

## **EFL Learners' Experiences of Using E-Learning in an English Course**

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### **Abstract**

*Due to its flexibility, online instruction has become the new normal in education. Utilizing various digital tools, learners can engage in online learning activities. One of the e-learning platforms is asynchronous e-learning for Madrasah, which provides a flexible and engaging learning environment. This study aimed to explore the experiences and motivations of EFL learners who used E-learning in an English course. This qualitative case study used observation, interviews, and document review. A purposeful sampling technique was used to recruit 15 students to participate. The data was validated using triangulation of methods and data sources. EFL learners' experiences with E-learning in English subjects were classified into five categories: (1) course information access, (2) Autonomous learning, (3) Adaptation to technology, 4) Web-based learning system, and (5) Technical support. Furthermore, the motivations of EFL learners to use e-learning in an English course can be categorized into two groups: (1) Intrinsic motivation and (2) Extrinsic motivation. Pedagogically, e-learning has provided new experiences for students; therefore, e-learning should be adopted in this new normal era.*

**Keywords:** *E-learning; experiences; motivation; qualitative study; English course*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The educational aspect is considered to be one of the most essential and it still requires improvement. Education in the twenty-first century incorporates technology as a crucial aspect, implying that the techniques used by educators have shifted from conventional to online or blended learning which offers accessibility and flexibility (Rojabi et al., 2023; Rojabi & Femilia, 2023) and promotes collaboration and autonomous learning (Wu et al., 2022). Blended learning becomes an option and it becomes the new normal in higher education settings (Viswanathan, 2021), When teachers exploit technology in the classroom, they also facilitate learners with a fun atmosphere and increase interaction (Haleem et al., 2022; Rojabi, 2020).

To support online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Regulation No. 4 of 2020 on the implementation of Education in Emergency Coronavirus (COVID-19). During pandemics, the government focuses on instruction through online learning. This is the best option for education amid the Covid-19 outbreak. Online learning is a teaching method that employs technology in the classroom. Online learning is one type of E-learning. E-learning involves the utilization of electronic facilities as a medium for learning, with students engaging in activities that integrate internet access (Ali & Maksum, 2020; Eze et al., 2018).

Based on a preliminary study with an English teacher at an Islamic high school in Jembrana, Bali, the teachers reported online delivery instructions were carried out during pandemic by exploiting E-learning madrasah which was created

by a team of developers from The Ministry of Religious Affairs. A semi-structured interview with one English teacher showed that E-learning is beneficial for students. This application includes features to facilitate learners during online courses, such as tracking attendance and determining the level of student engagement with the English subject. Furthermore, this version provides additional features than previous versions of e-learning. It can assist English teachers in delivering instructional content in English more easily and store content in the form of video and text so that students can easily access it and submit tasks anytime and anywhere. Students' concerns about course design refer to the total amount of time spent on course content and learning materials such as online textbooks, PowerPoint presentations, and discussion forums. A good course design should be well-organized and easy for students to access, allowing them to interact with knowledge and information in the course content (Su et al., 2005). Cai (2012) highlighted the advantages of E-learning, including providing lots of resources and accessibility of information. Prior studies pinpointed the advantages of E-Learning: cost-effectiveness (Rojabi, 2021), flexibility (Rawashdeh et al., 2021; Turan et al., 2022), and learner autonomy (Rojabi et al., 2022; Serdyukova & Serdyukov, 2013).

Some experts defined motivation as a general term for a wide range of actions and consequences, with the fundamental principle being the realization that an individual chooses a particular action based on desired results and subsequently executes it with an effort through a particular path. There are two types of motivations: (1) Intrinsic motivation refers to activities that a person engages in without expecting anything in return. Intrinsic motivation emerges from an individual's needs or desires, so external rewards are unnecessary. (2) Extrinsic motivation describes behaviors that are driven by external rewards. Extrinsic motivation focuses solely on outside rewards (Bear et al., 2017; Brown, 2007).

Prior research investigated E-learning. As reported by Hasnidar's (2020) study, most students have a positive attitude toward online learning because it provides them with new experiences with the new media used by instructors in media online learning. This study also discovered some barriers such as a bad network, the quality of the students' mobile phones, and the capacity of the online learning application. She discussed how E-Learning affects student interest and learning at the university level. According to the findings, E-Learning allows students to have more time flexibility and motivates them to complete assignments without the assistance of others. It also provides students with convenience when surfing the internet to find course materials (Kvavik, 2024; Salamat et al., 2018). Rojabi (2020) also reported that online classes delivered via Microsoft Teams provided optimal support for the online learning environment. Furthermore, online learning through Microsoft Teams facilitated interaction between student-student and student-teachers.

Prior research had previously examined EFL or ESL students' experiences with e-learning at the high school or university level; however, studies that delved deeper into EFL learners' motivation in E-learning, particularly in Indonesian Islamic high schools or Madrasahs, are scarce. Thus, this study attempted to investigate not only EFL learners' experiences with e-learning in an English course but also their motivation through e-learning by answering the following two questions:

1. What are EFL learners' experiences with E-Learning in English courses?

## 2. What motivates EFL learners to use E-learning in their English courses?

### **METHOD**

#### **Research Design**

The present study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative study seeks to describe phenomena, including behavior, perception, motivation, and action, which are perceived by participants in the study by adopting a holistic approach and describing things in words and language within a specific natural context (Moleong, 2008).

A case study was used as the research design. A case study is a detailed explanation of several elements of an individual, team, organization, program, or community situation. A detailed investigation was undertaken. Additionally, case studies refer to in-depth research conducted on an individual or group of people during a particular time (Sugiyono, 2015).

Based on the aforementioned explanation, it can be inferred that the case study research method is an approach for investigating a particular phenomenon in a particular setting. To conduct this kind of study, a researcher requires a detailed and factual record of the case. In this present study, researchers need to identify the cause of the phenomenon as well as investigate the experiences of EFL learners utilizing E-Learning in the English subject.

#### **Research Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted at an Islamic high school in Jembrana, Bali, which had implemented e-learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling. Tenth-grade English teachers and students participated in semi-structured interviews. The X IPA class consisted of 12 males and 39 females. The reason for selecting this class is that the students can provide the necessary information. A total of fifteen students were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. The names of the participants in this study were pseudonyms.

#### **Data Collection Method**

In this study, the researchers used non-participant observation. This allows researchers to observe the teaching and learning process of E-learning in English courses, as well as the activities performed by students. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to develop flexible and unstructured settings, creating feelings of confidence and encouraging participants to freely express their thoughts. The researchers interviewed one English teacher and 15 students.

#### **Data analysis and data validity**

This study employed the data analysis framework devised by Miles et al. (2014) proposes three distinct phases for qualitative data analysis. The phases can be described as follows: (1) Data condensation is the process of selecting, paying attention, simplifying, summarizing, and converting data into written form. This includes observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents (2) Data display presents the information gathered in the form of excerpts. (3) Drawing conclusions, deriving conclusions from collected data, and summarizing the results of research. To verify the trustworthiness of the data collected, the researchers used

triangulation as a method for verifying data validity. Moleong (2008) describes triangulation as a method of determining the reliability of data by comparing it to another source. In this study, the researchers used source triangulation and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is the process of ensuring the reliability of collected data by cross-referencing it with information obtained from multiple or diverse sources to achieve consistent results. To ensure data validity, the researchers cross-referenced it from various sources, including observations, interviews, and document reviews. To ensure accuracy and reliability, the triangulation technique collects data using a variety of methods, including observation, interviews, and document review. The researcher obtained the data by conducting a comparison between data gathered from interviews, observations, and document reviews.

## **RESULTS**

### **What are EFL Learners' experiences toward the use of E-learning in an English Course?**

#### **Easily Accessing Course Information**

E-learning, an asynchronous learning platform, allows students to readily access course content at any time during their free time, as well as navigate and download the necessary material. Furthermore, as indicated by several participants below, e-learning assignments can be made easier by just submitting them online and saving money on paper.

*"Using E-Learning is simple because English learning materials are already available through E-learning. I simply typed keywords to find the materials I needed. It's different when I learn from a book, and submitting assignments is too simple because I do not have to go to school." (P1)*

*"E-learning is something new for student like me; during COVID-19, E-learning is advantageous because, I can find course materials and download them." (P2)*

*"In my perspective, utilizing E-learning to learn English optimizes the learning process. For instance, instead of submitting a paper to school, I simply need to capture images of them and upload them to e-learning." (P4)*

Teachers also expressed the opinion that online learning activities facilitated by e-learning allow students to learn more safely during the pandemic and access content easily and flexibly.

*"All teaching and learning activities must be conducted remotely to prevent the spread of the coronavirus." E-learning's existence is extremely beneficial in this particular circumstance. Still, students may study securely at home. Additionally, this e-learning offers students a new experience. The teacher-centered environment typically facilitates in-person instruction. Additionally, students find e-learning features to be extremely beneficial throughout the learning process. The e-learning features are designed to facilitate students' educational experience." (T1)*

### **Autonomous Learning**

English asynchronous E-learning allows students to learn at their own convenience and gain knowledge on their own time. Of course, students make use of this opportunity to seek and acquire knowledge. To increase their understanding of the material, students utilized Google Translate or an online dictionary tool for searching up the definitions of words.

*"While enrolled in e-learning courses, I was required to study independently. I developed the ability to comprehend the course content and where I faced difficulty, I consulted Google for answers." (P2)*

*"I consider myself an independent learner because whenever I fail to understand the teacher's explanation, I immediately seek out additional resources on the Internet." (P4)*

*The teacher provides learning materials in the format of PowerPoint presentations and videos. When I encounter difficulty comprehending the course material provided by the teacher, I promptly seek an alternative explanation on Google." (P5)*

The teacher also explains how e-learning helps students manage their time by allowing them to access and study material that the teacher has prepared and uploaded.

*"I constantly highlight the importance of studying at their own pace and paying attention to deadlines for assignments. I have set up all the necessary resources for students to engage in E-Learning, and it is crucial for students to properly schedule their free time for studying." (T1)*

### **Technology Adaptation**

To facilitate the learning process, students must adapt to the platform used in class. To communicate, students and teachers discovered that WhatsApp groups are an effective communication medium for data storage, as stated by several participants and teachers below.

*"I frequently use WhatsApp to communicate with teachers and classmates." (P1)*

*"My English teacher asked us to create WhatsApp Group only. for English course." (P3)*

*"We communicate via WhatsApp group regularly as it consumes minimum data." (P7)*

*"Throughout the e-learning process, I engaged in discussions via WhatsApp." We have a WhatsApp group where we discuss various topics. This medium is beneficial for promoting student interaction and teacher-student interaction. Students typically use this WhatsApp group to seek clarification on topics they do not understand." (T1)*

### **Web-Based Learning Support System**

The students received all of the English materials from their teacher via e-learning, including handouts and YouTube videos related to the English course. However, during online instruction, learners reported that the teacher failed to provide comprehensive explanations for the English materials

*"We sometimes receive PowerPoint in the form of videos, but the explanations are not detailed." (P1)*

*"The teacher provides materials in e-learning such as handouts, but the instructions and explanations are limited and we sometimes receive YouTube links of English." (P2)*

*"I think it becomes more difficult when the teacher does not give us clear explanations since she just shared the materials or YouTube link for us to watch and learn by ourselves." (P12)*

The teacher needs more time to prepare educational materials, such as videos. The teacher occasionally uses YouTube videos created by other people about a particular topic in English.

*"When creating learning videos for students, I usually use videos from YouTube that are relevant to the material. It takes time if I create it myself, edit it, and then upload it to YouTube and share the link to e-learning." (T1)*

### **Technical Support**

The integration of an e-learning platform within an academic environment presents many obstacles. This is an issue that exists in rural as well as urban regions. One of the numerous challenges is connectivity problems.

*"Until now, I believed the signal was the main issue. When I open e-learning, the signal immediately disappears." (P2)*

*"Sometimes, the internet connection disappears and I have to find another spot to maintain a connection stable and can continue learning." (P5)*

*"The failure that occurs during online sessions using e-learning was on an internet connection problem." (P7)*

As reported by participants 6 and 9, the students also experienced issues with their access to the internet when attempting to submit assignments.

*"I had difficulty in uploading a video task in e-learning due to unstable connection" (P6)*

*"Sometimes the internet connection is stable, but the issue is with e-learning. It has suddenly stopped and needs to be refreshed." (P9)*

## **The EFL Learners' Motivations Using E-learning in an English Course**

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

This study found that EFL students' experiences with e-learning in English courses were influenced by internal motivation. The overwhelming majority of EFL students expressed that online learning significantly increased their motivation. Their twofold motivation for engaging in online learning was as follows: 1) a desire, belief, or hope to acquire new knowledge; and 2) a motivation to explore innovative pedagogical methodologies.

*"My motivation for online learning is to be disciplined in study. Being lazy to study is not an exception." (P1)*

*"Learning English using e-learning during the pandemic is a new thing for me." (P2)*

Participant 7 and 8 noted that they joined online classes because they understand how important it is to learn English.

*"English classes via E-learning is flexible." More information can also be discovered on other websites. (P7)*

*"Even though now we are all in a pandemic situation, it doesn't make us lazy since we can learn anytime and anywhere." (P8)*

The teacher reported that students are still motivated to learn English through E-Learning during the pandemic. Participants also expressed their enjoyment of online learning due to technological activities.

*"So far, students have continued to complete and submit their assignments, even though they are late. This demonstrates that students still have the motivation to learn during the pandemic." (T1)*

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Additionally, extrinsic motivation affected EFL students' experiences with E-learning in English courses, as shown by this study. The participants indicated that extrinsic motivation impacted their tendencies towards online learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.: a conducive learning environment, appropriate learning facilities, and support from teachers, friends, and parental encouragement.

*"The best thing is that during online learning, I don't have to spend my time going to school, it saves money, time, and energy." (P7)*

*"Alhamdulillah, I have Wi-Fi connections and a laptop and smartphones, this helps me a lot to study." (P8)*

*"My parents support my online learning during the pandemic. The most basic example is when I'm working on an assignment and they lower the volume of the television to help me concentrate." (P12)*

Additionally, the teacher disclosed that attempts were undertaken to boost student motivation amidst the pandemic, particularly by providing students with guidance and support to guarantee they continued their commitment to complete their attendance.

*"My initiatives to boost student motivation during this pandemic have been to support them academically and provide information. I observed that they are still actively completing our presence forms. This demonstrates that students are still motivated to learn during a pandemic." (T1)*

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The EFL Learners' experiences toward using E-Learning in an English Course**

The current study demonstrated that students easily access course information in online learning. EFL students confirmed that they can easily access the English materials provided by their teacher through e-learning at all times and from any location. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Amin et al. (2022), which confirmed that E-learning is one of the new ways of learning that utilizes technological devices as an online learning platform. Perveen (2021) stated that students in asynchronous E-learning environments have access to materials such as audio or video lectures, handouts, articles, and PowerPoint presentations. This information is available at any time and from any location.

This study found that autonomous learning in online learning is a common experience among EFL learners. EFL learners confirmed that they take the initiative to learn independently, searching for and discovering new knowledge on their own. The EFL students also confirmed that they frequently seek additional information regardless of English lessons to assist them in better understanding the course contents. This finding is in line with prior studies which confirm that online learning can promote learner autonomy (Muhammad, 2020; Rojabi, Setiawan, Munir, Purwati, & Widyastuti, 2022).

Regarding technological adaptation. This study discovered that in English asynchronous e-learning, students are required to use particular apps that assist them in the process of learning, such as WhatsApp app. The application used by the participants certainly centers on the use of a learning management system as a means of online communication. The majority of EFL learners who used e-learning and WhatsApp in their English learning process confirmed that students prefer to communicate with teachers via WhatsApp. WhatsApp saves its quota, and the application is simple and convenient for using media as a means of communication. Some EFL students confirmed that using WhatsApp as a communication tool allows them to send multimedia messages including photos, videos, documents, and audio.

The findings support Gon and Rawekar's (2017) study, confirming that WhatsApp is a free messenger application that works on multiple platforms, including iPhones and Android phones. WhatsApp Messenger has advantages that allow the user to exchange videos, text messages, images, and voice notes, supports.

This current study also addresses some of the challenges that learners encounter when using e-learning. The EFL learners admitted that in English asynchronous e-learning, they received explanations through e-learning media

provided by the teachers, instead of paying attention directly to the teachers' explanation during face-to-face instruction. The materials were provided by their English teacher so that students could learn at their own pace. Since the teacher does not provide detailed explanations, exactly what they do in face-to-face meetings. The students had difficulty comprehending the English material. Some reported having difficulty completing the task. This finding is also mentioned by Hariadi and Simanjuntak (2020). They noted that some students need to adapt to digital platforms and that they also require more explanations during online learning.

### **What are the EFL Learners' motivations toward using E-learning in an English Course**

The current study demonstrated that intrinsic motivation influenced learners' experiences with e-learning. The majority of the EFL learners reported that they were highly motivated by online learning. Their motivation for online learning was twofold: 1) an ambition, belief, or desire to learn and gain new knowledge, and 2) a desire to experiment with innovative approaches to learning. This was supported by Knowles and Kerkman's (2007) study, which stated that students' engagement in online learning was a consequence of self-determination, interest, belief, and desire as manifestations of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, their enthusiasm regarding experiencing and learning new technological distance-integrated learning was linked with curiosity about the situation.

The second was extrinsic motivation. This motivation impacted EFL students' experience with e-learning. Some learners reported extrinsic motivation for online learning. They were motivated by their supportive environment and regularly attended online classes to compensate for absences. This aligns with Knowles and Kerkman's (2007) research, which found that adequate learning facilities lead to self-determined extrinsic motivation among students. This situation is referred to as co-existing motivation. Students feel self-determined after obtaining positive external motivation during online learning.

### **CONCLUSION**

EFL learners' experiences with e-learning in English subjects were classified into five categories: (1) course information access. The students believed that learning English through E-learning was beneficial since it was simple to access information regarding the course. (2) Autonomous learning. Students utilized various platforms independently, such as Google Translate, to delve into the meanings of words. (3) Adaptation to technology. Students agree that WhatsApp can be utilized for online interaction. (4) Web-based learning system. Obstacles experienced by EFL learners during online learning were an absence of explanation instructors, a struggle to understand the English materials, and issues accomplishing the task. (5) Technical support. Students found many obstacles to implementing an e-learning system in an educational setting due to network connectivity problems

The motivations of EFL learners to use E-learning in English subjects can be categorized into two groups: 1) Intrinsic motivation. Most participants expressed a strong sense of motivation for online learning. Their motivation for online learning came from their aspiration, conviction, or desire to gain new information,

as well as their pleasure in exploring novel ways to learn. 2) Extrinsic motivation. This motivation had an impact on the experiences of EFL learners when utilizing e-learning for English subjects. Several EFL learners admitted to being motivated by external factors while learning online. Their participation in online learning was motivated by a conducive learning environment, appropriate learning facilities, and support from teachers, friends, and parental encouragement. Since this study is limited to an English course, further study should investigate the experiences of EFL learners who use e-learning in a specific classroom, such as speaking or writing. Diverse sources of data are also required to enhance information about students' experiences in the online learning environment.

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