

## **Indonesian EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Challenges and Solutions in Distance Learning Context**

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**Abstract:** Since the Covid-19 phenomenon until the present, distance learning has become a common learning method. This learning method makes participation in the learning activity easier and more superficial for students, as the activity can be completed anywhere via online platforms and devices such as laptops and smartphones. However, many students still face obstacles when learning through this mode, which necessitates the development of solutions. While research on the challenges and solutions of distance learning from the perspective of general students has been conducted, little has been conducted from the perspective of Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers. This study, thus aimed to examine the distance learning challenges and solutions encountered by 10 Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers who were invited to be the participants of this study through a purposive sampling technique. The results show that the EFL pre-service teachers face four major challenges in distance learning, namely: network, platform, instruction and interaction, and boredom. As they must engage in distance learning activities, they must implement solutions to the associated difficulties. The solutions are finding a location with a good and stable internet connection, utilizing Wi-Fi, and preparing a backup of internet data, self-teaching or consulting with peers to master the application's functionality, asking the instructors in groups or individually, and being self-motivated. This study suggests that the government, educators, and parents must assist them.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Distance Learning, EFL, Solutions, Students' Experience

### **A. Introduction**

The use of technology as a learning medium is vital in this modern era as technology now plays a significant part in the success of the learning activity in distant learning. In addition, due to the Covid-19 virus phenomena, governments, teachers, and educational institutions in all countries were forced to replace face-to-face learning with a distance learning model in order to prevent the Covid-19 virus from spreading (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

To counter educational interference in the Covid-19 outbreak, universities and institutes in Ukraine, for example, implemented distance learning (Shevchenko et al., 2021). In accordance with the Polish Ministry of National Education's decision to

establish distance learning under such conditions (Kruszewska et al., 2022). Similarly, educational institutions in Indonesia have employed either hybrid or total distance learning as a response to this situation (Irfan & Ariandi, 2021). In other words, the use of technology, particularly distant learning platforms, is now widespread in the majority of the world's countries (Mukarromah & Wijayanti, 2021).

Distance learning is a learning activity in which the knowledge is transferred using an image, video, audio, and application supported by an internet connection (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). It means that the students and teachers do not need to meet face-to-face during the teaching and learning process. As this kind of learning activity does not require them to interact directly, it can be done at a distance and from different places (Sa'imah et al., 2023). Many platforms can be used in online learning activities, such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and E-learning. These platforms cannot just be used as a solution to the pandemic, but it also helps the teacher to share their material simply and easily (Santosa et al., 2022). Teachers and students can exchange and receive the material with merely a reliable Internet connection. They do not need to spend money on travelling to class, nor do they need to wear professional attire, because the learning activity is limited to the camera. Moreover, this learning mode could improve and expand innovation in education, strengthen skills, provide more adaptable media for learning, and be utilized by learners of all ages (Dhawan, 2020).

However, despite its capability of helping either teachers or students to quickly and simply share and receive the material, this learning model has some challenges in its implication. (Parkes et al., 2015), in their research about online learning implementation in universities involving students and staff, found that students need more preparation in an online learning mode, which includes e-learning and academic competencies, collaborating and critical thinking skills, also time management ability. Furthermore, other studies (Atsani, 2020)(Nambiar, 2020); (Yuzulia, 2021) have also shown that the shift from the conventional method to the online learning one is not simple, as all of the people who work in the field will face problems in some aspects such as facilities, time, costs, technology, health especially for the eye, unclear interaction and direction, low interest and motivation, lousy connection and ineffective understanding of the material from the teacher, as well as the location from where the students access the class may affect their success in the online learning activity (Nurlina et al., 2023).

As in Indonesia, there are still a significant number of rural areas with poor or no internet connectivity (Aliyah et al., 2023). When an internet connection is accessible, the cost of internet data is relatively expensive. In addition, lack of student-teacher interaction and the disorganized nature of remote learning create a new issue (Syafri & Saude, 2022). Another study by (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021) who surveyed 386 students via messenger, e-mail, WhatsApp, and Facebook, revealed that the weaknesses of online learning in Indonesia are the students' low motivation and discipline, as well as the boredom they experienced during online meetings, praxis, and assignments (Nugraha et al., 2023).

To sum up, there are so many challenges and obstacles in remote or distance learning which may reduce learners' achievement. As online learning is only done through the screen and some applications work on an internet connection, this will significantly affect the students who live in rural areas, making it hard to join the class or get cut off in the middle of the meeting. Then, the price of internet quota is relatively high and can make students unable to join the class, as not all students have a good economic condition. Unclear instruction and ineffective material received from the instructor will make the learning activity useless as it makes students hard fitting in with this learning model. Those problems clearly will bring boredom and fatigue for the students. Not just that, it will also bring a subtraction of students' discipline and motivation in learning. It will make students lack interaction with their teachers and friends. So, when they need to discuss something in a group, it will not run well as it is only finite in the online meeting, and it will be hard for the students to deliver their idea expressively. Thus, it will influence the result of students' learning and discussion, whether it will be less and undeveloped or vice versa.

Regarding the aforementioned challenges in distance learning, it is imperative to be aware of those challenges and to find solutions to those challenges so that future teachers or instructors can find the best ways to anticipate and overcome them. Previous studies have only focused on challenges in distance learning, while very few offer the possible solutions. Furthermore, most of the studies were focusing on students in general, not specifically for the EFL pre-service teachers, especially in the Indonesian context. Thus, this study is aimed to fill the lacuna by exploring the challenges or obstacles faced by the Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers in distance learning. This study also focuses on the solutions they used to overcome those obstacles so that it can be better implemented. For this purpose, the following two questions guide the investigation (1) What challenges do the EFL pre-service teachers face in distance learning? And (2) How do they overcome those challenges?

## **B. Methods**

### **Research design**

This research was conducted using a qualitative method, which is used to investigate, comprehend, and explain the social phenomenon faced or experienced by an individual or groups (Creswell, 2014). The design of this research was phenomenological case study which describes the participants' experiences of a phenomenon that is involving interview for the data collection (Giorgi, 2009). Also, the phenomenon in which it will describe the participants' experience based on how they run into it (Bevan, 2014).

### **Research participants**

This study was conducted in an English Education department at a state university in North Sumatra, Indonesia. This research involved ten 7th semester students as the participants of the study, who were selected using a purposive sampling strategy to meet the research purpose. In the case, the participants need to be in their final year of study as at this time they have completed the teaching

practicum and can officially be called as 'pre-service teachers'. As an ethical consideration, the researchers did not use the participants' names yet scientific terms such as participant 1, participant 2, and so on (look at Table 1 for details).

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Number	Participant	Gender	Age (Years)	Semester
1.	Participant 1	Female	21	7
2.	Participant 2	Female	21	7
3.	Participant 3	Female	21	7
4.	Participant 4	Female	22	7
5.	Participant 5	Female	21	7
6.	Participant 6	Female	21	7
7.	Participant 7	Female	21	7
8.	Participant 8	Male	21	7
9.	Participant 9	Male	21	7
10.	Participant 10	Male	23	7

### Data collection and data analysis

The data in this study were collected by using reflective journals and in-depth interview. Ten participants were asked to record their experience during one semester of distance learning implementation in the form of reflective journal to get description about the challenges they faced and solutions they used in distance learning. Each participant had to write three reflective journals in total. Reflective journal is claimed as the factual way in gaining information of someone's inkling (Cohen et al., 2007). The in-depth interview was done in order to get more specific information about the challenges and solutions of distance learning for the EFL pre-service teachers. The participants were interviewed for half an hour. The interview section was adapted from (Ossiannilsson, 2020) in which the questions were related to five main aspects, namely accessibility, network aspect, platform, motivation, and interface dimension. The questions were semi-structured, and the interview was done using Bahasa to allow the participants to express their experience in distance learning. Then, building upon the participants' consent, the interview was recorded in audio and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

As suggested by (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data were analyzed using three steps. The first step was data reduction, which consisted of selecting the focus and essential data to be used, and ignoring irrelevant data. The NVivo software was used to transcribe and highlight the data from the interview section, while the reflective journal was manually highlighted to obtain the data focus. The second step was data display in narrative or descriptive form and as a table or figure; in this study, the data were presented in narrative form. The final step was the conclusion where the data

taken from the beginning, causality, and other proportions that could generate novelty were examined.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

#### **Challenges in Distance Learning for EFL Pre-Service Teachers**

After analyzing the data from the interviews and reflective journals of the EFL pre-service teachers, it was determined that the EFL pre-service teachers face a number of obstacles during the implementation of distance learning.

#### *Network*

The network is the most crucial aspect of learning and teaching via distance education; therefore, it must be effectively implemented. However, distance learning networks have emerged as the most common obstacle for the participants. As stated by these following participants below, the network is the most significant obstacle in distance learning.

A network cannot be controlled, and not just because of its location. Occasionally, network errors are also caused by the internet server or the SIM card used to access the internet. (Participant 1, Reflective journal 1)

As the Wi-Fi user in my home, I also experience internet connection issues when the Wi-Fi server encounters an error. In addition, when the power goes out, I will have difficulty joining the class because the Wi-Fi will be disabled. (Participant 2, Reflective journal 4)

Due to the error in the connection server, the internet connection became unstable, thereby hindering the use of the distance learning platform. For instance, if I am using WhatsApp or Zoom Meeting and the network server experiences an error, I will have to repeatedly log in and out, making it difficult to access the content. In addition, sending assignments annoy me. (Participant 9, Interview)

Participants in the study were aware that the internet's stability must be secured. Evidently, network errors resulting from the use of Wi-Fi or a mobile data card were able to cause an unstable internet connection, making it difficult for students to join the class properly. A server issue with their internet SIM card was also cited by other participants as one of the causes of network issues in distance learning, which prevented them from having a positive experience with the format.

Then, another network issue occurred due to the participants location, which can be described as a rural area with a poor internet connection, as online learning required a good and stable connection for a satisfactory learning experience. According to the following comments from study participants.

The internet connection was the most difficult aspect of distance education for me. At my residence, the network is unstable and difficult to locate. During the rainy season, every internet SIM card in my hometown has a poor internet connection. (Participant 5, Interview)

As the internet connection in my village is still sluggish, the network issue hinders my educational pursuits. (Participant 6, Reflective Journal 17)

In my hometown, the internet connection frequently dropped, making it difficult for me to attend class, so I find the poor internet connection to be very annoying. (Participant 7, Reflective journal 19)

The unstable connection at my residence makes it difficult for me to join the class regularly. When the Zoom Meeting began, it was difficult for me to join and I was constantly joining and leaving, making it difficult to obtain the material. (Participant 8, Interview)

Because I reside in a rural area, connecting to a reliable internet connection requires considerable effort. I required assistance joining the class. This caused me to miss almost all of the class sections. (Participant 10, Interview)

Due to the participants' rural location and unstable Internet connection, they were frequently absent from class and required an improved educational experience. The conditions prevented them from successfully receiving information. Then, a power outage and a Wi-Fi server error impacted their ability to properly join the class meeting.

### ***Platform***

In addition to being essential for distance learning, the use of a platform becomes a challenge for EFL pre-service teachers, as agreed and stated by the participants below.

I am sometimes confused by the use of distance learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, E-Learning, and others. It occasionally causes me anxiety because I frequently forget how to operate the application. Besides that, the limited use of the application infuriates me because it will disrupt the learning activity and delay the lecture's explanation. Re-joining the class takes a considerable amount of time and lessens study time. (Participant 1, Interview)

Distance learning necessitates that I be able to operate some new applications, that typically causes me to be mystified because it is something new for me. When I need to share my screen, I am typically confused, requiring me to sometimes remember to mute and unmute my microphone because I am not accustomed with doing so. (Participant 5, Reflective journal 13)

I always need assistance in order to use the platform or application for distance learning, as it causes me to become confused. I am frequently confused about submitting assignments via Google Classroom and e-learning, and I struggle with sharing the screen during presentations. (Participant 10, Interview)

Important platforms and applications in distance learning, such as WhatsApp, E-learning, Zoom, Google Drive, YouTube, and Google Meet, were difficult for students to operate and run. They became confused by the novelty and lacked knowledge of the operation of technology as a learning medium. Their unfamiliarity with using online platforms and applications as a learning medium contributed to their confusion. In addition, restricted access to the platforms impeded the learning process, thereby delaying it.

### ***Instruction and Interaction***

In this section, the participants also identified problems with instruction and interaction that impeded their understanding and proficiency. As stated by the research participants listed below.

In distance learning, I commonly obtain unclear instruction and misinterpretation from the lecturer, as when they enter the online class, they assign us tasks without explanation, causing us to have questions. Due to the inability to interact with the lecturer, it is difficult to comprehend what is being said in certain lectures. (Participant 2, Interview)

It is difficult for me to process the lecture material because we rarely do practical sections in the learning activity. The material becomes exclusively theoretical, making it difficult for me to comprehend. Because the material is only theoretical, I need clarification when I have to put it into practice. For example, in my teacher training program, I am required to teach English subjects to students, but I needed clarification on how to deliver the material. In addition, I was occasionally confused by the lecturer's explanations, as we were simply given assignments and told to find information on the internet. (Participant 3, Reflective journal 5)

Due to the fact that all of the material for this learning was obtained solely from the internet, it is difficult to find an authentic source of information when participating in distance learning. Due to the limitations of distance learning, the instruction is occasionally difficult to comprehend because some orders may be overlooked. (Participant 8, Interview)

The pre-service EFL teachers encountered instructional and interpersonal challenges as the lecturer gave them unclear instructions without a thorough explanation. In addition, the lack of face-to-face interaction with the instructor led to a negative learning experience, as the material was presented theoretically and not practically, resulting in poor reception. This negatively impacts their ability to teach in the location where they received their teacher training.

### ***Boredom***

As the EFL pre-service teachers' learning activity was restricted to the screen of their smartphone or laptop, boredom poses a challenge for distance learning.

In the context of distance learning, I always have problem receiving lecture materials. The learning activity is only accessible through an online platform, which is tedious because I only see a screen and interaction is limited. (Participant 4, Reflective journal 12)

I used to be bored by learning activities because I was required to sit in the same place and could only interact via the online platform; it exhausted me. (Participant 6, Reflective journal 18)

The learning activity in distance learning is not varied. It is consistent on a daily basis. Consequently, it frustrates me and makes me too lazy to join the class properly. (Participant 7, Interview)

I have difficulty adapting to this learning activity because I prefer to learn through practice; therefore, having to sit still in front of a laptop for hours makes me bored and unmotivated to pay attention to the lecture. (Participant 9, Interview)

Distance learning involves participants to spend a lot of time in front of a computer, resulting in boredom and laziness. As a consequence, participants will not maximize their following and attention in class, causing them to miss the explanation and have a diminished understanding of the theory. The very same category of daily learning activity will also cause fatigue for participants who necessitate praxis, as it is easier for them to accept the theory through practice.

### **Solutions in Distance Learning for EFL Pre-Service Teachers**

In accordance with the challenges that the participants experienced in distance learning, they concurred that they were also aware of the solutions to overcome it in order to participate in the activity. As a result of the data analysis, some solutions to the problems in distance learning were identified.

#### ***Network***

Here, the EFL pre-service teacher demonstrates their approach to overcoming network challenges, as stated by the study participants below.

To overcome the poor internet access in my hometown, I usually seek out a location with a strong connection. A location where an Internet connection is possible. (Participant 5, Reflective journal 14)

I used Wi-Fi as my internet connection to make it possible and simple for me to join the class, because the network is superior when using this access. (Participant 7, Reflective journal 20)

The participants agreed that finding a spot that can support an internet connection and using Wi-Fi as an alternative to connect to the internet are the most common methods because they are the most efficient. Then, according to another participant, the EFL pre-service teacher who has used Wi-Fi but still faces some obstacles has a solution.

In order to remain connected to the internet despite a Wi-Fi server error or loss of power, I typically prepare internet data. To prevent me from skipping class. (Participant 3, Interview)

The participants' ability to overcome a Wi-Fi server error and power outage was bolstered by the availability of Internet data as a backup. Participant believed that using Internet data as an alternative to continue connecting to the internet in the event of a Wi-Fi connection error would allow them to join the class effectively.

#### ***Platform***

During the class meeting, every participant agreed that they had the exact solution to their difficulties in operating the platform. As stated by one of the study participants.

In order to resolve my problem with using the platforms, I obtained the information via the internet. It is possible to learn by doing. When I do not know how



to operate a platform, I search YouTube for instructions and practice before or during class. In addition, I will ask and inform my friend about the issue I am facing, so if they are cognizant, they will inform and teach me. (Participant 8, Interview)

The behavior of using the Internet and sharing with peers demonstrated that in distance learning, EFL pre-service teachers must comprehend the use of all involved platforms and learn it independently. In addition, the participants' ability and desire to learn by doing encourages them to figure out the best way to operate online applications in distance learning, as they require it for their learning success.

#### **Instruction and Interaction**

In this section, EFL pre-service teachers coincident and demonstrated how they manage the instructional and interpersonal challenges. As stated by the following study participants, the responses pertained to their capacity for online communication and discussion.

Regarding the instruction's ambiguity, I will consult a friend who is better able to comprehend it than I am. We conduct the sharing and discussion section on occasion by using WhatsApp the most. (Participant 3, Reflective journal 6)

So then, I will attempt to contact my instructor privately in order to clarify the task's instructions and the class's material by using online applications such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and others. In addition, I will use Google to seek a further explanation. (Participant 2, Interview)

Contacting them privately or with a few of my friends is the best way for me to obtain more specific instructions and details. (Participant 10, Interview)

The participants agreed that, in addition to contacting the lecturer privately, the sharing and discussion section on instruction and interaction problems could help EFL pre-service teachers obtain lecturers' explanations. Therefore, they utilized online applications to overcome the obstacles and acquire more accurate information. The applications consisted of WhatsApp and Zoom Meeting.

#### **Boredom**

Regarding the problem of boredom, respondents indicated that their solution was related to motivation from themselves or their environment. As stated by the following participants in this study *infra*.

I usually consider my parents whenever I become sluggish or bored in class. Consider my responsibility and the impact it would have on me if I simply ignored the class or let it slide. (Participant 4, Reflective journal 10)

My friends used to motivate me to endure boredom. When I observed them actively participating in the class activity, I became agitated and began to exert extra effort to maintain concentration throughout the class. (Participant 6, Interview)

Whenever I'm bored in class, I will try to recall my future ambitions, my responsibility for enrolling in college, and all the work I have put in thus far. In addition, the realization that my parents are the key to my success compelled me to focus on the class. (Participant 9, Interview)

Realizing internal and external motivation was the best solution that the study participants applied in overcoming boredom challenges in the distance learning

activity. The students' awareness of their own self-motivations encouraged them to continue focusing on the class and participating in the learning activity that is dependent on the social treatment surrounding them.

## **Discussion**

This study was primarily concerned with the EFL pre-service teachers' difficulties with distance learning and their strategies for overcoming those difficulties. According to the results of this study, the participants shared a variety of challenges with the implementation of distance learning. The most challenge faced by the participants was network, as according to the research conducted by (Safford & Stinton, 2016), attempting to utilize their online platform, distance learning students encountered connectivity issues. Then, challenges, platform, instruction and interaction, and boredom followed. During the network challenges, the EFL pre-service teachers who utilized internet data packages experienced a sluggish internet connection. It is because their residence was in a rural area, and the situation deteriorated during the rainy season. The finding was related to the invention that the quality of the network and frequent interruptions in rural areas may contribute to disparities in distance learning (Blizak et al., 2020). In addition, the error Wi-Fi server and power failure render the connection unstable or nonexistent. In line with that, (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022) said that the loss of electricity and error cannot be avoided in online classes.

This obstacle will significantly impact the student's learning experience, as it will prevent them from accepting a decent education. According to (Almegren & Yassin, 2013), student's dissatisfaction with the network's stability and quality stems from their terrible Internet connection. Even worse, they will miss the entire class activity, which will adversely impact their academic performance because they will not receive the lecture's information and explanation, rendering the learning activity ineffective. They needed a better educational experience. This is reliable to (Setlhako, 2014), who stated that distance learning considered student's incapable of studying because they lacked adequate access to course materials.

Subsequently, the EFL pre-service teachers in distance learning also met platform issues. The participants agreed that using online applications as learning media causes them confusion and anxiousness because it is a novel experience for them. They had to remember how to share the screen in Zoom meetings, mute and unmute, and submit assignments through Google classroom or E-learning were the source of the issue. Additionally, the limited platform frustrates the participants. They were irritated by the fact that they must rejoin the class after the allotted time has expired, as it consumes valuable study time to reassemble everyone for the next section.

Because of the newness of distance learning, participants are frequently unfamiliar with its applications, indicating that they are incapable of using technology as a learning medium. In accordance with the result of (A.K, 2012) study, a significant number of students in higher education lack proficiency with technology such as computers and the internet. Then, a lack of technological knowledge inhibits the

success of distance learning activities, as the participants did not use online study platforms in offline classes. It indicates that they needed a greater understanding of technology. As (Zacharis, 2015) asserted on his research that a lack of technological knowledge on the part of the students creates a delay in distance learning activities and the receipt of materials. In addition, students need more support to use and manage technology to succeed in online learning effectively (Rasheed et al., 2020).

Further, another challenge which the challenge of instruction and interaction has a variety of impacts on the participants since it is widely known that future English teachers require a significant amount of praxis to apply the theory they have learned in class. However, they only received theoretical information without practice during distance learning, making it challenging to apply the theory in the teaching practicum location. It occurred due to a lack of interaction with the lectures because participants only engaged in learning activities through their laptop or smartphone screens. In line with that, (Adnan, 2020), reported on their study that distance learning instruction did not produce a positive outcome due to the lack of interaction and instruction. Students claim that online learning is quite effective for completing assignments; however, because it cannot provide a complete and precise subject explanation, it does not affect learning effectiveness (Adnan, 2020)(Kizilcec et al., 2015)

The unclear assignment instructions make it difficult for EFL pre-service teachers to receive a material explanation from their lecturers, particularly regarding material related to the teaching English method. From this perspective, it is clear that the academic aspect of EFL pre-service teachers will decline due to their inability to obtain material information, which will cause them to miss class sections or join classes for no reason. According to (Rotas et al., 2020), the module's instruction and the material provided to students are inappropriate for distance learning. It could result from the distance learning instructors needing more knowledge and experience (T. Chen et al., 2020). They can ask questions and receive immediate feedback, unlike offline classes where the instructor provides instructions. In other words, students are more engaged in offline than online classes. According to (Skulmowski & Rey, 2020), distance learning requires significant effort to maintain a sense of community and interaction.

Then the study participants experienced that distance learning necessitates that learner spend hours in front of a computer screen or mobile device. Due to the limited learning conditions, EFL pre-service teachers were forced to endure boredom. The statement in line with (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021) findings, students become bored because distance learning is conducted exclusively online and is restricted to internet connections and devices.

As a result of their reluctance to attend and participate in class, boredom will negatively affect their ability to learn. Lack of social interaction contributes to their boredom, which in turn stimulates their laziness (Efriana, 2021). Laziness made it difficult for the participants to receive the material and rendered them incapable of comprehending the information. As a consequence of missing the lecturer's explanation, they were also unable to teach effectively in the teaching practicum location and choose the most effective method for teaching English.

Nonetheless, as distance learning becomes a common learning method in educational institutions, especially for EFL pre-service teachers, they must be able to adapt to this method and all its learning activities, whether or not they are prepared. Also, distance learning obstacles can be mitigated by the fact that today's instructors and students have access to technology-based learning tools (Byun & Slavin, 2020). Consequently, in overcoming the obstacles they faced, they have also developed solutions that, according to them, can resolve the issues.

In accordance with the findings, participants decided to address the network challenge by relocating to a location with a reliable internet connection. Then, other participants added that they chose to connect to the internet via a Wi-Fi provider. Similar to the findings of (Santosa et al., 2022), students who struggled with the internet connection for distance learning opted to use Wi-Fi or other internet providers for the highest quality connection. Then, participants who were already utilizing Wi-Fi but were still encountering difficulties had decided to prepare and utilize an internet data package as a backup to maintain connectivity. Aside from that, the government's role in overcoming this type of challenge is indeed crucial. This assertion is supported by (Rotas et al., 2020), who argued that the government must provide adequate access to technology such as the internet and electricity, particularly in remote areas.

Concerning the platform issue, the EFL pre-service teachers overcame it by self-studying via the internet, such as YouTube and Google. In addition, they attempted to learn how to operate the platform by asking and exchanging information with their peers. In regards, familiarizing themselves with the online platform through teaching and learning activities will enable them to operate the platform effectively during distance learning activities, as students are the most proficient users of technology (Prensky, 2001). Also, in distance learning, the use of online platforms is crucial to the success of the learning activity. The statement supported by (Alturise, 2020) who discovered that in distance learning, the students' and teachers' ability to use and operate online applications is necessary for learning stability.

Additionally, they will be able to track and understand technological advancement. Because technology features such as the internet are used minimally in offline classes, students are unaware that numerous platforms can be used as learning media. In addition, creating a technology training section for the students will enhance their participation in class. As discovered that the technology training provided to students increased their participation and engagement in online learning activities (Dutta & Smita, 2020).

Then, it was agreed that the participants' difficulties with instruction and interaction in receiving information about the English teaching method could be resolved by contacting their lecturer individually or as a team. It is consistent with (O'Doherty et al., 2018), who stated that forming a team can eliminate the communication barrier, along with using Google and a sharing and discussion section with their peers. They exclusively communicate through online applications, with WhatsApp being the most popular. The statement is supported by (Nuraini et al., 2020), which states that communication in distance learning can be conducted via a

variety of online application features, such as voice calls and video conferences. Also, in line with (Kaid M & Rashad, 2019), said that cell phone availability and online social media platforms such as Zoom, Google, and WhatsApp would enable interaction and success in the distance learning context. Class meeting recording is an additional option for addressing the problems with instruction and interaction. So that when EFL pre-service teachers miss or are confused about certain explanations, they can access the recording they previously made to re-listen to the lecture's instruction and explanation.

Then in relevant with boredom issue, the participants believed that they were aware of their self-motivation to stabilize their learning activity. The participants used to consider their efforts in college, as well as their parents' efforts in educating them until they reached the university level. In addition, noticing their learning environment and the people around them prompted them to maintain concentration on the class meeting. For instance, if they observe that their peers are participating actively in class, they will be motivated to do the same, which will increase their participation and make them more focused on their studies. This indicated that motivation was the most important factor for students to be actively engaged in distance learning activities which related to the social treatment of learners to increase their motivation (Midgley et al., 1995).

Similarly, other solutions can be used to overcome the boredom challenge, as the boredom issue relates to the motivation of EFL pre-service teachers, which can be addressed using self-determination and self-efficacy theories. Self-determination refers to how distance-learning students can be aware of their three needs: task competency awareness, a sense of control, and a sense of inclusion or affiliation with others that is related to their self and will (C. Chen & Jang, 2010). Then, self-efficacy is related to the capability of distance learning in determining a student's self-regulation and how they insist on distance learning activity, which depends on the student's interaction with their environment (Garrison et al., 1999).

Consequently, the results of this research demonstrated that EFL pre-service teachers were aware of the obstacles they experienced in distance learning, which enabled them to find appropriate solutions that, according to them, were effective in overcoming the above obstacles. However, the proposed solutions could be utilized to precisely address the issues.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the challenges and solutions of Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers in a distance learning context. It was determined that the challenges they faced and the solutions they received fell into four categories: network, platform, instruction and interaction, and boredom. Finding a location with a good and stable internet connection, utilizing Wi-Fi, and preparing a backup of an internet data package were the solutions they employed. Autodidactically or by consulting with their peers, they mastered the application's operation. Asked the instructors in groups or individually and made themselves aware of the self-motivation that is also triggered by their environment. Therefore, this study proposes

several solutions that can be utilized to overcome the obstacles. It is the government's responsibility to provide sufficient internet access for students so that they can attend class in comfort when there are network issues. Providing students with technological training to prepare them to use online platforms for distance learning activities. Then, they may use the recording feature of an online application or a cell phone during class to assist them in reviewing the lecture's instruction and explanation. Moreover, implementing theories of self-determination and self-efficacy will likely aide them in motivating themselves to overcome boredom in distance learning. Nonetheless, this study has a number of limitations. First, it was limited by the number of participants, which comprised only a small proportion of the majority of English Education students. Second, this study focused solely on the challenges and solutions of distance learning for Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers, but did not identify the factors that led to the emergence of these challenges and solutions. Therefore, the next researcher should involve more participants and provide an additional perspective on the challenges and solutions in EFL pre-service teacher distance learning.

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