



# Asynchronous Learning Method: Prospects and Challenges Among Undergraduate Students at Higher Islamic Institution in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Distance education technologies have become viable alternatives to traditional education. While asynchronous learning allows students complete freedom of time and location, the synchronous model provides an online learning platform where instructors and students meet in the same or different locations in a virtual environment. This research aims to explore the experiences of eight undergraduate students of the Islamic Education Department at the Al Azhar University of Indonesia in the online Asynchronous Learning Method (ALM). Specifically, it investigates students' understandings of ALM, explores their perceptions of its advantages and disadvantages, looks into their strategies in coping with challenges and obstacles they face, and their aspirations for ALM. In doing so, a qualitative case study was used to collect the data through open-ended interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) which provide personal and specific pictures of asynchronous learning. The findings revealed that apart from giving students flexibility and independence of learning, ALM has not been utilized optimally at the university level. ALM is mostly used to transfer information without the element of teaching and instructions. Hence, there is room for improvement from the current e-learning practices in which this study provides some recommendations for future online pedagogy.

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## INTRODUCTION

New concepts have emerged in education with the development of the internet (Abdallah & Abdallah, 2022; Bartlett, 2022; Kayalar, 2021). Conventional face-to-face instruction has been losing its monopoly and domination due to the advance in technology which encourages teachers and lecturers to opt for online teaching and learning (Mustafa Malik & Javed, 2021). Recently, online teaching and learning had its momentum when Covid-19 hit and all countries in the world shifted their education practice to the online platform (Decarlo et al., 2022). However, learning from home through distance education is a solution that has not been fully utilized. UNICEF (2020) reported that limited access to affordable Internet and appropriate digital devices makes learning from home difficult for most students, especially those in remote and rural areas. Less than 15% of children in rural areas and 25% of urban children have computers for home-based learning. Many children share smartphones with their siblings or parents or rely on friends to share school assignments.

To deal with the problem of limited access to internet connections, some universities in Indonesia, including the University Al Azhar of Indonesia, implemented the policy to maximize the use of the asynchronous method in online learning. Consequently, online synchronous zoom meetings must be limited to 4 times per semester. This gives lecturers the freedom to deliver a variety of teaching materials that are easily accessible to the students. Nevertheless, some authors argued that asynchronous learning is not considered the optimum teaching and learning process (Skelcher et al., 2020). This is due to the traditional view of the teaching and learning process which emphasizes that teaching and instructions must be conducted face-to-face.

The above issue was pointed out by (Lei & So 2021) as he argued that many teaching professionals assume that there is no difference between online and offline learning, hence, synchronous face-to-face is a must in both online and offline learning environments. In this sense, Asynchronous Learning Method (ALM) has offered solutions for accessible and affordable teaching and learning processes. Nevertheless, some problems and downsides of ALM have appeared in its implementation. Students started to complain about the shortage of the system. Thus, identification of problems needs to be done to help the university to rectify them accordingly.

Therefore, this study explored the experiences of students of the Department of Islamic Education, University Al Azhar of Indonesia in using asynchronous learning, to identify students' understandings of the concept of ALM, explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of ALM, investigate the learning strategies taken by students in ALM, and explore students' aspirations in improving the quality of ALM. The findings of the current study will contribute to the corpus of knowledge on asynchronous learning method and its unique strategies as encountered by the participants of this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology and digital forms of learning have been steadily integrated into schools and classrooms in recent years (Bond, 2020). Learners using tablets in class Bjørgen et al., (2021) and doing homework assignments online are becoming more widespread in many circumstances. While primary and secondary education still takes place in traditional classrooms in most countries, virtual schools and online learning are becoming increasingly popular throughout primary and secondary school years around the world (Barbour & Reeves, 2009). Teachers must consider content, activities (synchronous and asynchronous), facilitation, and evaluation all within the constraints of the physical and possible relational distance between the student and the teacher when developing and designing online courses (Wang, 2021).

Synchronous learning is when instructors and learners interact in real-time at a shared location, in which real-time collaborative contact is the boundary of synchronous learning. According to Teng et al., (2012), the online platforms where collaborative learning takes place also facilitates synchronous learning through live streaming, video conferencing, live chat, teleconferencing, and other methods. For faculty members and students, current software development with additional features like the chat-box window, polling questions, live feedback, survey, and so forth has been very helpful (Hrastinski, 2010). These media facilitate synchronous e-learning and enable faculty and students to communicate effectively (Bonk & Zhang, 2006; Murphy et al., 2011).

The benefits of synchronous learning include the ability for students to ask questions, look for answers, receive prompt feedback, and express their opinions and ideas in class since the session is taking place in real time. On the other hand, synchronous learning has some drawbacks because of the strict timetable and potential for continuous use, including being stressful for students who must spend a lot of time in front of computers (Teng et al., 2012). Furthermore, synchronous learning can occasionally be rigid. Due to poor network coverage and erratic Internet connections, synchronous learning may be interrupted and may not support continuous learning for the students. The learning path is established by the instructor so that students may acquire knowledge at their own pace and time, which occasionally may not meet their expectations. Students may have a variety of personal concerns that prevent them from attending online lessons on time, especially during a pandemic (Perveen, 2016).

To circumvent these problems and deliver education in a flexible way, asynchronous learning styles have become very popular. Pre-recorded sessions, a virtual library, social media platforms, online discussion boards, and other techniques are the norm in asynchronous learning (Lin et al., 2012). Asynchronous learning has the advantage of giving learners a great deal of flexibility so they can advance in their education at their own rate and have access to it at any time or location. Burns et al., (2022) asserted that asynchronous learning enables students to lean with flexibility in their own comfort zone as evidence in favour of this. Additionally, students have the chance to learn with independence and are not solely dependent on the teacher (Lemke, 2022).

Asynchronous learning method (ALM) is a term used to describe a type of teaching and learning process which does not occur in real-time. It uses some

sources that facilitate the exchange of information without disruptions of time and place between online learners (Decarlo et al., 2022; Malik & Javed, 2021; Öztürk, 2021). The advantages of asynchronous learning are that it allows the learner to progress at their own pace and that it can be accessed from any location and at any time. Asynchronous learning, allows students to learn with flexibility in their comfort zone (Bartlett, 2022; Dhawan, 2020; Jiang, 2017).

A study by Kim et al., (2018) implies that ALM is popular within higher education institutions. This is due to flexibility in terms of time and space, and the provision of independent thinking opportunities for students learning at different speeds. Another study by Bonk & Zhang, (2006), which explores a pedagogical aspect of ALM, pointed out that the biggest challenge faced by instructors is to attract the attention of learners. Besides attention, öztürk, (2021) summarized that decreased motivation and less interest in the lesson may arise in ALM. Nevertheless, a study by Hrastinski, (2010) revealed that there is an indication that ALM encourages more learners' cognitive participation.

Furthermore, a study by Summers et al., (2005) on students' satisfaction and achievement of bachelor's degree students in Statistics courses online and offline revealed that online students achieved higher marks than those who studied offline. However, offline students feel more satisfied than those who studied online (Abdallah & Abdallah, 2022). Almost similarly, a study by York, (Conrad et al., 2022) found that asynchronous discussion may be effective in reducing the problems of students who have difficulty transitioning from traditional to the online environment.

Moreover, asynchronous learning is less expensive because instructors do not need to monitor it constantly. Students can work on the content themselves and receive their education at a low cost because it is a self-guided module. However, asynchronous learning has some drawbacks, including the fact that students feel less connected to the instructors and can become lonely because they are not conversing with peers and teachers. Due to a lack of supervision, it would cause students to put off doing their assignments (Moorhouse & Wong, 2022). Students occasionally fail to do the asynchronous tasks that their teachers have given them. Additionally, teachers must gently urge their students to complete their assignments and turn them in for assessment.

On the other hand, Kanuka, (2011) emphasized the importance of the involvement of instructors of online courses in designing and developing the content because design, development, and instruction need to be integrated into online learning. In this sense, Shadiev et al., (2021) in their analytical study on an asynchronous multicultural education course, discovered that students' experience plays a fundamental role in the development of the course. More importantly, Malik et al., (2017) found interesting facts from different perspectives on the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous methods between males and females. The study suggests that male students do not have a preference in choosing synchronous and asynchronous compared to female students who preferred synchronous due to the possibility of getting the addition of marks. In Apriliani et al., (2019) study on the impact of using Asynchronous Blended Problem Based Learning (ABLE-PBL) on cognitive retention and motivation of students, the result shows no difference between ABLE-PBL and PBL in impacting cognitive retention and motivation of students. This study culturally

explores different angles of ALM users' experience, as none of the above studies were conducted in Indonesia. In addition, the fact that participants of this study who are undergraduate students majoring in Islamic education gives another angle of academic background.

## METHODS

A qualitative method with a case study approach was employed in this research. The rationale for using a case study was due to the fact the study involved experiences that took place in natural settings such as classrooms, houses, campuses and so on to acquire a holistic interpretation of the situation being studied (Cresswell et al., 2011; Mutathahirin et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2022). According to Dooley, (2002), a case study is one method that excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue and can add strength to what is already known through previous research. Furthermore, Phelan & Phelan, (2015) adds that a *case study* is a preferred strategy for answering “how or why questions”, when the researcher cannot control events and when the focus is on “contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context”.

In this study, purposeful sampling was chosen to serve the objective of having informants who could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the topic under study (Engkizar et al., 2018; Sartika et al., 2020). In addition, it was chosen to provide a source of specific and unique information related to the relevance of the research topic as suggested by (Patton, 1987). Accordingly, eight informants were purposely selected from registered active students in the Department of Islamic Education, University Al Azhar of Indonesia. They were given an informed voluntary consent form, in addition to all information related to the aims of the research, how data will be collected, and who will have access to the data.

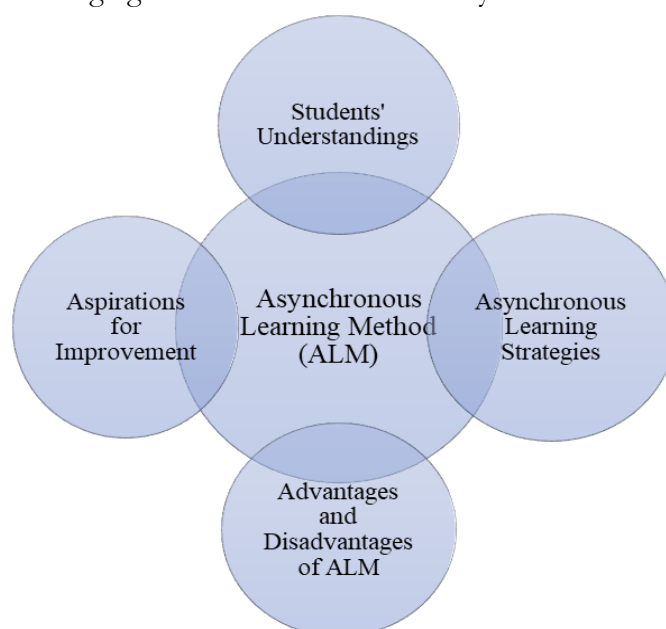
The main criteria for choosing the participants for this study was based on their active participation and excellent performance in asynchronous learning method (ALM). By following this, the researchers believed that potential participants will be most informative in providing the answers to the research questions. They were chosen from the first and second semester undergraduate students who are impacted by the shift of learning to online mode due to Covid-19 pandemic. Since the main objectives of the current study were to investigate students' understandings of ALM, their perceptions and strategies to cope with its challenges, the researchers' judgment seemed properly fit for the selection criteria of the participants for this study.

Specifically, in the data collection process, the researchers employed semi-structured open-ended interviews which Aini et al., (2019) argued is the most effective technique in collecting data, because face-to-face interviews involved direct verbal interaction between interviewer and interviewees. Besides the interview method, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also used in this study. The data gathered through interviews and FGD have gone through the process of

analysis such as transcriptions and coding. For the process of coding, the researchers used NVivo software Version 12. It is used to analyze the data from interviews and focus group discussion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected through eight interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify overall themes and patterns throughout the data. The identified themes were crosschecked independently by all researchers, with reference to the audio/video files and interview transcripts. There are four identified themes gathered in this research, namely students' understandings of ALM, asynchronous learning strategies, advantages and disadvantages of ALM, and aspirations for improvement. Figure 1 shows the four emerging themes of the current study.



**Fig 1. Emerging themes for Asynchronous Learning Method**

In selecting the participants for this study, the researchers used a judgment sample or purposeful sample as suggested by [Marshall \(1996\)](#). To answer the study topic, the researchers selected the eight most productive samples of students who have experiences in learning using ALM. For the confidentiality of the participants, the researchers used pseudonyms in the narrative of this study. The pseudonyms used for each participant are Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, and Participant 8.

### Students' Understandings of ALM

The data showed that all respondents are familiar with the ALM and have the right understanding of the method and its features and attributes. Through the process of coding using NVivo software, the codes were extracted and the theme "Students' understanding of asynchronous learning method concept" was generated. The theme comprises five categories, namely flexibility, e-learning lessons and assignments, indirect interaction, and independent learning.

Flexibility may be the most familiar attribute of asynchronous learning noted by all informants. Asynchronous learning features flexible didactic activities that give the possibility to students to catch up with the course. The fact that Students have independence in deciding when, how, and with what content and activities they engage is in parallel with the work of (Milligan & Littlejohn, 2014). In line with this, Participant 2, a male student informant stated:

*In my opinion, learning asynchronously would be like... every time we can open the laptop, or, very flexible, as you can bring (learning materials) wherever you go in your mobile phone. I open e-learning on Sunday. So, on Monday and Thursday, I won't miss the lessons (Participant 2, DU: 16)*

Participant 5, a female student informant added, it is flexible due to its indirect instructional nature, whereby students can access the teaching materials at their convenient time:

*What I know about asynchronous is indirect online learning like doing it through e-learning and with no time restriction (Participant 5, DU: 2)*

ALM is very much associated with an e-learning platform that consists of teaching materials uploaded by the lecturers. Teaching materials are usually filled with files of articles, PowerPoint presentations (PPT), videos and evaluation tools such as tests, quizzes, and assignments. Almost all informants emphasized the frequency of quizzes and assignments (Participant 8, DU: 14-16) given during asynchronous learning, to the extent that in almost all questions about students' perception of asynchronous learning concepts (Participant 6, DU: 6), the element of 'quizzes' and 'assignments' are always found in their responses. Nevertheless, ALM is not only about assignments. There are also teaching materials delivered in a variety of forms such as documents or videos. In line with this, Participant 1 stated:

*Then, besides assignments, they give explanations, there are many types of explanations, some of them in a form of documents or videos (Participant 1, DU: 4)*

The materials, however, are delivered in one-way communication form, with less or no direct interaction between lecturer and students. Lecturers usually ask students to read e-books or journals (Participant 5, DU: 2).

The above statements are parallels with studies on interactions in ALM by Kanuka, (2011) who revealed that most of the interactions in their asynchronous online courses were straightforward sharing and receiving information without meaningful dialogue. Debies-Carl, (2021) also found that many of the messages posted on the discussion board looked more like monologues than dialogues. In asynchronous learning, students are trained to learn independently with less guidance from synchronous teaching. In this study, it is found that students understand their role in asynchronous learning, that they have to actively engage in the independent learning activity (Participant 7, DU: 4). Most informants are aware that at their level as university students they are not supposed to expect to be fed with all learning materials by the lecturers. They have to make an effort to understand the materials given (Participant 8, DU: 34).

### **Asynchronous Learning Strategies**

Asynchronous learning gives students flexibility which requires them to monitor and adjust their behaviours and actions concerning the specific learning context (Ateş-Çobanoğlu et al., 2022). Therefore, it requires students to have specific strategies to cope with the courses. In asynchronous learning, students have to adapt to self-directed learning (SDL) which requires them to be aware of

their learning responsibility in themselves instead of an external source, such as a teacher or lecturer. SDL refers to the psychological processes of learners that purposively direct themselves to gain knowledge and understand how to solve problems (Fabito et al., 2021). When the informants were asked about their experiences in coping with asynchronous learning, the 'Asynchronous learning strategies' emerged from the data. The theme comprises five categories, namely being positive, support system, managing learning materials, friend's and lecturer's help, and responsibility and consistency.

The most important strategy to cope with ALM is to have a positive attitude towards learning. Omar et al., (2021) summarized positive attitudes toward online learning of students are scheduling flexibility, reducing costs, and time-saving where students can learn regardless of location or time. Hence, Participant 4, a male student informant, claimed a quite positive statement about asynchronous learning:

*I am happy that there is no face-to-face learning, so I feel more independent, I can explore more information from YouTube and google compared to a face-to-face meeting with lecturers. That face-to-face teaching creates one-way information, only from the perspective of the lecturer. However, in asynchronous mode, we can study from Google (Participant 4, DU: 36)*

It is important to have a positive attitude toward online learning, as it helps students to gain their readiness in the distance form of learning as pointed out by (Kim et al., 2018). A positive attitude towards online asynchronous learning was also shown by Participant 1, a female informant, who feels that it is important to enjoy the learning process (Participant 1, DU: 18). Besides a positive attitude, asynchronous learning compels students to apply Self-directed learning that requires extra effort. As self-directed learning (SDL) refers to the psychological processes of learners that purposively direct themselves to gain knowledge and understand how to solve problems Fabito et al., (2021), asynchronous learning also depends on the psychological being of the learners. Students, therefore, need to feel good about themselves to master the lessons delivered (Participant 1, DU: 22).

Apart from moral and psychological support from students' surroundings, material support in the forms of availability of devices and internet connection during online asynchronous activities is also needed. During online learning, students are not only psychologically burdened with tests and quizzes that they need to solve, but they sometimes need technical support related to devices and internet connections that they use when they are interrupted (Participant 1, DU: 31).

Being connected to the system is very important, as asynchronous ALM depends on students' ability to access the material from e-learning. There are a variety of kinds of online content that are accessible by students, such as texts, images, videos, sounds, and artifacts (Moore & Greg, 2012). In addition, there may be a variety of forms of media such as adaptive, narrative, and productive (Kayalar, 2021). Students have a variety of ways of dealing with these materials on how to catch up with them. Participant 8, a male informant, admitted that when a lecturer informed students through a WhatsApp group about new materials uploaded in e-learning, he would directly go to e-learning, read, and do everything he needs to understand the materials given. When he faces difficulty in understanding the materials given, he would refer to the books related to the



course, so go surfing on the internet, or watching instructional videos on YouTube.

Participant 4, a male informant, has a different way of dealing with materials. He would download all materials and organize them into one file. He preferred reading all materials offline. In addition, he prefers reading articles from google rather than watching YouTube. He argued that reading articles from google gives a more comprehensive understanding than reading materials from e-learning. Like Participant 8, he buys printed books for every subject to enrich his understanding of the courses he takes. To avoid being disrupted by social media notifications while reading e-learning, Participant 4 has his own way:

*My way to make me more focused, I use laptop, it is not easy for me to avoid social media (notifications), so it makes me focus, in addition to more comfort in reading (Participant 4, DU: 59)*

However, Participant 7 and Participant 3 have different ways of dealing with teaching materials. They would check the course outline or information about the materials given by lecturers. When they do not understand the concept, they would access e-learning. The materials in e-learning are not sufficient for Participant 7 and Participant 3 as they usually have other steps to go such as checking online resources (Participant 7, DU: 16; Participant 3, DU: 38).

As students practice self-directed learning (SDL) which usually makes them more actively participate in learning tasks such as reading online learning material, completing classroom tasks, planning and evaluating milestones of learning [Fabito et al., \(2021\)](#), they put their utmost effort to understand the courses without direct help from anyone. Nevertheless, sometimes, students need the help of their friends or lecturers to catch up with the lesson, or to confirm their understanding. In case of catching up on the lesson, Participant 6 said:

*I would ask my classmates of course, in case of I don't have any choice like missed a class, due to trouble in internet connection (Participant 6, DU: 30)*

When dealing with asynchronous learning, students need to practice High-level self-management as reported by [\(Lee et al., 2014\)](#). The success and failure of students in choosing the right learning strategy in asynchronous learning depend on their responsibility and consistency in regulating themselves. One of the informants stated:

*Every assignment, test, online and also class has its own value, so don't make us miss them. That's all, in my case I set my target, do not make that as a burden, then, I try to be consistent with myself, in which, one thing that. I mean, in which I will hold on that (Participant 1, DU: 14)*

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of ALM**

Notwithstanding many advantages of the asynchronous learning method, researchers such as [Jiang, \(2017\)](#); [Nandi et al., \(2012\)](#); [Öztürk, \(2021\)](#); [Potts, \(2011\)](#); [Schulte, \(2011\)](#); [Strang, \(2011\)](#) reported some problems facing students during the implementation of the system. In this study, the researchers investigated problems facing them during asynchronous learning. When informants were asked about challenges that they face during asynchronous learning, the data collection ended up with a theme of 'Problems of asynchronous learning method'. The theme comprises four categories, namely connection problem, burdened with assignments, lecturer's guidance, and demotivation.

Internet connection is the core of online learning. The entire program of teaching and learning is dependent on the availability of a good internet

connection. However, the quality of internet connection is beyond the reach of neither educational institutions nor the learners themselves. A study by [Fabito et al., \(2021\)](#) revealed that one of the barriers and challenges encountered by students in online learning is a good internet connection. When informants were asked about internet connection, they all agreed that internet connection is very important in asynchronous learning. Participant 3 pointed out that sometimes it is very difficult to get a good internet connection. She added that she must prepare a worst-case scenario plan in case of the disconnection of the internet:

*Sometimes, it is about the signal, it is difficult, sometimes we face difficulty to access e-learning, sometimes, it is difficult for us to get full signals. In the case of asynchronous learning, I may have to pay attention on internet data plan, in case of run out of data plan, I have to go to my friend's house who has Wi-Fi, or my elder sister (Participant 3, DU: 34, 36)*

In asynchronous learning, lecturers are having difficulty creating meaningful interaction with students as pointed out by. However, recent studies have provided and suggested some strategies to maximize the learning method by incorporating active learning, learning management system, and collaboration tools that focus on best practices and empathic learning environment [Jimenez & O'Neill, \(2021\)](#); [Mahoney & Hall, \(2020\)](#); [Mercimek & Çaka, \(2022\)](#); [Waltemeyer & Cranmore, \(2019\)](#). In the previous discussion, it is stated that the majority of spaces in student-lecturer interaction in asynchronous learning are filled with quizzes and assignments. Thus, many students feel that they are burdened with too many assignments (Participant 2, DU: 38). Sometimes, assignments are not only about the quantity, but also the level of difficulty caused by the absence of lecturers' guidance. In the end, the type of difficult assignment without lecturers' guidance will result in nothing but confusion (Participant 5, DU: 34).

Confusion and feeling of being overwhelmed with assignments and assessments could be contributing factors to the anxiety of online learning as reported by many researchers such as ([Omar et al., 2021](#)). The lack of lecturer-student interaction in the asynchronous learning method has been pointed out earlier, which results in a lack of lecturer's guidance. This complaint has been shouted out by informants in this study. Despite their awareness of the nature of the method that requires more students' initiative, however, they expected that there are some points lecturers can be more involved in the learning process (Participant 6, DU: 22; Participant 5, DU: 34).

In line with the above notion, [Khoiriyati et al., \(2021\)](#) argued that clarifications, explanations, as well as interpretations in the e-learning method might be less effective than the traditional method of learning. The learning process is much easier with the use of face-to-face encounters with instructors or teachers. With the problem of interaction and lack of guidance from lecturers, students are having difficulty understanding the material given in e-learning (Participant 5, DU: 28). The difficulty in understanding the materials was also due to the quantity. As many lecturers uploaded an overwhelmingly big number of learning materials, it creates difficulty in understanding the course (Participant 5, DU: 32).

Another difficulty faced by students is that some lecturers give raw learning materials, with insufficient explanation. Moreover, in one of the courses, the lecturer only gives the outlines, so students are responsible to come up with the content of the course. Participant 4 felt that it is very difficult, especially when no

clear guidance is given. Finally, all problems that face learners could create self-demotivation. For some, seeing piled up reading materials, without understanding the material, makes them lazy and unmotivated to learn. Participant 8 said:

*It makes students lazy. Especially when lecturers give too many materials to read, too many, and it is asynchronous, not synchronous. Not through a zoom meeting, only e-learning, if it is e-learning, mostly in my batch not all of them, people like me in the batch 2020, mostly only 40% are those who really read all materials on time, the rest would delay (Participant 8, DU: 99)*

The effectiveness of ALM may be the most anticipated discussion in this study. When all informants were asked about their perception of the effectiveness of asynchronous learning, the theme ‘The effectiveness of Asynchronous learning’ emerged. The themes comprise three categories, namely asynchronous pedagogy, feelings towards asynchronous learning, and indicators of success. Over two decades ago, the mode of asynchronous online instruction provided the opportunity for the realization of highly desirable pedagogical practices and processes that are difficult if not impossible in a conventional classroom course. The argument comes into realization when information technology is developed and penetrated in education. Nevertheless, when the world suddenly incorporated the asynchronous learning method into their program due to Covid-19, many teachers and lecturers are not ready with effective asynchronous pedagogy. Consequently, many students experience difficulties in benefitting from asynchronous courses.

The most common complaint about asynchronous learning is the monotonous teaching method that is commonly used by lecturers. Many lecturers practice nothing but uploading articles and asking students to understand and answer the questions. Participant 4, for example, complained:

*Honestly, that materials uploaded in the e-learning are very monotonous, because the content is boring, giving huge number of e-books, so we can't understand what is delivered by the lecturer, that's why we need to learn from other media (Participant 4, DU: 32)*

Additionally, Participant 8 argued:

*Not only written materials, such as words and pdf, reading the pdf can be done later on because there is a quiz. So, it is very difficult to read because you know we have a tendency to dislike readings, especially in Indonesia, people are too lazy to read. in my case, I feel like lazy to read, so if it is video, it would ease more, we can just listen to it, it is easier to listen to people than reading (Participant 8, DU: 107)*

From the above complaints, it is obvious that there are problems related to pedagogy that need to be properly addressed. Effective teaching and learning do not take place and students are unable to maximize their potential. Many informants pointed out the fact that asynchronous learning does not incorporate effective teaching in which many lecturers fill up e-learning with journals and articles, without any instructional activity. Some informants emphasized the importance of lecturers’ explanations for the topic covered, so the materials are not only about reading but also should serve the needs of visual and auditory, through audiovisual (Participant 3, DU: 45). Furthermore, two informants argued that some courses are not suitable to be conducted asynchronously. One of them is Arabic, especially when the students have zero basics of the Arabic Language. In addition, if the course is presented with only uploading books that are written in Arabic. Some students suggested that lecturers need to be enriched with e-

learning pedagogy. They also need to be more creative and innovative in developing learning materials for asynchronous learning.

Satisfaction is an underlying indicator of success in various learning environments, especially online modalities (Arifa, 2020). Therefore, it is important to listen to what students feel about asynchronous learning. Many informants feel dissatisfied with the asynchronous learning method. Many reasons appeared to be the factors for their dissatisfaction. One of the informants, Participant 5, pointed out the way learning is carried out, which in her view, it does not feel like studying at university. As she may expect more interactions and discussions, compared to one-way communication.

When the informants were asked whether ALM has successfully delivered its objective, many aspects that could indicate success or failure were mentioned. One of the informants linked the success of asynchronous learning with the level of students' participation. Participant 6, for instance, said:

*In my opinion, if the number of students submitted the works is more than those who do not submit, it can be considered as successful, because asynchronous learning actually, we actually learn, but without the direct guidance, it just like independent learning you know (Participant 6, DU: 10)*

On the other hand, Participant 1 emphasized the consistency and continuity of the program. In her view, if asynchronous learning continues to be employed, it can be considered a successful program (Participant 1, DU: 6). Nonetheless, one of the informants, Participant 5, seemed to be confused as she could not decide whether the program was successful or not. She feels that many people can learn, and at the same time, she views asynchronous programs as not suitable for many people. While Participant 7 viewed that it depends on the students themselves, he believes that it is effective for him. Almost similarly, Participant 2 believed that the asynchronous learning method is considered successfully effective during the pandemic season even though he witnessed many institutions have not leveled up themselves to use the asynchronous learning method.

### **Aspirations for Improvement**

When informants were asked about their aspirations in improving asynchronous learning methods, the theme 'Aspiration for improvement' emerged. The theme comprises two categories, namely consideration and system development. As a result of the pandemic, many people are facing financial difficulty. Many would argue that online learning costs less than physical face to face classes. However, online learning affects many people economically, especially when it comes to the internet data plan. One of the informants, Participant 1, urged the university management to consider decreasing tuition fees and giving out internet data plan aid. This policy should be considered as many students are financially affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another aspiration for consideration was voiced regarding the assignment submission policy. In this case, Participant 6 proposed:

*Give more space of time, more time because in asynchronous learning it has submission system, to submit all assignments, for example, an assignment should be submitted within certain time limit, such as a day, some only few hours, the shortest is 24 hours, in my opinion, the time limit should be extended to the next week class because it will help students to answer and allow them complete all the assignments (Participant 6, DU: 36)*

Some informants come up with aspirations to improve the e-learning

system. Their aspirations were based on their experience as e-learning users. Participant 2, for instance, pointed to the problem of missing the class, which can be avoided with a notification system. The notification system can be optimized if it is incorporated into mobile applications. With that system, students will be reminded when they have assignments, or when lecturers upload new learning materials in e-learning. Participant 5 added that the system should help lecturers in identifying whether the students have completed reading required learning materials, so lecturers can give consequences for those who do not read. On the other hand, Participant 3 pointed to the maximum capacity of e-learning when receiving uploaded files, as students sometimes need to upload assignments with a size bigger than what can be accommodated by the system. With upgrading the capacity, it would help students in optimizing their work.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study imply that students get used to having Asynchronous Learning Method (ALM) as their learning method. They enjoy the positive sides of ALM such as flexibility, independence, and room to improve the knowledge they acquired. Although, many students feel that they are burdened with too many assignments given by lecturers. Some technical difficulties were found in using ALM, however, since ALM does not require real-time response, all technical issues can be handled accordingly. One of the informants downloaded materials from e-learning and saved them on his computer, which is a smart way to avoid internet connection problems. ALM could also be widely used by educational institutions not only within the period of the pandemic. It has the potential to be used during a normal period. Nevertheless, the use of ALM has not yet been optimized by lecturers. Many lecturers were trapped in the monotonous method of interaction, by uploading articles and leaving them without giving an explanation, or room for students to be engaged in virtual discussions. As an instructional method, ALM should include teaching in any way possible such as video or audio files to at least give a simple explanation about teaching materials uploaded. As undergraduate students, the informants aspired to their high expectation that if it is well managed, ALM can be a very effective tool for teaching and learning, especially in higher learning institutions. Therefore, besides upgrading the technology used in online learning in general and specifically ALM, universities should consider enriching lecturers with online asynchronous pedagogical skills. In the future, ALM could be continuously used even after the Covid-19 pandemic is over.

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