

Video Conferencing: An Alternative for Face-to-Face Classes during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The present study examined college students' perspectives towards the use of video conferencing to facilitate their distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic. This study was conducted by using qualitative approach and involving 20 participants who are college students from Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. Results suggest students show positive responses towards the use of video conferencing in terms of helping them to understand and correct their misconceptions, increase their motivation to study due to the presence of teacher and peers, and allows them to experience a real classroom learning situation. Results also show that the inflexibility of video conferencing schedule, technical problems, and unsupportive learning environment affect students' perspectives on the imperative of video conferencing to facilitate distance learning. The findings indicate that synchronous learning still cannot replace face-to-face learning effectively, although synchronous learning is still preferred by students than asynchronous learning.

Key words: Video Conferencing, Students Perspectives, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in March 2020 in Indonesia, COVID-19 pandemic has been greatly affecting many aspects in our lives, one of which is educational sector (Pustaka, 2010), (Safitri et al., 2019), (Ramdan & Utami, 2020). The use of technology in teaching and learning process make it possible for both lecturers and students to carry out remote learning (E. Putri, 2022), (Ristiandika Arrahman, 2021), (Samanik & Lianasari, 2018). Three methods that can be used for remote learning are synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid learning (*MEMBIMBING Dan MENGUJI KP 2020.Pdf*, n.d.), (Kutipan et al., n.d.), (Artikel, 2020). Synchronous learning enables lecturers and students to have a live session of lectures virtually from different places or regions (Arwani & Firmansyah, 2013), (Firma Sahrul B, 2017), (Website & Cikarang, 2020). Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, does not require real-time interaction and the content provided by lecturers can be accessed by students anytime and anywhere (Gustanti & Ayu, 2021), (R Arrahman, 2022), (Pajar et al., 2017). Hybrid learning is the combination of those two methods, creating the best of both worlds. This study, however, will only focus on the role of synchronous learning using video conference in helping college students' distance learning (Firmansyah M et al., 2017), (N. U. Putri et al., 2020), (Wulandari, 2018). Video conferencing is a technology using audiovisual communication that allows users to hold face-to-face meetings regardless of their location (Yudha & Utami, 2022), (Prayoga & Utami, 2021), (Wahyuni et al., 2021).

Many studies show that synchronous learning with video capabilities allows real-time interaction and collaboration between teacher and students and among students, develops students' effective social skills, increases students' motivation and engagement which leads to an effective learning, and facilitates immediate feedback from both lecturers and peers as if the learning takes place in a real classroom (Setri & Setiawan, 2020), (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). Synchronous learning using video

conference also provides students some fun (Wahyudi & Utami, 2021), (Agustina & Utami, 2021). Video conferencing enables teacher and students to transmit video, audio, and other supporting tools such as PowerPoint slides (E. Putri & Sari, 2020), (Apriyanti & Ayu, 2020), (Firmansyah et al., 2017). Students can talk with each other and their teacher just like in a real classroom. This may relieve students from intensive writing and reading “which could be a burden in online communication as good keyboarding skills, language proficiency and plenty of time are pre-conditions” (Hartanto et al., 2022), (Gerai et al., 2021), (Siregar & Utami, 2021). Synchronous sessions may also result to learners having high levels of motivation to stay engaged in online activities due to the presence of teacher and peers (Suprayogi et al., 2021), (Samanik, 2021).

The theoretical foundation for this study stems since the current study attempts to seek and find out the role of video conferencing in helping students’ distance learning (Fithratullah, 2019), (Webqual, 2022). The zone of proximal development is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Fithratullah, 2021), (Dakwah et al., 2021), (Robot, 2007). The term scaffolding was first coined by Bruner, which was influenced by Vygotsky’s work. Scaffolding is defined as a process “that enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts.” (Sidiq & Manaf, 2020), (Sulistiani & Aldino, 2020), (Sidiq et al., 2015). The interactional approaches that results from video conferencing reflect scaffolding theory, asserting that interaction with a more knowledgeable adults/instructors or fellow learners can help a learner reach his/her optimal development. A learner would not be able to reach the same level of learning by working alone.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite many advantages offered by synchronous e-learning through video conferencing, there are still many shortcomings that need to be taken into account and challenges that need to be overcome (H Kara, 2014), (Firmansyah et al., 2018), (Pratama, 2018). Synchronous learning is more teacher-oriented. None of the tutors however believed video conferencing had the potential to provide students with an entirety effective learning experience (Nurmalasari & Samanik, 2018), (Gita & Setyaningrum, 2018). They found that some tutors were more dominating than usual and lesser opportunity to interact with other class-fellows or the tutor were given to the students. On the other hand, synchronous learning using video conferencing is often inflexible. The inflexibility of the learning schedule may result as a disadvantage since students might not be able to connect to the platform at the same time impeccably (Asia & Samanik, 2018), (Nindyarini Wirawan, 2018), (Keanu, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to find out Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia’s students’ perspectives towards the use of video conferencing as an alternative for face-to-face classes during COVID-19 pandemic as well as the challenges they have to face while carrying out video conferencing.

METHOD

This research adopted qualitative approach as it explores participants’ perspectives towards the use of video conferencing for distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic as an alternative for face-to-face class. The research was conducted in 7-9 January 2021 involving 20 participants. The participants were chosen from English Education students batch 2018 who have experienced both synchronous and asynchronous e-learning this

semester, asynchronous learning last semester, and face-to-face offline learning in their first two semesters. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was used to see students' agreement/disagreement towards the statements provided about synchronous learning through video conferencing. The questionnaire was distributed online through chatting application.

The questionnaire distributed to the participants consists of 15 questions. The questionnaire was developed and divided into two main sections. The first section consists of 10 questions to collect participants' agreement/disagreement towards the use of video conferencing during distance learning. The second section consists of 5 questions to collect participants' agreement/disagreement towards the challenges and limitations of video conferencing during distance learning. Both sections use 4 points Likert Scale ranging from 'totally disagree', 'somewhat disagree', 'somewhat agree', to 'totally agree' which requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to the stimulus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section will demonstrate the results of the study. An overview of participants' perspectives towards the use and challenges of video conferencing during distance learning can be seen in table below.

Table 3.1
PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS THE USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING

No.	Statements	TA	SA	SD	TD
1.	I have sufficient skills to use VCT (zoom/google meet)	55%	45%	0%	0%
2.	I feel that video conferencing helps me to understand the material better and improve my study	30%	45%	25%	0%
3.	I feel that I have better interaction and discussion with lecturers and other students via video conferencing	30%	40%	25%	5%
4.	The presence of lecturers and friends at video conferencing makes me more motivated to study	30%	55%	15%	0%
5.	I feel that video conferencing is enjoyable	20%	45%	30%	5%
6.	I feel that lecturing via video conferencing was better than just being given a file to read for myself	65%	30%	5%	0%
7.	I feel that video conferencing helped correct my misconceptions about the course material	55%	45%	0%	0%
8.	I feel that through video conferencing, I	45%	55%	0%	0%

	can get immediate feedback from lecturers and friends				
9.	I feel that video conferencing allows me to experience a real classroom learning situation	10%	55%	25%	10%
10.	I feel that video conferencing is a mandatory solution for students to continue the learning process during COVID-19 pandemic	60%	35%	5%	0%

Table 3.2
PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS DURING VIDEO CONFERENCING

No.	Statements	TA	SA	SD	TD
1.	I feel that the schedule for video conferencing is not flexible	20%	55%	15%	10%
2.	I often experience technical problems such as internet connection/application problems when doing video conferencing	55%	30%	10%	5%
3.	I have an unsupportive environment for doing video conferencing such as a noisy environment/no personal space available	25%	45%	25%	5%
4.	I feel that video conferencing remains less effective and not on par with face-to-face classes	50%	35%	15%	0%
5.	I object to having to conduct online learning using video conferencing	10%	30%	45%	15%

From the results above, it can be shown that learning through video conferencing helps students to understand the material better and improve their study compared to when they learn by themselves. Almost all participants agree that lecturing via video conferencing was better than just being given a file to read for themselves. When learning alone, students have to read the materials and comprehend what they read using their prior and present knowledge. Video conferencing enables students to get immediate feedback from lecturers and friends and helps students to correct their misconceptions about the course material. Learners indeed need a guidance from tutors or fellow learners who are more knowledgeable than them to assist them reach their potential or optimal development.

Video conferencing encourages students to study better and increases their motivation to study due to the present of fellow peers and teacher. When learning alone, it is hard for students to avoid distractions and keep focus on their study. Learning through video conferencing enables them to connect with other peers and also their lecturer synchronously, creating a better study environment. Students can also exchange their

knowledge with each other. Through video conferencing, lecturer can keep an eye on students' performance and competence, which makes students feel the urge to do better. Furthermore, due to the presence of teacher and peers may result students to having high levels of motivation to stay engaged in online activities is proven.

Video conferencing also allows students to experience a real classroom learning situation. During this pandemic, it is impossible to conduct an offline face-to-face learning. The closest method that can be used to create real classroom environment is by having online face-to-face learning through video conferencing. It is because video conferencing allows students to have an interaction and discussion with lecturers and other students just like in a classroom. Asynchronous learning would not be able to offer real classroom experience. Classroom environment is one of the most important factors affecting student learning. Students learn better when they view the learning environment as positive and supportive. Video conferencing enables students to get immediate feedback from lecturers and friends just like in a real classroom environment. Such an environment also provides students opportunities to build social skills.

Despite its merits, video conferencing still has many limitations. After conducting an in-depth analysis on the results above, findings suggest that 17 out of 20 participants agreed that offline synchronous learning is still better than online synchronous learning. Thus, synchronous learning using video conferencing is still not on par with offline face-to-face classes and cannot match the effectiveness of offline face-to-face classes. Conducting video conference will also be burdening for students, especially those who experience technical problems during video conference and live in an unsupportive environment. Differ from asynchronous learning which can be accessed by students anytime, the learning schedule of synchronous learning using video conferencing is not really flexible. This inflexibility may result as a drawback since students might likely experience hindrance during video conferencing.

CONCLUSION

Due to the current situation, Indonesian government and education institutions in Indonesia need to find the best solution so that teaching and learning activities can continue to be carried out effectively even in the midst of pandemic. Synchronous learning using video conferencing can be a good option as it enables video-based lecture that is similar to face-to-face learning in the classroom. The use of video conferencing helps students to understand the course material better, clear their misconceptions, and increase their motivation to study. Video conferencing also allows students to interact with their teacher and other students, get immediate feedback, and experience a real classroom situation even though the effectiveness of video conferencing still cannot match that of traditional face-to-face class. Although video conferencing offers many merits, there are still many variables that need to be taken into account since those variables may affect the quality of learning via video conferencing. Inflexible learning schedule, technical problems, and unsupportive students' environment are considered as the main challenges for students when joining video conferencing. However, despite those challenges and limitations, the majority of participants agree that video conferencing is a mandatory solution for distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, lecturers should conduct video conference for online learning.

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