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Exploring the Attitudes of English Language Learners toward Online Learning in Indonesian Higher Education

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Introduction

With the increasing use of the internet, online learning has become a popular approach to delivering education. Previous studies have explored how well online learning platforms work for teaching English. For example, Hazaymeh (2021) and Wu et al. (2017) found that using online learning platforms can enhance students' English language proficiency. Peer feedback was also identified as a positive contributor to learning outcomes in an online English writing course (Novakovich, 2016; Shang, 2022; Zhan et al., 2022). Isma et al. (2022) found that the Online Quizizz Application is viewed positively by students for learning English, leading to increased excitement and interest in the subject due to its game-based learning.

Furthermore, Andrade (2017) and Zakarneh (2018) examined online language learning in distance education and identified effective pedagogical practices for teaching English to learners. Additionally, the need for teaching strategies, including online vocabulary learning, had a favorable impact on EFL students' vocabulary achievement (Baharuddin et al., 2022; Tosun, 2015). Mohamed (2022) concluded that blended learning, which combines online and face-to-face instruction, was effective in enhancing EFL learning outcomes. Finally, Zhang's (2020) study discovered that online self-regulated learning strategy instruction improved EFL learners' achievement and self-efficacy.

Previous studies have demonstrated that online learning platforms have the potential to enhance English language proficiency and improve language skills for learners. However, these studies have primarily focused on exploring the efficiency of online learning without considering the attitudes of English language learners towards this mode of education. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate whether learners hold positive or negative attitudes towards online learning, as it directly impacts its efficacy and informs future educational policies and practices. In addition, although several studies have separately examined online learning and English language learning, there is limited research that specifically explores the attitudes of English language learners, particularly in Indonesian higher education. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to bridge this gap.



This study focuses on exploring the attitudes of English language learners toward online learning for Indonesian higher education, with the aim of contributing to the existing literature on the topic. The study provides recommendations for online learning implementation platforms in Indonesian higher education, which can improve the effectiveness of teaching English and enhance learners' language proficiency. Additionally, the study can help in the development of online learning platforms in Indonesia by offering insights into English language learners' attitudes toward online learning. By exploring attitudes towards online learning, this study can provide educators and policymakers with valuable insights to make well-informed decisions regarding the effectiveness and acceptance of these platforms, ensuring that they are efficient and support learners' academic success.

Methods

The study intends to explore the attitudes of 85 English language learners toward online learning in a higher academic institution in Indonesia following the COVID-19 outbreak. The participants were selected using convenience sampling, consisting of second-semester undergraduate students who were enrolled in the English department at Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia. The research design was a survey-based study, where the participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire to assess their attitudes toward online learning. The survey instrument used in this study was adapted and developed from existing literature on attitudes toward online learning. Specifically, this study incorporated elements from two keyword instruments: the “Online Learning Environment Survey (OLES)” and “attitudes toward online learning”, both of which have demonstrated reliability and validity in prior research (Korkmaz, 2012; Liaw et al., 2007; Malkawi et al., 2021; Pearson & Trinidad, 2005; Trinidad et al., 2005). The adaptation process involved a thoughtful review of the original items, considering the unique context of this study and the specific characteristics of the target population at Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia. The collection of data was carried out through an online survey distributed to the participants through Google Forms. The survey was available for more than a week (March 15-24, 2023), during which time the participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire. The survey responses were collected anonymously to ensure participant confidentiality.

Results

This report presents the findings of this study, with a particular focus on the responses provided by participants.

Learners' Knowledge and Experience in Online Learning

This part focused on three main areas: learners' prior experience with online learning, their proficiency in using technology and online learning platforms, and the types of online learning platforms they have used before.

TABLE 1
Prior Experience

Question	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Have you ever taken online learning before?	YES	83	97.6%
	NO	2	2.4%

Based on the findings, the overwhelming majority of respondents, 83 individuals or 97.6%, have previously participated in online learning. This indicates that online learning has become a prevalent mode

of education among the respondents. Only two respondents or 2.4% of the total responses claimed to have never participated in online learning before. This shows that there may be a small group of individuals who are less familiar with online learning or who have had limited access to online educational resources.

TABLE 2
Level of Proficiency

Question	Proficiency	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Do you feel quite proficient in using online learning technologies and platforms?	Not Proficient at All	0	0%
	Not Very Advanced	25	29.4%
	Adequate	37	43.5%
	Proficient	22	25.9%
	Very Proficient	1	1.2%

This table shows none of the 85 respondents claimed to be "Not Proficient at All" when asked about their proficiency in using technology and online learning platforms. This indicates that the respondents have some level of familiarity and experience with these tools. The majority of the respondents, 37 individuals or 43.5%, considered themselves to be "Adequate" in using technology and online learning platforms. This represents that they feel confident in their abilities but may still have some areas to improve. 22 respondents or 25.9% of the total responses claimed to be "Proficient" in using these tools, indicating that they have significant experience and expertise in navigating online learning platforms. Interestingly, only one respondent, or 1.2% of the total responses claimed to be "Very Proficient" in using technology and online learning platforms, suggesting that there is still significant room for growth in terms of technical proficiency among the respondents. Lastly, 25 respondents, or 29.4% of the total responses felt that they were "Not Very Advanced" in using technology and online learning platforms, indicating that they may require some assistance or additional training to become more proficient in these areas.

TABLE 3
Type of Platforms Used

Question	Type of Platforms	Number of Respondents	Percentage
What types of online learning platforms have you used?	Learning Management System (LMS)	42	49.4%
	Video Conferencing	72	84.7%
	Self-directed Learning with Video/Written	24	28.2%
	Mobile Learning Applications	17	20.0%

This question asked respondents about the types of online learning platforms they have used before. The findings show that the most commonly used platform is video conferencing, with 72 respondents, or 84.7% of the total responses reporting that they have used video conferencing platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. This indicates that video conferencing has become a popular method for delivering synchronous online instruction, where learners can interact with instructors and peers in real-time. Another frequently used platform is the LMS, including E-Learning, and Google Classroom, which 42 respondents, or 49.4% of the total responses reported using. This type of platform allows for the creation and delivery of course content, as well as the management of assessments and grades, providing a comprehensive learning environment for both lecturers and learners. In addition, 24 respondents, or 28.2% of the total responses reported using self-directed learning with video or written materials. This implies that many learners favor the flexibility of engaging with course materials at their preferred pace and time without the constraints of scheduled classes or meetings. Lastly, 17 respondents, or 20% of the total responses reported using mobile learning applications. This reveals that mobile devices have become an increasingly important tool for online learning, allowing learners to access course materials and participate in learning activities anytime and anywhere.

Learners' Attitude Toward Online Learning

This part comprised questions such as the frequency of online classes attended, satisfaction levels with online learning, the effectiveness of online learning in understanding the subject matter, the impact of online learning on improving English language skills, the level of confidence in participating in online classes, and the suitability of online learning for all types of courses.

TABLE 4
Frequency of Online Class Attended

Question	Frequency of Online Class Attendance	Number of Respondents	Percentage
How often did you attend online lectures during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Almost every day	36	42.4%
	Several times a week	21	24.7%
	Once a week	8	9.4%
	Less than once a week	10	11.8%
	Never	10	11.8%

Based on the findings regarding the frequency of online class attendance in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, 36 out of 85 respondents reported attending almost every day, 21 reported attending several times a week, and 8 reported attending once a week. On the other hand, 10 respondents reported attending less than once a week, and 10 respondents reported never attending online classes. The data indicates that the majority of respondents attended online classes frequently, with 57 out of 85 respondents (67%) attending at least several times a week. This result can be attributed to the implementation of remote learning by many educational institutions in order to curb the transmission of COVID-19. The availability and accessibility of online learning platforms also contribute to the increased frequency of attendance. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that a significant portion of respondents, specifically 20 out of 85 (23%), reported attending online classes less frequently or not at all. This may be due to various reasons such as technical difficulties, lack of motivation, or personal circumstances.

TABLE 5
Level of Satisfaction

Question	Satisfaction with Online Learning	Number of Respondents	Percentage
What is your level of satisfaction with the online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Very Satisfied	0	0%
	Satisfied	12	14.1%
	Quite Satisfied	36	42.4%
	Not Very Satisfied	33	38.8%
	Not Satisfied at All	4	4.7%

This table shows the satisfaction level among the respondents regarding their online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings revealed that none of the respondents were very satisfied, 12 were satisfied, 36 were quite satisfied, 33 were not very satisfied, and 4 were not satisfied at all. It is worth noting that a considerable proportion of the respondents, 37 out of 85 (43%), expressed some level of dissatisfaction with their online learning experience. The reasons for their dissatisfaction may vary, including technical difficulties, limited interaction with classmates and teachers, and challenges in staying focused and motivated. However, it is also essential to acknowledge that the majority of the respondents (48 out of 85, or 56%) expressed being satisfied to some extent with their online learning experience. This implies that despite the challenges, online learning has been effective for some learners in maintaining the continuity of education during the pandemic.

TABLE 6
Effectiveness of Online Learning

Question	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
In your opinion, is online learning effective in helping you understand the subject matter?	Very Effective	2	2.4%
	Effective	13	15.3%
	Quite Effective	29	34.1%
	Not Very Effective	37	43.5%
	Not Effective at All	4	4.7%

Based on the findings, a majority of respondents, 44 out of 85 (52%), acknowledged some level of effectiveness in online learning for understanding the subject matter. However, a substantial proportion, comprising 41 out of 85 (48%), expressed varying degrees of ineffectiveness. This data suggests a more balanced and varied perspective compared to the satisfaction levels with the online learning experience. The findings show that while some learners find online learning to be effective, there is room for improvement to ensure that more learners are satisfied with the experience. To provide a more comprehensive analysis, these findings are compared with existing literature and global studies which are further elaborated in the discussion section.

TABLE 7
Impact of Online Learning

Question	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
In your opinion, can online learning help you improve your English skills?	Very Helpful	4	4.7%
	Helpful	20	23.5%
	Quite Helpful	37	43.5%
	Not Very Helpful	24	28.2%
	Not Helpful at All	0	0%

This table shows a majority of the respondents (61 out of 85) believed that online learning can help improve their English language skills. Among these respondents, 4 rated online learning as very helpful, 20 rated it as helpful, and 37 rated it as quite helpful. However, 24 respondents did not find online learning to be very helpful in improving their English language skills. The findings demonstrate that many learners hold the view that online learning has the potential to improve their English language skills.

TABLE 8
Level of Confidence

Question	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
How confident are you in following online learning?	Very Confident	5	5.9%
	Confident	28	32.9%
	Quite Confident	39	45.9%
	Not Very Confident	13	15.3%
	Not Confident at All	0	0%

Based on the findings, the majority of respondents were confident or quite confident in following online learning, with 5 respondents (5.9%) indicating that they were very confident and 28 respondents (32.9%) indicating that they were confident. Additionally, 39 respondents (45.9%) felt quite confident in following online learning. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that a notable subgroup of respondents, 13 (15.3%), felt that they were not very confident in following online learning. Briefly, the findings show that while many learners feel confident in following online learning, there is still a significant proportion of learners who may require additional support and resources to help them feel more comfortable with this mode of education.

TABLE 9
Suitability of Online Learning

Question	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
In your opinion, is online learning suitable for all types of courses?	Very Suitable	3	3.5%
	Suitable	14	16.5%
	Quite Suitable	26	30.6%
	Not Very Suitable	38	44.7%
	Not Suitable at All	4	4.7%

The last question asked respondents about their opinions regarding the suitability of online learning for different types of courses. Among the respondents, 3 (3.5%) considered online learning to be very suitable for all types of courses, while 14 (16.5%) believed it to be suitable. Furthermore, 26 respondents (30.6%) expressed that online learning was quite suitable. On the other hand, 38 respondents (44.7%) found online learning not very suitable for all types of courses, and 4 respondents (4.7%) believed it was not suitable at all. The findings imply that there is a significant degree of skepticism about the suitability of online learning for all types of courses. This may indicate apprehensions regarding the efficacy of online learning when applied to specific subject areas, such as those that require hands-on or practical learning experiences.

Discussion

In this section, a general discussion is presented regarding the findings of the current study, as well as an overview of comparisons and connections with previous studies. Based on the findings, table 1 shows the vast majority of respondents, specifically 83 out of 85, have experience with online learning, which suggests that they are very familiar with this type of format. Table 2 reveals that most respondents, 59 out of 85, feel that they have at least adequate proficiency in using online learning technologies and platforms. Additionally, 72 respondents reported that they use video conferencing, and 42 respondents use learning management systems, as indicated in Table 3. In Table 4, it is reported that in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the majority of respondents, 57 out of 85, attended online lectures at least several times a week.

Respondents' satisfaction with the online learning experience during the pandemic is mixed, with 48 respondents expressing satisfaction and 37 respondents expressing dissatisfaction, as shown in Table 5. In Table 6, opinions are divided on the effectiveness and efficacy of online learning in helping respondents understand the subject matter, with 44 respondents considering it at least somewhat effective, while 41 respondents do not believe it is very effective or effective at all. Table 7 indicates that 61 out of 85 respondents feel that online learning can at least somewhat help them improve their English skills. The majority of respondents, 67 out of 85, feel quite confident in following online learning, as stated in Table 8. Finally, Table 9 shows that respondents have mixed views on whether online learning is appropriate for every category of courses, with 43 respondents believing that it is at least somewhat suitable and 42 respondents believing that it is not very suitable or not suitable at all.

The findings show that most of the respondents have some experience in online learning and feel at least adequate when using online learning technologies and platforms. However, satisfaction with the online learning experience in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis is mixed, and beliefs on the effectiveness and suitability of online learning are somewhat divided. Overall, the findings suggest that while online learning has its benefits, there is still potential for enhancement in relation to its effectiveness and suitability for different types of courses. Additionally, it may be important to consider ways to improve satisfaction with the online learning experience to maximize its potential benefits.

The findings align with previous studies that have demonstrated the increasing popularity and significance of online learning as an educational modality (Castro & Tumibay, 2021; Nambiar, 2020). However, this study also highlights the need for additional resources and support to aid learners in utilizing online learning platforms effectively, especially those who face challenges or difficulties while navigating

and engaging with online learning materials (Aguilera-Hermida et al., 2021; Isma, 2023; Liu et al., 2020; Yeung & Yau, 2022). The findings of this study also reflect the diverse and varied nature of online learning platforms, with options available to suit different learning needs and preferences (Isma, 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021). Additionally, the study highlights the importance of online learning in the midst of crises, such as the COVID-19 outbreak, in ensuring the continuity of education (Bozkurt et al., 2022).

Furthermore, this study shows that while many learners are satisfied with their online learning experience, there is an opportunity for enhancement in regard to instructional materials and the engagement level of the online platform (Almusharraf & Khahro, 2020). Moreover, the findings suggest that online learning can be effective in improving learners' English language skills, but high-quality and engaging materials are crucial for its success (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020). Finally, the study indicates that there is still some skepticism about the suitability of online learning for all types of courses, particularly those that require hands-on or practical learning experiences (Ye et al., 2023). The findings suggest that online learning resources and materials should be tailored to the specific needs and learning objectives of each course and that learners should be provided with opportunities for hands-on learning experiences to supplement their online learning.

The percentage of respondents who consider online learning effective and ineffective in this study aligns with some global trends reported in the literature (e.g., Allo, 2020; Mandasari, 2020; Mok et al., 2021). Several studies have noted similarly mixed views, with a significant portion of learners acknowledging the benefits of online education but also expressing challenges (Paudel, 2021; Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2020). However, it is noted that the effectiveness of online learning can be influenced by various factors, including the type of courses, technological infrastructure, and individual learning preferences (Castro & Tumibay, 2021). In contrast, the findings may deviate from some studies (e.g., Malkawi et al., 2021) that have reported higher satisfaction rates with online learning. This disparity could be attributed to the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic in different places, which may pose challenges for lecturers and learners. Institutions with strong online infrastructure and previous experience in virtual education may have different results compared to institutions that are experiencing this condition for the first time.

The findings of this study support prior research by highlighting the importance of providing support and resources for learners who may require additional assistance with online learning. Moreover, this study further enriches the literature by specifically focusing on the attitudes of English language learners in Indonesian higher education towards online learning. It highlights the need for tailored online learning resources and materials that take into account the specific needs and learning objectives of each course, as well as the importance of providing opportunities for hands-on learning experiences to supplement online learning. In addition, it is also crucial to recognize that the COVID-19 context is multifaceted and learners' experiences may vary. The findings provide a snapshot of attitudes during a specific period, and future research could explore in more depth how other variables like social isolation, lockdown conditions, and broader contextual elements interact with and influence student perceptions of online learning.

Conclusion

This study highlights the attitudes of English language learners toward online learning in Indonesian higher education. In conclusion, the findings reveal that most of the respondents have taken online learning before and feel proficient in using online learning technologies and platforms. The most commonly used online learning platforms are Learning Management Systems and Video Conferencing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most respondents attended online lectures several times a week or almost every day, but satisfaction with the online learning experience was mixed, with some feeling quite satisfied and others not very satisfied. Regarding the effectiveness of online learning, opinions were divided, with some finding it very effective or quite helpful in improving their English skills, while others did not find it effective or helpful at all. Confidence levels in following online learning were generally high, but opinions were also divided on whether online learning is appropriate for different types of courses. Further studies could be

conducted to investigate the reasons behind the mixed satisfaction and effectiveness levels of online learning, as well as some factors that influence the suitability of online learning for different types of courses. Additionally, the study could be conducted to identify best practices for designing and implementing online learning that can effectively meet the diverse needs and preferences of learners.

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