss the lecturers' explanations when in a poor internet connection by checking and learning independently from published recording available through online platform. This idea confirms previous study regarding the recommendation that lecturers must consider choosing the efficient and effective use of VLM, the availability of an internet connection, and students' conditions and situations during teaching and learning activities during pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Blended online learning is not something new for students in tertiary education, but it seems that not all students are satisfied with applying blended online learning during a pandemic. Listening, reading, and vocabulary skills are much affected in their development by blended online learning. In addition, there are various perceptions regarding benefits and limitations toward implementation of blended online learning during pandemic. Some of benefits are that students feel more competent in internet and computer skills and also

students can learn the materials at their own pace. However, there are also limitations experienced by students during blended online learning, such as internet connectivity problems and also their preference over hard books rather than materials that shared in course web or VLM in the form of e-book file. Some other limitations are technical aspects, and the other problems are related to students and lecturers' preparation in the learning and teaching process.

The limitations of the implementation of blended online learning during covid-19 pandemic have made students unsatisfied due to inadequate and sudden preparation. Implementing blended learning during the pandemic showed that students are still not able to adapt to the transition of distance learning methods enhanced by technology. It also made students believed that blended online learning was less effective than learning in conventional classrooms. From these perceptions, the problem must be taken seriously by the educational institution at tertiary level in Indonesia. Students' suggestions to solve the limitations of blended online learning by solving technical problems, providing proper training and increasing numbers of labs should be taken into account. The suggestion must be followed up and recontextualized in its implementation in educational setting in Indonesia so that the effectiveness of BL implementation during a pandemic can be achieved.

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