Portraying Self-Regulated Learning of EFL Higher Students Post Covid-19

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Abstract. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges related to the techniques of instruction used in the education field during and after COVID-19. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design. Questionnaires are employed to gather data regarding the perspectives of EFL students regarding the educational process both before and after COVID-19 through G-form. This study was carried out at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, a private university in North Sumatra, specifically in the English Education Department. The findings highlight the critical need to set up dedicated study areas for students engaged in distant learning, especially in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these drawbacks, the post-COVID-19 era produced positive changes by placing a higher priority on individualized training and technological integration.

Keywords: Self-Regulated Learning, EFL Higher Students, Post COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

In various situations, self-regulated learning (SRL) has been seen as a crucial set of abilities to enable effective lifelong learning [1]. The learning cycles in SRL are characterized by evaluative judgments, which may come from the learner or may be forced from the outside by the environment. The learning cycle can be as short as the time between initiation and evaluation, which can vary between learners, for self-regulated learners who monitor for the effectiveness of their learning, i.e., produce meta-cognitive evaluations to ascertain whether the strategies are helpful [2]. Self-regulated learning (SRL), coupled with EFL, is crucial when the goals are related to learning behavior. The learner's active process is described by SRL as exercising self-determined control over their thoughts, motivations, and conduct goals for learning [3]. Self-regulated learning is an important concept in education, as it empowers individuals to take control of their learning processes, become more independent learners, and ultimately achieve better outcomes. It can be applied in various contexts, from formal education to self-directed, lifelong learning.

Since it has been determined that self-regulated learning is a necessary skill that needs to be explicitly taught and practiced frequently throughout life, early treatments have been found to be more successful for lower-grade elementary school kids than later interventions for secondary school students [4]. SRL has a massive impact in order to foster student autonomy, online learning platforms are now promoted to students. Researchers have discovered that in an online learning environment, students' self-regulated behaviors impact their academic progress. Nevertheless, most students have fewer opportunities to receive beneficial recommendations for improving their knowledge connected to their learning issues because standard online learning systems are unable to customize feedback to the personality of the student [5]. In blended learning (BL), self-regulated learning (SRL) has drawn a lot of attention as one of the most important components of students' academic achievement. Other benefits include helping students adjust to the learning process, facilitating learning strategies, concentrating their efforts on specific areas, and keeping at-risk students informed about their learning route [2],[6]. Keep in mind that self-regulated learning is an ever-evolving process, and be optimal approach may differ depending on the context in which one chooses to learn. It's critical to become self-aware of the preferred methods of learning and modify approaches accordingly.

Students felt alone and stressed while adjusting to the online learning environment as additional details regarding the COVID-19 outbreak emerged and restrictions were upheld. students' information-seeking behaviors changed and shifted [7]. In the future, this study can be conducted on alternative research issues such as emotional intelligence, online learning, higher education, and perceived stress. This research suggests creating a curriculum that may adapt to different COVID-19 difficulties and the altered educational environment following the epidemic [8]. In light of the COVID-19 epidemic, the researchers looked into how preservice teachers perceived their self-regulated learning (SRL) abilities and methods in an online learning setting. In other words, they are future instructors as well as students [9]. The ability of education systems to adapt. The long-term consequences of the pandemic on education are still evolving, and it will likely continue to shape the future of learning in many ways.

The degree of student self-regulated learning is one of the elements that determines the success of online learning. Consequently, mastering SRL's capabilities is crucial to completing an effective education throughout this pandemic. The related research has found that self-regulated learning has four key components: planning, monitoring, controlling, and reflecting predictions on the success of online learning during COVID-19 [10]. To increase their learning achievement through active learning, students who exhibit self-regulated learning must take personal responsibility for their learning. Based on the findings of previous studies done at different educational levels, it was discovered that using self-regulated learning significantly improved students' learning outcomes [11]. Although assessments of online and in-person instruction have been done before, this review shows how blended learning has emerged in response to the pandemic. Furthermore, this study offers a thorough summary of current research studies from several angles, providing readers with a comprehensive grasp of the potential problems experienced by educators and students throughout the epidemic [12]. The previous study were focusing on the teacher's perpective which created inovation in learning due to Covid 19 [13], [14], [15]. It caused some model of learning, actually in learning language which needed some practices and evaluation control [16], [17], [18]. The teacher thought about how they train students' in distance learning effectively [19], [20], [21]. The study about developing media would be the next issue even the pandemic is over [22], [23], [24], [25].

Based on the researcher's investigation of the EFL class, significant changes in learning methods post-Covid-19 have appeared. During the outbreak of COVID-19, online learning was comprehensively applied in education [26]. This study identifies a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties associated with the teaching modalities utilized in management education as well as other disciplines both during and after COVID-19. The results will indicate that the most practical strategy after COVID-19 is a hybrid learning environment. The future of teaching and learning in higher education will probably be shaped by the use of technology and an emphasis on individualized, immersive, and engaging learning experiences. The pandemic has created serious obstacles to regular classroom operations [27]. Online learning offers benefits like flexibility and self-paced learning, but it also lacks the social and emotional cues of in-person instruction, which can leave students feeling lost and unsupported. It's crucial to remember that individual differences exist in the efficacy of independent learning, and not every student will benefit from this setting. As a result, both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and institutions should keep refining and expanding their approaches to promoting and facilitating independent learning.

2. METHOD

Research Design

The research design applied in this research was qualitative. Qualitative research aims to comprehend the various ways in which individuals perceive events, locations, and procedures as components of a fluid reality that is created by a multitude of interpretations and filtered via an assortment of frames of reference and systems of establishing significance. Qualitative research involving direct communication with the target community is the most effective method for ensuring content validity [28],[29]. A qualitative phenomenological design was used in this research. It is believed that the primary goals of the study, which were to gather data and then analyze it to explain the phenomena that existed, were best served by applying qualitative research [30].

Data Sources

The study was conducted at a private university in North Sumatra, specifically the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. The sources of data in this research were

30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who had recently completed the teaching and learning process during and after Covid-19.

Data Collection

In this research, Questionnaires are used to collect information about EFL students' attitudes toward the teaching and learning process during and after Covid-19. Questionnaires provide valuable insights into individuals' behaviour, experiences, attitudes, and awareness of events [31],[32]. A Google Form questionnaire was created to assist subjects' responses by considering potential time restrictions that could restrict their ability to complete the question. The use of online questionnaires makes data gathering easier and increases subject participation in research.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the questionnaire will be examined using Miles and Huberman's theoretical framework. The idea describes a three-step data analysis procedure. These steps involve data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing/verification [33]. Data Condensation, the data that occurs in the entire corpus or written field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical sources is chosen, narrowed down, made simpler, abstracted, and altered. The data that students' perception of completing the teaching and learning process during and after COVID-19 is the main focus of the researchers' investigation; data Display, following the process of data reduction, the researcher proceeds to organize and categorize the data using diagrams, and then assesses the data concerning the categories of the learning experiences during and after COVID-19; conclusion drawing/verification: In the final stage, the researcher will conclude and confirm the information gathered to characterize and interpret all of the data to make the research's data and conclusions easily observable.

3. FINDINGS

Thirty respondents were acquired from the data gathering results utilizing a structured questionnaire issued via Google Forms. This study uses data from a sample of 30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who are currently enrolled in a private university in Medan, Sumatera Utara. The responses of the participants in this study were examined to get a sense of how the investigation was conducted. These results are classified depending on the questions asked to be clearly described.

Internet Problem During Covid-19 Learning Process

Based on internet problems during covid-19 learning process, the results indicate that 28 respondents (or 90% of the sample) reported having internet issues when participating in COVID-19 learning activities, whereas just 2 respondents (10%) reported not experiencing internet issues overall. This demonstrates that participants in this research were more probable to have internet issues during Covid-19 learning activities than those who did not experience internet issues during COVID-19 learning activities (Figure 1).
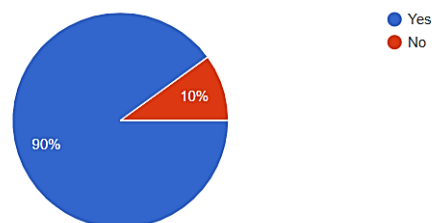

Figure 1. Internet Problem During Covid-19 Learning Process

The Effective Media for Online Learning

Zoom's video conference received the highest percentage of responses (50%) when it came to the usage of media for online learning, indicating that half of the respondents thought Zoom was a successful media. Google Classroom came in second, receiving 30% of responses from 9 respondents, and 10% from each of the two categories—Video Offline and Chatting Via WA Group (Figure 2).
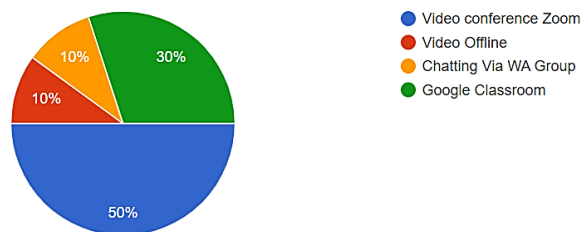

Figure 2 The effective media for online learning

Online Learning During Pandemic

According to the diagram, 46.7% of respondents believe that online learning is sufficient in the epidemic era. The next category was easy, which received 33.3% of responses, followed by difficult (20%) and very easy (none) (Figure 3).
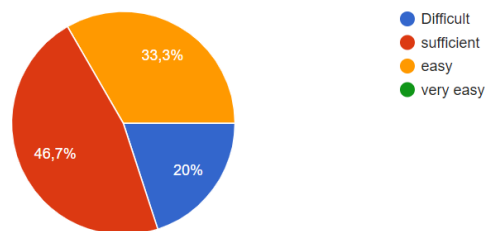

Figure 3. Online Learning During Pandemic

Student and Teacher Interaction

Sixty percent of respondents concur that in the epidemic era, teacher-student interaction is insufficient. Good came in second with 20% of respondents, followed by sufficient with 16%, and very good with only one responder (Figure 4).
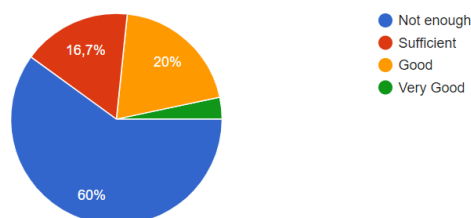

Figure 4. Student and Teacher Interaction

Teaching Strategy and Materials Quality

The teaching and learning resources utilized in online learning, according to 40% of respondents, were sufficient. A total of 30% expressed good, with 26.7% saying it was not enough and one respondent saying it was excellent (Figure 5).
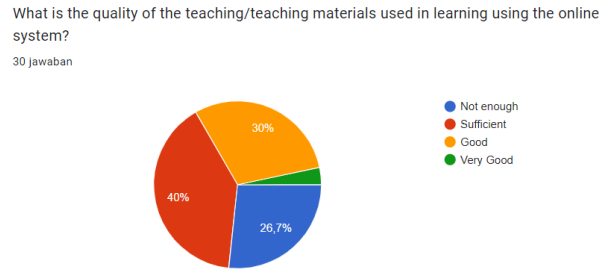
What is the quality of the teaching/teaching materials used in learning using the online system?

30 jawaban

- Not enough
- Sufficient
- Good
- Very Good

Figure 5. Teaching Strategy and Materials Quality

Changes of Educational System

Based on the question "Changes in Educational System," the results show that while just two respondents (10%) said they did not feel changes had occurred in the educational system, 28 respondents (or 90% of the sample) felt that changes had occurred. This indicates that compared to those who did not sense changes in the educational system, research participants were more likely to have felt them occurring (Figure 6).
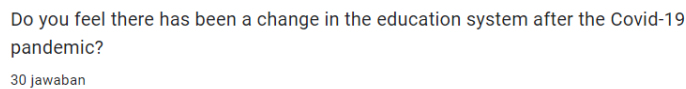
Do you feel there has been a change in the education system after the Covid-19 pandemic?

30 jawaban

- Yes
- No

Figure 6. Changes of Educational System

Learning Experiences Through Covid-19

Seventy percent of those surveyed believe their experiences have changed. 16.7% of those surveyed said they were confused about online education during the epidemic period. Figure 7 shows that one respondent declined while 10% of respondents say nothing changed and feel the same.
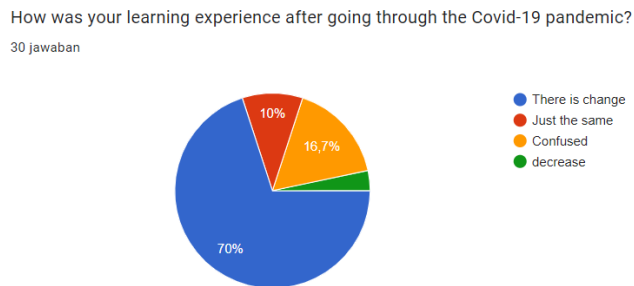
How was your learning experience after going through the Covid-19 pandemic?

30 jawaban

- There is change
- Just the same
- Confused
- decrease

Figure 7. Learning Experiences Through Covid-19

Social Interaction on Learning Experiences

According to the findings of the study on the impact of social interaction on learning experiences, 26 respondents (86.7% of the sample) said they felt their learning experience was being negatively impacted by a lack of social interaction, while only 4 respondents (13.3%) said they did not feel this way. This indicates that compared to those who did not feel it, research participants were more likely to feel that their learning experience was being negatively impacted by a lack of social interaction (Figure 8).

Do you feel the lack of social interaction is affecting your learning experience?
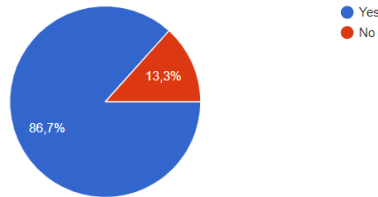
30 jawaban

- Yes
- No

13,3%

86,7%

Figure 8. Social Interaction on Learning Experience

The Implementation of Technology

Sixty percent of the participants believed that the implementation of technology in online learning was successful. With 26.7% feeling sufficient, it was followed by 13.3% feeling insufficient (Figure 9).

How effective do you think the implementation of technology in learning is?
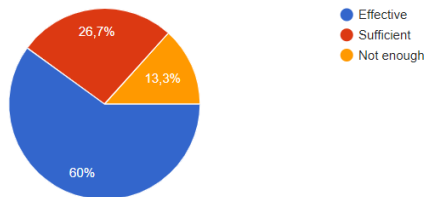
30 jawaban

- Effective
- Sufficient
- Not enough

26,7%

13,3%

60%

Figure 9. The Implementation of Technology

Positive Impact Post Covid-19

96.7% of the sample, or 29 respondents, thought that the positive impact post-Covid-19 had occurred. These results are based on the question "The positive impact post-Covid-19". Only 3.3% of the respondents indicated they did not experience the positive impact post-Covid-19. This suggests that research participants were more likely to have felt the impact than not have felt it (Figure 10).

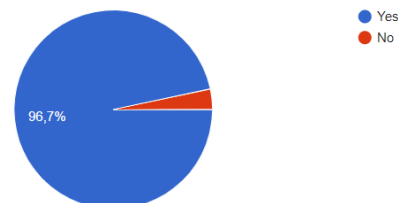Are there any positive aspects that you find in post-Covid-19 learning?

30 jawaban

- Yes
- No

96,7%

Figure 10. Positive Impact Post Covid-19

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4. DISCUSSION

In this section, Participants discuss their personal experiences with utilizing online resources, interacting with lecturers, and developing personalized schedules. This analysis delves into the specific variations and similarities observed between the periods before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a meticulous examination of these variations and viewpoints, utilizing G-Form as a research instrument, the objective is to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the effects of the global pandemic on independent learning.

G-Form (Student Point of View)

Derived from responses provided by students who completed the G-Form survey:

Students have emphasized the significance of establishing a dedicated study area at home to stay focused during online learning. This dedicated area serves as a crucial element in sustaining concentration amidst the challenges posed by remote education. Students frequently encounter connectivity problems with the internet signal, leading to disruptions in online learning. Internet access reliability has been a significant concern, affecting the ease and effectiveness of online learning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote education has become a common mode of instruction. We recognize through Figure 1 above that the internet issue occurred during the COVID-19 era of online learning. The diagram shows that 90% of learners got the issues. The pandemic has made it extremely difficult to conduct regular school activities [27]. Lack of internet access can negatively impact a student's academic performance in a variety of ways. Without internet connectivity, students are unable to complete their assignments, communicate with teachers or peers, or conduct independent research. Families that do not have internet connectivity may find themselves without access to crucial information or may cease communicating with educators and schools. The Internet has been useful for a variety of activities, including gaming, video streaming, online collaboration, remote working, and e-teaching [34]. However, the main cause of teachers' problems is technology in the classroom. The effective media used in online learning was Zoom (Figure 2). Half of the respondents agree that Zoom is an online platform that provides effective learning. Similar to the previous research, the implementation of online instruction requires a systematic strategy that takes into consideration the needs of all parties involved in education and removes obstacles [35]. The two biggest issues facing educational institutions are supplying suitable technology for instruction and providing efficient assistance for teacher training [36].

Figure 3 illustrates how students feel sufficient when learning online, as indicated by 46.7% of respondents who approve. On the other hand, the situations where teachers are unable to physically meet their students, it is crucial to stay in constant connection with them. Teachers have faced additional difficulties as a result of having to periodically phone students to check on their attendance and provide feedback on their performance [37]. The lack of student and teacher interaction also occurs in this online learning. It was proven in Figure 4 that 60% of the respondents did not have enough interaction with online learning activities. Related research found that it affects the students who put up little effort in class, show little enthusiasm in increasing their level of knowledge, or are more focused on earning marks and certifications than on studying themselves are considered uninterested or indifferent [38]. The teacher should create a platform for online learning and it was got 40% of respondents feel sufficient about it (Figure 5) Teachers must adjust their course materials to be appropriate for digital education when using online learning as a delivery method for instruction [37]. Teachers also had difficulty creating digitally based lessons and the accompanying learning resources for each one. How well teachers are prepared to educate may have an impact on the quality of education provided by online learning [39]. For the students, creating the learning materials for the online course was another difficulty. Teachers already have a lot on their minds with having to spend more time creating digital presentations that students can utilize in online conversations. Unlike face-to-face instruction, teachers are unable to illustrate the lessons they are teaching thus they must prepare everything for every lesson. It is shown in Figure 6 that 90% of the respondents felt that changes in the educational system during online learning. These phenomena create a new system of learning such as self-regulated learning. The previous research assumes that the four main elements of self-regulated learning are planning, monitoring, controlling, and reflecting [10]. On the other hand, Self-regulated learning (SRL) is defined as an intentional, positive process that consists of planned, proactive, and reactively adjusted thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to achieve individual objectives. Personal, behavioral, and environmental regulation are the three triadic domains of regulation that are integrated by feedback loops in the SRL process [40].

This research uses EFL learners as the respondents and shows that their experiences during online learning have changed. Previous Research identified a moderate to high level of self-directed learning among EFL students, with teacher-student interaction and intrinsic motivation as key factors [41]. Figure 7 shows that seventy percent of respondents surveyed believe their experiences have changed. The related research findings demonstrated that students who felt highly competent were more intrinsically motivated and used SRL methods (time management, goal-setting and organizing, and intellectual strategies) more frequently than students who felt less competent [42]. Students widely acknowledge collaborative online platforms, such as virtual study groups, as effective adaptive strategies. These platforms have been instrumental in improving the online learning experience, enabling students to interact with classmates, exchange ideas, and collaboratively address obstacles. As shown in Figure 8, a total of 26 respondents, or 86.7% of the sample, expressed that they believed their lack of social interaction was having a detrimental effect on their learning experience. For certain individuals, the lack of face-to-face communication with classmates and teachers might lead to feelings of isolation and impede the teamwork elements of education [43]. Many individuals have expressed significant concern about the lack of regular social interaction resulting from remote learning and social distancing measures. Debating the impact of limited social interaction on an individual's learning experience is subjective and can differ from person to person. On the other hand, these phenomena create a positive impact on technology utilization. The implementation of technology in online learning proved successful for 60% of the participants (Figure 9). The growing use of digital tools and online platforms has led to a reassessment of teaching methods, highlighting the significance of incorporating technology. It has occurred post-COVID-19 which is known as blended learning. There is no simple definition of blended learning. Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part when students are taught using both traditional and online environments [44]. This definition is limited since blended learning is seen as choosing between new and old media as if they could be substituted for one another [45],[45]. Hybrid learning models, which blend in-person and online components, have become increasingly popular, offering a versatile and adjustable educational structure. The pandemic has expedited the implementation of remote and virtual learning, impacting policies and curriculum.

Post-COVID-19 created a new era, technology adaptation, and different ways of teaching and learning activities also had an impact. In online learning, self-regulated learning is essential. In contrast to conventional classroom instruction, online learning is built on dispersed and open learning, unrestricted by location, time, or tangible resources. Several favorable aspects have surfaced in the realm of post-Covid-19 education. The proliferation of technological integration has created novel opportunities for individualized instruction, granting pupils access to an extensive array of materials and facilitating their involvement with varied learning approaches. Moreover, by prioritizing adaptability and resilience amidst disruptions, students have acquired invaluable competencies that extend beyond the confines of academia. Despite the difficulties, numerous individuals have discovered positive aspects of the changing educational environment since the release of COVID-19. 29 respondents, or 96.7% of the sample, believed that the post-Covid-19 beneficial impact had happened (Figure 10). Based on earlier research conducted at various educational levels, it was found that implementing self-regulated learning greatly enhanced students' learning achievements [11].These days, having a physical gap might lead to having a greater virtual connection. Based on the COVID-19 experiences, a hybrid approach of both online and offline instruction would be the best way to arrange students. Many educational institutions have already opened, however, it is not required to reverse the online learning environment that was established during COVID-19 when schools reopened [46]. All things considered, lots of evidence indicates that online learning is just as successful as traditional education [47].

5. CONCLUSION
The findings reveal a nuanced interaction between difficulties and adaptive approaches in the student's educational journey amidst and after the COVID-19 outbreak. The results underscore the essential importance of creating specific study spaces for learners who are enrolled in distance education, particularly given the obstacles presented by the COVID-19 outbreak [48]. A significant problem that has surfaced and is affecting the efficacy of online education is internet access. Despite the effectiveness of online learning platforms such as Zoom, issues with student engagement and teacher preparation continued. The shift to online instruction also highlighted the necessity for students to develop self-regulated learning techniques. One interesting answer that developed was a hybrid method that combined offline and online education. As schools navigate the complexities of evolving

educational landscapes, a balanced approach that integrates technological advancement with human interaction is essential for fostering resilient and effective learning environments [49].

Positive developments were brought about by the post-COVID-19 era, which prioritized individualized instruction and technological integration despite these limitations. One intriguing answer that developed was a hybrid method that combined offline and online education. Ultimately, the epidemic prompted more people to learn online, but it also brought attention to how important it is for educators to be resilient, flexible, and creative in their approach to teaching. Students learned the importance of Technology and adopted several new skills and to enhance their teaching abilities, teachers are becoming more knowledgeable about technology and picking up new skills [50]. But it's important to remember that technology is unable to take the place of teachers' skills in every situation. Teachers are still in charge of providing assignments, giving students direction, and doing their best to manage huge groups of students [51].

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