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Navigating Online Assessments in Post-Pandemic Education: Challenges and Strategies

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the use of online assessment by English lecturers in the post-pandemic Covid-19 period. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the challenges faced and how to manage them. The research used qualitative descriptive research focusing on interviews and documentation with lecturers at Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda. The findings revealed that lecturers used various platforms including YouTube, Google Drive, SPADA, Instagram, and Facebook. The challenges found in this research were varied due to the hybrid nature of post-pandemic teaching and learning. Challenges faced by lecturers included behavioral issues such as student discipline, plagiarism, password knowledge, and attendance, as well as technical issues such as students' internet access. To manage these challenges, lecturers implemented strict rules against plagiarism, set clear deadlines, and provided rewards like gamification. They also encouraged students to use their names as usernames and passwords and explained the features of the Learning Management System (LMS) to those unfamiliar with it. Additionally, lecturers shared internet data with students to address technical problems. Overall, the research found that online assessment appears to be a solution to meet the needs of lecturers and students, making teaching and learning accessible everywhere, effective, and reaching the target material taught for one semester.

Keywords: Online Assessment, English Lecturers, Post-Pandemic Covid-19

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has profoundly affected education worldwide, forcing a swift shift from face-to-face to online learning. According to Teräs et al., (2020), approximately 1.5 billion students were impacted globally, necessitating emergency remote teaching measures. The success of online learning hinges on the readiness of both educators and educational institutions in implementing effective learning processes and assessments. Assessment is a critical component of instruction, essential for measuring student progress and guiding instructional activities (Kearns, 2012). In the context of online learning, both formative and summative assessments play crucial roles, providing continuous feedback and evaluating student learning outcomes (Liu & Zhang, 2022)

Preliminary research indicates that Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda has established a robust online presence for teaching, learning, and assessment. This research is particularly interested in understanding the online assessment methods employed by English lecturers at this university, exploring whether they utilize the university's platforms exclusively or integrate external tools as well. This focus is significant, given the hybrid nature of post-pandemic education, combining both online and offline elements.

Despite the potential benefits of online assessments, numerous challenges persist. Issues such as student discipline, plagiarism, technical difficulties, and the effective use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) remain prevalent. Addressing these challenges requires innovative strategies and adaptive measures to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of the assessment process.

This research aims to delve into these aspects, providing a comprehensive overview of the current practices, challenges, and solutions related to online assessment by English lecturers at Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda in the post-pandemic era. By doing so, it seeks to contribute valuable insights into the ongoing discourse on enhancing online education in higher learning institutions.

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2. Method
2.1 Research Design

Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena that research subjects encounter, such as action, interpretation, behavior, motivation, and others (Lahiri, 2023). This research is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative interviews are conversations about the world of their life, in which the informant explores their point of view of their experience and regards the situation using interpretation (Hatch, 2010). In this research, the purpose of the descriptive analysis was to discover what online assessment is used by the English lecturers, how the English lecturers manage the challenges, and how the lecturers manage it.

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

The primary data collection techniques used in this research are interviews and document analysis. These methods were selected to gather in-depth insights and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the lecturers' experiences and perspectives.

a. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three English lecturers at Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda. The semi-structured format allowed for open-ended questions, encouraging participants to share their views and experiences in detail (Creswell, 2018). Interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the lecturers and were conducted face-to-face. Each interview session was recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate data capture and facilitate detailed analysis.

b. Document Analysis

Document analysis involved reviewing various types of documents, including public documents (such as official reports and meeting minutes) and private documents (such as personal journals, letters, and emails). This method provided additional context and corroborated the information obtained through interviews (Creswell, 2018). Specific attention was given to documents related to the online platforms used for assessment and instructional materials shared by the lecturers.

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2.3 Data Sources

The subjects of this research were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan, 2016). The criteria for selection included:

1. Permanent lecturers teaching in the English department at Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda.

2. Lecturers with experience in administering online assessments.

3. Lecturers willing to participate in the research and provide comprehensive insights.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

According to Creswell (2018), collecting data has three procedures: identifying and selecting people for a research, getting their permission to be research, and gathering information by delivering instruments through asking questions or observing their behaviors. The researcher gathered the data by doing the steps described as follows. First, three lecturers were requested to conduct short interviews to find deeper data to meet the needs and completeness of the research. It was a semi-structured interview with an average duration of 20 minutes, so it was expected to get deeper information. Second, all the activities were recorded during the interview. All interview results were recorded using audio so they could be analyzed afterward. Previously, the researcher asked the subject for permission to record the interview results.

2.5 Data Analysis Technique

According to Miles et al., (2014), there are 3 steps to analyzing the data: data collection or data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The researcher analyzed the data from two sources: interviews and documentation. So, at this stage, the researcher analyzed in some steps, as follows:

1) Transcribing all the research data. The recording data were written sentences.

2) Sorting the data, selecting the important data, and discarding unnecessary data.

3) Giving code. The researcher will categorize and code the research data based on themes.

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4) Explain the reduction result data in the form of a description to answer the existing research questions.

5) Concluding with a short excursion back to the result data.

Themes were encoded into a topic found in the interview transcript. Not each code appeared in the data finding, each category encoded the prefigured themes, which were broken down into more specific sub-themes (Kaufmann et al., 2020).

2.6 Ensuring Validity and Reliability

Triangulation of different sources of information by examining evidence from the source and using it to build coherence justifications (Creswell, 2018). In this research, the researcher used methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple qualitative methods. In this case, the researcher compared the data from one source. The data was gathered through the interview guidelines and documents.

3. Findings and Discussion

The research revealed several key findings regarding the use of online assessment by English lecturers at Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda. Lecturers utilized various online platforms, including YouTube, Google Drive, SPADA, Instagram, and Facebook, for different purposes such as delivering lectures, sharing materials, collecting assignments, and conducting assessments.

The challenges encountered by lecturers were categorized into behavioral and technical problems. Behavioral problems included issues such as student discipline, plagiarism, knowledge of passwords, and attendance. Lecturers noted difficulties in ensuring students' adherence to deadlines and maintaining academic integrity. On the other hand, technical problems primarily involved students' access to reliable internet connections, which was a significant barrier. Lecturers had to find ways to support students with limited internet access.

To address these challenges, lecturers implemented various strategies. For behavioral issues, strict rules against plagiarism were enforced, clear deadlines were set, and gamification

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techniques were used to reward timely submissions and good performance. For technical issues, lecturers shared their internet data with students and provided detailed instructions on using the Learning Management System (LMS) to those unfamiliar with it. Overall, from the findings it concludes some suggest that while online assessment offers a flexible solution to meet educational needs, it also requires significant effort to address associated challenges.

The findings of this research highlight the complexity of implementing online assessments in the post-pandemic educational landscape. The use of multiple platforms for various assessment purposes aligns with the literature suggesting that digital tools can enhance teaching and learning when effectively integrated (Kearns, 2012; Zhang, 2022). However, the challenges identified indicate that technical and behavioral issues remain significant barriers.

Behavioral issues, such as student discipline and plagiarism, emerged as major concerns in online assessments, consistent with previous studies from Bubaš & Čižmešija, (2023); and Bukhari et al., (2022). The enforcement of strict rules and the use of gamification to motivate students were effective strategies reported by lecturers. These approaches are supported by Bahar & Asil, (2018), who noted that flexibility and motivation are critical in online learning environments.

Technical difficulties related to internet access were also significant, corroborating findings by Bahar et al., (2018) and El Mourabit et al., (2023), who highlighted the importance of reliable technological infrastructure in online education. The proactive measures taken by lecturers, such as sharing internet data and providing LMS training, emphasize the need for supportive strategies to ensure all students can participate fully.

The varied use of platforms like SPADA, YouTube, and Google Drive reflects the adaptability of lecturers in utilizing available resources to enhance learning. This is in line with several previous research from Faizah et al., (2021); Reyes et al., (2023); Praditha & Nur, 2019); Arbain & Nur, (2018) and Nur, (2020) who emphasized the creative use of digital tools in educational settings. Overall, the research underscores the dual nature of online assessment. While it provides opportunities for flexible and accessible education, it also demands

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innovative and adaptive solutions to overcome inherent challenges. The need for continuous improvement in both technological infrastructure and pedagogical strategies is evident to fully realize the potential of online assessments in the evolving educational landscape.

4. Conclusion

This research found that in the English Department of Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda, several online assessment methods were used by lecturers, including YouTube, Google Drive, SPADA, Instagram, and Facebook. The assessment points for the entire semester included attendance, tasks (quizzes), mid-term tests, and final exams, with different assessment percentages for each lecturer.

The challenges faced in post-pandemic teaching and learning varied due to the hybrid teaching system that combines online and offline learning. These challenges were categorized into two: behavioral problems and technical problems. Behavioral problems included student discipline, plagiarism, knowledge of passwords, and student attendance, while technical problems included student internet access.

Various solutions have been implemented to address these challenges. For instance, to tackle plagiarism, Lecturer One implemented a strict rule by not accepting tasks suspected of plagiarism. To improve student discipline and make deadlines clearer, Lecturer Two provided rewards using a gamification concept. Students who submitted tasks and quizzes on time would earn rewards that would be added to their final score at the end of the semester. Lecturer Two also asked students to use their names as usernames and passwords using their NPM or student numbers to solve the issue of forgotten passwords. Lecturer Three explained the LMS features at the beginning of the semester for students unfamiliar with LMS. Regarding technical problems, lecturers asked students to share internet data with others.

The implications of this research indicate that online assessment can enhance teaching accessibility and effectiveness if managed well. Online assessments allow greater flexibility in managing lecturers' time and resources and provide opportunities for students to access materials and assessments from anywhere. This research recommends balancing online and

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offline meetings, improving students' knowledge about using LMS, and proactively addressing student issues.

Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda should provide training for lecturers and students, prepare adequate Wi-Fi routers, and establish clear hybrid assessment rules. Future studies should involve observing students and exploring new methods in online assessments that can be more effective and efficient. Additionally, the university should provide training for lecturers and students, prepare adequate Wi-Fi routers, and establish clear hybrid assessment rules. Future studies should involve student observation and research. Thus, online assessments are not just a temporary solution during the pandemic but can also become an integral part of the future education system that is more flexible and adaptive.

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