



Is online learning a win-win solution? The teachers and students' stories

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Abstrak

Pendidikan merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam kehidupan manusia. Saat ini, proses pendidikan melalui institusi formal seperti sekolah dan universitas menjadi luring/online karena virus corona atau COVID-19. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tantangan yang dihadapi siswa selama kegiatan belajar mengajar secara online, bagaimana siswa mengatasi tantangan tersebut, dan persepsi guru tentang keberhasilan kegiatan belajar mengajar online. Penelitian naratif inkuiri mempelajari cerita para peserta untuk mengetahui setiap aspek unik yang terkait dengan topik yang sedang diteliti. Subjek yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 165 siswa Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan dan 30 orang guru. Teknik pengambilan data menggunakan wawancara, survey, dan observasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif dengan teknik triangulasi data untuk klarifikasi dan eksplorasi yang lebih mendalam. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki tantangan teknis dan kognitif. Mereka kebanyakan menyelesaikan masalah yang mereka hadapi dengan mendiskusikan masalah mereka dengan guru dan teman sebaya. Berkaitan dengan persepsi guru, komunikasi yang baik dan ranah afektif siswa sangat diperlukan agar kegiatan belajar mengajar secara online berhasil.

Abstract

Is online learning a win-win solution? The teachers and students' stories. Currently, the learning process in schools and universities has become online due to coronavirus or COVID-19. This paper aims to determine the challenges students face during online teaching and learning activities, how students overcome these challenges and teachers' perceptions of the success of online teaching and learning activities. This narrative research studies participants' stories to determine any unique aspects of the topic being researched. The subjects involved in this study were 165 Vocational High School students and 30 teachers. Data collection techniques were interviews, surveys, and observations. Data analysis was carried out descriptively with data triangulation techniques for further clarification and exploration. Research findings indicated that students have both technical and cognitive challenges. They mostly solve the problems they face by discussing their problems with teachers and peers. Regarding teacher perceptions, good communication and students' affective domain are needed so that online teaching and learning activities are successful.

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Introduction

Education is one crucial aspect of human life. As a human being, we spent most of our time to learn to improve our cognitive and social competences. We spent many years to study formally from primary school up to university level (Sakurai, 2015). Our effort to attend a course, read a book, read a discussion paper show our effort to learn (Sequeira, 2012). Furthermore, we educate ourselves through our daily life when playing with friends, chatting with classmates and watching YouTube video. In other words, we can learn many things from our daily experience (Pinner, 2013). So, learning can be done anywhere and anytime.

One of important ways of learning can be done by attending formal education. Sequeira (2012) emphasizes that teaching and learning process is not merely about teacher and their role; in fact, it needs to pay closer attention to students and what they learn. Teacher has the role to teach the students, while students' role is to learn. It shows that teachers and students have an active role to fulfil during the teaching and learning activity. However, it does not necessarily mean the teachers are the only ones who are responsible for the success of the teaching and learning process. Instead, Classroom instruction should involve the active participation among all the people in the class (Nugroho et al., 2020).

Teaching is helping people to learn (Prozesky, 2000). It means that teacher has to be able to help students to learn. To optimize the learning outcomes, students are also required to get actively involved. Andartari et al (2013) mentioned that teaching is designed to support the internal process of learning, which owned by the students. In order to be able to help students to learn, there are various aspects that the teachers have to be aware of. Prozesky (2000) divided them into several points. First, the teachers have to decide what the students have to learn. Second, teacher has to make sure that the students have learnt. Next, teachers have to be aware of student's psychological condition as fun learning can motivate students to learn. Lastly, the teacher needs to have healthy teacher and students' relationship. Teachers have to create such an open and trusting relationship with the students.

Due to the Covid 19 outbreak the classroom interaction and students and teachers relation have shifted. The teachers have to shift to an offline to online mode of teaching (Lin & Gao, 2020). The massive migration to digital learning approach was quite unprecedented as both teachers and students had to adapt to spaceless and borderless learning through video-based classroom activities, either synchronous or asynchronous. Although it is virtual formal meeting, the teachers as well as the school are required to provide the best learning practices. Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) issues the rules regarding teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic. It has to ensure the fulfillment of the rights of students to get educational services, to protect educational unit such as teachers and students from the adverse effect of COVID-19, to stop the spreading of COVID-19, and ensure the fulfillment of psychosocial support for educators, students, and parents. Therefore, the teaching and learning activities are conducted virtually from home which is commonly known as learning from home (*belajar dari rumah* /BDR)

This method is expected to provide both meaningful learning experiences for students and to develop student's life skills and eliminating the COVID-19 spread. Online learning seems a good solution to conduct a teaching and learning activity during COVID-19 pandemic, as students and teachers could engaged in the teaching and learning activity without leaving their home. However, the implementation is quite new and it is still uncertain whether online learning a good option? Is it a win-win solution?

Online learning is also known as distance learning or e-learning. It refers to a method of learning through the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Murugesan & Chidambaram, 2020). There are some variables that have to be taken into consideration in its implementation (Lee & Drajadi, 2019). Those variables could be both strengths and weaknesses of online learning.

Hjelsvold & Bahmani (2020) mentioned the strength of having an online teaching and learning activity. They stated online learning increased students-teachers' interaction. Some educators stated that they have more dialogue with the students during virtual meeting as the

discussion could be done anytime and anywhere. This situation may not possibly occur in traditional teaching and learning. Also, online learning promotes flexibility. Its flexibility offers learners to manage their own learning phase and this situation could ensure full comprehension (Davis et al., 2019). Again, this leads to achieving better grades. In addition, Online learning also shows location independence. It means that both teachers and the students could engage in teaching and learning activity at any place (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018). For instance, students could access their class while waiting for their parents in the market, or teacher could check students' work while waiting at gasoline station, and many more.

However, this type of learning is not perfect to any situation. It has some weaknesses for both the teachers and students. No physical contact could make students being less interactive and the teacher lost their engagement (Mudra, 2018). It seems like not all students are able to enjoy and fully interact during an online learning. It can be caused overwhelmed of the online time that creates negative perception toward online class (Jin & Deifell, 2013). Also, sometimes it is not easy for teachers and students to find an appropriate application for their learning situation (Dziemianko, 2010). They may find hard to operate some application to support their learning activates. Additionally, it could be time consuming. It takes time for teacher to learn, set up online and to modify the lesson plan and design new activity. The teachers and students may be tired working in front of a laptop or PC (Ma, 2019). One of the impacts is sore eyes. Teachers and students have to adopt various online model of learning; there are fears, anxiety, and consciousness (Shenoy et al., 2020).

It is a problematic situation facing the education situation now. Because learning virtually is not just presenting positive sides, but it also has some drawbacks. Whatever the reasons is BDR is a must as it is the only way to eliminate the COVID-19 to get worse and it is a part of the government regulation. Amir et al (2020) highlighted there is an urgency to be able to maximize online learning as much as possible. Due to this reason, this paper is aimed to reveal the challenges of implementing an online learning. This paper is also aimed to find out how to overcome those challenges as well as teachers' perception toward a successful online learning. In short, the research questions of this study are: 1) what are the challenges faced by students during online teaching and learning activity? 2) How do students overcome the challenges? 3) what is teachers perception regarding successful online teaching and learning activity?

As there are numbers of studies conducted with the similar field which are to find the challenges of online learning and how to overcome them, the present study has it is own novelty. Here, the participants are both the teachers and students so the finding would be more comprehensive. Kalanit (2019) mentioned students are different and the teaching learning scenario is also different. So, the students' involvement as the participants was crucial. So, the study could show different outcomes. Furthermore, the insight the researcher obtained from this study could offer some new perspectives. others. It is beneficial as the more insight we have, the more we can expand our understanding. The more situation we observe, the more teachers' role we understand, the more insight we have, the more we can understand our own teaching and learning situation. Thus, how online learning conducted and studied in this study could shape readers' understanding.

Method

To answer the research questions of this study, the researchers utilize narrative inquiry to reveal information from participants' story. Narrative inquiry allowed the researchers to understand participants' personal stories and events (Wang & Geale, 2015). Benson and Voller (2014) mentioned narrative inquiry can be done in two ways; analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. Analysis of narrative is when the researchers analyze stories as the data source of the study; narrative analysis is when the researcher use storytelling to analyze the data. This study adopted analysis of narrative; the researchers study the stories of the participants to find out every unique aspect that related to the investigated topic. Unique aspects could be revealed from participants stories as story could make implicit become explicit, the hidden become seen, and the confusing become clear (Chou et al., 2013). The story as the data source of this study could

help the researcher to answer the research questions by revealing implicit, hidden, and confusing insight.

The participants of this study are teachers and students from two vocational high schools in Malang, Jawa Timur. There were 165 students as the candidate of research participants and 30 teachers as the candidate of research participants. As the design of this study was narrative inquiry, the data of this study was in form of stories. Only the initial name of each participants were displayed to protect their confidentiality (Patton, 2002).

As this study was qualitative in nature, the researchers were the key instrument. The researcher utilizes several instruments to assist the researchers collecting the data. The first instrument was interview. The researcher interviewed teachers and students to collect the data by phone. Semi structured interview was applied to allow the researchers to obtain the data and clarify and explore the data deeper at the same time (Kalanit, 2019). The second instrument used was questionnaire distributed to the students to collect the data. The questionnaire was distributed online to the teachers and students. This questionnaire was aimed to obtain more information or data from the participants

The last one was observation checklist. The observation checklist was to help the researchers observe the teaching and learning activities. Interview guideline was a set of questions prepared by the researcher to build up the stories (Kalanit, 2019). And, the observation checklist was used by the researchers to observe the teaching and learning process in an online classroom activity. The researchers join the online classroom as parts of the observation

The researchers distributed the questionnaire based on the data that had been obtained and analyzed from interview process. The questionnaire was distributed online. The questionnaire was distributed to those who provided rich information related to the topic being investigated in this study. The observation conducted along with interview process to ensure that if there any unique information or data obtained from the observation, the researchers could clarify and explore it deeper through interview process.

The data analysis conducted directly after the data obtained. This way, the researcher could explore the data and see whether the data need to be clarified or explored more. If there were data that needed to be clarified or explored, the researcher could clarify it and explore it in the very next interview session with the corresponding participants. By doing this, the presented information were clear and comprehensive. Also, the participants still remembered what they said and they were able to add more information to what they have said if required.

Results and Discussion

The findings and discussion were presented and discussed based on the research questions. First research question is what are the challenges faced by students during online teaching and learning activity. The Students' challenges were mainly about technical problems, and cognitive problems. The technical problems covered the devices they had, their competences in using the devices and online teaching and learning tools, as well as internet connection and internet data. Students' challenges related to cognitive factor were their understanding toward the lesson, and their ability to learn autonomously.

One student named RJ mentioned that she has a problem with her smartphone. She said *"My smartphone has small internal memory. There are too much to download. My phone's ram is also small. Sometime my phone gets slow when i have to work on a quiz with a time limit"*. Another student named AVB mentioned that he needed to borrow his father phone so that he could learn from home. AVB said *"Unfortunately I am not as lucky as my friend. I have to borrow my father phone so I could join the teaching and learning activity. It makes me late in submitting my assignments. Lucky, my teachers understand my condition"*. Teachers have to be aware with students' family economic status. Not all students have the devices to support their online learning. That is why teachers have to be flexible and be more tolerance ti them. Rasmitadila et al (2020) found the same issues. They found some students couldn't follow the lesson so they had

to delay the task completion. This problem occurred in students with low economic background (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

Another problem related to students' technical issue was how the students operated their devices or online learning application. SA mentioned that he knew how to use his smartphone but the story was different when it comes to the learning application. SA said *"I know how to use my phone. I use it every day. But I have no idea how to use the online learning tools"*. TIA, another student, mentioned the same thing. She gets confused easily with the learning tools. She said *"Understanding my phone is easy. But understanding online classroom is difficult. Sometimes, I have many problems such as fail to upload the task, or the download is not working"*.

Another technical challenge was network connection or internet data. One student named AP shared his story about network connection. He said *"It is difficult to understand the lesson, but it is also difficult for me to have a good and stable connection. Network connection may up and down anytime. It took long time just to download one video"*. Another story related to the network comes from VS. She said *"My family cannot afford to have wi-fi in our home. Consequently, I spent much internet data in one week. I have no other choice. It looks like a dead end for me"*. Ahmed et al (2020) reported that teachers and students mostly had connectivity issues. The same problem was also reported by (Kapasia et al., 2020). Poor internet connection was one of the problems that the students had during online learning. Internet connection problem is getting worst in suburbs area (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Due to the increased number of online teaching and learning activity, it is possible that the server of certain teaching and learning application get overloaded. Both in Indonesia or global context have to deal with that issue. Ahmed et al (2020) added networking issues may arise as the result of exponential rise in network usage during this pandemic. So, it is not surprising that the networking issues are found across various network provider.

The next challenge was about students' cognitive factors. Most of the students find it is difficult to understand the lesson. The first story come from PDT. She mentioned that lack of interaction and direct feedback makes it difficult to understand the lesson. She said *"I really hope we can have normal classroom sooner. It is so hard for me to understand the lesson. Normal classroom will give me more opportunity to interact directly with my teacher. My teacher can also give me feedback at once"*. In line with this, IJL mentioned that the media such as video provide little explanation. He said *"Most of the topic are delivered through video. Some of my teachers are good as they make their own video. However, some teachers only provide us with downloaded video from YouTube. It is difficult to understand the explanation. Some video also not too much related to the topic being taught"*. Online learning changes the way teachers interact with the students, and students interact with other students. Traditional teaching and learning process may allow students to get feedback or learn with their peers; this kind of interactions could give positive externalities (Di Pietro et al., 2020). As students moved into online learning, this interaction is limited. Thus, teachers have to be able to provide feedback and interaction; teacher can also build a collaborative atmosphere by having students work in group remotely.

Another problem rose under the category of students' cognitive challenge. Students found it difficult to learn autonomously. First, IVSD mentioned that she needed direct guidance from the teacher to learn. She said *"My parent sometime cannot help me to understand the topic. I really need a lot of guidance from my teachers. I cannot fully learn alone. There are a lot of questions and I get confuse easily. When I learn with my teacher in normal classroom, I can easily ask them and they could provide me a lot of explanation so I can understand better"*. Similar voice comes from AD. He mentioned that he gets distracted easily. He said *"Honestly, I caused a lot of trouble to my teachers and friends. But now, I find it hard to learn without my teacher. It is not like cannot understand the media or materials. I just get distracted easily"*. Autonomous learners are those who are able to be responsible for one's own learning (Yang & Huo, 2020). It is crucial to teach the students to learn autonomously. Students who were not able to learn autonomously would most likely to be left behind. They could be left behind as online learning has a limited time; students have to learn by themselves autonomously. Bao (2020) mentioned teachers have to consider two phases of teaching; the offline self-learning phase and online teaching phase. Students who are able to prepare themselves during the offline self-learning phase will be more ready to learn during the online learning phase.

The second research question was how do students overcome the challenges? To overcome their technical challenges, students communicate their problems to the teachers. To deal with students' cognitive challenges, students discussed their problem with classmates and teachers.

First, it was about students' technical challenges. They mostly discussed or told their problems to the teachers. KMS mentioned that his teachers always understood his situation. He said *"I had a problem. My father has to use his phone for working. It seems like I will not be able to join the class for a whole day. I told my teachers about that. Most of my etchers understand my situation. They give me permission to access the material and send my assignment late"*. Another story comes from STCI. She mentioned that her teachers often asked her to write down the answers of her task in her book. She said *"one of my teachers always asked the students to write the answer in our book then we send it to our online class. I find it very comfortable as we don't have to look at the screen of our phone every single minute. It also helps me to finished my task without worried that my phone will get slower as it has a small internal memory and RAM."*

Next, students also mentioned that they always got assistances from the teachers when they find it difficult to use the learning tools. APL mentioned that his teacher was so helpful. He said *"It happens to me and my classmates many times. We forget our id and password, we cannot download the document, we cannot access the file. Our teachers always have a solution for us. He also makes a short tutorial video for us"*.

It was clear students were relying on their teachers for every problem they had when dealing with online class. Thus, the teachers had significant roles as they were not only a teacher, but also a online learning guidance. Dealing with cognitive challenge may be easier for the teachers as they often dealt with them. Yet, dealing with technical challenges (how to deal with application and networking) could be new things for them. The findings showed that teachers have to be ready for any possible problems. Murugesan & Chidambaram (2020) mentioned that teachers had to expect for the unexpected and remain flexible. So, teachers had to know that the students relied on them for every problem that they may never expect would arise. For instance, teaches need to able to help students who forgot their username and password of their online account (Maryam et al., 2012).

The next problem related to students' technical challenge was network connection or internet data. GIN mentioned that one of her class really has various way to access the materials and assignment. She said *"I agree that network connection and internet data is one big problem for students. I have one class which the teachers give a lot of flexibility for us. What do I mean by flexibility was he provided materials and assignment not only in one place. We had our online class; we had our chat-group. If one cannot access the online class, he or she could still access the chat group. The same concept was applied to how we submit our assignment. We could submit it in our online class, or we can send it by email, or we can send it by sending him a direct message in our communication app. We found it very convenience as we could easily chose which way was most comfortable for us"*. What the students express here shows that teachers have to be aware with the potential of issues related to teaching and learning activity in an online environment. As long as they are aware, they could provide various plan to deal with the issues. The students show that their teacher has prepared various way to having a good teaching and learning process. It is also reported on Bao (2020) that preparing more than one plan is required in order to solve all kinds of unexpected issues.

The next challenge faced by students was related to their cognitive challenge. The first problem was students' understanding toward the lesson. TFN mentioned that she addressed her problem by having a discussion with her teacher. She said *"I cannot understand a concept easily. It takes long time for me, compared to my friend. I always contact my teacher to tell her that I cannot understand the lesson. She always replied by saying she will explain it in the group chat, so everyone can benefit from it as well. She explained by send us voice notes, she told us to take a note from what she said in her voice note. Then we are allowed to discuss what we have write in our note"*. Similar story came from RP. RP mentioned that his teacher always came with a very clear explanation. He said *"My teachers provide us more explanation if we cannot understand our lesson that day. He provides us with voice notes, photo, or even video. I can see that he does everything can to help us to*

understand the lesson. I think we are so lucky". These findings show that the teachers use various media to help students to understand. It is common to find this kind of problem as online learning provide less interaction. As stated by Bao (2020), body language and facial expression are under restriction when we have our class in an online environment. Thus, using tools such as voice note or sound recorder will surprisingly support students' understanding toward the lesson.

The third research question was what are teachers' perceptions regarding successful online teaching and learning activity? The teachers shared that communication is one important aspect. Communication could not only support the teaching and learning activity, but also ensure the flawless of teaching and learning activity being conducted. The second thing the teachers mentioned, regarding successful online teaching and learning activity is affective factors. They mentioned that affective factors play vital role in an online teaching and learning activity.

One teacher named DKH mentioned that she often communicated with her students who had learning problems. She mentioned that communication was highly required if we wanted to had a successful online teaching and learning activity. She said *"of course my students are dealing with problems too. Most of them tell their problem to me. Then we could work together to deal with that problem. For instance, I still remember that one of my students cannot access the material during the day. He only has night-internet packet data. Then I prepared everything from the evening. Then he downloaded it at night. After that he always send it the next morning. I think it is okay as long as we know that they have done their best"*.

Similar story comes from teacher named ABD. ABD mentioned that teachers have feelings. They never want their students suffer from online learning activity. ABD said *"we are human. We have feelings. We are not robot. We know and we understand our students' situation. Not all of could easily engaged in online teaching and learning activity. There are a lot of problems. That is why all we need is a good communication. For me, when my students have problem, I wanted their parents to contact me. I remembered that one of my students doesn't has smartphone. In his family, only his father and mother has it. I can't blame them as they are not wealthy family. I told my students to tell his parents to contact me. I just want to make sure that he was not lying. His father then came to call me by phone and explain the hardship his son has during the online learning. Of course, there are more story like this"*. Reimers & Andreas (2020) mentioned communication and collaboration among students is required to foster mutual learning and well-being. Communication is highly needed. Most of the teachers expresses that it is important to maintain good communication. With communication, teachers and students could share problems they have and solve it together. Teachers are also allows students to share what they feel toward online learning. Hasanah et al., (2020) highlighted the way we change our teaching and learning could trigger psychological changes such as anxiety. Thus, by having a good communication, teacher could help students to reduce their anxiety which could positively affect their learning experience. In line with this, if there is no communication between the teachers and the students, teacher may unable to help the students which it could affect students' psychology (Jamaluddin et al., 2020).

Along with good communication, teachers also mentioned that affective factor was highly needed. One teacher named YHM mentioned that students had to be encouraged and had a sense of responsibility so that online learning implementation could be successful. She said *"First, I want my students to have a high motivation and sense of responsibility"*. Having high motivation would lead them into better learning outcomes. In addition, the sense of responsibility was required to shape their mindset. It was important as students who were responsible with their task would always do their best to complete the task, even if they had various problems. GH mentioned the same story. GH stated that it is important to focus on students' affective factors. He said *"cognitive domain is about knowledge. Affective domain is about students' motivation, students' willingness to learn, students' responsibility, etc. we can easily teach our students to master cognitive domain. But it takes long time to shape their affective domain. Once they have good motivation to learn, they could overcome any obstacles. In my opinion, it is much more important nowadays"*.

Another teacher named VDS mentioned that she focuses on students' affective domain but it doesn't mean that she gives less attention to their cognitive domain. She said *"affective is related to students' mood and feeling. I do my best to let them have such a good mood and feeling. If they have that kind of feeling, they could enjoy the lessons and they could learn as much as they can"*. Most of the teachers highlighted motivation as one key aspects of successful online teaching and

learning activity. Motivation itself is known as a power that encourage someone to do something (Kalanit, 2019). In this case, highly motivated students could be categorizes as self-regulated students; self-regulated students are characterized by self-awareness, self-motivation, and behavioral skill (Zimmerman, 2008). In an online teaching and learning activity, self-regulated learners are known to have significantly better readiness to learn. It is reported by Bao (2020) that students have offline self-learning phase. Those who are highly motivated or those who are self-regulated learner may use this phase to maximize their preparation, to finished their unfinished task, or to explore the topic of the lesson deeper. It is why affective factors, such as motivation, willingness, and awareness are important.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that we all are required to conduct our teaching virtually as this is to decrease the COVID-19 outbreak and as a part of the national government regulation. This study showcased students have various problem, when they have to learn in an online environment. The challenges that the students have are technical challenges and cognitive challenges. To deal with the challenges, students rely more on the teachers. Also, they have a discussion with their peers. Teachers mentioned that there are two components of successful online teaching and learning. From their perception, communication is highly needed as the first component. In addition, they also mentioned that it is important to think about students' affective domain.

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