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THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN INDONESIA REGARDING ONLINE LEARNING METHOD DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstrak

Pandemi COVID-19 secara tidak langsung mengharuskan setiap institusi pendidikan di seluruh dunia untuk segera beralih dari pembelajaran tatap muka tradisional ke sistem pembelajaran daring. Studi kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pandangan mahasiswa program studi Sastra Inggris di Universitas Kristen Indonesia tentang pengalaman mereka dengan metode pembelajaran daring selama pandemi. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik wawancara dan menggunakan catatan lapangan dari 23 mahasiswa aktif yang menjalani pembelajaran daring dari tahun 2020-2023. Dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, penelitian ini berfokus pada tanggapan mahasiswa terhadap empat pertanyaan utama yang membahas tentang kesukaan, ketidaksukaan, hambatan yang dihadapi para mahasiswa, dan saran mereka untuk meningkatkan metode pembelajaran daring dikemudian hari. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa meskipun mahasiswa sangat menghargai adanya fleksibilitas, media pembelajaran yang beragam, dan kesempatan untuk belajar mandiri, mereka juga menghadapi berbagai tantangan, termasuk masalah yang paling utama adalah koneksi atau jaringan internet, keterbatasan perangkat, tugas-tugas kuliah yang berlebihan, kesulitan berkonsentrasi, dan metode pengajaran dosen yang mereka anggap monoton. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya untuk mengintegrasikan pendekatan pengajaran yang interaktif, fleksibel, dan kreatif, meningkatkan literasi digital baik bagi dosen maupun mahasiswa, serta mendorong adanya interaksi positif antara dosen dengan mahasiswa. Studi ini berkontribusi untuk memberikan wawasan mendalam kepada pembaca khususnya para pendidik di lingkungan institusi Pendidikan di Indonesia tentang pengalaman para mahasiswa dalam menjalani kuliah online. Penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi yang berharga bagi para praktisi pendidikan dan institusi pendidikan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas dan keterlibatan sistem pembelajaran daring, terutama dalam masa-masa krisis serupa di masa yang akan datang.

Kata kunci: pembelajaran daring, pandangan mahasiswa, pandemi COVID-19, penelitian kualitatif, literasi digital, metode pengajaran

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic compelled educational institutions worldwide to swiftly transition from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning platforms. This qualitative study aims to explore the perspectives of English Literature students at Universitas Kristen Indonesia regarding their experiences with online learning methods during the pandemic. Data were collected through interviews and field notes from 23 active students who experienced full online learning from 2020 until 2023. Using purposive sampling, the research focused on student responses to four main questions that addressed their likes and dislikes, encountered barriers, and suggestions for improving online learning methods. The findings revealed that while students appreciated the flexibility, varied learning media, and opportunities for independent study, they also encountered numerous challenges, including internet connection problems, device limitations, excessive workloads, concentration difficulties, and monotonous teaching methods. The research highlights the importance of integrating interactive, flexible, and creative teaching approaches, improving digital literacy for both lecturers and students, and fostering positive lecturer-student interactions. This study contributes uniquely by providing in-depth qualitative insights from students within a specific program and institutional setting in Indonesia. It offers valuable recommendations for teaching practitioners and educational institutions to enhance the effectiveness and engagement of online learning systems, especially in similar crises or blended learning environments in the future.

Keywords: online learning, student perspective, COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative research, digital literacy, teaching methods

1. Introduction

Background of Study

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant transformations across various sectors worldwide, including education. In response to health protocols and physical distancing measures, universities and schools rapidly shifted from traditional face-to-face instruction to fully online platforms. According to Dhawan (2020), online learning emerged as a vital solution to ensure educational continuity during the crisis. However, while this transition aimed to prevent academic disruption, it introduced numerous challenges for both educators and students.

In Indonesia, higher education institutions widely adopted online learning from 2020 to 2022. Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI) was among those that moved its academic activities to digital platforms. This shift presented benefits such as flexibility, accessibility, and the integration of multimedia resources (Muthuprasad et al., 2021).

Although numerous studies have explored online learning during the pandemic, most have focused on lecturers' perspectives or large-scale quantitative assessments of general effectiveness. There remains limited research delving into students' personal experiences, particularly within smaller academic environments like English Literature study programs in Indonesia. Understanding students' viewpoints is crucial, as their feedback offers valuable insights for refining online teaching methods.

This study centers on the experiences of Universitas Kristen Indonesia students, investigating their perceptions of online learning during the pandemic. Using qualitative methods, including direct interviews and field notes, the research aims to capture both the positive and negative aspects of online learning from the students' perspectives, the barriers they faced, and their recommendations for future online education practices.

Several relevant studies have examined students' experiences with online learning during the pandemic. Adnan and Anwar (2020) identified the internet connection issues, reduced motivation, and diminished interaction as primary obstacles for Pakistani university students. Similarly, Agung et al. (2020) highlighted disparities in digital infrastructure and learning environments among Indonesian students, emphasizing household distractions and unstable internet connections as factors affecting learning effectiveness. Rasheed et al. (2021) found that while students and lecturers in Malaysia gradually adapted to online platforms, the experience revealed a digital divide and a pressing need for improved digital literacy and online teaching strategies.

Comparative studies on online and offline learning modalities, such as the one conducted by Darwis and Hasyim (2024), revealed that while both modalities produced high average scores, offline learning slightly outperformed online education. Their findings affirmed that although online learning serves as a practical alternative during emergencies, it does not entirely replicate the effectiveness of face-to-face instruction. Similarly, Ponio (2021) explored how students' preparedness—including access to technology, digital skills, study habits, and motivation—impacts their perceived effectiveness of online learning. The study concluded that strengthening students' study habits is crucial for enhancing online education outcomes.

Basar et al. (2022) also investigated the effectiveness and challenges of online learning among secondary school students. Their research found that while online learning ensured educational continuity, students faced difficulties such as limited interaction, lack of motivation, and technical problems. The authors emphasized the need for improved interaction and technical support to enhance the online learning experience.

The novelty of this research lies in its exclusive focus on students' perspectives within an English Literature study program at a private university in Indonesia during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike broader quantitative studies, it adopts a qualitative approach through purposive sampling, targeting 23 students with direct, prolonged exposure to online learning from 2020 to 2022. Structured interviews gathered insights on students' preferences,

challenges, and suggestions for improving online learning systems, offering a more personal, holistic, and nuanced understanding of their experiences.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research are expected to be beneficial in several ways. Firstly, it offers valuable information for teaching practitioners at Universitas Kristen Indonesia and similar institutions on how to improve online learning methods and materials, based on the authentic feedback of students. Secondly, it contributes to the academic discussion on digital education in Indonesian higher education by presenting a focused, qualitative study in an area that has not been extensively explored. Lastly, this research could serve as a reference for future studies aiming to enhance online learning experiences in comparable contexts.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on students from the English Literature program at Universitas Kristen Indonesia who experienced full online learning from 2020 to 2022. Data were collected through purposive sampling, involving 23 students who participated in interviews. As a result, the findings are specific to this group and cannot be generalized to the broader population of Indonesian university students. The research is further limited by its focus on four specific interview questions, which address students' preferences, challenges, and suggestions related to online learning methods and materials.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered unprecedented shifts in education, as institutions quickly transitioned from face-to-face to fully online learning due to health and social restrictions. This rapid change brought both opportunities and challenges for students and educators, altering teaching methods, classroom interactions, and the overall learning experience. Given that online learning became the dominant educational mode during this period, it became crucial to understand how students navigated this new academic environment, particularly within the context of Indonesian higher education.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for educators, academic policymakers, and instructional designers, offering firsthand perspectives on students' experiences with online learning. By capturing students' voices, the research highlights aspects of online learning that students found effective, the challenges they faced, and their recommendations for improving virtual teaching practices. These insights are essential for refining online learning strategies, not only for future emergencies but also for integrating blended and digital learning models in post-pandemic education.

What distinguishes this research is its focus on a specific and often overlooked group: students in the English Literature program at Universitas Kristen Indonesia. While many studies have explored online learning during the pandemic, few have delved into the experiences of students in humanities programs, which rely heavily on interactive, discussion-based, and performative learning methods. The study also adopts a qualitative approach, using direct interviews and field notes, which allows for a deeper, narrative-driven exploration of student perspectives compared to large-scale quantitative studies.

This research contributes novelty by exploring not only the advantages and disadvantages of online learning but also the specific barriers students faced and their practical suggestions for improvement. By concentrating on 23 active students who experienced full online learning between 2020 and 2022, the study provides a detailed, context-specific account that can serve as a reference for future research in similar academic settings.

However, it is important to note the limitations of the study. The findings are based on a small, localized sample from a single university program, which means they cannot be generalized to the wider population of Indonesian university students. Despite these limitations, the insights offer valuable reflections on the implementation of online learning in higher education during a global crisis and lay the groundwork for broader studies on the topic.

2. Literature Review

Definition of Online Learning Method

Online learning is commonly defined as an instructional process conducted via digital platforms that utilize internet access to facilitate flexible interaction and information exchange between learners and instructors, regardless of their physical locations (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021). As a predominant form of modern distance education, online learning leverages technological infrastructure to overcome the limitations of traditional classroom settings, reaching a broad and diverse audience (Banson & Arthur-Nyarko, 2021).

Smart and Cappel (2006) describe online learning as instruction delivered electronically through the internet, intranet, or multimedia formats, offering both synchronous and asynchronous options to cater to various learning needs. Ally (2004) further emphasizes that this approach enables students to access educational content, instructor guidance, and peer interactions entirely through digital means, fostering independent and flexible learning experiences.

Beyond the basic delivery of content, online learning incorporates a range of digital tools and instructional methods to enhance and mediate the educational process. The OECD

(2016) highlights that online learning integrates technologies to create a dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered environment. Bartley and Golek (2004) describe online learning as a form of distance education that requires students and educators to engage through various resources and virtual communication channels.

Recent pedagogical advancements in online learning emphasize the shift from passive, instructor-led teaching to interactive, collaborative models. Wong et al. (2019) argue that effective online education encourages both instructors and students to co-construct knowledge and actively engage with the course content, peers, and instructors. This approach aligns with Garrison and Kanuka's (2004) view that online learning offers transformative potential by blending formal and informal learning across various times, spaces, and media.

Online learning also relies on course management systems (CMS) that support various educational activities, such as content delivery, assessment, and communication tools. Sun and Chen (2016) highlight that these systems improve flexibility and accessibility, providing a tailored learning framework to meet students' needs. Additionally, Maddison and Kumaran (2017) emphasize that online learning ecosystems are multidimensional, involving diverse media, instructional strategies, and opportunities for continuous, lifelong learning. These definitions collectively reflect the evolving and multifaceted nature of online learning as an essential component of modern education, offering both challenges and opportunities for innovation.

Online learning involves using internet-based platforms and digital resources to deliver educational content, facilitate communication, and manage instructional processes without requiring physical classroom interaction (Dhawan, 2020). Bao (2020) notes that online learning includes various synchronous and asynchronous teaching strategies designed to support remote student learning. It integrates digital tools such as video conferencing, learning management systems (LMS), multimedia content, and interactive applications (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). While online learning promotes flexibility and accessibility, scholars such as Rapanta et al. (2020) and Sun et al. (2020) argue that it also necessitates a high level of digital literacy and self-regulated learning from students.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Online Learning Method

Online learning has brought several significant advantages, especially during times of crisis. One of its most prominent benefits is flexibility. Students can access course materials and participate in classes from any location, which accommodates diverse schedules and learning paces (Dhawan, 2020; Adnan & Anwar, 2020). This flexibility is particularly

beneficial for non-traditional students who juggle education with work or family commitments. Additionally, online learning enables students to revisit recorded lectures and utilize a range of multimedia resources, enhancing their learning experience and supporting different learning styles (Bao, 2020). The reduced need for commuting and physical resources makes online education more cost-effective, lowering expenses related to travel, accommodation, and physical materials (Agung et al., 2020).

Moreover, online learning provides a rich array of multimedia tools, such as videos, interactive modules, and discussion forums, which can improve engagement and retention (Dumford & Miller, 2018). The digital nature of online education also allows for immediate feedback and efficient progress tracking (Muthuprasad et al., 2021), further enhancing the learning experience. These advantages collectively make online learning an appealing and accessible option for many students.

However, online learning is not without its challenges. One major disadvantage is the lack of face-to-face interaction, which can lead to feelings of isolation and diminished motivation (Le et al., 2022). The absence of a physical classroom environment may also limit the development of communication skills and reduce opportunities for collaborative learning (Culdüz, 2023). Technical issues, such as unreliable internet connections or insufficient access to necessary devices, further complicate the learning process, disproportionately affecting students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Muthuprasad et al., 2021).

Additionally, online learning heavily depends on students' self-discipline and time-management skills. Without the structure of traditional classroom settings, some students may struggle to stay focused and keep up with their coursework (Le et al., 2022). Educators also face challenges in adapting their teaching methods to online formats, which may require additional training and resources (Marek et al., 2021). Furthermore, the need for students to independently manage their time and learning progress can become a barrier, particularly for those unaccustomed to self-directed study (Dhawan, 2020).

In conclusion, while online learning offers substantial benefits, including flexibility, accessibility, and resource availability, it also presents notable challenges. To ensure its effectiveness, strategies such as providing technical support, fostering interactive and collaborative online environments, and offering training for both students and educators are essential for navigating the digital learning landscape.

3. Research Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perspectives on the online learning method during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2023. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of students' personal experiences, perceptions, and suggestions, which cannot be captured adequately through quantitative measurements alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through qualitative inquiry, this research aimed to gather rich, descriptive data to reveal the nuanced barriers and advantages of online learning from students' viewpoints.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of this study were 23 active students enrolled in the English Literature Study Program at Universitas Kristen Indonesia. These students experienced full online learning from 2020 to 2023. The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on specific criteria: students had to be actively engaged in online classes during the pandemic period and willing to participate in interviews. This sampling method ensured that the data collected was relevant and directly reflected the students' experiences with online learning.

Data Collection Instruments

To collect data, the researcher used two main instruments:

a) Field Notes.

During the interviews, the researcher recorded observational notes on participants' attitudes to complement the spoken data.

a) Interviews.

The primary data collection tool was a semi-structured interview. Each participant was asked four key open-ended questions, namely:

1. What do you like about the online learning method?
2. What do you dislike about the online learning method?
3. Based on your experiences, what barriers have you encountered during online learning? and
4. What are your suggestions to lecturers regarding learning materials and teaching methods to improve your interest and effectiveness in online learning?

These questions were designed to capture students' preferences, challenges, and recommendations concerning online education.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process took place over a designated period in 2022. The researcher conducted direct interviews either online or face-to-face, depending on participant availability and safety regulations at the time. Before each interview, participants were informed about the research purpose and provided verbal consent. Each interview lasted approximately 15–30 minutes, and responses were either recorded with permission or documented through detailed notes.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The researcher organized and categorized the responses based on recurring themes related to students' online learning experiences. These categories included advantages, disadvantages, encountered barriers, and suggested improvements. The findings were then descriptively narrated to identify common patterns and unique insights, ensuring that students' voices were authentically represented in the analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings gathered from 23 English Literature students at Universitas Kristen Indonesia regarding their experiences with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1. Students' Perspective on the Things They Like from the Online Learning System

Based on the students' responses (Data 1.1–1.23), using line-by-line coding, the researcher categorized the students' answers into several common themes related to the research question: “*What do you like about the online learning method?*” Here is the categorized breakdown:

1. Flexibility of Time and Location

The students appreciated the freedom to study and managed their schedules anywhere and anytime. This is mentioned in 16 out of 23 data.

2. **Cost Savings (Transport, Meals, etc.)**
Many students highlight saving money on transportation, food, and daily expenses. This is found in 17 out of 23 data.
3. **Use of Technology and Applications**
Students enjoy using platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc., and mention learning new tech skills. This is found in 8 out of 23 data.
4. **Recorded Lectures / Replay Materials**
The ability to re-watch class recordings helps the students review and better understand the materials. This is found in 9 out of 23 data.
5. **Comfort and Personal Space**
Learning in a familiar and comfortable environment, wearing relaxed clothes, or studying from their room. This is found in 6 out of 23 data.
6. **Environmentally Friendly**
Some students mentioned they used less paper, which could lower the carbon footprint. This is mentioned in 3 out of 23 data.
7. **Independent Learning & Better Focus**
The students were able to study at their own pace, with fewer distractions, and got access to more sources (journals, videos). This is mentioned in 9 out of 23 data.
8. **Learning New Skills & Experience**
Online learning is a new and positive experience, including learning soft skills, hobbies, and writing. This is found in 6 out of 23 data.
9. **Interaction & Communication Features**
The students find it easy to submit their assignments, communicate with lecturers through chat/email, or follow clear instructions. This is found in 4 out of 23 data.
10. **Mental Health & Reduced Social Pressure**
The online learning made the students feel less pressure in exams, less anxiety, and gave more time for self-care or hobbies for the students. This is found in 4 out of 23 data.

4.2. Students' Perspective on the Things They Dislike from the Online Learning System

Below is the categorization of what students dislike about online learning, based on the student responses (Data 2.1–2.23).

1. Technical Issues (Internet, Devices, Platform Bugs)

Many students expressed frustration with technical problems that significantly disrupt online learning. Issues like unstable internet connections (6 out of 23 data) and power outages (1 out of 23 data) often cause delays or disconnections during live classes and assessments. Device limitations, such as outdated laptops, broken microphones, and low-quality cameras, further worsen the learning experience (4 out of 23 data). Students also encountered frequent problems with learning platforms and applications—bugs, errors, and non-functioning features like screen sharing or open-camera functions (2 out of 23 data). Additionally, students criticized the lack of technological competence among some educators, making it difficult to conduct or follow effective lessons (1 out of 23 data). These technical obstacles not only cause stress but also contribute to an uneven and unreliable learning environment.

2. Lack of Social Interaction / Isolation

A common concern among students is the lack of meaningful interaction during online learning. Many felt disconnected from their friends and peers, leading to feelings of loneliness and boredom (11 out of 23 data). The inability to meet classmates face-to-face or engage in casual conversation affects both their social lives and learning motivation. Students also pointed out the absence of non-verbal cues like eye contact and facial expressions, making communication feel impersonal and awkward (2 out of 23 data). These social limitations have left many students feeling isolated and disconnected from the academic community.

3. Learning & Comprehension Challenges

Many students reported that online learning has made it harder to understand course materials. Without direct interaction with instructors or peers, students often find themselves struggling alone with concepts they don't fully grasp (9 out of 23 data). Some noted that learning through videos or recorded materials is less effective than face-to-face explanations. Students also mentioned becoming passive learners due to the one-way communication format of many online classes (2 out of 23 data). This leads to poor engagement, misunderstanding of tasks, and reduced comprehension, especially when distractions or technical barriers are present.

4. Motivation, Focus, and Discipline Issues

Students frequently reported that the online environment weakens their ability to stay focused and motivated. Factors such as household distractions, family interruptions, and an overall passive atmosphere make it hard to stay engaged (8 out of 23 data). The lack of classroom energy and physical movement often results in feelings of sleepiness and laziness, with many admitting to zoning out or even falling asleep during sessions (2 out of 23 data). The monotony of online routines and the absence of structured supervision contribute to a decline in discipline and learning enthusiasm, making it harder for students to maintain consistent academic performance.

5. Physical Strain & Health Concerns

Several students highlighted the physical toll of prolonged screen time during online classes. Common complaints included sore eyes, body aches, and headaches from staring at a laptop or smartphone for hours (5 out of 23 data). Some even mentioned the need for glasses due to worsening eye conditions. Additionally, the sedentary lifestyle caused by continuous indoor studying led to a lack of physical activity, further impacting their physical well-being (1 out of 23 data). This raises concerns about the long-term health implications of fully remote learning environments.

6. Assignment & Workload Overload

A frequent complaint was the overwhelming number of assignments students received during online learning. Many felt that the workload was heavier than in offline classes, with numerous daily tasks and tight submission deadlines (5 out of 23 data). The process of completing, photographing, uploading, and submitting assignments became burdensome, especially when combined with technical limitations like full device memory or poor internet (1 out of 23 data). Students felt mentally drained and stressed by the constant cycle of homework, which left them little time to relax or engage in other activities.

7. Group Work / Communication Problems

Online group assignments posed additional challenges for students. Communication difficulties, lack of responsiveness from team members, and platform glitches disrupted the collaborative process (5 out of 23 data). Without face-to-face interaction, coordinating tasks became more complicated, and many students were left to carry the burden of group projects alone. Some found it hard to reach out to peers or lacked the technological means to contribute effectively, leading to imbalanced workloads and group conflicts.

8. Accessibility & Economic Issues

A few students raised concerns about the unequal access to resources required for online learning. For those in rural or economically challenged areas, maintaining a stable internet connection or affording data packages was difficult (3 out of 23 data). Sharing devices among family members (1 out of 23 data), using outdated technology, or being unfamiliar with learning apps due to limited digital literacy made participation even more difficult. This inequality placed additional stress on students and highlighted the digital divide in access to education.

4.3. Students' Barriers in the Online Learning System

Here is the summary of the barriers based on the student responses to a question: "Based on your experiences, what are the barriers you have had so far during the online learning method?".

1. Internet Connection / Signal Problems

Many students experienced significant issues with unstable internet connections and poor signal quality, particularly during bad weather. This problem was mentioned in 16 data. Common consequences included difficulty hearing lecturers, delayed assignment submissions, missing important information, and even being unable to attend classes. Many students shared that their Wi-Fi networks were unreliable, with signals often dropping or slowing down, especially when it rained. This caused anxiety and frustration, especially during assessments or presentations.

2. Device / Equipment Limitations

Technical limitations related to devices were another recurring problem. Reported in 11 data points, issues included old or malfunctioning laptops, incompatible smartphones, broken microphones and cameras, app lagging, and limited access to reliable equipment. Students struggled with outdated or poorly functioning devices that hindered their participation in class activities, disrupted meetings, and caused delays in completing assignments.

3. Platform / Technology Problems

Several students pointed out difficulties with online learning platforms and applications. This was reflected in 7 out of 23 data. Frequent app errors, bugs in Microsoft Teams, trouble joining meetings, and platform crashes disrupted learning experiences. These problems often led to students missing classes, facing delays in submitting work, or being unable to access learning materials effectively.

4. Overloaded Assignments / Tight Deadlines

A number of students expressed concerns about the excessive workload and tight deadlines imposed during online learning. Found in 4 out of 23 data, students highlighted the pressure of handling numerous assignments with little time to complete them. Some lecturers were described as inflexible, unwilling to adjust deadlines despite technical barriers, adding stress and making it difficult for students to manage their responsibilities.

5. Concentration / Focus Issues & Learning Motivation

Loss of focus and motivation emerged as a major challenge in online learning. Mentioned in 12 out of 23 data, students cited distractions at home, screen fatigue, boredom, and lack of face-to-face interaction as key factors contributing to declining concentration. Some students admitted to feeling lazy, uninterested, or even physically and mentally exhausted due to continuous online sessions without the engaging classroom atmosphere.

6. Home Environment Distractions

Several students shared how their home environments were not conducive to studying. This was described in 6 out of 23 cases. Common distractions included pets, family members calling for help, household chores, noisy surroundings, and other domestic interruptions that disrupted classes and reduced focus. These uncontrollable factors made it difficult for students to create a productive learning space.

7. Group Projects / Collaboration Challenges

Online group projects presented their own difficulties, as noted in 2 out of 23 data, and 3.12. Students reported challenges such as uncooperative group members, poor communication, and unequal task distribution. Additionally, technical problems and unfamiliarity with collaborative tools made teamwork complicated, leading to frustration and additional workload for those actively participating.

8. Physical / Health Complaints

Physical discomfort and health concerns were reported by some students, particularly eye strain and body aches from prolonged screen time. This was raised in 3 out of 23 cases. Students mentioned issues like headaches, eye fatigue, and the effects of prolonged exposure to device radiation, which further reduced their ability to stay focused and motivated.

9. Lecturer's Attitude / Teaching Method

Some students criticized the approach and attitudes of certain lecturers during online learning. Reflected in 5 out of 23 data, issues included lecturers being inflexible about deadlines, delivering monotonous or unclear material, and lacking interaction or

understanding of students' difficulties. This contributed to reduced engagement and made it harder for students to follow lessons effectively.

10. Digital Literacy / Technical Skills

A smaller number of students are admitted to lacking the technical skills necessary for effective online learning. Reported in 2 out of 23 cases, difficulties included unfamiliarity with learning applications, online platforms, and digital tools. This gap in digital literacy created additional obstacles for students as they adapted to the new learning environment.

4.4. Students' Suggestions to the Lecturers Who Conduct the Online Learning System

Here is the categorization of the student suggestions for the lecturers based on the research questions: “As a student, what are your suggestions to the teaching practitioners regarding to their learning materials and the teaching methods to make you more effective and interested in the online learning system?”

1. Internet Connection / Signal Problems

Several students highlighted the low and unreliable internet connection as a recurring barrier in online learning. They suggested that lecturers avoid requiring students to keep their cameras on during class, as it often worsens connection quality for those with limited internet access. In cases where technical issues like platform errors or unstable signals occur, students recommended that lecturers offer alternative submission methods—such as via email or WhatsApp—and provide extra time allowances to ensure fair participation.

2. Device / Equipment Limitations

One student specifically addressed the difficulties posed by device or equipment limitations, particularly when learning applications malfunction. They recommended that lecturers accommodate these barriers by providing backup options for submitting assignments and allowing deadline flexibility when technical issues prevent timely submissions.

3. Platform / Technology Problems

Several responses focused on the challenges posed by online learning platforms and application errors. Students asked lecturers to be more understanding when these issues arise and to provide clear, alternative ways for students to submit their work. Ensuring reliable

communication and offering backup channels for task submissions were suggested as practical solutions.

4. Overloaded Assignments / Tight Deadlines

A number of students expressed concerns over the excessive volume of assignments and tight deadlines that often characterize online learning. They proposed reducing video-based tasks, managing workloads more fairly, and ensuring deadlines are reasonable. Students emphasized the need for a balanced distribution of tasks to avoid overwhelming learners.

5. Concentration / Focus Issues & Learning Motivation

Many students noted that maintaining focus and motivation is particularly challenging in online learning environments. They recommended making classes more interactive by incorporating activities like quizzes, games, videos, movies, songs, and discussions. Other suggestions included making materials concise, using humour or icebreakers, and varying delivery methods to hold students' attention and keep them engaged throughout the class.

6. Home Environment Distractions

One student acknowledged that learning from home presents unique distractions that impact concentration. To counter this, they suggested that lecturers enhance the appeal of their materials—for example, by improving the design and delivery of PowerPoint presentations—to help students stay focused and engaged despite their home environment.

7. Group Projects / Collaboration Challenges

Regarding group assignments, a student recommended allowing learners to choose their own group members, preferably those who live nearby. This would make it easier to collaborate on projects, particularly for tasks that are difficult to manage individually in an online learning context.

8. Physical / Health Complaints

A student pointed out that long online sessions can cause fatigue and drowsiness. To address this, they suggested that lecturers schedule short breaks during class, giving students time to eat, rest, or recharge before continuing with the lesson.

9. Lecturer's Attitude / Teaching Method

The majority of students emphasized the importance of enhancing teaching methods and the lecturer's viewpoint towards online learning. They suggested making materials clearer, more concise, and varied—incorporating media like videos, songs, animations, and interactive discussions. Balancing synchronous and asynchronous learning, providing clear

instructions, giving timely feedback, and fostering a cheerful, relaxed, and supportive learning environment were repeatedly recommended. Students also valued lecturers who shared life lessons and motivational insights, creating a more meaningful and engaging experience.

10. Digital Literacy / Technical Skills

One student suggested incorporating ICT tools and digital game-based learning into online education. They proposed using flipped classroom models, encouraging cooperative learning, improving communication among students and lecturers, and helping learners visualize lesson objectives through images and digital tools. These strategies would enhance both student and lecturer digital literacy, contributing to a smoother and more effective online learning environment.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The recent research findings from Universitas Kristen Indonesia students both support and extend the conclusions drawn by previous studies on online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with earlier research by Adnan and Anwar (2020), Agung et al. (2020), and Basar et al. (2022), the students in this study acknowledged challenges such as low and bad internet connections and occasional platform glitches, which indirectly confirm the limitations of online learning identified in past research. However, this study's findings lean more toward highlighting the advantages of online learning, which offers a complementary perspective to prior studies that emphasized obstacles and limitations. For instance, while Darwis and Hasyim (2024) concluded that offline learning produced slightly better academic outcomes, the students in this study valued the flexibility, cost-efficiency, and autonomy afforded by online learning. Similarly, Ponio's (2021) assertion that preparedness affects online learning effectiveness is reinforced by the students' emphasis on independent learning, improved study habits, and better focus, suggesting that learners can benefit when given control over their schedules and environments. Moreover, while previous research often focused on technical, motivational, and interaction challenges, the current study introduces new positive dimensions such as environmental friendliness and improved mental well-being due to reduced social pressures, areas not extensively addressed in earlier studies. Thus, this research not only supports prior findings regarding the challenges of online education but also proposes additional benefits, emphasizing that with adequate adaptation, online learning can offer unique advantages that traditional face-to-face instruction might lack.

The recent research findings from Universitas Kristen Indonesia students generally support and reinforce the conclusions of previous studies regarding the challenges of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consistent with Adnan and Anwar's (2020) findings, students in this study reported significant technical issues, including unstable internet connections, device limitations, and platform bugs, which disrupted their learning experience. Similarly, as highlighted by Agung et al. (2020), disparities in digital infrastructure and household distractions were also apparent, particularly for students in economically disadvantaged settings or those sharing devices at home. Rasheed et al. (2021) had emphasized the digital divide and the need for improved digital competencies; a point echoed in the current study, where students expressed frustration with the lack of technological proficiency among some educators. In line with Basar et al. (2022), the students in this research experienced limited interaction, increased feelings of isolation, and reduced motivation — factors that affected their academic focus and mental well-being. Furthermore, the finding that students struggled with comprehension, discipline, and workload overload aligns with Darwis and Hasyim's (2024) conclusion that while online learning was a necessary substitute, it could not fully match the effectiveness of face-to-face instruction. Although Ponio (2021) noted that student preparedness influenced online learning effectiveness, this study revealed that even with access to technology, challenges like poor focus, passive learning, and communication difficulties persisted. Additionally, new insights emerged in this study, such as the physical strain and health concerns caused by prolonged screen time, which had not been a primary focus in earlier research. In summary, the recent findings propose additional nuances while largely supporting prior research, confirming that although online learning offers continuity in crises, it presents complex challenges that require strategic, empathetic, and inclusive solutions for future implementation.

The recent research findings align with and further support the conclusions drawn by previous studies regarding the challenges faced by students in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consistent with Adnan and Anwar's (2020) study, low and bad internet connections and lack of motivation emerged as the most frequently mentioned barriers among students, confirming that unstable signals and household distractions continue to disrupt learning and decrease engagement. Similarly, Agung et al. (2020) identified disparities in digital infrastructure and home learning environments as major obstacles, which this study reinforces through students' complaints about outdated devices, poor internet access, and unsupportive home conditions. The issue of digital divide and technological competency, as emphasized by Rasheed et al. (2021), was also evident in the present research, with students

expressing difficulties in handling online platforms and frustration over lecturers who were limited in digital literacy. Furthermore, in line with Darwis and Hasyim's (2024) comparison of learning outcomes between online and offline modalities, students in this study consistently noted that online learning could not fully replicate the effectiveness, interaction, and focus provided by traditional face-to-face education. Echoing Basar et al. (2022), challenges such as excessive workloads, reduced interaction, concentration problems, and technical issues were still prevalent, confirming the urgent need to improve the online learning framework. Although Ponio (2021) argued that students' preparedness influences the perceived effectiveness of online learning, this research reveals that even with access to technology, barriers like motivation loss, assignment overload, and health complaints remain significant. In addition, the current findings offer new insights by highlighting physical health concerns, such as eye strain and body fatigue from prolonged screen time, which were less emphasized in earlier studies. Overall, the recent research findings propose additional specific barriers while strongly supporting and reaffirming the patterns and conclusions established by previous research, emphasizing the multifaceted and ongoing challenges of online learning in higher education.

The recent research findings are largely consistent with, and thus propose, the conclusions established by previous studies regarding the challenges and experiences of students in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the findings of Adnan and Anwar (2020), internet connectivity issues remained one of the most commonly cited obstacles by students, who recommended practical solutions such as avoiding mandatory camera use and providing flexible submission options. This supports the earlier conclusion that poor internet access continues to hinder online learning's effectiveness. Likewise, the concern over motivation and decreased engagement, as highlighted by Agung et al. (2020) and Basar et al. (2022), was reaffirmed in the recent study, with students suggesting interactive activities, varied materials, and engaging teaching methods to maintain attention and motivation. Rasheed et al.'s (2021) emphasis on the need for improved digital literacy was also reflected in student recommendations to incorporate ICT tools and game-based learning to enhance both lecturer and student competence with online platforms. Additionally, Darwis and Hasyim's (2024) findings, which showed a gap in learning outcomes between online and offline modalities, find further support here as students expressed dissatisfaction with overloaded assignments, tight deadlines, and home distractions — factors that undermine online learning's effectiveness compared to traditional settings. Ponio's (2021) assertion about the role of preparedness aligns with students' calls for better task management, clearer instructions, and enhanced lecturer attitudes, suggesting that preparedness involves not only technical skills but also adaptability

in pedagogy and course design. Interestingly, while previous studies mentioned digital infrastructure and interaction limitations, the current findings add new emphasis on physical discomfort, health complaints, and the importance of lecturer demeanor, offering a more nuanced view of students' holistic online learning experiences. In summary, the recent research does not contradict but rather extends and substantiates prior studies, reaffirming existing challenges while proposing practical, student-centered improvements to enhance the quality and effectiveness of online education.

Conclusion

The recent research findings from Universitas Kristen Indonesia students predominantly propose and reinforce the conclusions established by previous studies regarding the challenges of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consistent with the findings of Adnan and Anwar (2020), Agung et al. (2020), and Basar et al. (2022), this study confirms persistent issues such as internet connectivity problems, decreased motivation, limited interaction, and disparities in digital infrastructure. It also aligns with Rasheed et al. (2021) in highlighting the need for improved digital literacy and the digital divide affecting both students and lecturers. Similarly, Darwis and Hasyim's (2024) observation that online learning falls short of replicating the effectiveness of face-to-face instruction is reaffirmed, as students in this study reported challenges like overloaded assignments, concentration difficulties, and limited collaboration opportunities. While Ponio's (2021) conclusion about the importance of student preparedness is supported in terms of access to technology and the need for strong study habits, this study slightly opposes the implication that preparedness alone ensures effectiveness. Even with adequate access and skills, students continued to face issues such as loss of motivation, physical fatigue, and health complaints from prolonged screen time, factors not thoroughly addressed in earlier studies. Furthermore, this research proposes additional, previously underexplored insights — including the importance of lecturer demeanor, flexible teaching strategies, interactive materials, and attention to students' physical and mental well-being — suggesting that successful online learning requires not only technical readiness but also empathetic, adaptive, and student-centered instructional practices. In conclusion, while largely affirming prior research, the current study introduces nuanced, student-driven recommendations to improve the online learning experience.

This study explored the perspectives of English Literature students at Universitas Kristen Indonesia regarding their experiences with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the qualitative data gathered from 23 student participants through

interviews and field notes, it is evident that while online learning offered certain conveniences, it also presented various challenges that influenced students' academic performance and motivation. Key challenges included unstable internet connections, device limitations, platform issues, excessive assignments, concentration difficulties, home distractions, and physical fatigue. Furthermore, students expressed that monotonous teaching styles and a lack of interaction from lecturers exacerbated disengagement in online settings. Despite these challenges, many students appreciated the flexibility, use of multimedia resources, and the opportunity for independent study provided by online learning. Notably, students emphasized the importance of engaging teaching methods, improved lecturer digital literacy, varied learning media, and adaptive strategies to accommodate technical and environmental barriers. Positive lecturer attitudes and clear, supportive communication were also seen as crucial in sustaining student motivation throughout the pandemic. The novelty of this research lies in its focused exploration of student voices within a specific academic program and institutional context in Indonesia, offering firsthand, qualitative insights into how students personally navigated online learning during an unprecedented global crisis.

Citation

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