



Blended Learning in Post-Pandemic Era: from Students' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Coronavirus disease 2019 stroke the world at the end of 2019 and influenced greatly to all of the sectors. One of the sectors is education. Similarly, when the pandemic ended gradually in 2022, learning returned to normal but required gradual adjustments because both instructors and students had become proficient with online learning. Blended learning is a suitable teaching and learning strategy for the current environment. Blended learning is a combination of online and in-person instruction. Given the widespread use of blended learning today, the researcher intends to investigate students' attitudes toward blended learning in the post-pandemic period. This investigation included 29 students from the English Department at IAIN Ponorogo. The results indicated that the majority of students have a favorable view of blended learning. Two fair attitudes showed in student-student interaction and the contribution of blended learning toward the improvement of their skills.

Keywords: blended learning, students' attitude, post-pandemic era

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) that arose at the end of 2019 had affected many sectors around the world. The education system is one of the sectors that is influenced by the existence of the Covid-19. In anticipation of spread outbreak, some prevention and policies have been accommodated by the Indonesian government. For instance, forbidding the society to make crowd, isolating people who infected by the virus, socializing how to live cleaner and wash hands before and after any kinds of activity, instructing to do social restriction in large scale (PSBB), and asking the citizens to stay at home if do not have important agenda that insist them to go outside. Because of this condition, inhabitants, including students and teachers, are required to participate in all events, perform their jobs, pray, and study from within their homes (Jamaluddin et al., 2020).

Under these circumstances, educational institutions are, of course, need to implement novel approaches to the teaching and learning process. One example of innovation is the use of the internet for educational purposes. After this, the Ministry of Education and Culture replied by publishing various circular letters (SE) pertaining to the prevention and handling of Covid-19. These letters were in response to the situation described above. To begin, please refer to circular letter No. 2 of 2020 concerning the treatment and prevention of Covid-19 within the Ministry of Education and Culture. The second item is Circular Letter No. 3 of 2020, which concerns the prohibition of Covid-19 in the Education Unit. Third, Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 on the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period of the Spread of Covid-19, which includes, among other things, instructions on the process of home-based learning and teaching. This circular letter was issued in response to the spread of Covid-19 (Arifa, 2020). The next circulating letter is published by Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 2 of 2022 that governs about teaching and learning process. It is stated that limited face-to-face learning can be carried out with the number of learners 50% of the classroom capacity. While the newest circulating letter is published by four ministers joint decree Number 408 of 2022. It stated face-to-face learning can be done in some areas and by some conditions.

Three years after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of students and teachers in Indonesia have become increasingly competent at organizing online learning and multiple situates tactics to promote learning throughout socio-cultural situations. This development has occurred despite the fact that the country is still grappling with the aftermath of the pandemic (Cahyono et al., 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) made the announcement that the pandemic was over at the beginning of 2023. The educational sector does not make advantage of fully online learning anymore. In this post-pandemic period, one of the instructional methods that is utilized is known as blended learning (Rapanta et al., 2021).

Blended learning, sometimes known as BL, is quickly becoming one of the most popular educational models. It is a learning model that is suitable to be implemented in this present circumstance, and it is one of those models. It encourages both online and traditional methods

of education (Saboo-wala & Manghirmalani-Mishra, 2020). Blended learning enables educators to incorporate information from the internet into ordinary classroom activities, which helps students become more active learners and engages them in the learning process. Blended learning also helps teachers save time. Blended learning was defined by Badawi as "a flexible approach that combines face-to-face learning activities with online learning practices that allow students to exchange collective and individual feedback and responses in four specific areas, namely, learner feedback, learner strategies, and alternative assessment synchronously or asynchronously." Blended learning combines face-to-face learning activities with online learning practices that allow students to exchange collective and individual feedback and responses in four specific areas (Badawi, 2009). In addition, in order for BL to be a successful learning paradigm, not only does it require the physical attendance of the teacher and the learners in a classroom setting, but it also requires the technology equipment necessary for online engagement (Smith & Hill, 2019b). In face-to-face learning, the teacher and the students are equipped by computer-mediated materials in terms of delivering the materials and collecting the assignments. Therefore, BL also need the assistance of technological innovation in order to function well (Strauss, 2012).

Blended learning allows teachers to incorporate information from the internet into ordinary classroom activities, which helps students become more active learners and engages them in the learning process. Blended learning also helps teachers save time (Tang & Chaw, 2013). If a student possesses these attitudes, it is possible to determine whether or not they are equipped for blended learning. Surprisingly, students who had positive attitudes (and high degrees of desire) toward learning also had more favorable views regarding online learning when it was combined with traditional classroom instruction (Zhu et al., 2013). The implementation of a model of blended learning into classroom activities has a significant and overwhelmingly positive impact on the students' attitudes toward this educational approach (Al-Shaer, 2013). There is a consensus of opinion that blended learning and the utilization of social media for scholastic purposes are both acceptable (Acar, 2013). The satisfaction that students have with a course that utilizes blended learning is highly connected with the attitudes that they have regarding this instructional setting. Self-report surveys are the standard method for gathering this information (Bowyer & Chambers, 2017).

Several studies revealed how students feel about blended learning. Ja'ashan conducted a study at eight levels of the undergraduate program at the University of Bisha, which has schools for both boys and girls. The results of the study showed that, in general, the students felt good about BL in the three areas that were asked about in the evaluation. Students are also told that they need to be responsible for their own learning. Learners can also choose when and how to use the tools that are given. This study also comes to the conclusion that blended learning is just as good as face-to-face learning for learning new things and getting better at old ones. It shows how some students thought it was a waste of time, easy to cheat, and made them feel alone (Ja'ashan, 2015). Akbarov and others did their second study in 2018. They did a study with 162 National Kazakh University pupils. According to the study, EFL students prefer online learning to traditional classrooms. But they liked taking English tests on paper and pencil rather than on a computer (Akbarov et al., 2018). Then, the survey study which focus on investigating students' perception of blended learning among science and technology

cluster students at UiTM Kelantan Branch. The study found that blended learning had a positive impact on students, as they were able to achieve better results and improve their learning skills. Additionally, the use of forums and discussion tools in blended learning motivated students to learn and discuss course-related topics with their peers (Eliveria et al., 2019).

Research on the perception during their learning activity in ESP class that applied blended learning model was conducted by Nurmasitah et al (2019). This survey employed questionnaire for 145 undergraduate students. The findings revealed the students' perception towards blended learning was generally positive since it is easy to use and has flexibility. Blended learning also positively impacts students' achievement at the end of the class and increases their interest and motivation to learn (Nurmasitah et al., 2019).

The vast majority of study has focused on investigating the views of students concerning blended learning method, particularly regarding the previous studies conducted during the pandemic. However, few research highlight students' perceptions in the post pandemic era especially for students from Islamic Higher education context. Therefore, this study fills this knowledge gap by exploring the students' attitude towards blended learning in post-pandemic era at IAIN Ponorogo, East Java, Indonesia.

Methodology

The objective of this research is to describe the students' attitude towards the implementation of blended-learning in post-pandemic era. To answer the questions the following procedures were undertaken:

1. Participants

A total number of participants who filled the questionnaire are 29 students who study in English Department of IAIN Ponorogo, East Java who are willing to fill the questionnaire. Out of which 24 students (82.8%) were females and 5 students (17.2%) were males. The participants are fourth and sixth semester students.

2. Data collection instrument

The participant questionnaire that was handed out in this investigation contained a total of twenty questions. The first seven questions were of a more general nature and asked participants to provide information about themselves, including their gender, age, semester, and the types of devices they used for online study. The other questions concerned a hybrid form of education known as blended learning. Some of the questions contained a Likert's scale with four points, which the researcher intended to use either to quantify the level of agreement for certain components of blended learning or to examine the attitudes of the participants toward various different aspects of the training. The questions that dealt with the students' attitudes regarding the efficacy of blended learning, the students' involvement, the interaction between the teacher and the students, the interaction between the students themselves, the tasks, the students' control of their movement, and the advancement of their skills.

3. Procedure and data analysis

The researcher composed the questionnaire in a form of Google Form. The link of questionnaire, then, shared to the English Department students of IAIN Ponorogo. From the

link shared, 29 learners filled the questionnaire. After getting the data, the researcher employed statistical procedures. Calculation of the conventional descriptive statistical values was a part of the statistical operations. The researchers utilized SPSS in order to compute the proportion of correct responses provided by the students.

Findings

The analysis of the collected data produced some interesting findings on the participants' general information as well as their perspective on blended learning. It is known from the background information that the remaining 17.3 percent of the participants are male students, whereas 82.7 percent of the participants are female students. Students from the fourth and sixth semesters are present here. The vast majority, or 83.3%, are in their third year at this point. The remaining 16.7 percent are in their third year of study at this point. In terms of their ages, the responses fall between the ages of 21 and 23. Concerning the availability of an internet connection, 96.7 percent of the students have access to the internet when they are off campus. One student remains who does not have access to the internet anywhere else outside the institution. When it comes to the electronic tools that are utilized in an online classroom, the great majority of the pupils learn online with the assistance of a laptop computer and a mobile phone. There is only one student who makes use of a desktop personal computer, and not a single student makes use of a tablet.

The result of students' attitude toward blended learning can be seen from the table below

Table 1. students' attitude of blended learning

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A combination of online and traditional in-class learning is more effective than one-way delivery of information	6.90 %	10.34 %	65.52 %	17.24 %
Blended learning assignments allow me to read and learn more	6.90 %	10.34 %	79.31 %	3.45 %
With blended learning, the information is obtained in more than one way	3.45 %	3.45 %	82.76 %	10.34 %
Blended learning improves my English skills	6.90 %	27.59 %	58.62 %	6.90 %
Blended learning enables a student to become more involved in the learning process	6.90 %	6.90 %	72.41 %	13.79 %
A course designed for blended learning is more interesting	13.79 %	13.79 %	68.97 %	3.45 %

Blended learning reinforces interaction between teacher and students	10.34 %	10.34 %	72.41 %	6.90 %
Blended learning reinforces interaction among students	10.34 %	24.14 %	58.62 %	6.90 %
Tasks in the blended learning are understandable	0.00 %	20.69 %	72.41 %	6.90 %
“Blended learning provides me with enough time to perform tasks”	3.45 %	20.69 %	62.07 %	13.79 %
“Blended learning sessions are more meaningful because they include discussion in online learning environments after face-to-face learning”	3.45 %	24.14 %	72.41 %	0.00
“With blended learning, you can control how fast or slow you move through lessons”	3.45 %	24.14 %	65.52 %	6.90 %
“Which type of English teaching materials do you trust more? digital (electronic) or analog (paper)?”	58.62 %	41.38 %	0.00	0.00

Figure 1 depicted the highest possible percentage of the correct response is 82.76 percent. It appears that 24 students are in agreement that blended learning obtains more comprehensive knowledge or references from digital sources when compared to traditional classroom settings. The answer to the second question, which states that blended learning assignments enable students to read and learn more, currently holds the position of the second highest rank. It is taken up by 79.31 percent of the respondents, which is equivalent to 23 pupils. In addition, the percentage of people who agree with the statement that occupies the third highest spot, 72.41 percent, comes from the third question. They are blended learning enables a student to become more involved in the learning process; blended learning reinforces interaction between teacher and students; tasks in the blended learning are understandable; blended learning sessions are more meaningful because they include discussion in online learning environments after face-to-face learning. When it comes to the question of whether or not blended learning may help students enhance their English proficiency, the table also makes it possible to evaluate whether or not students have a positive or negative attitude.

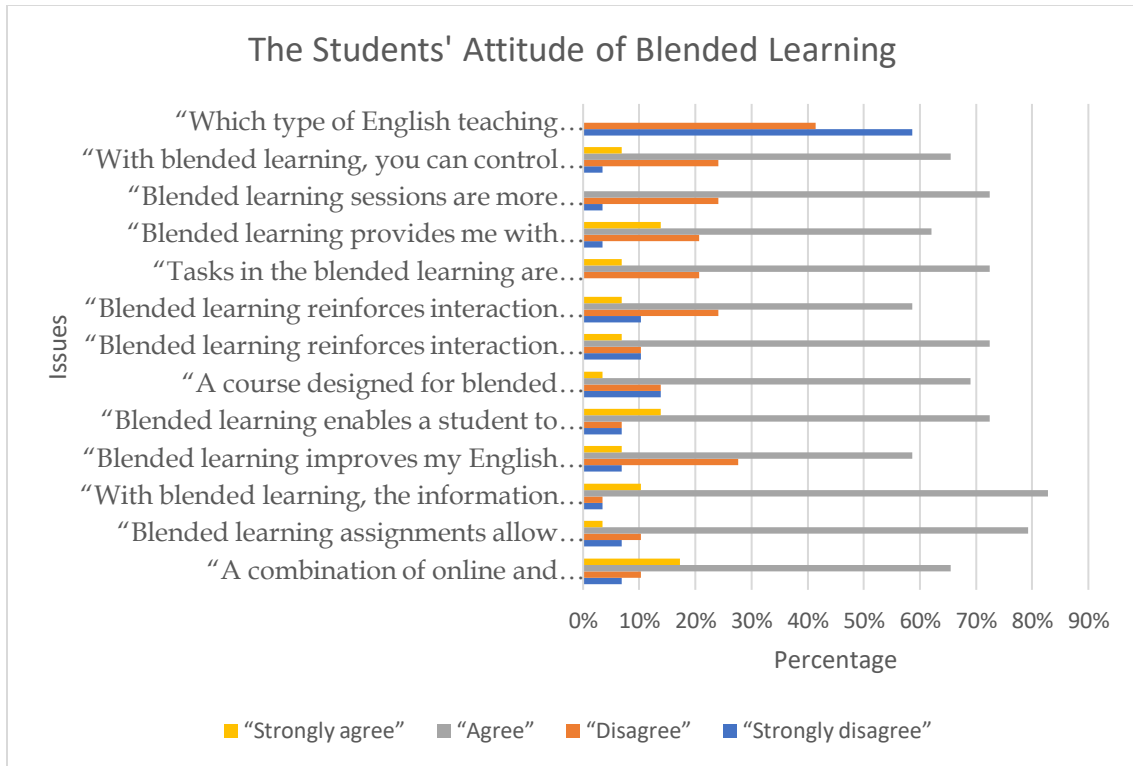


Figure. 1. Students' attitude of blended learning

The sentiment expressed by fewer than two thirds of the student body is identical to that one. In addition to their English skills, the students displayed a neutral attitude in their interactions with one another. The students do not believe that they had sufficient opportunities to engage in conversation with their peers.

Discussion

This study's objective was to investigate the attitudes held by students in the English Department of IAIN Ponorogo regarding blended learning as well as their comprehension of the blended learning requirements they have. According to the findings of the research, students held favorable attitudes toward blended forms of education. They also prefer blended learning, and they believe that the combination of online class learning and traditional in-class learning is more effective than using one-way delivery of information. This is because they believe that online class learning and traditional in-class learning complement each other. The vast majority of students are fine with participating in a hybrid classroom setting that combines in-person and online instruction.

According to the responses to the first couple of questions on the survey, the vast majority of students believe that blended learning is superior to traditional classroom instruction in terms of efficiency. However, there are five kids who feel quite strongly about the statement. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the students believe that blended learning helps them save time and effort because it eliminates the need for them to travel to the campus in order to obtain the necessary materials. They are able to participate in the online

learning from any location that they want. In addition, they can do the work whenever it is convenient for them, so long as the submissions are made before the deadline. Students who need to work to cover the cost of their education are permitted to do so provided as their employment does not interfere with their academic pursuits.

The overwhelming majority of students exhibited a positive attitude, and this was reflected in their level of participation in the learning process. 24 of the 29 participants reported that they experienced a sense of involvement in the teaching and learning process. Even though some of the meetings were held online, the students nevertheless maintained a strong relationship to the material being taught. To summarize, blended learning does not impede the participation of students in the teaching and learning process in any way. This is true for both face-to-face and online instruction. Not only is blended learning acceptable, but it is also highly favored by the students, as Hubackova and Semradova have stated. This finding is consistent with their findings. The pupils of today are known for their quick adaptation to new technologies and their ability to quickly master their use. Even the instruction of foreign languages should make use of blended learning, which is defined as the combination of face-to-face instruction in accordance with certain constructivist principles and instruction delivered in an electronic format (Hubackova & Semradova, 2016).

The students have a favorable attitude toward the many different sources that might be used during the blended learning process. They are in agreement that when they combine learning in person and online, they are able to take full use of the convenience and speed with which information can be obtained through online sources. Before and after the online session, the students have the opportunity to further their education by conducting research on the internet. As a consequence of this, the students' knowledge regarding global issues may be able to greatly expand. During the time that the students are required to wait for the instructor to initiate the online meeting, they have the option of either keeping up with the most recent news or contributing their prior experience in connection with the topic at hand.

Regarding the contact that takes place between the students and the teacher, as well as between the students themselves, the students have a somewhat diverse attitude. 24 of the participants hold a favorable attitude with regard to the relationship that occurs between the instructor and the pupils. It showed that the students had sufficient or adequate interaction with the instructor during blended learning, particularly when the class was conducted online. Because they are still able to ask questions and have conversations with the instructor, the participants are not able to tell the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning. During in-person instruction, obviously, there is no one to get in the way of the students' ability to communicate openly and freely with one another. During the time that the class is being taught online, the instructor and students can communicate with one another through a learning management system (LMS) that is being utilized in accordance with the agreement. Benefits of blended learning are well-rehearsed, and they align with the theory proposed by Smith and Hill. These benefits include increased flexibility for teachers and students, customization, improved student outcomes, the cultivation of independent and self-directed learning, chances for teachers to grow professionally, lower tuition, greater job satisfaction, and more productive classroom discussions (Smith & Hill, 2019a).

On the other hand, the learners have an attitude that may be described as "fair" or "so-so" toward blended learning in terms of the interaction that occurs among them. 19 of the 29 students surveyed expressed agreement or strong agreement that blended learning makes it easier for them to interact with one another. While the remaining 10 students disagree and strongly disagree that a combination of online and face-to-face engagement promotes learners' interaction among themselves, the remaining students think that the combination of online and face-to-face interaction is beneficial. In comparison to a conventional classroom, the participant thought that there was insufficient room for them to interact with one another. The online meeting was a barrier for them in the blended learning format. When holding an online meeting, the majority of the time is devoted to interaction between the instructor and the pupils. despite the fact that the interaction between students does not have a sufficient amount. Actually, this issue can be fixed by making it easier for students to communicate with one another via a learning management system. For example, the instructor required each student to compose an essay addressing a problem regarding a curtain, and then the students were required to offer constructive criticism to the work of at least three of their classmates.

In addition, a reasonable attitude was shown in terms of enhancing the English skills of the students. The perspective that the students take on this assertion is almost identical to the perspective that they take on the interaction that occurs between the students in blended learning. The statement was met with disagreement and significant disagreement from ten of the twenty-nine pupils. While the remaining 19 individuals either agreed or strongly agreed that students' English skills can be improved through blended learning. Even if students are surrounded by digital devices that make it simple to obtain information or knowledge, they do not believe that using these devices helps them improve their skills. The students still require additional direction from the professor regarding the selection and utilization of a website or application that is offered. Additionally, the kids lack the self-assurance necessary to successfully use the application. In addition, the students require a motivator in order to encourage them to utilize the program that is either hosted on a website or sold in a play store.

Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, more than half of the participants have a favorable attitude toward the deployment of blended learning at the time after the pandemic. Even though the students had to adjust to online learning in the beginning of the outbreak, as time goes on, the learners get the adjustment and become more comfortable with blended learning. The students have the most favorable view on the advantages of blended learning in terms of the availability of knowledge in more than one direction. Blended learning gives students the opportunity to research and gather information or knowledge from a variety of sources that are readily available to them. The involvement of students in the learning process as a result of the implementation of blended learning garnered the second-highest number of positive attitudes. Students are not prevented from actively participating in the teaching and learning process by using online learning. In addition to a favorable attitude toward mixed learning, the participants also revealed two attitudes that were either neutral or unfavorable. One of the types of evidence indicating the pupils experienced less interaction among themselves is the

answer to the question regarding the interaction among the classmates. The growth of one's English skills during integrated learning is the subject of the next attitude that is merely satisfactory. They were of the opinion that studying using a hybrid approach did not result in a significant improvement to the skills. It is necessary for the instructor and the students to have a conversation about this circumstance in order to find a solution to the issue that the pupils are having.

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