

Learning Transition from Covid-19 Pandemic to Post Pandemic Era: EFL University Students' Perspective

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Abstrak

Setelah ditutup selama lebih dari dua tahun karena pandemi COVID-19, sekolah-sekolah dibuka kembali secara bertahap. Pandemi secara signifikan mengubah spektrum pembelajaran dan sistem sekolah jika dibandingkan dengan masa sebelum pandemi. Perjalanan setiap siswa berbeda, namun karena keadaan pribadi yang memerlukan penyesuaian dengan lingkungan baru, transisi setiap siswa dari pembelajaran daring ke luring adalah unik. Beberapa penelitian telah dilakukan untuk mengkaji peralihan dari offline ke online, namun peralihan dari online ke offline kurang mendapat perhatian. Penelitian tentang pengalaman siswa dalam bertransisi dari pembelajaran daring ke luring dilakukan kepada 4 siswa terpilih berdasarkan beberapa pertimbangan. Pengalaman naratif yang berfokus pada perspektif mahasiswa dalam transisi pembelajaran daring ke luring menjadi pokok bahasan penelitian ini, oleh karena itu digunakan desain kualitatif. Model transisi Bridges diadopsi sebagai kerangka penelitian ini. Setelah melakukan wawancara semi terstruktur, informasi yang diperoleh dari transkrip wawancara dibagi ke dalam berbagai sistem pengkodean untuk memeriksa wawasan. Ditemukan bahwa setiap orang yang berpartisipasi merasa berbeda tentang peralihan ke pembelajaran luring. Pada akhirnya, sebagian orang mempersepsikan perubahan itu secara negatif sementara yang lain tidak. Karena berbagai tantangan yang mereka temui dalam pembelajaran online dan offline, peserta memiliki berbagai pendapat tentang transisi pembelajaran

Kata kunci: Transisi belajar, persepsi, belajar online, belajar offline

Abstract

Following a more than two-year closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are gradually reopening. The pandemic significantly changed the learning spectrum and school systems when compared to pre-pandemic times. Each student's journey is different, though, due to the personal circumstances that require adjustment to a new environment, each student's transition from online to offline learning is unique. Several studies have been conducted to examine the transition from offline to online, but the transition from online to offline has gotten less attention. Research on students' experiences of transitioning from online learning to offline was conducted to 4 selected students based on several considerations. Narrative experiences which focused on the perspectives of university students in transitioning their online to offline learning was a subject of this research therefore a qualitative design was used. Bridges transition model was adopted as the framework of this study. After conducting semi-structured interviews, the information obtained from the interview transcripts was divided into various coding systems in order to examine the insights. It was discovered that everyone who participated felt differently about the switch to offline learning. In the end, some people perceived the change negatively while others did not. Due to the various challenges, they encountered in both online and offline learning, participants had varying opinions of the learning transition.

Keywords: Learning Transition, Perception, Online Learning, Offline Learning

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1. INTRODUCTION

The remarkable expansion of the covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt learning and teaching environments, as well as the larger higher education scene, for about 94% of the student population in the world was affected by it (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020; Rohmah & Bukhori, 2020). When compared to pre-pandemic times, the pandemic created a substantial shift in the learning spectrum and school systems. The dynamics of online education in diverse contexts throughout the pandemic have garnered significant academic attention in the higher education literature to date (Adzobu, N, 2014; Alenezi, 2020). Both lecturers and students have acquired and packed a lot of new experiences and established new ways of doing things via online learning. To some level, comfort has already been formed, so leaving

that comfort zone will need some re-navigation. However, schools are progressively resuming after being shuttered for over two years because of the covid-19 pandemic (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020; Rohmah & Bukhori, 2020).

The abrupt shift from online to offline learning or a new learning space caused various major problems such as policy, pedagogy, logistics, socioeconomic factors, technology, and psychosocial domains (Espino-Díaz et al., 2020; Ibna Seraj & Habil, 2019). Therefore, because of personal circumstances that necessitate adaptation to a new world, each student's transition is unique. Previous study explains that there are 3 phases that every individual faces during the transition in his transition model, which takes a comprehensive view of the change process and specifies three overlapping phases: "Ending, losing, and letting Go, the neutral zone, and the new beginning" (Afdareza et al., 2020; Natalya & Halim, 2021). As a result of these changes, students may experience despair, concern, discontent, and disorientation.

Therefore, it is important to consider the student's opinions, feelings, or perceptions regarding the experiences they had relating to the learning transition. Furthermore, according to the preliminary study, the students of English Education at Sriwijaya University experienced some difficulties in both online and offline learning, particularly those from the academic year 2020, who began online learning on the first day of college and stayed online for two years before returning to offline for the first time. Previous study defines students' perceptions as their feelings about something (Fu et al., 2019; Torres & Castaneda-Pena, 2016). For example, their feelings about online learning may differ from their feelings about face-to-face learning. They may approach learning in various ways. The experience of the same senses may change from person to person. This happens because each a person's brain processes input differently based on their learning, memories, emotions, and expectations (Kärner & Kögler, 2016; Suminto & Mbato, 2020).

Various researches has been undertaken to explore the subject of the learning transition that the students went through. Previous study is to emphasize students' perspectives on the shift from offline to online learning (Julien & Dookwah, 2020). The research discovered that for a specific topic, arithmetic, face-to-face is more convenient since it is also highly important for human contact, yet online learning provides a viable instructional alternative. Previous study stressed the theme of students' impressions of earlier emergency learning, restricted face-to-face transfer, and instructor expectations of the transition (Soesanto & Dirgantoro, 2021). Conducting a cross-sectional survey to obtain all of the necessary information found that participants welcomed the learning shift, which was accompanied by the hope that teachers would correctly design teaching techniques.

Furthermore, it enabled new discoveries from all education stakeholders, which would promote a good learning environment. Those conducted studies happened in order to analyze the shift from offline to online, but the move from online to offline has received less attention. On the other hand, previous study state about the transition from online learning to offline learning, yet the methodology used was a quantitative cross-sectional survey which differs from this presented study in terms of the methodology used (Maya et al., 2022). This study was intended to gather information related to the perception that students experienced during their learning transition from online to offline learning in a deeper way using a different approach which was a narrative inquiry with hope that the authorities can understand in detail what students feel.

This study was worthwhile to conduct in order to fill the research gaps as it would be very useful in reconsidering existing tactics in various learning contexts. Valuing students' voices from perceiving their demands would undoubtedly lead the road for developing and selecting the best and realistic educational policies related to the learning process and preparing any similar future issues.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach in order to investigate and report students' insights about their learning transition in the post-pandemic era among several students from Swijaya University, Indonesia (Maxwell & Reybold, 2015). By questioning the participants through the interview, the researcher was able to delve deeper into how they individually experienced the move from online to offline learning mode utilizing narrative design inquiry. The only instrument used in this study was a set of list interview questions based on the theoretical framework with several developed questions related to their opinion about the learning transition from online to online, some learning aspects that change during online and offline learning, the feeling during the first weeks of online and offline learning, and the period of enjoying the learning transition eventually.

The participants of this research were the four English students class of 2020 selected with identified criteria-based sampling. They were the students who attended online learning from the very beginning and had spent more than two years learning online from 2020-2022 in different learning environments and struggles, so they had no experience with studying at university offline, yet. The participants were contacted to have some face-to-face interviews. Before starting the interviews, the researcher explained to each participant the research's aim. Then, they were asked several semi-structured questions related to their learning experience during online and offline classes which led them to their self-perception toward the learning transition. For further discussion, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to be coded thematically.

The responses, first, were read and familiarized and presented in a narrative form. Then, the significant themes and relevant responses were identified and categorized based on the study's objective. To ensure the quality of the data gathered in this study, credibility through member checks and transferability by giving rich descriptions were performed. To allow individuals to share their experiences, the researcher treated all participants with respect, created a comfortable environment, and remained non-judgmental during all interview sessions. There were no ethical quandaries that arose over the course of this inquiry.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings in this research were based on the research question about the student's perceptions regarding to the learning transition that they had experienced so their feeling, acceptance and the changes during the transition were stated below as some additional information which is related to their perspective.

Participants' Overview

The participants began their online college life for the first time in August 2020. Adam said that he had no prior experience with online learning and having various challenges throughout online learning for two years, which hindered his knowledge of the curriculum. Meanwhile, Salsa spent her online learning in her village, a 5 hours away distant area from Palembang. She expressed her troubles in online and now is returning to offline learning which troubles her with face-to-face interaction too. Even though Junika had an experience in online meeting before, she still had some issues in online learning and encountered some issues in offline learning too. However, she still favours offline learning as she was not being able to fully absorb the information during online class even it took her moving out from Bengkulu to Palembang to study face-to-face. Haikal who lived in Jambi said that his connection was one of his problems during online learning. Therefore, he

continues to prefer offline learning, which requires him to physically attend the class, spend money, and modify his schedule.

Perception

Participants in this study had been exposed to online learning for around two years before being directed to study offline for the first time and perceive it differently. The perception is show in Table 1.

Table 1. Positive and Negative Perception

Perception	Excerpt
Positive Perception	<i>I felt like a freshman again when I had to attend an offline meeting for the first time, even though I was already in my junior year, because it was the first time, I met everyone. My emotions were confused at first since I was experiencing both excitement and concern. I was relieved since I could return to class and perhaps better comprehend the topic if I saw it in person As a student, this shift from online to offline may be beneficial since I am a student who has never experienced face-to-face learning before, so when I switched to face-to-face learning, I thought this was something new and exciting to me.</i>
Negative Perception	<i>In my perspective, the change from online to offline learning was quite a cultural shock for me, because it was my first time face-to-face with the lectures. I didn't know what the campus situation was like, what the lecturers' characteristics were when teaching in person, even though I had seen them visually online, but it was different when I met face to face, I could see the lecturer directly, so when I was offline, I guess I had to better understand the lecturer's character.</i>

Base on Table 1 some were surprised, some were scared, and some were overjoyed. Salsa and Junika, on the other hand, had mixed feelings about the shift. Salsa was finally comfortable with the online learning, yet she had to shift the learning mode.

Feeling and Acceptance Changes

Adam acknowledged to be perplexed and scared at first when he had to attend face to face learning after being online for 2 years and finally accept it after a month. This was also experienced by Salsa who needed 4 weeks to finally accept the transition. Junika and Haikal, on the other hand, had only attempted to accept the transition quicker for a week. People go through changes with which they may or may not approve.

The learning strategy, physical attendance, learning preparation, class engagement, and teamwork were the differences that participants saw between online and offline learning. Both Haikal and Adam observed that the learning approaches in online and offline learning were distinct. Moreover Salsa thought that the physical preparation was not necessarily in online class, she explained that the classroom activity could be done online starting from the attendance, submission, discussion and even presentation, there was no need much preparation as she did for offline learning. It is related to Junika's statement where she admitted that she was becoming self-centred because she could not deal with the online discussion. She added that being able to attend offline meetings made the collaboration more effective.

All the participants experienced fearsome and confusion which symbolizes the first stage of transition where they had to part with their routines in online classes. Then they also did some adjustments so their action was related to the second stage of the learning transition

which is called the neutral zone and finally accept the changes that they had to face in the last stage called the new beginning where the fearsome and confusion were lessened. In this current study, the participants perceived the learning transition positively and negatively. All participants went through the same stages of transitioning from online to offline starting from the ending, losing, and letting go phase which was the first time for parting from their comfort zone, then the neutral phase which was related to their attempt to adjust to a new learning process, and finally how they accepted the fact that they were there for offline learning and started to be okay with that in the new beginning. The way how each participant lasted in each stage was different from each other if they were comfortable with the change would likely advance rapidly to stage three, while others would remain in stages one or two.

Discussion

The goal of this research was to have a clear picture of how students in the English academic perceived the learning transition from online to offline learning. The findings showed that most of the participants perceived the shift from online to offline learning positively at the end. In the previous research the respondents showed a greater willingness of going back to offline learning (Mee Mee et al., 2020). That study also detailed the benefits and drawbacks of the two types of education from two perspectives: first-year students (who only benefit from e-learning) and upper-year students (who benefit from both face-to-face and e-learning). However, this study focused on the perspective of students who never had an experience of online learning in college previously (Gebre, 2018; Islam et al., 2022). This presented study also focused on the personal experience of each participant so the information gathered was detailed and not presented in a general perspective.

In another research offline learning from the perspective of their participants was viewed as something important where the participants told that they had an interactive and fun interaction in face-to-face meetings which made them participate well, this the same finding in this current study (Julien & Dookwah, 2020). In this study, the different interactions between online and offline learning were presented in detail which caused different perspectives during the transition where some participants expressed astonishment and nervousness, while others expressed satisfaction with the learning transfer from online to offline that they had undergone.

Adam saw the learning transition as something new to him; he appreciated being presented in an offline class and expressed hope that he would grasp the material better. He stated that he struggled to absorb the lesson content. This finding confirms the finding from which revealed that the inferior academic achievement was found in students who struggled with the online shift (Chisadza et al., 2021). Adam shared that he could not understand the material well during online which may lead him to suffer from academic issue. However, this present study differs from that finding of which told that as a result of academic performance which was influenced by the stability of internet during the online learning, the students preferred to have self-study by reading the notes rather than aided study by joining the live lecturers (Bhuana & Apriliyanti, 2021), in this study some participants were reluctant to study independently during online class as they could do everything at home without someone was controlling which led them to have a poor attitude while studying which also influenced their concentration therefore they would like to join live lecturer, especially offline class. This happened as self-awareness had not increased yet, whereas self-awareness and capacity are very important to identify problems and possibilities that will aid in the realization and expansion of high learning independence (Gebre, 2018; Hikmah et al., 2020).

Face-to-face learning improves interpersonal connections by allowing students and instructors to build a support network. Students may feel more at ease and hence learn better in a familiar, traditional classroom setting (Dios & Charlo, 2021; Miles et al., 2018). They

may also have access to more knowledge and a better understanding of course topic materials as a result of these interactions. However, Haikal perceived the transition negatively as he felt uncomfortable with the sudden change. This is explained by previous study that learners are susceptible to abrupt changes in learning modes (Lei & So, 2021). Haikal was worried about his readiness for offline learning which is in line with the findings who mentioned that the students felt worried about the learning burden that might be experienced when shifting to offline class (Maya et al., 2022). Haikal was accustomed to the rhythm of online learning so he stated that he had to re-learn the offline's rhythm such as understanding the lecturer's teaching style.

The rest of the participants, Salsa and Junika felt the transition was a disaster to them as they were finally engaged well with online learning after 2 years, yet they had to attend the offline class for the first time which was their first time for learning face-to-face as the university students (Nortvig et al., 2018; Ropawandi et al., 2022). However, they eventually perceived the transition positively as Salsa explained that her online learning habit was very bad and that she hoped to improve it through offline learning so that she began to see the transition positively, which she was not accustomed to it at first because some things she had previously been comfortable with were changed. This finding was related to previous study who found that in their study, there were groups in which students had previously been in their comfort zone and accustomed to the life habits in terms of preparation before class including sleep routine which has an effect on learning motivation (Soesanto & Dirgantoro, 2021). The drawbacks of online learning which influenced the perception of the participants in this study were the same as in the study that found that the students might enjoy the flexibility and independence of online learning as a result of the possibilities dishonesty in finishing the assignment which was very dangerous as it would lead to the laziness (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020).

The transition that had been experienced by the participants in this research was similar to the model that explains that it consists of three stages: ending, losing, and letting go, the neutral zone, and the new beginning. People in the Ending, losing, and letting go phase feel fear, denial, rage, despair, confusion, irritation, ambiguity, and a sense of loss. The Neutral (Transition) Zone is a period of transition during which people remain attached to their previous circumstances while attempting to adjust to their new one (Cassum et al., 2020; Qekaj-Thaqi & Thaqi, 2021). It can cause anxiety as a result of meeting new people, poor academic achievement, humiliation, and trouble adjusting to the new way of learning. According to previous study the third phase, 'The New Beginning,' is when students acquire confidence and acclimate to the university's learning routines (Bridges, 2011). This explanation is consistent with Adam's remark, in which he acknowledged to be perplexed and scared at first, which are the same emotions that individuals experience in the initial stage of transition, attempting to deal, and then arriving in the final stage lasting roughly a month. Junika and Haikal, on the other hand, had only attempted to accept the transition quicker for a week.

These findings implicate theoretically for further researcher and practically for policy makers, educators, and universities' authorities for the sake of establishing and selecting the best and practical educational policies connected to the learning process and planning any comparable future concerns. This paper may also directly address or provide insights into the specific issue or problem that the future researcher is investigating especially learning transition issue. It may have a similar research question, methodology, or focus, making it highly relevant to the current study. By referencing the paper, the future researcher can draw on the previous work and build upon it in their own research either with the same narrative inquiry approach to collect other narratives of learning transitions from online to offline learning or related different approach to enrich the information of learning transition from

different modes which seems not widely researched yet. As a limitation of this study, this research may be expanded to include students' post-pandemic learning expectations.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be inferred from the previous discussion that all of the participants had mixed feelings about transitioning to offline learning. Some people perceived the change adversely, while others saw it positively in the end. Participants regarded the change differently because they faced diverse barriers in both online and offline learning as well as the different time they had in facing each stage of their transition. This feedback can be used to identify areas that need improvement and make necessary adjustments to enhance the learning experience. Furthermore, emotional support such as offering counselling services or mental health resources to support students' well-being during this transition period should be provided as it was recognized that the transition from online to offline learning may bring about various emotions and challenges for students.

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