

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

As human beings, the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and learning is a fundamental obligation and a cornerstone of personal and societal development. Education equips individuals with the skills, understanding, and values needed to navigate and contribute to an ever-changing world. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, the process of learning must adapt to technological advancements to remain effective and relevant. Education in the 21st century is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities, including digitalization, inclusivity, mental health, data-driven decision-making, and the urgent need for lifelong learning, all of which require educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to collaboratively adapt to ensure education remains a powerful force for individual and societal growth in this digital age (Srivastava, 2023). The integration of digital tools into educational systems reflects the ongoing effort to enhance both teaching and learning experiences across all levels of education.

The advancement of digital technology has reshaped the dynamics of higher education globally, including in Indonesia. One significant shift has

been the increasing integration of synchronous online learning into university curricula. In many higher education institutions, current academic policies allow lecturers to conduct up to 30% of the total sessions per semester through synchronous online platforms. This policy reflects the broader transformation of learning behaviors and systems within higher education institutions, where technology is once viewed as a secondary support tool that has now become a primary facility for instructional delivery. Thelma et al. (2024) emphasize that successful technology integration into curriculum design requires aligning digital tools with learning objectives, prioritizing professional development for educators, employing continuous assessment strategies, and engaging all stakeholders such as educators, students, parents, and policymakers are in a collaborative process to ensure that technological adoption is not only effective but also sustainable and responsive to evolving educational needs.

As human beings, teaching and learning are not only professional responsibilities but also spiritual obligations, especially within Islamic educational institutions. In the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 125, Allah SWT commands:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Meaning:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”

This verse emphasizes the value of delivering knowledge using wisdom (*hikmah*) and effective communication (*mau'izah hasanah*), which directly correlates with the adoption of synchronous online learning as a strategic method of instruction. At UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, embracing technology serves not only an academic purpose but also fulfills a spiritual mandate is to spread beneficial knowledge in the most effective, meaningful, and ethical manner.

In light of this perspective, the implementation of synchronous online learning can be seen as a practical extension of the commitment to share knowledge wisely and meaningfully. The shift toward digital instruction is not merely a response to technological advancement but also a deliberate effort to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of education. Santiago et al. (2021) emphasize that flexible learning, which integrates both digital and non-digital technologies through online, offline, or blended modes, ensures inclusive and accessible education by utilizing widely available tools like smartphones, Google Classroom, and Google Meet, while also highlighting

the importance of student proficiency, engagement, and the need for content tailored to learners' needs to enhance the overall teaching and learning experience. By aligning pedagogical strategies with both ethical communication and modern tools, institutions like UIN Antasari Banjarmasin aim to uphold the quality of learning while adapting to contemporary educational demands.

This change in learning modality has had substantial impacts on campus life, including work systems, teaching methods, and communication patterns. Lecturers, in particular, have had to transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to technology-driven models, such as synchronous online learning, requiring them to rapidly acquire digital competencies to maintain the quality of instruction. McBrien and Jones (2009) argue that the rapid development of technology has simplified distance learning, making it more accessible and flexible for both educators and students. Similarly, Clark and Post (2021) found that the combination of asynchronous and synchronous modes in blended learning environments enhances learning outcomes, particularly when students engage actively with eLearning materials prior to face-to-face or synchronous class participation.

As lecturers adapt to these evolving instructional demands, synchronous online learning has emerged as a practical solution to replicate aspects of conventional classroom interaction in virtual settings. It addresses the need for continuity in academic delivery while supporting the

development of new pedagogical approaches suited for digital environments. According to Samoylenko et al. (2022), ICT and e-learning tools are widely used at universities to manage the educational process, establish various forms of communication and interaction, conduct assessments and evaluate academic progress, as well as to organize team-based projects within blended learning environments, all while enhancing students' language and professional development. This approach not only aligns with modern educational expectations but also fosters a more interactive and student-centered learning experience, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of online instruction.

The implementation of synchronous online learning such as real-time, instructor-led sessions conducted through platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet (Marshall & Kostka, 2020) that provides the opportunity for direct interaction and immediate feedback between lecturers and students. Such interactivity mirrors the benefits of traditional face-to-face learning environments and allows lecturers to monitor student engagement more effectively, especially when students activate their cameras and participate actively. In line with this, research by Clark and Post (2021) revealed that active participation in synchronous sessions significantly contributes to students' performance, especially in achieving intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

While the benefits of synchronous online learning are evident,

particularly in fostering real-time interaction and enhancing academic performance in which its effectiveness depends heavily on both technological infrastructure and human readiness. The success of such learning environments is influenced not only by the availability of digital tools but also by the users' ability and willingness to engage meaningfully with them. Without adequate preparation and support, the potential of synchronous learning may not be fully realized. However, despite these potential advantages, synchronous online learning also presents challenges. Not all learners and lecturers are equally prepared to utilize educational communication technologies. A study conducted in the United Arab Emirates demonstrated that learners' motivation and readiness to engage in synchronous online environments directly influenced their ability to acquire essential knowledge and develop important cognitive and personal traits such as conceptualization, tolerance, and communication (Clark and Post, 2021). These findings underscore the importance of structured and accessible platforms to enhance knowledge acquisition through online learning.

Besides the practicality of synchronous online learning as a method of instructional delivery, several researchers have examined its implementation and effectiveness in various educational contexts. The first study was conducted by Adnan and Anwar (2020), which focused on higher education students' perceptions of synchronous online learning in Pakistan. The results indicated that this mode of learning could not effectively develop

students' knowledge due to limited access to internet services and inadequate digital infrastructure. Another study by Watts (2016) highlighted the importance of designing innovative online media to sustain student engagement and ensure high-quality education in online settings. Furthermore, research conducted in the United Arab Emirates, as reported in the Clark and Post (2021), found that students' motivation and readiness significantly influenced their ability to benefit from synchronous online learning, especially in developing cognitive and communication skills. These findings suggest that while synchronous online learning offers meaningful interaction and instructional continuity, it also presents significant challenges. In this study, the researcher will explore the implementation of synchronous online learning in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, specifically focusing on lecturers' perspectives regarding its benefits, challenges, and alignment with current institutional policies. This is particularly relevant as it marks one of the first large-scale integrations of synchronous online learning in the university's teaching and learning process.

In the context of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, the shift toward synchronous online learning raises questions about how lecturers perceive its implementation. Previous studies in different countries, such as by Adnan and Anwar (2020) in Pakistan, have shown mixed responses to this learning model, citing infrastructure limitations and inadequate access to internet services as barriers to effectiveness. In contrast, studies like that of Watts

(2016) emphasize the importance of innovation in online media design to keep students engaged and ensure the continuity of quality education. These contrasting perspectives highlight the complexity of implementing synchronous online learning across diverse educational settings. While some contexts struggle with foundational barriers like infrastructure and access, others focus on enhancing engagement through creative digital solutions. This variation underscores the need to examine localized experiences, such as those of lecturers at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, to gain a balanced understanding of both the constraints and opportunities inherent in this mode of instruction.

Therefore, exploring lecturers' views on synchronous online learning at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin is essential to understand how this model is being implemented, what challenges are encountered, and how it can be optimized within the limits of institutional policy. This study aims to contribute insights into the practical application of synchronous online learning, highlight the perspectives of academic staff, and offer recommendations for improving the effectiveness of digital instructional strategies in Islamic higher education institutions.

B. Definition of Key Terms

The researcher floors some definitions of key terms to avoid misunderstanding in this study. Those terms are defined as follows:

1. Lecturers' View

The researcher defines the word “view” as the synonym of perception. Corbin et al. (2020) mentioned that perception is an individual’s view of other people who play a role in his life and can be one of the determining factors for success, which also applies to lecturers. Perception can also be considered an individual’s interpretation of something (Amir et al., 2020). To sum up, lecturers’ view is the students’ active process to create meaning by perceiving something through their senses.

2. Synchronous Online Learning

Shahabadi & Uplane (2015) described that synchronous online learning refers to the real-time online learning which facilitates students and teachers to interact at the same time or live. Thus, the researcher defines synchronous online learning as an online learning that enables students to instantly communicate with their peers and lecturers in real time.

C. Research Questions

Based on the research background above, the researcher formulate the research problem as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of synchronous online learning that implemented in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin?

2. What are the challenges perceived by the lecturers on the implementation of synchronous online learning in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin?
3. What are the lecturers' point of view about the implementation of synchronous online learning in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin?

D. Objectives of Study

Following the formulated research questions, the researcher floors three objectives of study. Those are:

1. To investigate the characteristics of synchronous online learning that implemented in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.
2. To investigate the challenges perceived by the lecturers on the implementation of synchronous online learning in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.
3. To investigate the lecturers' point of view about the implementation of synchronous online learning in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

E. Significance of Study

It is expected that the result of this study will give many inputs. Those are:

1. Theoretical Implications

The result of this study will provide a deep understanding about the characteristics and challenges on the implementation of synchronous online learning particularly in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

2. Practical Implications

The researcher hopes that the result of this study will give the teachers, the lecturers, and the students a better insight of synchronous online learning implementation in UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. For teachers and lecturers, it will help them to know the problem and the way how to cope with the problem in implementing this synchronous online learning system. For students, it will help them to face the challenges on the implementation of synchronous online learning.

3. Other Researcher

This study will be useful for further researchers to use it as a reference to conduct the same topic but in different ways.