

## **STUDENTS' POINTS OF VIEW ON ONLINE AND OFFLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING SYSTEMS**

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 outbreak has forced students to study from home and switched from offline learning to online learning. This study inquired about the preferences and opinions of language school students majoring in English towards online and offline learning. The students filled out a questionnaire at the end of the second semester of their fully online classes. The results indicate that they preferred the combination of online and offline learning and favored face-to-face more than online learning when they worked in groups. They also tended to prefer offline classes to learn the productive skill of speaking. The receptive skill of listening was deemed to be best taken online. Offline classes were still considered to be easier to complete and help them perform better than online classes which they thought to have lower course depth and quality and more difficult tests and activities.

**Keywords:** online learning, offline learning, preferences, opinions

### **INTRODUCTION**

The debate about which learning model is better between online learning and traditional face-to-face learning seems to have the answer since online learning has been extensively implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. The virus outbreak has made people across the world to work and study from home, specifically in Indonesia since the end of February 2020. Some previous studies conducted before the pandemic have shown that the majority of students prefer to have more online courses rather than face-to-face format courses. However, many of the students believe that online courses still need to be further improved. That is why the combination of these two modes of learning has become very well-liked amongst students.

Looking at the definition of online learning, Marine Colliot wrote in "The Battle of This Generation – Online vs Offline Education" that online learning is a mode of learning in which the students can study via the internet using electronic devices wherever they want. In contrast, according to Colliot, "Offline Education means a student needs to go in a school, in a classroom, and attend a class face to face with a teacher". When these two modes of learning are combined, it is

called blended learning. Hrastinski in "What Do We Mean by Blended Learning?" quoted definitions of blended learning from some scholars. He cited Graham (2006) who states: "Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction". He also cited Allen and Seaman (2010) who said that blended learning course "blends online and face-to-face delivery." In short, blended learning can be said as a mode of learning where face-to-face learning and technology-based learning are mixed.

Alsaaty, Carter, Abrahams, and Alshameri conducted an online questionnaire to discover the perceptions of 147 graduate and undergraduate business students of a university in the United States on online and traditional learning. The researchers found that the majority of the students agreed to have more online classes enrolled than offline classes. The majority of them also admitted having learned new skills such as course-related, blackboard, and team formation skills in online classes. However, it is hard to determine whether online classes are easier to complete than offline classes since only a small number of them agreed (29.9%). That is because the students faced various problems in online courses. Among the major problems are difficulties in contacting the faculty concerned or unreliable university internet connection. The statistics also shows that the majority of them felt that they got more knowledge in the face-to-face courses rather than in online courses.

In a study that explores student preferences from three dimensions: blended, fully-online, and face-to-face learning, Pechenkina and Aeschliman found that students declared a strong preference for the blended mode of study when compared to both fully face-to-face and fully online modes. They randomly distributed an online survey of 32 questions to students enrolled in different majors of study in a university in Australia. The survey got 66 valid responses and revealed that more than half of the students preferred blended learning for its flexibility and agreed that it improved their apprehension of concepts.

Another similar study by Glover and Lewis investigated preferences towards online and traditional courses among college students from three universities in southeast America. They found out that the students who had attended some online classes preferred online learning and demanded more online classes from their universities. History class ranked first as the subject best taught online followed by Sociology, Computer Science, Business classes, and Language. The courses least taken online were those that required practices. Foreign Language rank fourth, after Theoretical Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, and Engineering.

The purpose of this study was to find out the preferences and opinions of STBA LIA (school of languages) Yogyakarta students on online and offline learning. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the students at the language school had received the combination of face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated instruction in some courses they attended. The pandemic has forced them to

have a fully online learning system for all courses they enrolled as they had to stay at home and the school had to be closed temporarily. This study was conducted after they experienced online learning during the pandemic for two semesters.

## **METHOD**

To find out their preferences and opinions, the study used an online questionnaire distributed randomly to students of STBA LIA Yogyakarta, class of 2017, 2018, and 2020 at the end of even semester i.e. the second semester they had fully online learning at home. The questionnaire which was created with Google Forms was divided into three sections. The first section asked about students' demographics (gender, batch/class, study program, and geographic location). The second section consisting of two items asked about students' preferences on online and offline learning, and the last section with five items was about students' opinions on online and offline learning. Some of the questionnaire items were adapted from Alsaaty et.al (2016), Pechenkina and Aeschliman (2017), and Glover and Lewis (2012).

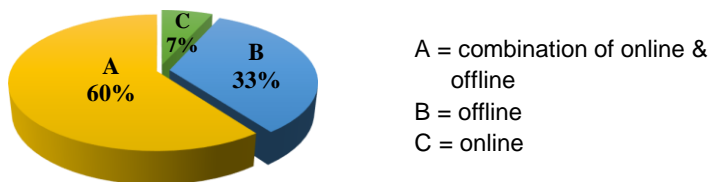
## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The questionnaire was responded by students from class of 2017, 2018, and 2019. The majority of students were male (53.3%) and lived in city (53.3%) where internet connection is available.

The second section of the questionnaire which was to find out the students' preferences on online and offline learning first asked them to choose which mode of learning they preferred. Three modes of teaching and learning delivery, namely offline, online, and combination of online and offline have been experienced by the students studying at the language school. Pie Chart 1 below shows the mode of teaching and learning delivery they prefer the most.

**Pie Chart 1. Mode of teaching & learning students prefer**

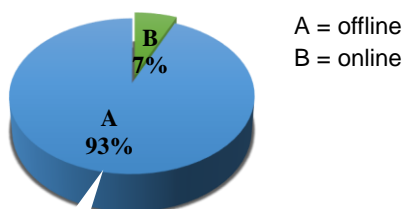


Nine (9) out of 15 participants (60%) favored the combination of online and offline. Only 1 participant preferred to have fully online classes. The rest of

them (33%) thought that fully offline classes would fit them the most. Based on the responses, it can be said that the combination of online and offline learning was the favorite amongst the students.

The second item in the second section of the questionnaire identified the mode of learning (online or offline) the students liked when working in a group. Pie Chart 2 shows the mode of teaching and learning delivery they favor the most.

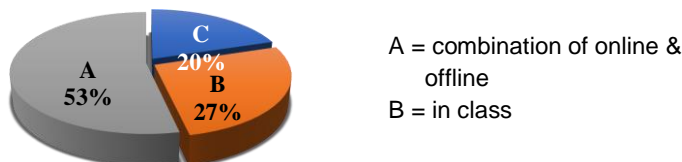
**Pie Chart 2. Mode of learning preferences when working in a group**



The data indicate that almost all of the students (93%) would choose face-to-face or offline learning when working in a group. The data further indicate that only one student selected online learning as the media to work in a group. It can be said that offline learning was most favored when the students had to work in a group.

The third section of the questionnaire was to find out the students' opinions on online and offline learning. The first item of this section asked the students the mode of learning they thought the easiest to complete. Their responses are seen in Pie Chart 3.

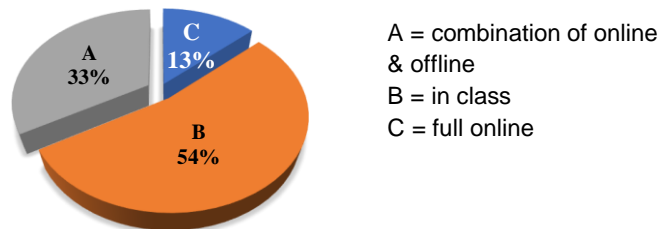
**Pie Chart 3. Mode of learning easier to complete**



Pie Chart 3 shows that a large number of the students (53%) admitted that the combination of online and offline was easier mode of learning to complete. Only 20% of them selected the idea that full online learning was easier. The rest (27%) chose offline learning.

The next item of the questionnaire was to identify which mode of learning was easier to achieve better performance according to the students.

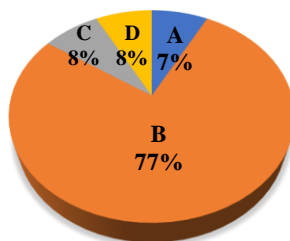
**Pie Chart 4. Mode of learning easier to achieve better performance**



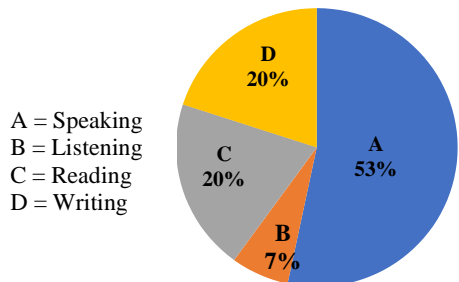
As seen in Pie Chart 4, eight of them (54%) claimed that learning in class/offline was easier to achieve better performance while 33% of them thought that the combination of online and in class learning was easier. Only a small number of them (13%) chose full online learning. Learning face-to-face was thus considered to make the students perform better.

The next two items in the third section of the questionnaire asked the students to choose one of the language skill courses (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) is best and not best taken online. Pie Chart 5 and 6 present the results.

**Pie Chart 5. Subject best taken online**



**Pie Chart 6. Subject not best taken online.**

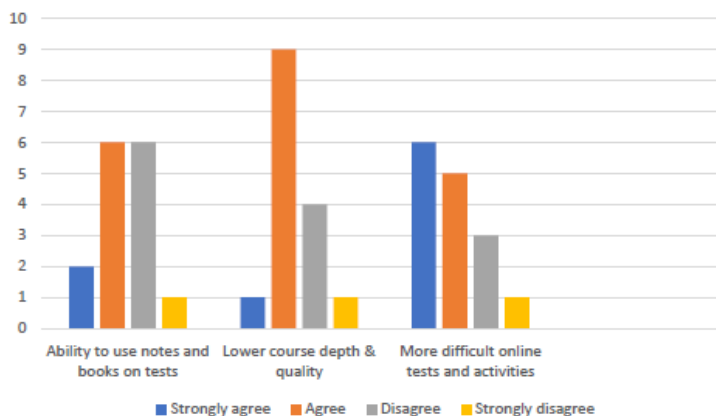


As shown in Pie Chart 5, 77% of the students admitted that Listening was the best subject to take in online classes. Reading and Writing were both chosen by 8% of the students while Speaking was the least. As for the subject not

best taken online, a large proportion of the students (53%) chose Speaking. Reading and Writing shared the same proportion (20%) while the least selected subject was Listening (7%).

The last item of the third section of the questionnaire required the students to rate three given statements about online learning. Bar Chart 1 illustrates the students' opinion on those three statements.

**Bar Chart 1. Students' opinions on online learning**



The first statement asked about the ability to use notes and books on tests in online learning. Interestingly, the numbers of students who agreed and disagreed were the same (40% each). Only 1 student strongly disagreed on the first statement. The second statement asked their opinions on whether they agreed or not that online learning had lower course depth and quality. A significant number of the students (60%) agreed that online learning had lower course depth and quality while only 26% of them disagreed. The rest of the students strongly agreed (13%) and disagreed (7%). The third statement asked whether or not they agreed that online learning had more difficult tests and activities. As seen in Bar Chart 1, 40% of the students strongly agreed with the statement, 33% chose to agree while 20% disagreed. Only 1 participant strongly disagreed with the last statement. It can be said that most of them agreed that online learning had more difficult tests and activities.

## DISCUSSION

The findings in this study are similar to research by Alsaaty et.al. Students had more preferences for blended learning or the combination of offline and online over online learning and favored collaborative work in offline settings than online.

In regard to performance, this study's findings coincide with those of Pechenkina and Aeschliman. Students disagreed that online classes are easier to accomplish and to perform better compared to offline classes. The students in this study expressed that depth and quality of online course was lower than that of offline. In addition, they considered the tests and activities of online classes were harder than that of offline.

Courses that involve interactive activities and require students to demonstrate productive skills such as Speaking was deemed to be best given offline compared to courses that are receptive like Listening. This is in line with Glover and Lewis's findings which found that courses that demanded students to apply and demonstrate the acquired skills were best taught offline.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, the results clearly show that the students had a strong preference for the combination of online and in class learning. Furthermore, students only preferred face-to-face learning when they were working in a group. Interestingly, even though the combination of online and offline was easier to complete, it was offline learning that the students thought was much easier to achieve higher performance. Also, most of them agreed that Listening was the subject best taken online while Speaking was considered the opposite. The data, however, indicate that it is hard to determine whether it is true or not that online learning had more ability to use notes and books on tests. Most student students also agreed that online learning had lower course and they admitted that online learning had more difficult tests and activities.

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