

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES ON ONLINE LEARNING DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE INFLUENCE OF ENGAGEMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL CHARACTERISTIC IN EFL CONTEXT

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Received: September 10, 2021 Accepted: October 12, 2021 Published: November 30, 2021

Abstract

This study is aimed to report undergraduate students' experiences on online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While online learning is not new, this was a novel and sudden experience for students who normally attend school, relatively little empirical evidence explore how undergraduate students experience during online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of their engagement and pedagogical aspects. To fill this gap, this present study focused on investigating undergraduate students' experience of online learning in engagement included students' active involvement category and pedagogical characteristics such as personalization, authenticity, and collaboration. Grounded in qualitative approach with phenomenological case study design. Out of thirty-one undergraduate students of 2nd semester major in English education in one of universities in West Java, three undergraduate students were recruited as the participants voluntarily in this study. The data were collected from online interviews adopting the three-interview series framework by Seidman's (2013) consisting of thirteen questions. The data were qualitatively analyzed by inductive phenomenological reduction from Seidman's (2013). The result of this study showed two emergent findings on undergraduate students' experience during online learning. First of all, the term of engagement on online learning of undergraduate students shows that each participant has a wide range of class involvement. Secondly, the pedagogical characteristic of personalization aspect indicated that students have independent learning such as read repeatedly the material and access more than one learning source.

Keywords: Online learning, engagement, pedagogical characteristic

INTRODUCTION

As the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the spread of Covid-19 as a global pandemic, face- to- face or traditional classrooms and courses had to be changed into virtual or online modes. In the Covid-19 pandemic, ELT has become very important and a top priority around the world. This assertion follows the assessment of Duraku and Hoxha

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(2020) report that the COVID-19 has affected the education, well-being, and functioning of all parties involved and benefiting from educational systems in the world. To ensure the continuation of teaching, learning, and assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic, all educational institutions closed their doors to students and moved to remote, emergency delivery of programs.

While online learning is not new, this was a novel and sudden experience for students who normally attend school. Abernathy (2020) showed that online learning is the acquisition of knowledge through electronic technologies, conducted media, and the Internet. Another relevant study by Ewing & Cooper (2021) found that online learning was a qualified winner. Once the pedagogy and learning design catch up (in time for the next pandemic perhaps), many of the lessons learned from Covid-19 will prove to be instructive and enduring. This study implied that technology is a tool that can reach a broader scope and positively impact the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. Another factor that is the leading cause is learning using applications that are considered ineffective so that learning cannot run as desired. Student engagement is considered an important aspect of education because it is a necessary prerequisite for learning, especially online learning.

Student engagement refers to students' active involvement in educationally effective practices and their commitment to educational goals and learning (Christenson et al., 2012; Reeve, 2013). Engaged students find learning fun and meaningful and invest energy and effort in their knowledge. Furthermore, supportive pedagogy through effective use of technology-enabled motivation, Collaboration, and authentic learning activities enhanced the students' learning experience.

There are three pedagogical characteristics; the first is Personalization consists of independent education and access at any time to resources (Schuck et al., 2016, p. 49). The second is authenticity provides opportunities for contextualized, situated learning, and through the use of digital devices, students can generate tasks involving participation in real-life practices. The last is Collaboration that consists of students interacting with peers and others, exchanging ideas and sharing resources through task-rich Collaboration (Wang & Shen, 2012).

During the past decades, numerous of studies have been conducted on how undergraduate students in online learning. For example, Alvarez (2020) revealed the phenomenon of learning at a distance through emergency remote teaching amidst the pandemic crisis in higher education. The study reported that there is a need to be more student-centered learning, the need for educators to be familiar with and have some training on online pedagogy. A range of pedagogical practices were identified when students were doing their learning activities, including the learning process in writing in a professional context subject. Another relevant study by Barclay et al (2018) found that undergraduate students' intention to use the online learning environment is influenced by attitude and computer self-efficacy. Students' attitude is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Additionally, Mishra et al (2020) reported that there had been a greater realization of the time-bound relevance and criticalities of online teaching-learning mode during the lockdown period and the efforts should be made to provide free-to-access online educational resources to students.

Despite a growing body of studies investigating the experience of online learning in EFL context, a few studies explore the experience on online pedagogical characteristics situated in higher education in particular EFL writing in professional context subject. To fill this void, this present study investigates undergraduate students' experience on online learning

in terms of engagement and pedagogical characteristics that consist of personalization, authenticity, and Collaboration in writing in a professional context major in English education.

METHOD

Grounded in qualitative approach with phenomenological case study design, this study is aimed to explore how undergraduate students' experience on online learning. Situated in English teacher education context, this study portrays how undergraduate experience on online learning due to Covid-19 pandemic where the researcher joined the course as student in writing in professional context in the second semester. Why phenomenological case study because covid-19 limits all activities shift from face-to-face to online mode in particular the teaching learning process. Yin (2014) argued that a phenomenological case study is preferred when the research question is focused on explaining an event or phenomenon, and control over the behavior of the event is not possible and is focused on a contemporary event. This design describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Mourlam et al, 2019). In this respect, a phenomenological approach allows the use of "several research participant to come up with a better single finding concerning the phenomenon or several incidences to understand the individual's way of experiencing the phenomenon (Denmir & Qureshi, 2019).

Out of 31 undergraduate students who participated in writing in professional context, 3 students were recruited as the participants for this study. They were recruited on the voluntary basis as they have engaged on online learning through Zoom and Google Classroom as the platform in writing in professional context. The research participants were recruited by considering their writing in professional context score by the second semester which highest, the middle and the lowest to find out the difference experience between each participant. They are EM (female students), RJ (female students) and LM (female student). Semi-structured interview adopted as the instrumentation for this study. The primary method of data analysis adopted inductive phenomenological reduction based on Seidman (2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Drawing on the data from online interview, the participants expressed their voice regarding online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, participants argued that there is class involvement because the lecturer always allowed students to ask the lecturer, such as questions and answers when the presentation begin. The lecturer was open to the students' questions, the interaction between lecturers and students' was sufficient with the platform used to achieve goals in learning.

The lecturer always gives the opportunities to interact with the students, such as question and answer when presentation begin, and the lecturer open to the students question, interaction between lecturers and students is very sufficient with the platform used to achieve goals in learning and I always ask the lecturer about the material that I don't understand. (EM, online interview 10/08/2021).

RJ argued that lack of class involvement causes blurry voice and unclear sound. There are the interaction between lecturer and student. The lecturer always explains the material and does the question and answer in the online meeting. Still, the active involvement has been disrupted and there is a lack of engagement with the students and lecturer.

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Because my environment is crowded and makes me not focus to study, and the unstable signal make me hard to focus, such as when the lecturer explaining the material and then suddenly the speech paused so we didn't hear what the lecturer was saying. The lecturer explaining the material and interact with the student and always open for question and answer. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021)

LM argued that there is lack of class involvement because the lecturer only gives written assignment without explaining the material. The noisy environment also effect the lack of class engagement between lecturer and students because if participant 3 ask the lecturer in a noisy environment, it will not be heard and learn to be unfocused when join the meeting. Sometimes the participant 3 does not mastered well the setting in Zoom and google classroom as the platform because it's her new experience.

The Lecturer only gives written assignments without explaining the material trough Google Classroom. And the signal really likes to be lost and the noisy environment is effect lack of class engagement between lecturer and students because if I ask the lecturer in a noisy environment, it will not be heard and learn to be unfocused when join the meeting, Sometimes I don't understand the setting in zoom and Google classroom as the platform because it's my new experience. (LM, online interview 10/08/2021).

EM answered that she felt the difficulties to understand the material and she have to read the material repeatedly to understand the material. It shows the independent learning where she tries to understand a material such as read the material more than once studying outside the prescribed course on personalization. EM argued that because of online learning is only need the participation on learning platform, and do not need in the same place, so she can study anywhere such as at friend's house and café and she always joined the subject and focus on it.

I find the difficulties to understand the material and the way to overcome the difficulties is to read the book or the material repeatedly and understand it, Learning resources provided by lecturers can be accessed anytime and anywhere and I can study anywhere such as at a friend's house and café (EM, online interview 10/08/2021)

RJ argued that she didn't felt the difficulties to understanding the material in writing in professional context subject because of all material and learning source is varied and can be accessed anytime. She only found the material that has been discussed so there is no difficulties to understand the material. The participant 2 argued that she can access the material anytime and it shows the independent learning in term of personalization. For study outside it is quite flexible to study anywhere the important things is only joined the subject on time.

I don't find the difficulties to understanding the material in writing in professional context subject It is quite flexible to study anywhere such as friend's house and other convenient place. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021)

Participant answered that learning resources provided by lecturers can be accessed anytime and anywhere, because the material is posted in the Google Classroom, automatically the material can be accessed anytime and anywhere if needed. Participant 2 argued that she often accessed learning materials on the other learning sites not only based on the material that has been given by the lecturer and the learning sites can access anytime and anywhere. Participant 2 enriching learning materials by not only learning from one source, she access for other sources to better understanding of the material that has been given by the lecturer. For the participants argued that in term of access at any time to resources, she often access the material at a relative's house, it means the material or the resources can access anywhere not only in one place as long as the place is comfortable and free from distractions, accessing material on online learning can be done anytime and anywhere. It showed the ease of accessing materials in term of personalization on online learning.

In terms contextualized the participants felt that the learning process is contextualized, such as learn to write and send email properly and correctly related to the material. The lecturer explain the completed material about how to write and send email properly and correctly, with the explanation from the lecturer and the learning source that given by the lecturer, the students are easier to do the practice such as learn about how to write and send email. It shows the real-life practice that usually done by lecturer. in term of contextualized answer the lecturer always provides direct practical teaching to make it easier to understand, such as how to make a resume and how to send a good email for someone. The lecturer always gives practices related to the material being taught it is an influential thing to provide more understanding for students. The lecturers play an important role in learning with all the obstacles that exist in online learning. The participants argued that the lecturer always explains the step of learning material such a real life, and structured, for example when the subject is talked about being professional by email. The learning process will run well if the lecturer provides more understanding such as structured practice stages, and makes it an easy thing for students. With the learning practice the students more understand related with the material that given by lecturer and for the step of learning material delivered well. The participants said:

Usually after students doing the presentation, the lecturer doing practice such as learn to write and send email properly and correctly related to the material. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021)

The lecturer always provide direct practical teaching to make it easier to understand, such as how to make a cover letter and resume and how to send a good email for someone. (EM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The lecturer always explains the step of learning material such a real life, and structured, for example when the subject is talked about being professional by email. (LM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The participants argued that practicing presentations in Zoom is something that usually done in writing courses. Yates (2020) contend situated learning is an activity that contains knowledge and practice, with a presentation for each group, indicating that there is situated learning in the writing subject. Each group member works together to bring a material that has been determined by the lecturer.

Participants argued that there is interaction between lecturers and students through the platform of learning such as questions and answers through WhatsApp chat and Google Classroom and ask about the material that is not understood or is not clear. Lecturers are very open for students who want to ask questions and open questions and answers properly and explained in more detail. This make easier for students to interact by facilitating interaction from lecturers to students through the learning platform or contacting lecturers personally. This statement is supported by Yates (2020) that study success is determined

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by the interaction between the students and their teacher. Everyone may learn something better if he/she experiences it by himself/ herself (through interaction). The interaction between the students and the teacher in the classroom is an important factor in the learning out-comes. As noted by the participants:

Practicing presentations in zoom meeting is something that usually done in writing courses. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021)

In every week there is a presentation for each group member and discuss about the material that has been determined by the lecturer. (EM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The kind of discussion in writing in professional context subject such as group presentations to bring a material that has been distributed (LM, online interview 10/08/2021)

In term of interaction the participants felt that there was lack of interaction between students and lecturer. In online learning they prefer to ask friend who understand the material in the presentation because they were reluctant to ask for the lecturer. They also added that there was lack of interaction between students and lecturer, and it is indicated that the lack of interaction between the lecturer and students' was mostly caused by reluctance of the student to ask question to the lecturer. Another respond from participants, the interaction between undergraduate student and lecturer is questions and answers through Zoom about learning material. The lecturer open to question and answer session on Zoom in the end of learning process, and the student have opportunity to ask the lecturer about the material that lecturer's given. But, on online learning the interaction between the lecturer ask the question for students, the students can answer with more time, to find answers that match those asked by the lecturer via the internet. And also often exchange answers with my friends via WhatsApp chat. The participants voiced that:

The interaction between lecturers and students through the platform of learning such as questions and answers through WhatsApp chat or Google classroom. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021)

For the interaction, I think I don't interact with the lecturers, because I'm reluctant to the lecturers, even though the lecturers always offer questions and answers to students, I want to ask when the learning process begin, but I prefer to ask my friend. (EM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The interaction between undergraduate student and lecturer is questions and answers about learning material that I do not understand through Zoom and i have plenty of time to think, also often exchange answers with friends through WhatsApp (LM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The participants argued that the students sharing and accessing an array of content and information, when the lecturer distributes assignments to work in groups and do the presentation, the group member distribute evenly related material that has been determined by the lecturer and learn together via WhatsApp when got the presentation task to easier

and to minimize misunderstanding about the material. The step of sharing between each member is make WhatsApp per group after that divide the tasks for each member, after the tasks have been distributed then each member discuss about the results of the tasks that they have been done, and then the tasks are combined and collected in full of the material. When power point is posted in the platform of learning the other student can ask freely. With good collaboration between each member of groups, when question and answer session is held, each group member can answer well because of the member of group doing a good collaboration.

The participants reported that the students sharing and accessing an array of content and information occur in term of presentation and the division of material that has been shared in WhatsApp group and sometimes learn together via video call or Zoom. If learning together between each member of group through WhatsApp is not enough to provide understanding between group members, then one of the group members creates a zoom link and learns together through Zoom meeting to provide a better understanding of the material. For the participant 2, this collaboration through Zoom or WhatsApp is helpful, same with the direct discussion in the normal situation of learning. The different it just conducted via online. As expressed by participants:

There is collaboration between student-student such as presentation group that is conducted in Zoom meeting and distribute the material and learn together via WhatsApp when got the presentation task. (RJ, online interview 10/08/2021).

The collaboration between student-student occur in term of presentation and the division of material that has been shared in WA group and sometimes learn together via video call or Zoom. (EM, online interview 10/08/2021).

The collaboration between student-student in the term of group presentations to bring a material that has been distributed in the group work, share the material, discuss and learn together via Zoom. (LM, online interview 10/08/2021)

The participants argued that students share and accessing the information, the students shared the information in the term of group presentations to bring a material that has been distributed in the group work, share the material, discuss and learn together via Zoom. The first step to doing the collaboration between each group is make a group, then each member discuss the task via WhatsApp, and understanding the material, after that each member dividing the material of learning.

The main issue of student collaboration is in term of sharing and accessing an array of content and information such as share the content of material by creating groups and dividing tasks to group members and combining all collective work that has been done by each member in the group presentation and work together.

Drawing on the participants data regarding the exploring undergraduate students' experience on online learning due to covid-19 pandemic by interviewing three undergraduate students' who have engaged on online learning through Google Classroom and Zoom Meeting platform in writing in professional context subject for 6 months. The researcher directed 3 step interview adopted from Seidman (2013) and Yates (2020). This

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study using semi-structured interviews comes from topic development. The interview was conducted through Whatsapp chat and Whatsapp voice note with each participant. The duration of data collection was a week. Each interview lasted between 30-60 min. This study focus on exploring undergraduate students' experience on online learning in terms engagement such as in students' active involvement and pedagogical characteristic consist of personalization which contain students' independent learning and access anytime to resources. Authenticity includes contextualized, situated learning and interaction through the use of digital devices and collaboration such as sharing an array content and information.

The first theme is undergraduate students' experience on online learning in term of engagement. In engagement contained students' active involvement. As their background, all undergraduate students' have never used a learning platform before pandemic spread. Christenson et al., (2012) argued that student engagement refers to students' active involvement in educationally effective practices and their commitment to educational goals and learning, and is an essential pathway to highly valued educational outcomes such as academic achievement. In the interview section regarding students' active involvement, each participant has different class involvement even though they were in the same class and taking the same courses such as lack of class involvement because of signaling like a blurry voice and unclear sound and another factor such as students'. This statement is related with To (2021) contend that class involvement is an interaction relationship between students and lecturers regarding a learning goal in which the results are determined by the students themselves. Although in the same class, engagement between students will be different related to the factors experienced by these students.

Second theme is undergraduate students' experience on online learning in term of pedagogical characteristic. In pedagogical characteristic consist of personalization, authenticity and collaboration. In the interview section regarding first characteristic is personalization. In personalization included independent learning and access anytime to resources.

The first category in personalization is independent learning. This categories shows that the environment influences students to be independent in learning. An independent learning will return to each student's intentions and based on their commitment to participating in online learning. There is a desire to understand a learning platform, read the material repeatedly and increase knowledge by accessing other sources related to the material provided by the lecturer. Although independence learning comes from the habit of using learning platforms and the desire to learn from each student, they admit that by studying and looking for material not only given by lecturers who are posted on a learning platform and students' read repeatedly the material, it is enough to prove that there is independent learning. This statement supported by Yates (2020) that independence learning can be seen when students in locked situation, they can still survive and try to understand the material independently by looking for information related to the material and factors that support it.

The second category in personalization is access anytime to resources. Students answer that the resources can access anytime and anywhere, not only in one place. Students' can access the resources in the other place such as friend's house, café and other convenient place. The students' statements means the material or the resources can access anywhere not only in one place as long as the place is comfortable and free from distractions. Accessing material on online learning can be done anytime and anywhere. It showed the ease of accessing materials in personalization on online learning. All statement of the participants indicated the personalization on online learning. This statement is supported by Bates (2017) online learning has no limits, anytime you can access the desired material in order to enrich knowledge and distribute it by understanding what is in it and interpreting learning material not only in one source.

The second characteristic is authenticity. In authenticity included contextualized, situated learning and interaction through the use of digital devices. The first category in authenticity is contextualized. In contextualized the students' answer the same result that in online learning especially in writing subject. The teaching learning is contextualized because the lecturer always explained the material and always provides direct practical teaching. The lecturer was teach like in the normal situation such as the lecturer explain and doing practices related to the material being taught is an influential thing to provide more understanding for the students easier to doing the practice such as learnt about write and send email properly and correctly. It shows the real-life practice and structured that usually done by lecturer and the lecturer plays an important role in learning with all the obstacles that exist in online learning. This study correspond with Yates (2020) that the contextualized will be seen when the teacher gives lessons exactly as they are done in normal situations and connects learning of basic skills with academic or work content by focusing teaching and learning precisely on concrete applications in specific contexts.

The second category in authenticity is situated learning. In the interview section regarding situated learning, students' answered the same thing that every week, they were assigned to present in groups related to the material that had been set and given by the lecturer. The presentation indicated that there is direct learning to examine the material like in the normal situation that usually writing in professional context subject done. The presentation task itself contained the knowledge and practice in learning. This statement was supported by Yates (2020) that situated learning is an activity that contains knowledge and practice, with a presentation for each group indicating that there is situated learning on online learning.

The third categories in authenticity is the interaction through the use of digital devices, in the interview section regarding the interaction through the use of digital devices between student and lecturer on online learning such as question and answer about the material that is not understood or is not clear, and the lecturer always open to students' question. This make easier for students to interact by facilitating interaction from lecturers to students through the learning platform or contacting lecturers personally. But, not all students felt interact with the lecturer. Although the lecturer is always open to student questions, there are also students who felt reluctant to ask for one reason or another. This causes her to ask his friends more often than ask the lecturer directly. Even though in online learning, the feeling of reluctance will still arise even though students do not study directly in the same room with the lecturer as they study in normal conditions. Yates (2020) argued that study success is determined by the interaction between the students and their teacher. Everyone may learn something better if he/she experiences it by himself/ herself (through interaction). The interaction between the students and the teacher in the classroom is an important factor in the learning out-comes.

The last characteristic is collaboration. In collaboration included sharing and accessing an array of content and information categories. In the interview section regarding sharing and accessing an array of content and information categories, the students share the content of

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material by creating groups and dividing tasks to group members and combining all collective work that has been done by each member in the group presentation and work together. The form of collaboration carried out during online learning is discussing group material that will be presented at the time of presentation, all participants argued that there are no significant obstacles in terms of collaboration. Supported by Yates et al (2020) revealed that collaboration is replicated conversational aspects of this framework through conversations between students and between students and a teacher, but also identified were collaborative activities whereby students worked together. Most of them handle it well since student has their own way to communicate with their group member, such as making group in Whatsapp to easier discuss about the material and using video conferencing to give more understand about the material this is related with Schuck et al (2016) in term of collaboration dimension when students sharing and accessing an array of content and information.

CONCLUSION

This research is expected to explore undergraduate student experience on online learning due to Covid-19 pandemic especially in term of engagement and pedagogical characteristic. The results showed the engagement in students active involvement categories, each participant has different class involvement, even though they were in the same class and taking the same courses, but the factors they faced were different such as signaling like a blurry voice and unclear sound and another factor such as students understanding about the material, knowledge, and the environment between each students' and it's affect the active involvement in term of class engagement in the writing in professional context subject. Drawing on the findings and discussion, this study has two emergent implications. Practically, the students must be able students to divide their time on online learning and the student should independent on online learning such as find material not only in one source and they must be more active in online learning, such as asking questions and interacting with lecturers. Because the students only learn on the material that given by lecturer and passive on online learning because of the reluctance to ask the lecturer. Pedagogically, the lecturer should provide opportunities for students to involve in the discussion in Zoom and Google Classroom. Because the lecturer only focuses on explaining without giving more class involvement to the students in the discussion. For the institution, we suggest that they should provide more facilities and infrastructure that support online learning, such as providing free quotas for student. Because the students have problem on signaling and its affect teaching learning in Covid-19 pandemic, one of the reason is because of their quotas to conduct the online learning.

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