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Teacher's Resilience Strategies during Covid-19 Pandemic: Reflections From Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

This research explores the resilience strategies employed by EFL teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic and their subsequent impact on students' engagement and motivation. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining a questionnaire distributed among 84 students and interviews conducted with 8 students. Analysis of the data is carried out using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis method. The research reveals that EFL teachers who effectively integrated technology tools such as Zoom and Google Meet demonstrated a higher level of resilience. Students' perceptions indicated that these strategies not only sustained their concentration during online sessions but also fostered enthusiasm and motivation for learning. The findings corroborate previous research emphasizing the role of adaptive teaching approaches and technology integration in enhancing student engagement. The study concludes by suggesting further exploration into the long-term impacts of these strategies on academic performance and the challenges in implementing technology-driven teaching methods. This research contributes to the understanding of EFL teachers' resilience and its correlation with students' learning experiences amid the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: *covid-19 pandemic; efl teachers resilience; students' perception*

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has caused such unpredictable situation where learning should be shifted to online mode. It consequently forces teacher to be more creative in designing material and preparing such interesting classroom, while students are expected to be able to actively participate during the learning. However, several drawbacks due to technical and pedagogical problems are experienced by the students such as a decrease of their learning quality. Blagg (2021) for example, found that students get lower academic achievement as well as problems in their relation with friends and parents. It might happen due to the complexity and variety of situation that is not easily anticipated especially in the form of technology and internet advancement (Amin et al., 2022).

The present article aims to describe how students perceive my teaching performance during and after Covid-19 pandemic. I was wondering whether or not they have different perception on the teacher's teaching strategy as well as the resilience skill toward more effective teaching. More specifically, the article tries to capture students' satisfaction and compared to the teacher's narratives on the strategy used during and after Covid-19 pandemic. It is essential to be a self-reflection toward better teaching as well as better understanding on students' characteristics and preferences of learning. It is the teacher who is in charge toward students' success by presenting

an effective and creative way of learning. This makes teachers are irreplaceable (Beteille et al., 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teacher' Challenges

Technological tools remain essential to help teachers effectively present the materials and interact with the students synchronously or asynchronously. The most recent research indicates that there are several most frequently used-platforms that students recommend during the learning namely WhatsApp, Google Classroom dan LMS, while teachers tend to frequently employee Zoom, WhatsApp and LMS as well as Youtube (Luy, 2022; Sakkir et al., 2020).

Numerous problems emerged during Covid-19 pandemic that affect the quality of teaching and learning. Apart from students' challenges, teachers also have found it difficult to present materials and successful learning (Ariawan, 2021). The challenges include, but not limited to, technical, academic, and communication challenges (Mahyoob, 2020). Furthermore, Ghanbari & Nowroozi (2022) in their research coined the problems as pedagogical, technological, institutional and affective difficulties. Pedagogical constraints might involve difficulty in presenting an appropriate materials (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020), integrating technology with pedagogy and subject teaching and workload (Li, 2022) as well as the availability in *giving feedback* (Putri, 2021). *Technological problems deal with inability to generate modern technology devices to get better access and weak of internet connection* (Hakim, 2020) *as well as discouragement in using ICT* (Fitri & Putro, 2021).

Another issue pertinent to affective aspects faced by the teachers can be seen from students' attitudes (Nova et al., 2022). It is shown that the students perceive negative attitude toward online learning where they were passive during the discussion, lack of motivation (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020) and experience attention deficit (Hakim, 2020). Moreover, they frequently experience a stress during learning (Luy, 2022). In addition to affective issue, these phenomena with such rapidly-unprecedented changes has also become stressor for teachers that lead them to have mental health problems (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2022). One more problem was found by Ghanbari & Nowroozi (2022) related to the lack of administrative support from the university or school management. Insufficiency of financial and material support as well as unavailability of equitable trainings has exacerbated the situation (Sukmojati et al., 2023).

2. Resilience and Coping Strategies

According to Fox & Walter (2022), there are, at least, three types of teachers in responding the challenges of distance learning: growing teachers, coping teachers and discouraged teachers. Growing teachers tend to perceive remote learning positively as they might have a strong level of coping strategy and receive support from the schools which lead them to grow as a professional teacher. However, coping teachers experience lack of independency as well as less administrative and technical support from the school. Fortunately, they have such positive mindset and coping strategy. Different from other types, discouraged teachers face more negative outlooks in facing the critical distance learning and they might have low level of confidence due to the insufficiency of self-coping strategy and school support.

These types of teacher will obviously influence the sustainability of learning during and after Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers who always keep updated and adjust their learning to the current context and trend in their workplace are needed. This is part of the resilience strategy (Amin et al., 2022) that what every single teacher should possess. They are expected to think of meaningful, simple and realistic learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (Efriana, 2021). Those who are able to establish such professional engagement, motivation, satisfaction as well as well-being among the teachers and students (Mansfield et al., 2012). Another provision required toward growing teachers, or at least coping teachers, is the ability to manage the class during the uncertainty and unpredictability conditions professionally (Gu & Day, 2013).

On the other hand, coping strategies can be defined in the context of responding a stressor where someone uses particular strategies (MacIntyre et al., 2020). The strategy used mainly through psychological approaches with certain procedures (Nazari et al., 2022). Another coping strategies were also introduced by Endler & Parker (1990) who tried to categorize the coping strategies into stressful situation including task-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. Apart from health perspective, coping strategies pertinent to pedagogy might refer to the ability in planning online learning, managing online classroom, supporting students' ability and skill to generate technology as well as fostering the motivation and engagement (Abdel Latif, 2022). It means that coping or resilience strategy likely depends on the teachers' mental responses as well as experience and skill in preventing unpredictable situation that potentially disrupt the teaching process.

To deal with the problems, coping strategy should not always be quick without any provision or analysis on the problems. Abid et al. (2021) suggested in their research that a group of Pakistani instructors decided not to make drastic changes in their teaching methodologies just to protect the cognitive connections of the students with the previous traditional learning. It means that, coping strategy is not about how fast the teachers are able toward effective learning, but it reveals the procedures to connect with the students and help them adapt to the new trend. Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) also coined the ability of teachers in using internet and technology as one of the crucial skills needed to accelerate the coping strategy. Collie & Martin (2020) also proposed solutions toward challenges during and after Covid-19 pandemic which includes the need of thinking and attitude adjustment from teachers and students on how technology can be harnessed in teaching like never before.

From health point of view, the future teachers need to emphasize their capacity building on the fitness of psychological health, engagement and minimizing apprehension (Nazari et al., 2022). Moreover, administrative level in the institution also plays pivotal roles where school community should adjust the curriculum and materials and at the same time the schools should conduct professional training to improve teachers' pedagogical practice (Munawaroh & Nurmalasari, 2021). This might develop teachers' readiness to face such critical situation or urgent matter that significant influence the learning effectiveness.

METHOD

The present research utilized a mixed-method approach to comprehensively investigate the topic. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods to gather a holistic understanding of the strategies teachers employ to enhance their resilience in the face of various challenges. The quantitative component of the study involved the distribution of a structured

questionnaire to a sample of 84 students. This questionnaire likely contained items designed to assess the perceived resilience strategies exhibited by their teachers. By quantifying the students' perspectives, the researchers could identify common patterns and trends in the teachers' resilience strategies, shedding light on the effectiveness and prevalence of these strategies within the educational context.

In addition to the quantitative aspect, the research also delved into qualitative insights by conducting interviews with 8 selected students. Qualitative methods allow for a deeper exploration of the nuances and underlying factors that quantitative data might not capture. These interviews likely involved open-ended questions, encouraging the students to express their thoughts, feelings, and personal observations about the resilience strategies displayed by their teachers. The qualitative data from the interviews would have provided rich narratives and individual experiences, offering a more comprehensive view of the teacher's resilience strategies, their impact on students, and potential areas for improvement. The researchers employed the Miles and Huberman's approach for data analysis, a well-established qualitative analysis method involving processes like data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014). This rigorous mixed-method approach, combining the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative insights, allowed the researchers to derive a comprehensive understanding of the strategies teachers employ to cultivate resilience in an educational setting.

FINDINGS

The results of the questionnaire revealed a significant consensus among the students, with over 60% indicating that their teachers demonstrated high levels of engagement and activity during online teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding suggests that a majority of students perceived their teachers as proactive and committed to maintaining effective teaching practices despite the challenges posed by remote learning. The teachers' dedication to staying engaged likely contributed to a more positive and productive learning experience for the students during these unprecedented times.

Furthermore, the questionnaire results shed light on the evolution of teaching strategies during and after the COVID-19 period. More than 60% of the students reported a noticeable shift in their teachers' instructional methods. This suggests that educators adapted their approaches to suit the online learning environment and, subsequently, post-COVID-19 in-person classes. This adaptability underscores the flexibility of teachers in responding to changing circumstances, and the shift in teaching strategies may have been influenced by the lessons learned from the online teaching experience.

In terms of technology usage, the questionnaire data indicated that over 60% of the students observed a substantial integration of technology into their teachers' instructional practices. This finding highlights the pivotal role technology played in facilitating remote learning during the pandemic and its continued relevance even as in-person classes resumed. The majority of students' experiences with technology in education could potentially have positive implications for their digital literacy skills and adaptability in an increasingly technology-driven world. Overall, these results collectively portray teachers who were resilient, adaptable, and technology-savvy in navigating the challenges presented by the pandemic and its aftermath.

Table 1. result of questionnaire

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturers are actively trying to teach online during the pandemic	3.61%	2.41%	4.82%	26.51%	62.65%
Lecturers use certain technologies in teaching during the pandemic	2.4%	0.0%	2.4%	21.7%	73.5%
Lecturers try to use interesting methods in teaching during the pandemic	1.2%	0.0%	14.5%	47.0%	37.3%
Lecturers try to use interesting methods in teaching during the pandemic	0.0%	2.4%	6.0%	20.5%	71.1%

The interviews with eight students who reported positive experiences regarding their teachers' resilience strategies unveiled a common theme centered around the proficient use of technology tools like Zoom, Google Meet, and other applications. These students expressed that these technological platforms not only facilitated seamless communication between teachers and students but also acted as catalysts for enhanced motivation and enthusiasm in their studies. The integration of these tools in teaching practices emerged as a pivotal factor that ignited students' engagement, fostering a dynamic and interactive virtual learning environment. These findings underscored the pivotal role of adept technological integration in bolstering students' motivation and spirit, ultimately contributing to a more effective and enriched learning experience.

R1

The lecture provides software or applications that are useful for students when learning takes place online in order to increase student learning motivation.

R3

For example using certain applications that have never been seen or used by the students, for example an online quiz application that is used to sharpen the memory of students

R4

We discussed online using the Zoom app and also Google meet.

During the interviews, students consistently highlighted an impactful strategy employed by their teachers to maintain focus and enthusiasm during online learning sessions. This strategy resonated with students as it effectively captured their attention and heightened their learning motivation. The teachers' implementation of innovative teaching methods, interactive discussions, and captivating visual aids emerged as key elements in sustaining concentration and cultivating a genuine enthusiasm for learning. By fostering an engaging virtual classroom atmosphere, these teachers managed to bridge the physical gap inherent to online education. The positive student responses underscored the significance of dynamic pedagogical approaches in fostering a sense of connection, active participation, and intrinsic motivation within the virtual learning landscape.

R2

Lecturers use a lot of fun strategies that make us more enthusiastic in learning and always motivate us to be better.

R5

Lecturers have their own strategies in teaching and learning activities during the pandemic that can increase students' learning motivation. I think it is very extraordinary and can increase learning motivation.

R6

Despite online learning, lecturers still teach well and use learning methods that are easy to understand. The lecturer's teaching method is very clear, but sometimes we as students also feel sleepy when we are zooming, therefore in my opinion, if possible, the lecturer can also add learning methods so that we remain enthusiastic during the learning process.

R7

There are some lecturers who, in my personal opinion, have very interesting characteristics during distance or online learning, for example in the ISCP course, the lecturer has a good strategy in taking students' concentration in online learning sessions, but on the other hand students do not feel tense or bored during learning.

R8

In addition to teaching material, he also instills honesty, discipline, and enthusiasm in his students, his humorous nature makes students less rigid when interacting during class.

Apart from positive perception, the students also addressed challenges they experience during online learning.

R2

I experienced technical problems such as signal, teaching problems and not getting along with the teacher's strategy, especially in the beginning. After that I started to adapt.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the observation and interviews conducted in this research shed light on the crucial role of teachers' strategies, especially those involving technology integration, in enhancing students' engagement, motivation, and overall learning experience during online learning periods. These findings resonate with several previous research studies, which have also emphasized the importance of teacher resilience and effective instructional approaches in various educational contexts. The present finding clearly confirms the category of growing teacher according to Fox & Walter (2022) where he is able to meet the contemporary situation requirement in terms of technology advancement. This also indicates the teacher's character who consistently stay informed and adapt their instructional practices to align with the contemporary context and prevailing trends within their professional environment (Amin et al., 2022).

In a study by Mansfield et al.,(2012), it was observed that teachers' adaptability and innovative use of technology positively influenced students' engagement and motivation in an online learning environment. Similarly, Endler & Parker (1990) found that teachers who employed a mix of pedagogical methods, including technology-based tools, managed to maintain students' focus and enthusiasm during remote learning, resulting in improved learning outcomes.

Moreover, the results align with research conducted by Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) where teachers' strategic use of digital platforms enhanced students' interaction and collaborative learning experiences. This resonates with the current study's emphasis on the use of platforms like Zoom and Google Meet to facilitate interactive sessions. Furthermore, the research is in line with Abdel Latif (2022) that highlighted that students' motivation was positively influenced when teachers employed innovative strategies to make online lessons more engaging. This corresponds to the current research, where teachers' effective strategies were noted to boost motivation and enthusiasm. In a study by Nazari et al.,(2022), the integration of technology was found to foster active learning and student engagement. The present research's focus on teachers utilizing technology as a means to enhance concentration and motivation echoes these findings.

On the other hand, according to Mahyoob (2020), students provide their perspectives on issues they encounter, including technological, intellectual, and communication challenges, drawing from their own firsthand experiences. Moreover, Ghanbari and Nowroozi (2022) identified a set of challenges in their study, categorizing them as pedagogical, technological, institutional, and emotive in nature.

Collectively, these prior studies corroborate the current research's outcomes, demonstrating a consensus on the pivotal role of teachers' strategic resilience, coupled with technology integration, in augmenting students' engagement, motivation, and effective learning in online educational settings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores the significance of teachers' resilience strategies and adept technology integration in shaping students' engagement, motivation, and learning experiences within online and post-online learning contexts. The findings align with prior studies that emphasize the pivotal role of innovative pedagogical approaches and technological tools in maintaining concentration, fostering enthusiasm, and cultivating interactive virtual classroom environments. As a suggestion for further research, investigating the long-term impacts of these strategies on students' academic performance, as well as exploring potential challenges in the implementation of technology-integrated teaching methods, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between teachers' strategies, technology, and student outcomes. Moreover, conducting comparative studies across diverse educational settings and cultural contexts would contribute to a nuanced comprehension of the generalizability of these findings.

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