Table of Contents

Investigating Student Satisfaction In Remote Online Learning Settings During Covid-19 In Indonesia

Jenny Ngo[a]
Institut Sains dan Teknologi Terpadu Surabaya

Budiyono
Agustinus Ngadiman
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya

Abstract: *This study was to examine student satisfaction in remote online learning environments during COVID-19 in Indonesia. The participants were 65 undergraduate Informatics students from a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia. Data from Strachota's Student Satisfaction survey responses were examined using quantitative analyses. According to the findings, there was a strong and statistically significant relationship between student satisfaction and interaction. According to predictive models, every type of interaction could predict student satisfaction, with student interaction with content being the most powerful predictor. Furthermore, the findings revealed that self-ability in digital learning, good internet accessibility and connectivity, the presence and feedback of the teacher, website content, and the ability to learn from peer feedback and group discussions all played important roles in influencing student satisfaction. Students reported that they were generally more satisfied with their improved spoken communication skills, which helped them achieve their learning objectives. The findings suggest that integrating synchronous and asynchronous learning effectively promotes student learning and improves student satisfaction in Indonesia's remote online learning environment.*

Keywords: *COVID-19; interaction; Indonesia; remote online learning; satisfaction*

Introduction

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago country. It consists of over 1,700 islands, including five main ones: Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Java (populated), and Irian Jaya, and has a population of over 270 million people (World Bank, 2021). Currently, Indonesia has 4.593 higher education institutions "(a 0.01 percent decrease from the previous year due to the data update process and the improvement in higher education quality)" (PDDikti Kemendikbud, 2020, p. 4).

The year 2020 marks a crisis moment in Indonesia's higher education system, ushering in fundamental changes. The first COVID-19 cases were discovered in Jakarta, Indonesia, in early March 2020. The Indonesian government then issued Circular Letter No. 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020 on March 17, 2020, announcing online learning and working from home to control the spread of COVID-19, promoting social distancing prevent excessive/mass gatherings at educational institutions (Kemendikbud, 2020a). As of March 24, 2020, the national declaration required 4.593 higher education institutions under the Ministry of Education and Culture, affecting 8,483,213 students

[a] Correspondence can be directed to: jennyngo@istts.ac.id

and 312,890 lecturers (PDDikti Kemendikbud, 2020), to adopt remote online learning with the use of internet technology to replace most, if not all, face-to-face classrooms with no or little preparation (Kusnayat, Muiz, Sumarni, Mansyur, & Zaqiah, 2020; Siahaan, 2020).

Remote online learning is novel in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Remote online learning refers to learning and teaching processes that take place entirely online and are mediated by the internet across Indonesia's geographical spreads. Its implementation is not impossible, but it is extremely challenging. First, most lecturers have little or no experience with online education (Kusnayat et al., 2020; Siahaan, 2020). Because of the crisis, they were forced to transition from face-to-face to online education in a quick and unexpected manner. As a result of the mandated use of completely remote online teaching and learning for continuing education, various issues with lesson materials, content courses, and teaching methods using e-learning platforms and the internet have arisen (Kusnayat et al., 2020; Siahaan, 2020). Second, the affordability and accessibility of the internet are critical in providing remote online learning experiences comparable to face-to-face courses. Video conferencing applications, such as Zoom video meetings, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams require a fast internet connection to enable online learning at a distance. This phenomenon, in most cases, did not occur everywhere in Indonesia. The most significant challenges were network instabilities and audio loss (Firman & Rachman, 2020). Consequently, online learning became fragmented, necessitating students or educators to leave the classroom and reconnect. Third, Indonesia's high cost of internet data packages (quotas) has become a major impediment to remote education. According to CNN Indonesia, "data usage for video conferencing using the zoom application with 720p video quality for one hour consumes 540MB of data, and in Indonesia, the price of a 1 GB quota costs 20 thousand to 50 thousand rupiahs" (cited in Firman & Rachman, 2020, p. 83). Firman and Rachman (2020) estimate that "if one student has eight online courses, each of which uses the Zoom video conferencing application for at least one hour every week, the student will spend 80 to 200 thousand rupiahs (between 5 and 14 US dollars, currency rate on July 12 2021) per week, depending on the cellular providers used" (pp. 83-84). In response to the internet's accessibility and affordability, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has provided 50 GB of free internet data to all university students and lecturers in Indonesia from September to December 2020 (Kemendikbud, 2020b) and 15 GB of free internet data from January to May 2021 (Kemendikbud, 2021). Fourth, students face some emotional and mental health risks as a result of remote online learning. Students want to be emotionally present with their classmates and friends. Still, due to the pandemic, they are unable to make physical contacts and build relationships as they would face-to-face. "Early indications in the COVID19 context indicate that more than one-third of adolescents report high levels of loneliness and almost half of 18- to 24-year old are lonely during lockdown" (Loades et al., 2020, p. 1218). Loneliness and social isolation increased the likelihood of developing mental illnesses such as depression (Loades et al., 2020). Additional stressors identified by Indonesian students include a large amount of homework, class assignments, and projects (Kusnayat et al., 2020; Siahaan, 2020). Indonesian educators who have been placed in a new learning environment have difficulty adjusting to remote learning programs. As a result, in order to keep the learning processes running smoothly, they assigned a lot of homework, class tasks, and projects to the students (Kusnayat et al., 2020; Siahaan, 2020).

Despite the fact that remote online learning proved to be a useful and practical tool for sustaining educational delivery during the covid-19 pandemic, some questions have been raised about the success of remote online learning in Indonesian higher education due to the issues above. In this regard, higher education institutions believe that student satisfaction is an important factor in determining the success of their programs (Yekselturk & Yildirim, 2008; Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Schroder, 2014). According to Yekselturk and Yildirim (2008), "student satisfaction is seen as one of the key variables in determining the success or failure of distance learners, courses, and programs in the literature" (p. 51).

Scholars have identified interaction as one of the most important drivers of student satisfaction over the last decade. Sher (2009) discovered that student-instructor interaction and student-student

interaction were strongly predictive of student satisfaction in a study of 208 higher education students in the United States. Ahn (2012) investigated the impact of learning interaction on student satisfaction with 100% online courses in the department of learning technologies in North Texas, USA. Based on 159 responses, Ahn (2012) discovered that learner-content and learner-instructor were significant predictors of student satisfaction. Kuo, Walker, Belland, and Schroder (2014) discovered that learner-instructor interaction, learner-content interaction, and internet self-efficacy contributed to student satisfaction in a study involving 102 students at Western University in the United States. From these studies, we learn that "interaction is an important part of learner satisfaction" (Yekselturk & Yildirim, 2008, p. 52).

This study aimed to determine the relationship between interaction and student satisfaction in a remote online learning environment during COVID-19 in Indonesia. The remainder of the study is organized as follows in order to produce meaningful results. To begin, a review of the existing literature is provided. The research questions are then presented. Next, the research methodologies, including participants and procedures and data analysis, are described. Following that, the empirical findings are presented and discussed. Finally, the study's findings and practical implications are discussed.

Remote Online Learning

Remote online learning is a type of blended online learning that higher education institutions are implementing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In actuality, the novelty of blended learning is defined as "the blending of face-to-face instruction with various types of non-classroom technology-mediated delivery, [which] has been practiced within the academy for more than four decades" (Dziuban et al., 2004, p. 2). Its concept combines traditional classroom instruction with the advantages of Information Communication Technology (ICT)-supported learning, which includes both offline and online learning. In addition, blended learning allows for collaborative learning, constructive learning, and computer-assisted learning (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017). In other words, blended learning is an instructional model that "focuses on student-centered instruction and increases interaction between student-instructor, student-student, student content, and student-outside resources" (Dziuban et al., 2004, p.3). This type of learning has maintained "higher levels of student and faculty satisfaction [and] student learning outcomes" when compared to traditional courses (Dziuban et al., 2004, p. 3).

Remote online learning as a pandemic response is defined in this study as a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction (Harasim, 1989) in which teachers and students are separated by geographical distance for all or most of the time they teach and learn (Moore & Kearsley, 1996) and must rely on communication technologies (Allen & Seaman, 2010). It defines the online teaching and learning process, which includes direct instruction, indirect instruction, collaborative teaching and learning, and individualized computer-assisted learning (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017). Direct instruction, also known as synchronous instruction, is a form of communication in which students interact with the lecturer and their classmates at the same time via Web-videoconferencing (Fatani, 2020). Synchronous communication tools enable learners and instructors to interact directly and provide feedback (Giesbers et al., 2013), beneficial to the teaching-learning process. It is extremely motivating for teachers and students because it adds a virtual human touch to the teaching and learning process (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017). Synchronous classrooms allow students to interact with teachers and allow students to engage in discussions with their classmates about various aspects of the course content and exchange ideas (Dziuban et al., 2018). Students gain confidence as a result of this and critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Speece, 2012; Foerderer et al., 2021).

Indirect instruction, also known as asynchronous instruction, is a type of communication in which students communicate with the teacher and classmates at different times through e-learning platforms. Asynchronous discussion boards allow a large number of students to participate and interact with one another on a specific topic (Corfman & Beck, 2019). They provide students with indirect interaction with their course content in a variety of interesting and versatile ways (Lalima

& Dangwal, 2017). Along with teacher-developed online materials, asynchronous discussion boards are frequently used as a central component of courses (Corfman & Beck, 2019).

Both synchronous and asynchronous instructions in remote online learning rely heavily on the internet and e-learning platforms for student interaction with the teacher, classmates, and course content (Yukselturk & Yildirim, 2008; Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994). Various applications such as web-video conferencing (Fatani, 2020), Edmodo learning platform (Ngo & Ngadiman, 2019), WhatsApp (So, 2016), Facebook and Instagram (Kumar & Nanda, 2019) can support the implementation of remote online learning. As a result, owning digital devices (e.g., a laptop, a personal desktop, or a smartphone), a fast and stable internet connection, and an affordable WIFI or data package are critical in online learning delivery, particularly in the Indonesian context (Firman & Rachman, 2020).

In this study, remote online learning is a type of teaching and learning environment in which 1) the student is physically separated from the lecturer, 2) the student accesses learning materials through asynchronous learning resources (Edmodo), and 3) the student interacts with the teacher and other students through synchronous web-video conferencing apps (zoom). In short, the remote online course provided both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, completely replacing face-to-face learning by allowing students to connect with their lecturer, other students, and course content while the lecturer monitors students' learning processes.

According to Jiang, Islam, Gu, and Spector (2021), student satisfaction is extremely important in online learning. Satisfaction is a pleasant sensation or positive emotion that people feel due to comparing their perceptions and experiences of the service they are receiving to what they expect (Ahn, 2012). Learning satisfaction is the value that students place on their educational experience, and it is one of the most important factors to consider when assessing the efficacy of online learning (Kuo et al., 2014; Alqurashi, 2019). This study defines student satisfaction as students' positive feelings about their engagement with course content, teachers, peers, and technology in a remote online learning setting. In addition, students are satisfied with remote online learning if they believe the course has helped them improve their spoken communication skills and addressed their learning needs.

Interaction

Interaction is regarded as an important component in achieving online learning goals. Moore (1989) defines it as having three critical dimensions: student-to-content, student-to-teacher, and student-to-student. Moore's conceptual framework was expanded to include interaction between students and technology (Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994). Individual students intellectually elaborating and reflecting on the subject matter or course content are involved in student-content interaction (Moore, 1989). According to Moore and Kearsley (1996), the most fundamental interaction in online education is student-content interaction. Any document files, audio files, video files, and/or websites used to deliver online learning are referred to as course content. When students engage in course content that is posted or distributed online via e-learning platforms, they will have some time for reflection and will be able to develop their understanding of what they read, listen to, and watch at any time and from any location (Moore, 1989; Anderson, 2003). This type of interaction expands and sharpens students' knowledge through thinking, reasoning, and problem solving (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). "Only when instructional content is meaningful and relevant can learning occur" (Ahn, 2012, p. 6). As a result, the course design is critical in persuading students' learning and satisfaction through their course expectations (Lin et al., 2008).

Student-teacher interaction is two-way communication between a teacher and students based on the exchange of subject-matter information (Moore, 1989). It emphasizes the learning process when the teacher effectively delivers the course, provides feedback, encourages and supports students to actively participate in the classrooms (Moore, 1989), and influences students to do better in their studies (Gopal et al., 2021). According to Croxton (2014), a primary determinant of

student satisfaction is the quality and consistency of student-teacher communication. Furthermore, Roger (1992) stated that using instructor feedback as a self-evaluation tool for students can help them improve their performance (as cited in Gopal et al., 2021). Ivankova and Stick (2007) and Ngo and Ngadiman (2019) have noted the importance of feedback on student learning, performance, and satisfaction.

Student-student interaction is defined as mutual or social contact between or among students who collaborate and exchange information, knowledge, opinions, or ideas about the course in group discussions, regardless of whether the teacher is present (Moore, 1989). The nature of the activities in the class is collaborative learning, which involves the use of teams "with peers seeing themselves as a source of authority and knowledge." Without much direction or involvement from the instructor, teams self-manage and communicate their decisions to the instructor" (Williams, Durray, & Reddy, 2006, p. 593). In this sense, student-student contact promotes a learner-centred (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Anderson, 2003) and constructivist learning approach and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Speece, 2012). Furthermore, Foerderer et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of peer support in group discussions and engagement with peers in student satisfaction during online learning.

Because of the rise of technology-based learning environments, students' interactions with teachers and classmates have changed (Yukselturk & Yildirim, 2008). Recognizing the importance of technology interfaces in interaction in online education, Hillman, Willis, and Gunawardena (1994) proposed a new type of interaction: student-technology, which was linked to Moore's interaction model. Student-technology interaction refers to individual students interacting with technology to communicate with course content, the course instructor, and other students in the course (Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994). Furthermore, internet-based learning, as a novel technology for remote online learning, "facilitates interaction and encourages learners and instructors to use multi-learning technologies" (Ahn, 2012, p. 1). In this regard, the internet has created a plethora of opportunities for synchronous interactions between students and teachers via web-video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, and/or Microsoft Teams (Fatani, 2020). Alternatively, in online learning contexts such as Edmodo, Moodle, and/or Blackboard, threaded conversations are frequently used to enable interactive group discussions and exchange ideas among students or between students and the teacher in asynchronous mode (Speece, 2012).

Recent Studies on Student Satisfaction in Relation to Interaction during COVID-19

A number of scholars have conducted recent studies on student satisfaction and its relationship to interaction in remote online learning in the COVID-19 era. Muzammil, Sutawijaya, and Harsasi (2020) studied 4,305 students at an open and distance learning institution in Indonesia and discovered that interactions between student and teacher, student and content, and student and student influenced learning outcomes positively. Basith, Rosmaiyadi, Triani, and Fitri (2020) conducted an online learning satisfaction survey with 357 college students at STKIP Singkawang, Indonesia, during COVID 19. Students were satisfied with their interactions when the lecturer provided constructive feedback; they had more opportunities to discuss with classmates and course instructors. Fatani (2020) surveyed 162 Saudi Arabian undergraduate medical students in Pediatrics to assess student satisfaction with videoconferencing teaching quality during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the survey, 82 per cent of respondents were extremely satisfied with the teaching quality of web-videoconferencing-delivered case-based discussion courses. Furthermore, the survey discovered that technology remains an important platform for instructors' instructional activities. Suryani and Sugianingrat (2021) studied 257 students at two private universities in Bali, Indonesia, who were actively engaged in e-learning during COVID-19. They discovered a significant positive relationship between student e-learning attitude and e-learning quality on student e-learning satisfaction and student e-learning satisfaction on e-learning system success. Gopal, Singh, and Aggarwal (2021) investigated factors influencing student satisfaction and performance in online classrooms during

the COVID-19 epidemic. The study included 544 students enrolled in business management courses at Indian institutions. According to the study, instructor quality, course design, quick feedback, and student expectations all positively impact student satisfaction.

Purpose and Objective

This study aimed to investigate student satisfaction in remote online learning environments during COVID-19 in Indonesia. More specifically, this study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between student satisfaction and learning interaction,
2. understand the effects of interaction on student satisfaction in online learning environments.

The study's main research question is defined by the research objectives: What is the relationship between student satisfaction and interaction in remote online settings during COVID-19 in Indonesia? How can this student satisfaction be explained?

Methods

Research Design and Rationale

Quantitative research was used as a methodology in determining the answers to the research questions. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), quantitative research investigates cause and effect, uses standardized measurements, and analyzes numerical data. In this study, multiple linear regression analyses were used to investigate cause and effect relationships and model the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, the independent variables were student-content interaction, student-teacher interaction, student-student interaction, and student-technology interaction, and the dependent variable was general student satisfaction.

Participants and Procedure

Participants in this study are undergraduate Informatics majors enrolled in the English Conversation Class (ECC) course at Institut Sains dan Teknologi Terpadu Surabaya [Surabaya Institute of Integrated Science and Technology] in Surabaya, Indonesia. During the second semester of 2019/2020, a questionnaire was distributed to the class and posted on Edmodo, reminding students who did not participate in the survey to do so. The survey was anonymous and was open for three weeks, from May 15 to June 5, 2020. The online survey was completed by 65 students, yielding a 100% response rate. However, because of the small sample size, there is no claim of generalizability that the study's findings will be replicated in every remote online learning classroom.

Instrumentation

This study utilized Strachota's (2006) Student Satisfaction Survey, which explored learning interaction and satisfaction in online learning courses, to address the objectives of this study. The survey instrument contains five sections: learner-content, learner-instructor, learner-learner (Moore & Kearsley, 1996), learner-technology (Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994), and general satisfaction (Strachota, 2003, 2006). "Items specific to learner-technology interaction were taken from the Cassidy and Eachus (2000) survey instrument, which had previously been pilot tested and demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of .97 for the single construct of computer self-efficacy, which was equated as being synonymous with learner-technology interaction" (Strachota, 2006, p. 2). Strachota (2006) tested the survey instrument's reliability and validity with the help of field experts and a pilot test. Factor loading for learner-content interaction ranged from .604 to .780, factor loading for learner-instructor interaction ranged from .594 to .841, and factor loading for learner-learner interaction

ranged from .588 to .786. Cronbach's alpha for learner-content interaction and general satisfaction was .90, while it was .89 for learner-instructor interaction and learner-learner interaction (Strachota, 2006). As a result, the findings indicate that the Student Satisfaction Survey instrument is "a valid and highly reliable instrument that can be used at any institution of higher learning that offers online courses and is concerned with measuring the outcome of student satisfaction" (Strachota, 2006, p. 2). These were the underlying motivations for using the Student Satisfaction Survey instrument to investigate student satisfaction in remote online learning settings during COVID-19 in Indonesia.

The current research survey instrument contained 25 items (five for each interaction and five for satisfaction), with responses on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree) (strongly agree). After that, the survey instrument was tested on 12 students who were enrolled in an online Academic English course at the time. Based on the students' learning experiences with remote online education in Indonesian contexts, some of the items were slightly modified (wording changes) for the study. Demographic data were also collected regarding age, gender, home city, the primary device used for remote learning, familiarity with the internet technology, and online learning experience. The descriptive analysis of participants is presented in Table 1 in the Findings section.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The survey tool employs a Likert-style rating scale to quantify each type of interaction and student satisfaction in the remote online environment, with 1 as strongly disagree and 4 as strongly agree. According to Jamieson (2005), the ordinal level of Likert scale survey response can be "described using frequencies/percentages of response in each category" (p. 1217). This is because "the mean (and standard deviation) are inappropriate for ordinal data" (Jamieson, 2005, p. 1217).

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the level of interaction and general satisfaction in remote online courses. The descriptive analysis of this study was presented in Tables 2–6 using the frequency/percentage of responses in each survey category. Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables to analyse the first objective. Multiple regression analysis was used to address the second objective. It was a tool to examine the relation of multiple independent variables to the dependent variable. After that, a predictive research model is proposed.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics of Participants of the Study

The sample of this study includes 65 students majoring in informatics with an average age of 18.66 years (SD = 0.691, range = 18-21). According to Table 1, the gender distribution of the respondents is unequal, with more males (83.1 per cent) than females (16.9 per cent). Furthermore, 61.5 per cent of respondents studied in their hometown (East Java) of Surabaya, while 7.7 per cent studied from their homes on other Indonesian islands, namely Sulawesi and Bali. In the study, 61.5 per cent of students said they primarily used laptops for online learning, 27.7 per cent said they used personal computers, and 10.8 per cent said they used smartphones. Wi-Fi and data packets were used by 40 (61.5%) and 25 (38.5%) of respondents, respectively, to connect to the internet for distance learning courses. The students' familiarity with technology is satisfactory (97 per cent). In terms of online learning, 80 per cent of respondents said they had a good experience, while only 4.6 per cent said they had a poor experience.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Participants of the Study (N = 65)

	Responses (%)
Age (Mean, ±SD)	18.66, ±0.691
Gender:	
Female	11 (16.9)
Male	54 (83.1)
Studying from home-city:	
Surabaya in Java	40 (61.5)
Other cities in Java	20 (30.8)
Outside Java	5 (7.7)
Primary device used for remote learning:	
Smartphone	7 (10.8)
Laptop	40 (61.5)
Personal computer	18 (27.7)
Familiarity with technology: *	
Good	63 (96.9)
Fair	2 (3.1)
Poor	-
Internet network:	
Wi-Fi	40 (61.5)
Data package	25 (38.5)
Experience of online learning: *	
Good	52 (80)
Fair	10 (15.4)
Poor	3 (4.6)

Note: *Students' self-rated digital knowledge, responses using 3-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates Good; 2 for Fair; 3 for Poor

Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Survey

Student-Content Interaction

Table 2 displays the results of items in which 65 participants were asked to estimate their interaction with course content. More than 70% of participants agreed that the speaking tasks and projects in the course promoted their learning (Q3), the learning activities in the course required critical thinking skills that are conducive to their learning (Q4). In addition, the course materials used in class promoted their learning (Q1). According to the table, 26.2 per cent of participants strongly

agree with Q2, indicating that the learning or website content provided in Edmodo for the course aided their learning, while 6.2 per cent strongly disagree. As shown in Table 2, participants generally positively perceive their interactions with course content during the online learning process.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Student-Content Interaction Items

	Responses (N=65) (frequency, percent)							
Student-Content Interaction	***Strongly disagree***		***Disagree***		***Agree***		***Strongly agree***	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Q1 The course materials (games, songs, films, vlog-making, prepared speech, storytelling) used in this class have facilitated my learning	2	3.1	2	3.1	46	70.8	15	23.1
Q2 The learning/website content provided in Edmodo for this course has facilitated my learning	4	6.2	5	7.7	39	60.0	17	26.2
Q3 The speaking tasks and projects in this course have facilitated my learning	2	3.1	4	6.2	49	75.4	10	15.4
Q4 The learning activities in this course have required critical thinking skills which facilitated my learning	3	4.6	3	4.6	48	73.8	11	16.9
Q5 The learning activities in this course have required problem solving skills which facilitated my learning	2	3.1	5	7.7	44	67.7	14	21.5

Student-Teacher Interaction

Table 3 displays the results of items in which participants were asked to estimate their interaction with the teacher. The findings revealed that most participants agreed that their interactions with the teacher during the online learning process were positive. They agreed that the teacher was an active member of the discussion group and provided guidance for classroom discussions (Q6, 73.8%), that the teacher provided individualized attention when needed (Q8, 72.3%), that the teacher was easily reached to communicate via public or private messages in the Zoom chat room (Q9, 72.3%), and that the teacher-facilitated their learning (Q10, 72.3%). According to Table 3, 27.7 per cent of participants strongly agreed with Q7, stating that they had received immediate/direct feedback from the teacher. As shown in Table 3, participants generally positively perceive their interactions with their teacher during the online learning process.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Student-Teacher Interaction Items

Student-Teacher Interaction	Responses (N=65) (frequency, percent)							
	Strongly disagree		*Disagree*		*Agree*		*Strongly agree*	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Q6 In this course the teacher has been an active member of the discussion group offering direction to class discussion	1	1.5	2	3.1	48	73.8	14	21.5
Q7 I have received immediate/direct feedback from my teacher	2	3.1	5	7.7	40	61.5	18	27.7
Q8 I have been able to get individualized attention in zoom from my teacher when needed	3	4.6	5	7.7	47	72.3	10	15.4
Q9 I have been able to communicate easily via public or private messages with the teacher in Zoom chat room.	1	1.5	5	7.7	47	72.3	12	18.5
Q10 In this course the teacher has functioned as the facilitator by continuously encouraging communication	2	3.1	6	9.2	47	72.3	10	15.4

Student-Student Interaction

Table 4 illustrates the results of items in which participants were asked to estimate their interactions with classmates. According to the findings, more than 70% of participants agreed with Q12 and Q15. Participants believe that Zoom's chat room allows them to share critical thinking with other students and that the online course encourages them to discuss ideas and concepts with their classmates. According to the table, 18.5 per cent of participants strongly agree that Zoom's breakout room allows them to solve problems with other students (Q11). As shown in Table 4, participants have a positive perception of their interactions with their classmates during the online learning process.

Student-Technology Interaction

Table 5 displays the outcomes of items in which participants were asked to estimate their interaction with the technology used in the online course. According to the results, more than 70% of participants agreed with Q16, Q18, and Q20. Participants believe that they enjoy working with computers, are confident in their ability to use computers, and are a useful tool for learning. For example, 24.6 per cent of participants strongly agreed with "Q17: computers make me more productive," while 20 per cent strongly agreed with "Q16: I like to work with computers." Furthermore, as shown in the table, 7.7 per cent of participants disagreed with "Q18: I am very confident in my ability to use computers, Q19: using computers make learning more interesting, and Q20: computers are good aid for learning." Table 5 shows that participants have a positive experience with the technology used for online learning.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Student-Student Interaction Items

	Responses (N=65) (frequency, percent)							
Student-Student Interaction	***Strongly disagree***		***Disagree***		***Agree***		***Strongly agree***	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Q11 In this course the breakout rooms in Zoom have provided opportunity for problem solving with other students	3	4.6	5	7.7	45	69.2	12	18.5
Q12 In this course the chat rooms in Zoom have provided opportunity for sharing critical thinking with other students	5	7.7	6	9.2	49	75.4	5	7.7
Q13 In this course the use of Edmodo and Zoom has created a sense of community among students	6	9.2	6	9.2	44	67.7	9	13.8
Q14 I have received direct feedback from students in Zoom	6	9.2	6	9.2	45	69.2	8	12.3
Q15 This online course has encouraged me to discuss ideas and concepts with other students	4	6.2	4	6.2	47	72.3	10	15.4

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Responses for Student-Technology Interaction Items

	Responses (N=65) (frequency, percent)							
Student-Technology Interaction	***Strongly disagree***		***Disagree***		***Agree***		***Strongly agree***	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Q16 I enjoy working with computers*	2	3.1	2	3.1	48	73.8	13	20.0
Q17 Computers make me much more productive	2	3.1	2	3.1	45	69.2	16	24.6
Q18 I am very confident in my abilities to use computers	3	4.6	5	7.7	47	72.3	10	15.4
Q19 Using computers makes learning more interesting	3	4.6	5	7.7	45	69.2	12	18.5
Q20 Computers are good aid to learning	2	3.1	5	7.7	46	70.8	12	18.5

Note: * the term 'computers' refers to laptops, personal computers, or smartphones.

General Satisfaction

Table 6 displays the outcomes of items in which participants were asked to estimate their overall satisfaction with online courses. According to the findings, 73.8 per cent of participants said the online course experience helped them improve their speaking communication skills (Q25), and the online course met their learning objectives (Q22). According to the table, 24.6 per cent of participants strongly agree that online courses are as effective as in-person courses (Q24), while 6.2 per cent strongly disagree. According to Table 6, 66.2 per cent of participants were satisfied with the online course, while 15.4 per cent were dissatisfied (Q21). Thus, table 6 shows that participants are generally satisfied with online learning.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Responses for General Satisfaction Items

	Responses (N=65) (frequency, percent)							
General Satisfaction	***Strongly disagree***		***Disagree***		***Agree***		***Strongly agree***	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	f	%
Q21 I am very satisfied with this online course	2	3.1	10	15.4	43	66.2	10	15.4
Q22 This online course meets my learning needs	1	1.5	5	7.7	48	73.8	11	16.9
Q23 I have learned as much in this online course as compared to a face-to-face course	5	7.7	5	7.7	45	69.2	10	15.4
Q24 I feel this online course is as effective as face-to-face course	4	6.2	5	7.7	40	61.5	16	24.6
Q25 I feel this online course experience has helped improve my spoken communication skills	2	3.1	2	3.1	48	73.8	13	20.0

Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument

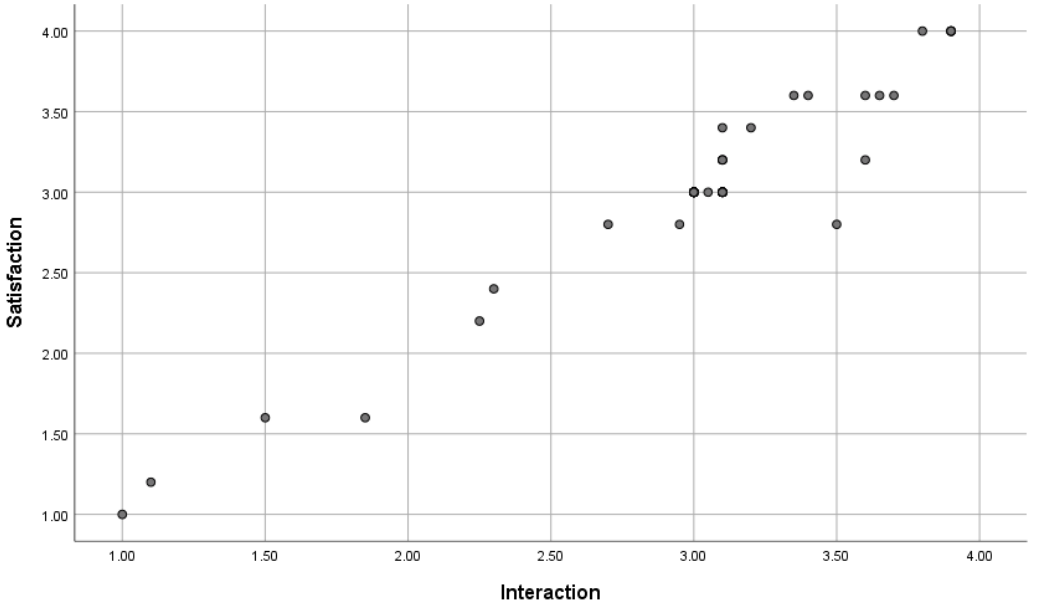
We used factor analysis to see if we could find the theoretically assumed student satisfaction and interaction in our data. The five satisfaction-related items had factor loadings ranging from .713 to .917 and a Cronbach's alpha of .889. Factor loading for student-content interaction ranged from .798 to .954, factor loading for student-teacher interaction ranged from .707 to .949, factor loading for student-student interaction ranged from .899 to .941, and factor loading for student-technology interaction ranged from .755 to .879. The internal consistency of student-content was α =.933, the internal consistency of student-teacher was α =.931, the internal consistency of student-student was α =.954, and the internal consistency of student-technology was α =.857. With reliability coefficients greater than .07, all constructs were deemed reliable (Babbie, 2013).

Relationship between Satisfaction and Interaction

The first goal of the study was to investigate the relationship between student satisfaction and interaction. According to Spearman's rho correlation analysis, there was a statistically significant

positive relationship between satisfaction and interaction ($r_s(63) = .824$, $\rho < .001$). The scatterplot for general satisfaction and interaction is shown in Figure 1. This finding implies that interaction is significantly correlated with student satisfaction.

Figure 1. Positive Relation between Interaction and Student Satisfaction



Note: $r_s(63) = .824$, $\rho < .001$.

The relationship between satisfaction and each type of interaction is shown in Table 7. The strongest correlations to satisfaction are student-teacher (r_s =.854) and student-student (r_s =.818). While student content has a moderate correlation with satisfaction (r_s =.795), student technology has the lowest correlation (r_s =.635).

Table 7. Relationship of Satisfaction and Each Type of Interaction

			Student-Content	Student-Teacher	Student-Student	Student-Technology
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.795**	.854**	.818**	.635**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	65	65	65	65

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Effects of Each Type of Interaction on Student Satisfaction

The study's second objective was to understand the effects of interaction on student satisfaction in remote online learning courses. Multiple regression was used to assess the effect of each type of interaction on student satisfaction. Table 8 displays the results of the study's multiple linear regression. The most powerful predictor of student satisfaction was student-content interaction (Adjusted R^2 = 0.937, $\rho < 0.001$), followed by student-student interaction (Adjusted R^2 = 0.896, $\rho < 0.001$), student-teacher interaction (Adjusted R^2 = 0.851, $\rho < 0.001$), and student-technology

interaction (Adjusted R^2 = 0.841, ρ < 0.001). In conclusion, student satisfaction is primarily influenced by student-content interaction.

Table 8. Effects of Each Type of Interaction on Satisfaction

	Satisfaction			
	Adjusted R^2	β	*t*	Sig
Student-Content Interaction	.937 (F=191.870)			.000***
Q1: The course materials have facilitated my learning		.124	2.354	.022*
Q2: The learning/website content provided in Edmodo has facilitated my learning		.558	10.856	.000***
Q4: The learning activities required critical thinking skills which facilitated my learning		.285	2.284	.026*
Q5: The learning activities required problem solving skills which facilitated my learning		.160	2.273	.027*
Student-Teacher Interaction	.851 (F = 74.114)			.000***
Q7: I have received immediate/direct feedback from my teacher		.402	4.445	.000***
Q8: I have been able to get individualized attention in zoom from my teacher when needed		.644	2.445	.017*
Student-Student Interaction	.896 (F=110.748)			.000**
Q11: The breakout rooms in Zoom have provided opportunity for problem solving with other students		.394	2.733	.008**
Q12: The chat rooms in Zoom have provided opportunity for sharing critical thinking with other students		.197	2.086	.041*
Student-Technology Interaction	.841 (F = 68.681)			.000***
Q17: Computers make me much more productive		.498	3.316	.002**
Q18: I am very confident in my abilities to use computers		.652	7.163	.000***

Note: *. Significant at the 0.05, **. Significant at the 0.01 level, ***. Significant at the 0.001 level, β = standardized regression coefficient, R^2 = adjusted coefficient of determination, N = 65.

Table 8 also shows ten items of interaction influencing student satisfaction in remote online learning. The following items have the highest weight coefficients (>0.4): "Q18 I am very confident in my abilities to use computers" (0.652), "Q8 I have been able to get individualized attention in zoom from my teacher when needed" (0.644), "Q2 The learning/website content provided in Edmodo has facilitated my learning" (0.558), "Q17: Computers make me much more productive" (0.498), and "Q7 I am very confident in my abilities to use computers" (0.402).

Discussion

The framing concept for this study is investigating student satisfaction in remote online learning during COVID-19 in Indonesia. The findings of this study reveal that each type of interaction has

an impact on student satisfaction. Thus, Moore's (1989) model of interaction which included the student-technology interaction provided by Hillman et al. (1994), is entirely supported by this study. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with other research that employs the interaction typology and discovers a strong relationship between student-content interaction and satisfaction (Yekselturk & Yildirim, 2008; Sher, 2009; Ahn, 2012; Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Schroder, 2014). In addition, the study emphasizes the relevance of technological supports, instructional supports, peer-supports, and course content designed to facilitate and promote online learning. The discussion that follows goes into greater detail about the findings.

Interaction

Student-Content Interaction

According to the regression results, student-content interaction is the most influential predictor of satisfaction (93.70 per cent). Importantly, four of the five built-in items were significant in predicting student satisfaction, with the item "Q2 The learning/website content provided in Edmodo has facilitated my learning" being the strongest predictor within this construct. This finding suggests that the course content provided in Edmodo improved students' understanding and autonomy in their learning (Ngo & Ngadiman, 2019). In support of our finding, Kumar, Saxena, and Baber (2021) surveyed 435 undergraduate and graduate management students and discovered that "both the learning content and website content provided under the online study environment are important factors of e-learning quality, having a positive effect on e-learning quality and student satisfaction" (p. 11). Gopal, Singh, and Anggarwal (2021) discovered that the design of the course content is an important factor influencing student satisfaction in a survey of 544 M.B.A students in India. According to the study, "the design should be in an effective manner so that students can easily understand the content without any problems" (p. 15). Furthermore, Edmodo is easy to use and navigate at any time and from any location. The ease with which students can obtain online lesson materials may influence how well they interact with course content (Anderson, 2003). This situation is most likely the source of student satisfaction.

The other built-in items that significantly predicted student satisfaction were "Q4: the learning activities required critical thinking skills, which facilitated my learning," "Q1: the course materials (games, songs, films, vlog-making, prepared speech, storytelling) used in this class facilitated my learning," and "Q5: the learning activities in this course required problem-solving thinking skills, which facilitated my learning." These findings imply that incorporating interactive learning materials into the classroom can help students improve their comprehension, elaborate and reflect on their ideas, and increase their motivation (Moore, 1989; Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Schroder, 2014). In remote learning settings, interactive learning activities help students become more involved in the topic (Higgins et al., 2002 cited in Ahn, 2012). A well-designed and high-quality content structure enable students to study and create information on their own, resulting in improved student performance and satisfaction (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Ahn, 2012).

Student-Student Interaction

The second most important predictor of student satisfaction was student-student interaction (89.6 per cent). Only two of the five built-in items for this interaction were significant predictors of satisfaction (see Table 8), namely "Q11: in this course, the Zoom breakout rooms have provided opportunity for problem-solving with other students," and "Q12: in this course, the Zoom chat rooms have provided opportunity for sharing critical thinking with other students." Students reflected on the relatively high collaborative tasks in online learning mediated by Zoom breakout rooms and chat rooms. Students can use Zoom breakout rooms to supplement their class with quality peer/group conversations. Furthermore, students who received pertinent, constructive peer criticism

and benefited from social interaction were more satisfied with their online learning experience. Our findings support Jung, Choi, Lim, and Leem's (2002) hypothesis that collaborative activities engaged students in the learning process, implying that student-student interaction significantly impacted student satisfaction. Ivankova and Stick (2007) presented the interview results, claiming that the online format enabled students to learn from other students' work, resulting in the formation of a virtual community among the students. Peer support in group discussions and opportunities to communicate with peers are two critical aspects that affect student satisfaction, according to the current study by Foerderer, Hoffman, Schneider, and Prichard (2021). Despite their plausibility, the findings of this study contradict those of Ahn (2012) and Alqurashi (2019), who discovered that student-student interaction has no effect on satisfaction.

Student-Teacher Interaction

The third most important predictor of satisfaction was student-teacher interaction (85.1 per cent). "Q8: I have been able to get individualized attention in zoom from my teacher when needed" and "Q7: I have received immediate/direct feedback from my teacher" were found to be highly and significantly predictive of student satisfaction (see Table 8). These findings highlight the significance of instructor presence and support in online learning and direct feedback on tasks through online class discussion. One possible explanation is that students in this study experienced fully online learning remotely for the first time using both synchronous and asynchronous approaches. Hence, the teacher's presence and active feedback in-class discussion became important aspects of improving their learning. "Conceptually, the more the instructor is present, the more engaged a student becomes, and the more satisfied he becomes" (Garrison et al., 2000; Jaggars et al., 2013; Gray & DiLoreto, 2016, p. 14). Furthermore, Shea, Li, and Pickett (2006) stated that the instructor's most important role in an online learning environment is establishing his presence and personality in the course content, discussions, and activities. "Through active intervention, the teacher draws in less active participants, acknowledges individual contributions, reinforces appropriate contributions, focuses discussion, and generally facilitates an educational transaction" (Garrison et al., 2000, p.101). The findings of our study are consistent with the findings of previous studies. According to Suryani and Sugianingrat (2021), the most important factor influencing student satisfaction is the instructor's quality (e.g., efficiency, passion throughout the online session). Furthermore, Foerderer et al. (2021) discovered that teachers' assistance and guidance and their time availability contributed to student satisfaction. Our findings are also consistent with Gray and DiLoreto's previous study (2016). According to the findings, establishing instructor presence in online courses can be accomplished by facilitating the course to promote positive interaction between the instructor and students, resulting in student satisfaction (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). Teacher feedback, according to our findings, had an effect on student satisfaction. The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of previous studies. Gopal, Singh, and Anggarwal (2021) discovered that prompt feedback from an instructor had an effect on student satisfaction. Ngo and Ngadiman (2019) discovered that providing students with immediate teacher feedback allows them to assess their understanding of course content and improve their performance.

Our findings also show that using web-video conferencing apps improves interpersonal interactions between teachers and students and students, providing a similarity to (conventional) classroom activities. This finding is consistent with the previous study, indicating that students were satisfied with the teacher's presence, and web-video conferencing aids in developing a social presence for both the teacher and the students and engaging students in virtual classrooms (Fatani, 2020). Furthermore, Jung, Choi, Lee, and Leem (2002) discovered that "collaboration among learners is related more to learner satisfaction than to learning outcome in WBI" (Web-Based Instruction) (p. 159).

Student-Technology Interaction

The fourth most important indicator of satisfaction was student-technology interaction (84.1 per cent). Looking at the built-in items for this construct, two of them, "Q17: computers make me much more productive," and "Q18: I am very confident in my ability to use computers," contributed significantly to student satisfaction. This finding appears to be acceptable in our study because 1) the participants are Informatics students, 2) the majority of students (61.5 per cent) were working with a laptop for their online learning, 3) the vast majority of students (96.9 per cent) were proficient in internet technology, and 4) the majority of students (80 per cent) had a positive experience with computers.

S. Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021) surveyed 43 students from the Telecommunication Engineering department in Madrid. They discovered that students with the highest level of digital competence are more likely and proficient to use digital tools. In addition, students with digital devices and previous learning experiences tend to interact more with digital tools or ICT to take notes and complete assignments. Furthermore, Du (2004) conducted a survey of 237 undergraduate library and information science students from a mid-southwestern state university in the United States from 2001 to 2003 and discovered a "statistically significant correlation between computer competency and students' enjoyment level" (p. 9). According to the study, "students believe web-based courses are easier if they have sufficient computer background" (p. 10). It is worth noting that students who have a "higher level of computer competency are likely to be more satisfied with distance learning" (Du, 2004, p. 10).

In terms of IT infrastructure, the majority of students in Surabaya, East Java, had access to an internet network with both Wi-Fi and data packages, and 61.5 per cent of them did their online learning from home. Surabaya ranked 10th in the Ookla Speed Test Global Index for 2020 (Cahya, 2021), with a speed of 19.91Mbps. In our study, it is reasonable to believe that relatively well-supported digital gadgets and the internet network (IT infrastructure) are critical tools in online learning environments and contribute to student satisfaction. Suryani and Sugianingrat (2021), who conducted a study on student e-learning satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bali, Indonesia, confirm that internet quality is one of the major factors determining student satisfaction. Students were able to easily communicate with the course content, the facilitator, and other students due to their skill and competency in digital learning, as well as the reasonably fast internet bandwidth (Hillman et al., 1994; Ahn, 2012; Fatani, 2020, Kusnayat et al., 2020).

Student General Satisfaction

As shown in Table 6, the majority of participants had positive feelings about the English Conversation Class course offered in a remote online learning context. According to their self-reports, the students thought the online course helped them improve their spoken communication skills, was as successful as face-to-face courses and matched their goals. The findings may indicate that students enjoy and are satisfied with remote online learning. Basith et al. (2020) conducted an online learning satisfaction study in Singkawang, Indonesia, during the COVID-19 pandemic. They discovered that students are satisfied with the course's learning objectives, tailored to their needs and expectations. According to Gopal et al. (2021), meeting students' expectations in an online course is a critical component of satisfaction. It was discovered that students enrolled in online courses believed they had met the learning objective, which was one of the factors contributing to student satisfaction (Foerderer et al., 2021).

Our research found that combining synchronous (Zoom) and asynchronous (Edmodo) tools improves student satisfaction with online learning courses. This is consistent with the previous study's findings. Almusharraf and Khahro (2020) conducted a survey of 283 students at one higher

education institution in Saudi Arabia. They discovered that students were extremely satisfied with using an integrated approach of synchronous (Google Hangouts) and asynchronous learning (Google Classroom and Moodle).

Conclusions and Implications

This study investigated students' satisfaction in remote online learning environments during COVID-19 in Indonesia. Our findings show that students in an online English Conversation Class course recognized a strong link between classroom interaction and learning satisfaction. In this study, it was clear that students positively perceived their interaction with course content, instructor, classmates, and technology in the online environment. However, the findings do point out factors that influence student satisfaction in remote online learning courses.

According to their self-reports, the majority of students are satisfied with the English Conversation Class course delivered via remote online learning. Students clearly stated that the online course helped them improve their spoken communication skills, was as effective as face-to-face courses, and matched their objectives. Students are also satisfied with the online course's learning resources. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning platforms is regarded as the most effective to facilitate their learning.

These findings have some implications for the body of knowledge in the field of student satisfaction, where the emphasis must be placed on incorporating various types of interaction into Web-based learning processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Course content that can help students learn during the pandemic is essential (Kumar et al., 2021; Gopal et al., 2021). The presence of a teacher during online learning has a significant impact on student satisfaction (Suryani & Sugianingrat, 2021; Foerderer et al., 2021; Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). In the context of Indonesia, where students have experienced fully online learning for the first time, the teacher's presence can motivate, direct, and establish student security that they can learn in the same way as traditional classes (Suryani & Sugianingrat, 2021, Jaggars et al., 2013). These will aid in reducing their stress during the pandemic (Kusnayat et al., 2020). Student group discussions are among the most important predictors of student satisfaction during the pandemic (Foerderer et al., 2021). The use of synchronous learning tools has encouraged students in virtual classes to discuss ideas and concepts with other students. Furthermore, this research adds to the body of knowledge by emphasizing the importance of low-cost internet data packages and an integrated synchronous and asynchronous learning approach in the context of online learning in Indonesia.

This study's practical implications frame the teaching-learning process in remote online learning. This study demonstrates that the integrated synchronous and asynchronous online approaches facilitate lecture delivery and interaction with the teacher, classmates, and technology. Combining synchronous and asynchronous online approaches, seen as a new instructional paradigm in the Indonesian context, is a potential educational model emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the new higher education policy issued in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No 3, 2020 concerning Independent Campus (*Kampus Merdeka*) (Dikti Kemendikbud, 2020). This new paradigm of teaching and learning will facilitate the implementation of the Independent Campus policy, which emphasizes a student-centered approach (independent learning) through media technology or ubiquitous learning.

To put the Independent Campus policy into action, faculty must experiment with combining traditional learning and e-learning and integrating synchronous and asynchronous online learning. It implies that Learning Management System platforms are required to assist teachers in managing their lectures and courses, monitor and evaluate students, assign grades, track course attendance, and perform other administrative tasks as mandated by educational institutions (Coman et al., 2020). Teachers can use these platforms to upload and provide students with information and learning resources, and students will be expected to log in daily, read the daily messages, and complete any tasks assigned to them by the teacher at any time and from any location (Dziuban

et al., 2004; Jaggars et al., 2013). This type of learning promotes a student-centered approach by using an e-learning platform (Moore, 1989; Anderson, 2003), which is in line with the goal of the Independent campus policy.

To improve the quality of e-learning or online learning, universities, faculties and online content specialists should create and develop instructional content (in the future, digital curriculum) that teachers can use in their classrooms. It is critical to provide interactive course content or web content that increases students' learning motivation while also facilitating critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Moore & Kearsley, 1996), as also suggested in this study. Furthermore, a good content design encourages real-time interaction between students or among students and between students and instructors (Moore, 1989; Ahn, 2012). The expectation is that students be given various times to engage synchronously, whether in whole group, small group, or individual settings. Furthermore, infusing audio, video, and web-content resources throughout lectures allows students to engage with content in various ways while also creating a strong instructor presence (Jaggars et al., 2013). In support of the Independent Campus policy, when ready, universities and faculties can open online courses or modules that students across Indonesia can access, in which they can spend three semesters studying outside their core study program at home-university, different universities in Indonesia, and potentially overseas, and outside universities (non-tertiary education), according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 3 of 2020 Article 15 (2) (Dikti Kemendikbud, 2020).

The pandemic has benefited teachers who have become more technologically savvy. As a result, teachers have been compelled to improve their instructional design and delivery abilities through the use of technology. To comply with the Independent Campus policy, teachers, in collaboration with online content experts, must learn, create, and develop a web-course design to improve online learning processes for each course. In addition, teachers should adapt their teaching methods to include more visual and interpersonal communication through webinars or other interactive media (YouTube, podcasts) and more student interaction.

In light of blended education, some recommendations may be made. First and foremost, the government should improve and stabilize Indonesia's information technology infrastructure. Second, the government can provide loans to deserving students through universities to own a laptop or computer. Third, universities should offer online courses to students and provide online learning training to teachers.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study identified and explained the relationship between interaction and satisfaction in remote online learning during the COVID-19, some significant limitations should be noted. First, the sampling was chosen for convenience, and the sample size was small. The results are specific to one institution, specifically one engineering department and one subject—a bachelor's degree in Informatics—as a case study. As a result, we acknowledge that these findings may not apply to other online learning environments. Second, we used Strachota's Student Satisfaction Survey instrument (2003, 2006). Although it is a valid and reliable instrument for researching student satisfaction with online learning courses, we should have investigated another instrument used to predict student satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, which is more relevant to the study. For example, the 2020 home study questionnaire for elementary to high school students developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture can be used as a starting point for creating and developing a survey instrument by combining it with Strachota's Student Satisfaction Survey instrument.

More research will be needed to determine how well the findings of this study apply to participants from different majors, faculties, and/or universities. It will be more interesting to investigate student satisfaction in the Indonesian context when comparing traditional and online learning. A stronger emphasis on developing a survey instrument from the perspective of student learning in the Indonesian context could be interesting for future research. Another area for future

research is the blended learning approach used in Indonesian higher education institutions, which combines traditional and online learning (via e-platforms) and synchronous and asynchronous learning. It would be very interesting to investigate the relationship between blended learning and current higher education policy: Independent Learning (*Kampus Merdeka*), focusing on student-centered approaches and the use of ICT and the internet.

Note:

We appreciate the positive and constructive feedback from the reviewers on the manuscript. We would like to thank all of the students who took part in the survey, as well as their perseverance in continuing their education during the COVID-19.

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The Role of Low-cost Private Secondary Schools in Rural Kenya Under the 'Free Secondary Education Policy'

Miku Ogawa[a]
Osaka University

Abstract: *This study aims to understand the role of private secondary schools in rural Kenya under the Free Secondary Education Policy. Data were collected from four private schools over two months in 2018 and 2019. All the schools had experienced instability due to low enrolment, particularly after the policy was implemented in 2018. The decline in the schools' income also affected the quality of education. However, the results suggest that some students prefer to complete their education at private schools as low-expense-boarders or as beneficiaries of fee discounts. Other students choose private schools to avoid overcrowded classrooms and travel far, especially when excluded from public schools. This study argues that despite limited learning resources, private secondary schools in rural Kenya have an important place in the public education system outside of the academic pyramid of public schools.*

Keywords: *private schools; public schools; Kenya; low-cost; free education*

Introduction

Why is there a demand for private education when public school is free in developing countries? According to James (1993), limited public spending on schooling in developing countries creates an excess demand in the private sector at the secondary level. The author also predicted that as the public education sector expands, people previously involuntarily excluded from public schools will be able to find places to study; thus, excess-demand-driven private schools have lost their need and will be crowded out.

Kenya was one such country, with very limited public spending on secondary education. However, since 2008, the government has gradually increased its support for public schools, leading to a secondary education policy in 2018 that provides free education. Given this situation, how have the excess-demand-driven private schools been affected? This study aimed to examine the state of private schools since public schools were made free and to discuss their role in the Kenyan education system.

Kenya has a basic education system consisting of eight years of primary education and four years of secondary education. Primary education is reaching full enrolment ratio, with a net enrolment rate (NER) of 92.4 % and a gross enrolment rate (GER) of 104 %, as of 2018 (RoK, 2019). Opportunities for secondary education are also expanding, with 53.2 % NER and 70.3 % GER, as of 2018 (RoK, 2019).

Abolishing school fees is one of the most powerful interventions for promoting education in developing countries. Yet, despite the free public education by the government, studies have revealed the emergence of private schools during this period, even in countries other than Kenya. Particularly, in the context of primary education, studies have indicated that private schools are rapidly proliferating in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Bold, Kimenyi, & Sandefur, 2013; Tooley, Dixon, & Stanfield, 2008). For example, in 2002, in Kenya, there were 1,441 private primary schools.

[a] Correspondence can be directed to: ogawa.miku.39@gmail.com

By 2018, this number increased to 13,669 (RoK, 2006; 2019) The percentage of private schools in secondary education is not as high as in primary education, although it is still around 15% (RoK, 2019).

Some studies, including those conducted in Kenya, have discussed the reasons for the growth of private schools and their role in education (Alcott & Rose, 2016; Oketch et al., 2010). However, since most of these studies have mainly focused on primary education, little is known about how private secondary schools influence the secondary education system (Srivastava & Walford, 2007; Srivastava, 2013). Additionally, many of the motivations for choosing a private school were examined via household surveys, whereas only a few were examined via school-based fieldwork (Akaguri, 2014; Alderman, Orazem & Paterno, 2001; Chudgar & Quin, 2012; Woodhead, Frost & James, 2013). There is, therefore, a lack of discussion on how secondary education is provided in private schools. To better understand the role of private secondary schools in Kenya, this study examines the influence of the free secondary education policy on private schools. It seeks to identify whether there are reasons, in addition to the inadequacy of public schools, that motivate students to choose private education.

Background

The Demand for Private Schools

To understand the growing need for private schools, James (1993) analyses primary and secondary education data from 12 developed and 38 developing countries. The author suggests that two kinds of demands—excess-demand and differentiated-demand—have motivated the growth of private education. According to James, the limited public system in developing countries creates an excess- demand for private schools, even if they are considered inferior. But, on the other hand, the differentiated-demand-driven private schools that survive in countries with adequate educational opportunities are likely to be considered academically or ideologically superior (James 1993). In other words, while excess- demand for private schools is created for people who would prefer to enrol in public schools but are unable to find a place, differentiated- demand for private schools comes from people who seek preferred education even if public schools are available.

The history of educational expansion in Kenya reveals that private schools were dominant, particularly in rural areas with fewer public schools (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014), suggesting they were excess-demand-driven. This is similar to other countries that also rely on private schools to provide educational opportunities. For example, in India, the unavailability of public schools has forced parents to choose private schools to ensure their children receive education (Mousumi & Kusakabe 2017). Similarly, in urban Kenya, parents prefer sending their younger daughters to private schools nearby, given the unsafeness of the slums that obstruct the route to the faraway public schools (Ohba, 2013).

Another issue to consider regarding free education is that these schools demand some money from the pupils. A Rwandan study posits that 'hidden costs' charged by public schools under the free education policy were a constraint to continued schooling (Williams, Abbott & Mupenzi, 2015). In a case study on the slums in Nairobi, Abuya, Oketch and Musyoka (2013) found that several pupils dropped out of public school due to their incapacity to pay the fees. In this case, parents chose to enrol their children in low-cost private schools that were cheaper than public schools. In this sense, private schools can be regarded as key to realising the 'education for all' agenda.

Some studies have also found that the emergence of private schools is an outcome of the desire to pursue higher quality education (Bold, Kimeny, & Sandefur, 2013; Bold et al., 2014). Studies from Asia similarly reveal that people prefer private schools for this reason. For instance, a study in India indicated that private school students have better learning outcomes than public school students, even after accounting for their socioeconomic status and other characteristics (Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2015). Mousumi and Kusakabe (2017) noted that parents in India do not send their children to public schools to keep them away from environments where drug abuse, violence, and abusive language are prevalent. Studies in Kenya also suggest that some parents prefer private

schools because free education has caused overcrowding in public school classrooms (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013; Somerset, 2009; Zuilkowski et al., 2018). Another study revealed parents' distrust in public schools; Zuilkowski et al. (2018) found that parents perceive public schools as a last option through a case study in Kenya. The study revealed that parents perceive public schools as unsafe because most students there belong to very low-income families. According to these findings, it can be inferred that students who do not wish to attend public schools prefer private schools. All of these preferences contribute to differentiated-demand-driven private schools.

To summarise, private schools have grown mainly because public schools are unable to accommodate the rising educational opportunities. In addition, the quality of education is also different from that in public schools. These reasons correspond to the two demands that James (1993) identified about the increase in the number of private schools.

The Diversity of Private Schools and their Role in the Inequality Gap

Private schools have grown in response to the two aforementioned demands; both, however, have been criticised for being actors that increase inequality, as the expansion of private education has widened the inequality gap between the wealthy and the underprivileged families. For example, excess-demand-driven private schools with low-quality education widen the inequality gap between richer students who can attend public schools and poorer students who can only attend private schools; whereas differentiated-demand-driven private schools widen the inequality gap between richer students who can afford to attend private schools and the poorer students who cannot (Alcott & Rose 2016; Bhatta, 2014; Härmä, 2011; Ohba, 2013; Oketch et al., 2010; Singh & Bangay, 2014; Srivastava, 2013; Woodhead, Frost & James, 2013).

Exemplifying the latter, a comparative study in the three East African countries, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, indicates that although private schooling improves children's chances of learning the basics, it does not bridge the gap in learning inequalities between the wealthy and the underprivileged. The underprivileged are much less likely to be enrolled in private schools in each of the three countries (Alcott & Rose, 2016). Another study from Nepal highlights inequality, whereby middle-income households abandon public schools in favour of private ones (Bhatta, 2014). Thus, educational inequality exists between wealthy and low-income families and between the poor and the poorest of the poor (Akaguri, 2014; Alcott & Rose, 2016; Oketch et al., 2010). Studies from India reveal that relatively poorer households succeed in accessing private schooling; however, the most marginalised groups have no access to low-cost private schools (Härmä, 2011; Singh & Bangay, 2014; Srivastava, 2013; Woodhead, Frost & James, 2013).

In contrast, some studies have indicated that private schools play a role in bridging the educational inequality gap. For example, a comparative study by Heyneman and Stern (2014) focusing on private schools that cater to children from low-income families noted the opportunities offered by private schools that public schools cannot provide. It focused on low-fee private schools in Jamaica, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Indonesia, and Pakistan, assessing the reasons for their increased demand. In their analysis, the difference in cost between a free public school and a low-tuition private school was modest in some countries. Thus, according to the study, it may be less expensive or even more cost-effective for some low-income families to privately educate their children. Further, in three countries, Tanzania, Jamaica, and Kenya, private schools often operate as miniature service agencies, offering education to children without families or to those from families that could not pay the full, or any, tuition (Heyneman & Stern, 2014).

Another study in Pakistan suggests that private schooling can prevent the mismanagement of public funds. In developing countries, public educational expenditure is often handled inefficiently; for example, providing school buildings when not required, paying unqualified or underperforming teachers, and providing inadequate and limited school supplies (Alderman, Orazem & Paterno, 2001). The study concluded that private schools should receive a public subsidy since this can improve both access to schools and quality education at a low cost.

The discussion above reveals no single answer regarding whether private schools contribute to or reduce the inequality gap. It is also not possible to conclusively state that private schools are inferior or superior to public schools. In some instances, low-cost private schools have been found to produce low-quality education, whereas, in other instances, their output has exceeded top-quality government schools (Heyneman & Stern, 2014). Chudgar and Quin (2012) suggest that diversity in private schooling quality can affect learning outcomes. Children at low-cost private schools can perform worse than those at public schools. Similarly, children at public schools can experience a learning deficit when compared to more expensive private schools.

Perceptions of private schooling may differ even when a study targets the same location. For instance, a study in Nairobi revealed that low-cost private primary schools were significantly more expensive than public schools (Zuilkowski et al., 2018). In contrast, another study showed that some public primary schools would collect user fees, making them more expensive than low-cost private schools (Abuya, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013). Further, school fees among private schools differed, depending on the school management policy. Some schools functioned on a profit-based business model, while others were financed through charity and contributions (Ohba, 2013). Some private schools are expensive, with only wealthy families opting for them, whereas others are low-cost and accept children from vulnerable families.

Srivastava and Walford (2016) note a need to refine our conceptualisations of the different types of private schools that operate in the Global South and the nature of their engagement to discuss the efficacy of those schools the best way to mitigate social inequities. Even the meaning of 'low cost' among the studies on 'low cost/fee private schools' has no agreement (Tooley & Longfield, 2016). Considering the diversity of private schools and understanding the actual situation, it is necessary to reveal how and why school leaders operate the institution and why students study there.

The Private Sector and Secondary Education in Kenya

In Kenya, public secondary schools are not uniform and are divided into four vertical categories: national, extra-county, county, and sub-county schools, based on their administrative level and merit (Nyangweso, Maiyo & Kati, 2019). The topmost category is the national school, which offers the best quality education for a limited number of students, selected based on their primary leaving examination results. Most national schools and extra-county schools are boarding schools and predominantly same-sex ones. These boarding schools are regarded as the best option, compared to community-based private schools that mushroom to compensate for the lack of public boarding schools (Gichana, 2021).

Sub-county schools are at the bottom of the public categorisation and have recently begun mushrooming, contributing significantly to increasing access to secondary education. They provide a day school option that does not require boarding fees, which was a major burden for parents (Wanja, 2014). Although sub-county schools are categorised as the lowest, some private schools in rural areas are regarded even lower in academic achievement in graduate examinations. Sub-county schools, often unofficially, set minimum scores for students to qualify for admission; consequently, some students were rejected (Ogawa, 2017). Additionally, before implementing the free education policy in 2018, most private schools in rural areas were cheaper than public schools. Resultantly, private schools in rural areas accepted children who could not enrol in public schools (Oketch & Somerset, 2010).

The quality of education provided by private secondary schools is generally regarded as poor; unlike in the primary education sector, there are only a few top private secondary schools in Kenya (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). The majority of private secondary schools in rural areas operate as an unwanted alternative to public secondary schools, implying that financial insufficiency and low academic achievement forced students to enrol in private secondary schools.

However, the situation has gradually been changing. The government of Kenya aimed for a full transition of students from primary to secondary education and introduced the free secondary

education policy in 2018. Although the government had provided a capitation grant to secondary schools under the banner of free education since 2008, the amount was insufficient to eliminate school fees. Therefore, in 2008, the government began allocating 10,265 Kenyan Shilling (KES) per student to public secondary schools annually and increased this amount to 12,870 KES in 2015 (1 KES is approximately 0.009 US Dollars). However, the government required contributions from parents and guardians up to 9,374 KES for day scholars and 53,553 KES for boarding scholars (RoK, 2015) in addition to the lunch fees. Finally, in 2018, this allocation doubled to 22,244 KES to cover the deficit since 2015, enabling day scholars to attend public secondary schools free of cost, except for lunch. This 2018 policy implementation was called 'truly' free education or 'full' free education. Additionally, sub-county schools had to accept students wishing to join secondary school, regardless of their scores, to ensure a 100% transition from primary to secondary education (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2015).

This policy increased access to secondary education for all primary school leavers in 2018. Students with low marks too were able to enrol in public schools as the cheapest option. These governmental reforms allowed all prospective students to attend less expensive public day schools. In light of this discussion, then, what motivates students to choose private schools? What role do private schools play in rural Kenya?

According to the literature on primary education (Abuya, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013; Zuilkowski et al., 2018), private schools are diverse. The present study, thus, focused on the private schools offering secondary education and attempted to understand the role of low-cost, private secondary schools in rural Kenya when a 'truly' Free Secondary Education Policy is in place. The study aimed to do this by first identifying the state and challenges of low-cost private schools under the free education policy, paying close attention to their diversity, and second, examining the reasons students joined these private schools. This was done so that private secondary schools in Kenya, following the free education policy, could be analysed by applying the two types of demand identified by James (1993).

Methodology

Fieldwork

This qualitative study used the case study method. It adopted a cross-sectional case-oriented approach, first examining aspects of each case (i.e. a school) and then conducting a comparative analysis of a small number of cases (i.e. all schools). As a result, the case study might be illustrative rather than representative. However, the strength of such a case study lies not in generalising percentages from specific findings to a wider population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Yin, 2018), but rather in revealing the details of the situation in a specific context (Morse & McEvoy, 2014). To this end, this study analysed qualitative descriptive data gathered through fieldwork.

Data were collected from four private schools in a sub-county of Busia County, Western Kenya (referred to as X sub-county), over a period of two months: six weeks in February & March 2018, & two weeks in March 2019.

Due to its political history, the western part of Kenya has lagged in educational reforms. Consequently, the region is currently experiencing a rapid expansion of education. X sub-county, the focus of this study, covers an area of about 238 km^2 (Busia Country Government, 2014) and is located about 20 km from the centre of Busia County. It experiences the highest rainfall in Busia and follows intensive agricultural practices. However, in recent years, drought and declining soil fertility have been affecting agricultural productivity (MoALF, 2016).

The data available at X sub-county's education office and the office of the Constituency Development Fund provided an overview of the geographical development of secondary schools in the target area. The research was conducted mainly through observation and interviews. The author spent more than a week in each school, observing teachers and students in their classrooms. Occasionally, when asked, helping teach some parts of the lesson or providing advice regarding

examinations. In addition, the author interacted with the students and teachers during breaks. Observations of student and teacher behaviour and interactions helped establish a preliminary knowledge base, using which interview themes and questions were modified intermittently.

Further, the author has prior research experience in this region; annual visits since 2014 (total length of stay was about eight months, the total number of public schools visited was 21) helped build rapport with the participants of the study and glean a better understanding of public schools in that area. In this study, five public schools were also visited in 2018 for comparison with private schools. These five public schools (one of which was a boarding school) were in close proximity to the private schools under study.

Data Analysis

A semi-structured interview lasting one or two hours was conducted to understand the efforts to manage schools made by the principals and the directors/owners. Questions were asked about the management of each school, the process of establishment and development, relationships with the community and parents, and other school-related matters. Key questions include how the school was established and managed, what changes had been made since the policy was introduced, how the school responded to its current challenges, and what respondents thought was positive about their private school. Interview questions were modified to accommodate the context of the participants' narratives. Semi-structured interviews were recorded when allowed.

In each school, around five teachers and ten students were also interviewed. Most teachers in each school were interviewed when they were available. Students for the interviews were randomly selected from among those who volunteered to talk with the researcher. The author asked those who behaved or spoke in a peculiar way during the observation questions to gauge the reasons for these peculiarities. Unstructured interviews with open-ended questions were employed to understand teachers' motivations and perceptions. Students were asked questions to learn about their academic background, for example, whether they had ever dropped out or transferred and their reasons for enrolling in a private school.

Follow up interviews were also conducted with directors/owners, principals, teachers, and students to gain further insight for triangulation, thus ensuring its validity. The questions were modified by conducting multiple visits to each school; in both 2018 and 2019, the author reviewed the data obtained after visiting all the targeted public schools; the author revisited these schools to conduct further fieldwork, following up on any questions that were missing or required confirmation. The author also cross-checked the data obtained from these interviews and observations with those obtained from the Education Office.

The interviews were conducted mainly in English (the official language of Kenya), with Swahili (the national language of Kenya) used as a supplement. At the time of the fieldwork, the author's proficiency in Swahili was at the level of basic daily conversation and short speech. At school, the conversations between students and teachers during break times were conducted in Swahili and English. The author confirmed what was said by taking an active part in conversations and being aware of the flow of conversations. Whenever a word was unclear, the author confirmed it with the respondent. Everyday conversations formed the basis for unstructured interviews. The findings from participant observations and interviews were written as fieldnotes reconstructed after conversations with participants during breaks and classes.

Before the analysis, the recorded interviews were transcribed. The transcription memorised conversation and notes from participant observation were triangulated to check whether the author's semantic interpretation was valid by asking different questions about the same topic in different ways or checking with other participants. The author analysed both interviews and observations according to Braun and Clarke's general guidelines of thematic analysis (2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study employed an inductive thematic analysis, a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. This analysis is data-driven. The author systematically worked through the dataset, giving full and equal attention to each item, and identifying interesting aspects that may have formed the basis for repeated patterns (themes). Coding was done manually, using highlighters to indicate potential patterns of data. The patterns were organised under two major themes: the challenges of private schools and motivation to attend those schools following policy implementation.

The ethics review board approved the study of the research institute to which the author belongs. Every consideration was given to ensure that the study participants were not physically, psychologically, or socially harmed. Additionally, a research permit was obtained from Kenya's National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. Particular attention was paid to the handling of personal data. To avoid participant identification, anonymity is maintained throughout the manuscript.

Profile of Schools

In 2019, X sub-county had 23 secondary schools. Among these, 2 were private schools, and 21 were public schools (18 sub-county schools, two extra-county schools and one county school). Extra-county schools accepted only boarding scholars, whereas the county school accepted day and boarding scholars. In addition, most sub-county schools did not have dormitories, accepting only day scholars.

In 2018, there were three private schools in the sub-country. Of these, two closed down in 2019, after which a new school was established in the same year. Thus, between 2018 and 2019, there were four private schools in this region, accepting both boarders and day scholars. The private and public schools were located in the same neighbourhood, and all were accessible on foot.

Table 1: Demography of Sampled Private Schools

	Presence	**Number of students (number of 1st-year secondary students)**		**Number of teachers**	
		2018	**2019**	**2018**	**2019**
School A	2001-2018	41(3)	n/a	5	n/a
School B	2011-2018	43(6)	n/a	10	n/a
School C	2014-	48(6)	55(2)	8	4
School D	2003-2014, 2019-	n/a	12(12)	n/a	4

Source: Author collected data from each school and the education office

Case Study (School) A

School A was established in 2001 as a branch of a private educational institution. The director came from another country but resided in Kenya. For political reasons, he had the school built near the residence of a Member of Parliament of that constituency. The quality of facilities in School A was better than other private and public sub-county schools. The classrooms had ceilings, tiled floors, and several windows. It performed well academically and ranked 6th among 15 schools in X sub-county in the 2014 final examinations for the time it functioned. However, after that year, academic performance gradually declined, and the school was unable to attract new students. Competition from a nearby sub-county school that ranked 4th in 2017 further affected school enrolments; finally, in 2018, there were only three students in the first year of secondary school. School A closed down in 2019.

Case Study (School) B

The director of School B started a school for girls in 2009 in her house. She purchased some land in 2005 and built her house in the township area. She noticed that many girls who had dropped out of secondary school remained in the town, doing nothing. She wanted, 'To start a school up to the secondary level'. The school offered bursaries in 'very, very needy cases'. The fees of 10 boarding scholars and five-day scholars were decreased to less than half the fee charged for other students. These 15 students paid in kind; they brought what they could from home, such as milk and agricultural produce from their fields. The director said that the existence of her school was 'sustained by a heart willing to help the girls'.

As a management strategy, the director accepted high scores students by reducing or waiving the school fees. She believed that to survive, the school required two kinds of students: those who were poor but performed well academically and those who belonged to relatively wealthy families and preferred to study privately. The former group of students raised the academic performance of the school, which would attract more students. The latter indirectly assisted the former by paying their school fees.

Even though the school had an insufficient number of students, boys were not enrolled because the director felt the presence of boys would make the girls reticent, thus affecting them adversely. The school, however, closed in 2019, when it had only 15 students. In addition, although the school ranked 4th in 2016, their decreased mean score for leaving examinations caused a decline in the number of higher-fee-paying students.

Case Study (School) C

School C was established in 2014 and is managed by a local. It was initially established as a college to educate the pastors of the denomination. Since 2014, the school has run as a secondary school, which, during holidays, functioned as a Pastoral college. Similar to School B, ten students were sponsored by the school in 2018, based on the economic status of their families. The school interviewed the students to understand their financial condition and judge whether they could afford the school fees. However, the school management has since become unstable.

A challenge that School C encountered was that of not being registered as an examination centre. This meant that students had to travel to another school to take their examinations, costing each student 100 KES. Although there was no examination fee, students of School C had to pay approximately 5,000 KES to the other school as boarding and lodging fees during the examinations. The results of the students who could not pay this fee were withheld, and they did not receive their certificates. Their annual fees in 2019 continued to be higher than public day schools. In 2019, there were only two first-year students at the secondary school.

Case Study (School) D

School D started in 2003 but closed down in 2014. It was re-opened in 2019, with only 12 students. The director of School D belonged to the neighbouring county and had worked in Nairobi before arriving in this county. According to the director, during the first phase of the school, more than 600 students were enrolled. However, the community around the school was not supportive, as most of the students came from outside the community. The school closed down in 2014, the director said, due to the former principal. However, the director hopes that the current principal could collaborate with the community because 'he comes from the same community'.

However, the school continued to face challenges from the community. The current principal explained, 'Neighbours are a bit reluctant to have a school again. They thought it might not work'. Although most students come from X sub-county, they travel from the farthest places. Students were aware of the corruption in the school that led to its closure in 2014 and said, 'The director did not pay salaries to teachers and fought against students'. The students feared to communicate with the

director even though, at times, she allowed them to watch television in her room and distributed fruits. Although it was not clear what had happened between the director and the community, her reputation among the students was not positive.

However, the new principal was popular among students, as was evident from the students' feedback: 'Now, the principal runs the school, so it's much better. He is very good'. The students were satisfied that the school was run by a local principal rather than a disreputable director. The current principal had joined the school in 2019 after giving up his job as a government teacher in an extra-county school. A teacher in another school said, 'The principal of School D is a very good chemistry teacher. That is a reason people enrol their children there'. The principal did not earn much but believed: 'I cannot be paid. If you compare the income (to my previous job), that was much more. It (School D) is a platform to keep me busy'. He used his personal connections in the government to raise funds for student bursaries.

Results and Findings

The Current State and Challenges in Private Schools

School Fees and Their Expenditure

Although the fees varied from school to school, day scholars in private schools paid more than public schools. In contrast, boarding scholars in private schools paid less than students in public schools, except for School B as of 2018.

Table 2: Basic Information on the Income and Expenditure of the Sampled Schools

	School fees (KES/year) *				Payment for teachers employed by each school (KES/ month)	
	2018		2019			
	Day	Boarding	Day	Boarding	2018	2019
School A	11,000	20,000			10,000-15,000	
School B	20,000	42,000			6,000-13,000	
School C	15,000	24,000	15,000	27,000	4,500-7,000	5,000-9,000
School D			18,000	30,000		4,000
Public**	7,000-10,000	41,000	7,000-10,000	41,000	10,000-18,000	

Notes: *approximate fees, **the nearest public schools
Source: Author collected data from each school

School A tried to set minimal school fees. However, the annual fee charged by the nearest public school in 2018 was 7,000 KES. School A reduced its fees from 34,000 KES to 20,000 KES and from 18,000 KES to 11,000 KES for boarding and day scholars, respectively; however, it could not compete with the nearby public school. The fees at School B were more expensive than at other schools; however, as discussed earlier, the school has introduced a fee exemption for students from poor families. In School C in 2018, day scholars were charged annual fees of 15,000 KES and boarding scholars, 24,000 KES, increased from the 2017 charges of 12,000 KES and 18,000 KES, respectively, to compensate for the decrease in the number of students (from 80 to 48). The strategy was different from that of School A. However, this increase could also have been a reason for some students leaving School C. Thus, the school was trapped in a vicious cycle, with a declining number of students and income. The principal described the harsh situation in private schools, saying, 'Government is really

destroying private schools'. Lastly, in School D, the school fees were 18,000 KES for day scholars and 30,000 KES for boarding scholars. Only one student paid the complete amount. Four students never paid any fees.

Decline in the Number of Students

All the four schools studied saw a decline in enrolment after the 'truly' free secondary education policy was implemented in 2018. The policy resulted in students shifting to public schools that offered 'cheaper and better' education than private schools.

According to the principal of School A, the sharp decline in student numbers began after a public school was established in their neighbourhood in 2014. Similarly, School C lost more than half its students in 2018. Only five of them had cleared their dues before transferring. The number of first-year secondary students in the private schools surveyed ranged between 2 and 12. Compared with the nearest public school, the difference in student enrolment was significant: 85 students in the smallest school and 271 in the largest. A teacher in School A said, 'the rest come to this school', explaining that students who could not find a place in public schools enrolled in private schools.

The principals of all the surveyed schools believed that their schools were quite successful before the government implemented free education. They further stated that they were running the school as a business to make profits. However, once the number of students dropped, it was not easy to recover. A teacher at School A said, 'Performance [in the secondary school leaving examinations] decides [the prospects of private schools]. If you perform well, you can be a private school charging with high fees. But once you fail to get students/population, you are off. You cannot select [students who attain high academic marks]'. As a result of declining student numbers and financial difficulties, all schools had tried to compensate for the dwindling finances by reducing teachers' salaries and maintenance expenditures. This predicament is illustrated by the accountant from School C, who said, 'The school fees are for at least buying food and paying staff'.

Insufficient Number of Good Teachers as an Outcome of Poor Working Conditions

Instability was one of the challenges faced by private schools because finding good teachers was not as easy as with public schools, where the government assigned teachers. The remuneration for teachers also varied by school, where, in public schools, it varies according to the type of employment. Even so, the lowest range of monthly salaries for public school teachers was between 10,000 KES and 18,000 KES (Table 2). Some teachers in private schools, however, were offered less than half that salary. The lowest example was School D, where a teacher's salary was set at 4,000 KES. Procuring even that amount of money in School D was difficult; according to the principal, "Any single payment [however small the payment from students is], will be shared by the teachers". The director of School B also said apologetically, 'They [teachers] are very patient and understanding'.

Most teachers of the surveyed private schools were not highly qualified. This was different from public schools in X sub-county, where most of the teachers earned requisite diplomas and degrees before being employed. Apart from the insufficient school budget, this was also one of the reasons for low teacher remuneration in private schools.

Such employment conditions resulted in the frequent replacement of teachers. When asked about the number of teachers at the private schools, respondents answered, 'For now…' as though the number was not fixed. Most teachers considered their work in private schools a temporary job while waiting for another secure position. For example, in 2018, there were eight teachers in School C, but in 2019, only the principal was working in the school, and other teachers were replaced. He, too, was going to leave soon for a government teaching job. All teachers, including the principal, in School C, were younger than 30 years, and most of them were still studying. It is not sustainable to employ and retain good teachers in such unfavourable circumstances.

Further, the principal of School C complained about the behaviour of young teachers. He pointed to a young male teacher stating, 'He is like a green snake in a green bush'. He said the teacher lied about being a university student and tried to establish inappropriate relationships with female students via private phone calls. Because of the teacher, the best schoolgirl had to leave school due to pregnancy. The teacher also sometimes sold school supplies to students, which were supposed to be free. In another case, a female teacher had eloped with her lover. Her mother visited the school to take her back home, but she had already left. The principal was disappointed that teachers, who should behave with maturity, were setting improper examples.

The shortage of English language teachers was also a huge challenge for private schools, as it is a compulsory subject. As a result, schools A, C, and D did not have proper English language teachers. Further, some teachers in Schools C and D were required to teach more than three subjects that were not their majors. Most were not even qualified in any subject.

Teachers in private schools face severe challenges at work, creating instability in the students' learning environment.

Shortage of Basic Supplies Such as Food and Drink

All four schools in this study provided cheaper meals than did public schools. In all the schools visited, food and drinks were separately ordered for the author. The ones served in these private schools were considered unsuitable for visitors like me; for example, the principal of School D asked, 'Would you be comfortable eating the same food as us?'

In School A, only hot water was served to students during the tea break, though other schools generally offered black tea with sugar. Schools A, C, and D offered only black tea to teachers, whereas milk and snacks were also served at public schools. In all four schools, the menu for lunch for the teachers was the same as for students; this differed from public schools, where meat was provided more frequently to the teachers.

The students in School D would always check what was being prepared in the kitchen, as the school lacked basic foods. In addition, the lunch menu was not fixed, as it was at other schools, and students here were always curious about what they would be served at mealtimes.

Schools had to try to reduce consumption to sustain themselves. However, students and teachers complained about the shortage of even basic supplies. While reducing the expense of daily meals was an easy way of saving money, it directly affected students' health, energy, and concentration levels.

Reasons for Choosing Private Schools

In most cases, private schools did not seem to be the best option for students. The negative aspects of private schools discussed in the previous section overshadow their benefits. This implies that, at first glance, the private secondary schools in this study were, as James (1993) points out, merely excess-demand-driven private schools, which can be recognised as an inferior alternative to public schools. In other words, they may be considered a type of school that is susceptible to being crowded out by introducing the free secondary education policy, enabling more accessible access to public schools.

However, interviews and participant observations revealed there were different reasons why students chose private schools. This section will analyse the results from interviews concerning students' motivation to attend private school and the results of participant observation, paying attention to the difference between excess-demand and differentiated-demand.

Benefits of Flexible School Management

This is an aspect that private schools work as a safety net. The findings in this section are based mainly on interviews with management, principals, and teachers.

The fee structure of public day-schools seems to be the cheapest option. However, private schools could provide cheaper education because of their flexible management. For example, some students did not wear the designated school uniforms, even though they were in the final year of secondary school; this would not be allowed in public schools. It was a relief to those who could not afford to buy uniforms.

Flexible management also provides some adjustability around school fees. In School B, for example, 35% of the students received a partial or complete discount. The director of School B cited the case of a first-year girl from a poor family who they fully sponsored. The director explained that this student had cried while expressing her desire to study. In her primary leaving examination, this student had scored 311 out of 500, which was sufficient for her to enrol in the extra-county school. The director stated, 'Some students do not have any money to study. Other students pay for their fees'. She also cited a case of parents who donated sanitary pads to the poor students studying with their daughters. Thus, it can be said that a cross-subsidy mechanism exists in private schools. However, flexible management can also cause instability and result in the closure of private schools.

Students who receive discounts were not selected merely based on their financial background; they were required to have a strong passion for academics and show a certain level of academic achievement. School C illustrates the difficulties students sometimes faced due to inadequate support from the school. The school offered a partial or complete discount to 21% of the students. However, the principal and the school manager summoned a 24-year-old second-year student, Kevin, because he had never paid fees. Some parents were surprised to see such an 'old boy' in school, wearing the designated school uniform. Kevin had scored over 250 in his primary leaving examination, which had enabled him to enrol in a public school at that time. However, he was unable to join because his parents had divorced and moved away. Kevin could not pay his fees because he did not receive any support from his parents. His mother had gone to Uganda and his father to Nairobi. Both of them had remarried. He explained that they did not meet him because they had new families. He earned his daily meals through his livestock (three goats) and a small field, using the money from the livestock to pay his rent (500 KES per month) and treat his ailing grandmother.

Although he explained his difficulties, the principal and the manager were not convinced. They looked at Kevin's notebooks to see if he was serious about his studies. Whereas there were some words written, there were also grammatical mistakes, and he could not read them himself. Further, when the manager asked him a few simple subject-based questions, Kevin could not answer them. An angry principal then said, 'If you were a hard-working person, the school may have understood your situation. But you are not'. Kevin was warned that if he did not pay his fees, he would be expelled. He was not allowed to attend classes until he paid.

Whereas some private schools function to support those who cannot access educational opportunities in public institutions, the managements struggle with sustenance realities. Consequently, students who received a reduction in school fees were selected based not only on their financial situation but also on their academic ability and attitude towards learning.

Another benefit of flexible school management was the personal connections. For example, most of the sponsored students in School B were referred by the church; the director's husband, a pastor, was associated with the church. Similarly, other schools also accepted students related to the school cooks, watchmen, and teachers. Although private schools exercise a certain degree of flexibility in understanding students' circumstances and reducing their financial burden, they do not necessarily accept all referred students. Only those who were introduced through known sources or who showed any potential for excelling academically were enrolled.

The safety net function of these private schools was important. Previous research has shown that low-cost private schools fulfil a similar function through flexible management (Heyneman & Stern, 2014). However, this function would not be necessary if public schools were adequately funded

and policies were developed to include the poorest. In other words, the private schools required in this respect were excess-demand-driven schools.

An Alternative to Public Boarding Schools

Although the reasons to study in private schools cannot be categorised simplistically, there were significant differences between boarding and day scholars regarding this issue.

All private schools had boarding facilities, whereas the majority of public schools in X sub-county did not. In Kenya, top-ranking public schools, such as national and extra-county schools, where only a small number of students enrol each year, are boarding schools. Sub-county schools are more widespread, without boarding facilities. However, to become a boarder at a public school, students have to excel academically and have the funds to pay the boarding fee. As shown in Table 2, it is possible to become a boarder at a private school for 50% to 70% less cost than a public school. For example, a student who transferred to School D from an extra-county boarding school emphasised that she had been a 'superior school' student. Although she was not allowed to attend the former school because of her inability to pay the fees, she still wore the uniform from her previous school to School D. It allowed her to recall her status of having been a student at a superior school in the past. Those students who chose private schools as an alternative to public boarding schools attainted above average scores in their primary leaving examination.

In this case, private schools are an inferior alternative to public boarding schools; they cater to excess- demand for public boarding schools. Some boarding scholars at private schools mentioned that the high fees of public boarding schools were the only reason they chose private schools.

Contrarily, private boarders rated their schools higher than public day schools. For example, a boarding student from School A referred to a neighbouring sub-county public day school, charging an annual fee of 7,000 KES, as a 'cheap school'. She also explained that she was enrolled in a private school because of poverty, implying that her financial circumstances prevented her from enrolling in a public boarding school, placing the public day schools at a lower level. This suggests that she believes the quality of education in private schools is lower than that in public boarding schools, but higher than in public day schools.

In this sense, private schools with boarding facilities have a quality different from public day schools, which can be regarded as a differentiated-demand. Nevertheless, it is a demand that could be eliminated was there cheaper access to public boarding schools.

Smaller-Sized Class, Better Quality

In this next section, I examine the opposite: what is considered to be differentiated-demand. Some students explained that their private schools were better than the public day schools for which they had received admission letters. In reality, these sub-county schools were diverse. Some, such as the newer schools, had lower examination results than the public schools; however, in terms of learning materials and the qualification of the teachers, they were better than the private schools. Nevertheless, students enrolled in private schools believed in their superiority over public day schools.

In the private schools studied, since class sizes were smaller—the number of students per class was just over 10 in the largest classes—students were able to participate actively during their lessons. By contrast, in public schools nearby, students per class averaged 54, with 68 in the largest classes and over 40 in the smallest ones.

Participant observation in private schools revealed that every student in the classroom received an opportunity to answer and ask questions. Moreover, when they were given an exercise

to complete, most of them attempted to solve it on the blackboard. Several students also pointed out this advantage of being able to learn freely in the classroom.

The smaller class size also allowed teachers to share students' progress with each other because the teachers knew all their students well. This is essential in private schools, where a wide range of academic abilities exist among the students. For example, in School D, 9 out of 12 students scored above 300 in their primary leaving examination, enabling them to enrol in extra-county schools. The remaining three were described as 'slow learners' by the teachers for scoring lower than 150. Teachers would spell out even simple words, such as 'sin' and 'view', when they read out what students needed to write in their notebooks for these 'slow learners'.

Students received adequate opportunities to express what they could not understand and to confirm what they had understood. Teachers also called students by their name and gave them the opportunity to ask questions, asking, 'Do you have any questions?' to confirm if they had correctly understood the contents. This was found to be a valuable characteristic of private schools, often not available in the crowded classrooms of public schools.

The 'quality of education' here is not explicitly defined in terms of the average score of the final examinations in each school or the qualifications of the teachers in each school. However, it was agreed in the interviews with teachers and students and confirmed through observation that smaller class sizes ensured more opportunities for independent learning. This type of education is currently not possible in public schools, with their large capacity; in this sense, these private schools were supported due to differentiated-demand.

Providing Contextual Needs

This section analyses differentiated-demand from another point of view. Students who feel uncomfortable with the large class sizes of public schools or their circumstances often enrol in private schools. They prefer studying in private schools where classes are smaller and fewer students from the same community.

For example, School C has a high-ranked student with an A-grade in her Continuous Assessment Test in 2018. This student had completed primary school in 2010 and joined the secondary school after saving money for her education. She is a mother and is older than the other students. She did not want to study in a public school because of her circumstances. The same school has another student who received an E in his Continuous Assessment Test. This student has a crucial learning difficulty and prefers a smaller class size with empathetic teachers. A private school better catered to both their different circumstances.

Further, the manager of School C explained, 'Some of them [i.e. students] are expelled from other schools because of bad behaviour'. For example, in School A, a student always wore a knit cap to hide her hairstyle, which was prohibited. Whereas there are students in private schools who are not well-disciplined, teachers rarely mete out severe punishment. For example, some girls use the dormitory to change into tight clothes and wear make-up after classes. This is not the case in public schools, where corporal punishment is often used. Students recognise this. A student from School D proudly said, 'That's what I like about this school. You don't get that in a public school'. Students sometimes even make fun of their teachers, behaving like they were the teacher's younger sibling. However, students and teachers were friendly in the schools that were surveyed.

Thus, the cases of students who, due to individual circumstances, do not want to or cannot go to their local public school, even if it is cheaper, can be said to be those of differentiated-demand. The public day school would not meet this demand because it has the 'localness' and familiarity of its members, who all come from the same community since primary school. This does not constitute differentiated-demand in the sense that private schools are more academically advanced than public schools; rather, it is in the sense that private schools provide alternative educational opportunities that public schools cannot. Public schools cannot fulfil this role so long as they are designed to accept students from the local area.

Discussion

This study found that private secondary schools in rural Kenya face numerous challenges. This is because public schools' free secondary education policy has led to a flow of students from private to public schools. Once the number of students declines, private schools find it difficult to select students based on academic merit; further, their reduced school fees limit the budget available for input into the quality of education. The result is a vicious circle of declining performance in the secondary leaving examinations, which leads to a further decline in the number of new students. This vicious circle, or the tendency of declining enrolments to correlate with lower performance in final examinations, has been noted in private schools and public secondary and special schools in Kenya (Nderitu & Ngunju, 2014; Ogawa, 2017).

However, even though private schools are not generally deemed the best option, some students prefer them. Location and overcrowded classrooms are some of the reasons why students avoid public schools. Financial assistance offered by private schools also makes them a better option for some students; those who come from different backgrounds, with a wide range of motivation and capabilities, are supported in private schools. In this sense, it can be said that private secondary schools in rural Kenya provide people with diverse abilities educational opportunities that are not available in public schools.

James (1993) suggested two kinds of demand support the growth of private schools: one, the excess-demand that arises due to a lack of public schools, and two, the differentiated-demand, which refers to differentials in the quality of education. The literature from developing countries notes that these two demands exist because of the shortage/incapacity of public schools or as an opportunity for receiving quality education (Chimombo, 2009; Härmä, 2016; Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; Nishimura & Yamano, 2013; Somerset, 2009; Zuilkowski et al., 2018).

This study found that such demands for private schools were a mixture of both excess-demand because students cannot go to public schools. On the other hand, it is also a differentiate-demand because they receive a more inclusive education that they cannot attain in public schools.

This study demonstrates that Kenyan free education policies limit the functions of private schools. As long as some students seek private schools, support for the institutions must be provided in educational policy reforms. It is also important to note that even if the quality of education is higher in public schools, 'quality of education' is a concept that can be defined in many ways and is not necessarily determined solely by the qualifications of teachers or the results of examinations. Nevertheless, Kenya's policy of allocating per capita subsidies only to public schools in secondary education poses a serious challenge to private schools. Of course, this policy has contributed to opening public schools to day-scholars and the expansion of access to secondary education. However, it is not easy for private schools with limited resources to ensure students an effective learning environment.

As seen in the Sustainable Development Goals, varied support and multiple options should be available for a variety of individuals to ensure 'equity'. Some private schools have higher tuition fees than public schools, further increasing the inequality gap that needs to be corrected. Similarly, it may also be assumed that private schools without quality education can widen the education gap. Indeed, as many studies have pointed out, private schools may increase the inequality gap (Akaguri, 2014; Alcott & Rose, 2016; Bhatta, 2014; Härmä, 2011; Oketch et al., 2010; Singh & Bangay, 2014; Srivastava, 2013; Woodhead, Frost & James, 2013). If more affluent segments receive a better-quality education in private schools, then investing more public funds in private schools will be criticised from the perspective of equity (Belfield & Levin, 2002); however, the findings of this study do not indicate that this is the case. Rather, it reveals the various reasons some students are excluded from public schools; it suggests that additional funding for private schools is needed to provide more equitable educational opportunities. For some students, without private schools, it might be impossible for them to complete their education.

In the Kenyan secondary school system, students are selected in top tier schools based on their academic ability (Nyangweso, Maiyo & Kati, 2019). Whereas this is not limited to Kenya, students are sorted according to their aptitude at a certain level of education. In this sense, students enrolled in secondary education may have a variety of educational needs, not necessarily seeking only an academically competitive learning environment but also carefully addressing their learning tasks according to their interests and living their lives as students without worrying about gossip or hearsay. To guarantee the availability of such diverse learning environments, it is essential to facilitate private schools as a learning option separate from the academic pyramid of public schools. Heyneman and Stern (2014) also question whether improvements in the public sector can meet the private sector's demand. This is because private schools provide a service that is unavailable in publicly operated schools. If we consider the diversification of quality in secondary education, private schools do not merely increase inequality but actually have the potential to achieve substantive 'equity' by providing a variety of educational opportunities for various individuals.

Whereas in developed countries, there has been much discussion around alternative schools that can guarantee a variety of educational opportunities (Henrich, 2005), in developing countries, the focus has been on expanding mainstream education in public schools to solve the significant shortage of educational opportunities. However, this may not be enough to meet the diverse learning needs of different individuals, meaning that it would not be possible to provide an inclusive education system with equity. The deficiency of public schools refers to the shortage in their numbers and their limited capacity to accommodate diverse learner needs (Abuya, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013). This study suggests that although some private schools may constitute private investments that can increase economic disparity among individuals, they can also serve as institutions that play a public role by ensuring equity and responding to individuals' needs by providing a wider variety of education.

Conclusion

It is challenging to maintain private schools under a 'truly' free education policy in rural Kenya. Although the number of students enrolled in private schools is sharply declining, some still prefer private institutions. Whereas public day schools seem the least expensive, private schools are an alternative for students with special circumstances. Some students prefer private schools to avoid the problems associated with overcrowding and the location of public schools. Students also avoid enrolling in local public schools or being denied admission for specific reasons, such as being older, pregnant, or suffering from behavioural or learning conditions.

One of the challenges of this study is, of course, the overwhelmingly small sample size and the insufficient examination of whether the demands identified in this study necessarily apply in other cases. Furthermore, this could be considered a relatively minor report in that it attempts to focus on the needs of the minority of those attending private schools. It can also be argued that the financial challenges faced in developing countries make it permissible to prioritise the spread of public schools first. Therefore, the needs of minorities for private schools cannot be addressed. Though they certainly constitute a minority, assuring the needs of the minority is essential in the age of the Sustainable Development Goals.

An analysis of the varied reasons students prefer private schools revealed a varied mix of financial, academic, residential, disciplinary, and other needs. Private schools not only compensate for the lack of places in public schools but also provide options to students who do not want to enrol in them. As explained by the director of School B, 'The purpose is different from public institutions. We also do our part in the community'. Further, private schools are flexibly managed, and some students are sponsored by the schools or indirectly supported by those students who pay their fees. In other words, private schools have an inbuilt mechanism of redistribution that helps provide a learning opportunity for the most vulnerable students.

However, the implementation of free education is hurting private schools that accept these vulnerable students and those excluded from public schools. This study found that some private

schools were forced to close down and also had to limit the number of students they could sponsor due to a lack of resources. This study argues that private schools work as a safety net, accepting vulnerable children who public schools cannot absorb for various reasons. School education is not just for competing in academic tests. Private schools have a strong role to play in achieving 'education for all', including those falling outside the academic pyramid of public schools.

Note:

[1] This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number16J00622 and 19K23340.

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I do it Better: How Social and Emotional Learning Environment Enhances Assessment for Learning Strategies in Science Classrooms

Renuka V. Sathasivam
Suzieleez Syrene Abdul Rahim[a]
University of Malaya

Abstract: *This paper describes part of a more extensive national study on Malaysian teachers' classroom assessment practices. The main study used a priori coding framework containing four-level performance ratings (i.e., Distinguish, Proficient, Basic, and Unsatisfactory). The findings revealed that a large majority of teachers' practices were at an unsatisfactory level. Among the 30 science teachers, only two teachers were categorised at the Basic level; the rest were at the unsatisfactory level. The present study used a qualitative approach to compare two teachers at basic and unsatisfactory levels and investigated if teachers' social and emotional competencies (SEC) affect the implementation of three Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies. Three video recordings for each teacher were the main source of data. The findings revealed that the teacher with SEC increased student engagement. The research findings have implications on educational assessment policy and, particularly, teacher education programmes to incorporate elements of SEC to improve teachers' AfL skills.*

Keywords: *Assessment for Learning; Social and emotional competencies: Science teachers; Classroom Discourse*

Introduction

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has consistently shown positive educational outcomes for all grade levels, for a broad spectrum of subjects and various educational settings (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Westbrock et al., 2020). AfL has been conceptualised as a series of strategies to enhance students' robust understanding of content matter (Black & Wiliam, 2009, Wiliam, 2011). These strategies are central but not mandatory, and teachers are given a higher degree of flexibility on how they implement the AfL approach (Leahy & Wiliam, 2012). Since the implementation of AfL is left open to teachers' initiatives and processes of adaptation, literature has shown that teachers are not successfully integrating AfL strategies in their daily lessons (DeLuca et al., 2012; Heritage et al., 2009; Klenowski, 2011; Marshall & Drummond, 2006).

There are two reasons why teachers might be reluctant to implement these strategies, or even when they do; the enterprise is unsuccessful. Firstly, Willis (2011) had suggested that the desired outcome for AfL (i.e., learner autonomy) had remained elusive as the implementation of AfL has not been viewed as an enterprise of participation. More commonly identified as teacher-student relationships, participation should include 'observation, conversations and telling personal stories' (Willis, 2011, p. 412). Through these teacher-student relationships, opportunities are provided for students to make meaning and develop expertise (Aspelin, 2012). However, many teachers rarely engage students in authentic conversation and formulate rich classroom discourses (Lloyd, Kolodziej & Brashears, 2016).

[a] Correspondence can be directed to: suzieleez@um.edu.my

Secondly, even if teachers do attempt to engage students in these classroom discourses, the process of getting teachers and students to share and develop expertise requires time and a mindset change. Many teachers face tensions between standardised testing and the AfL process; thus, finding the time for these learning activities diminishing (Hopfenbeck et al., 2015). Teachers' emotions are those of anxiety and despair as, on the one hand, they are held accountable for their students' success and on the other hand, they are not able to give their total commitment to the AfL process (Dori, 2003; Hayward & Spencer, 2010). Thus, Steinberg (2008, p. 42) was not wrong to claim that assessment and, particularly AfL process, would invoke "strong emotions of anxiety, irritation and even despair".

However, the social and emotional context of the AfL is seldom mentioned or explored (Hargreaves, 1998). AfL process is complex, but this complexity multiplies when one must consider the social and emotional context, leading to scholars shying away from this kind of research (Steinberg, 2008; Wiliam, 2018). Therefore, a study on AfL must consider the social or emotional aspect; if not, it produces a partial or likely misleading account of what is going on and how it may improve. Since AfL hinges heavily on student-teacher participation and relationships, there may be a possibility that enhancing teachers' social and emotional competencies (SEC) (Ryerse & Ark, 2018; Weissberg et al., 2015) could influence the quality of teachers' implementation of AfL strategies (Collie, 2017).

Literature Review

Traditionally, research on AfL has been solely investigated as a cognitive process (Black & Wiliam, 1998). As such, researchers developed strategies to help teachers to implement AfL in the classrooms. Wiliam and Thompson (2007) had provided five "key strategies" to implement AfL – (i) sharing learning goals, (ii) engineering good classroom discussions, (iii) providing constructive feedback, (iv) promoting peer assessment and (v) self-assessment. AfL principles are based on student autonomy and lifelong learning because students are involved in the entire process. Even though directives from policy documents encourage teachers to implement these strategies that lead to student autonomy and participation, teachers cannot successfully do so (Janssen et al., 2015; MOE, 2013).

Moreover, teachers operating in high power-distant cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) are often seen as knowledge keepers. Changing this role can be challenging (Marshall & Drummond, 2006; Willis, 2010). Often, these teachers' classrooms are teacher-centred, and they prefer to maintain discipline and control over class activities, especially where great importance is given to formal assessment (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Teachers are not in favour of students challenging them, and to avoid these situations, the teachers use non-Socratic discourses. When teachers do this, they relinquish student autonomy in their learning process, which is the heart of AfL (Swaffield, 2011).

The reasons for the lack of success in AfL could be the deficiency in studies of how teachers establish and sustain the social and emotional aspects of AfL. Re-contextualizing AfL from a sociocultural theory places the spotlight on the role of identity (Shepard, 2019). Acknowledging who a person is and envisioning who that person might become is essential to meaningful participation. To have meaningful class participation, all life experiences become relevant to learning, including the child's exosystem and macrosystem cultural practices. The socialisation of students must be met with the student's sense of safety and respect for meaningful learning opportunities (Heritage, 2013).

Emotion and cognition are now understood to be inextricably linked (Rogers, 1969, 1983). Rogers (1969, p. 106) held that "certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner" yield significant learning. Facilitation requires at least the facilitator's initial genuine trust in learners, followed by creating an acceptant and empathic climate. Thus, Poplin and Weeres (1994, p. 12) investigated the question, "What is the problem with schooling?" Their answer was relationships, particularly between teachers and students. They found that students who have positive experiences often involve "individuals who care, listen, understand,

respect others and are honest, open, and sensitive". Positive student outcomes are often associated with positive relationships, empathy, warmth, and encouraging thinking and learning and are seemed to be more effective than other educational innovations (Cornelius-White, 2007)

Creating social and emotional learning environment when implementing AfL is no easy task. Teachers do not only focus on the cognitive enhancement of their students, but they now need to incorporate social competencies such as being empathic, being able to cooperate and work in teams as well as developing trust among peers into the assessment process (Black & Wiliam, 2003; Schneider & Randel, 2010; Taylor & Parsons, 2011; Willis, 2010). However, the success of AfL implementation lies in teachers' teaching ability and their relational skills (Chen, 2008; Humphrey, 2013; Osher et al., 2020; Pianta et al., 2008). It is because students who had experienced some form of support from their teachers showed increased academic achievement and motivation to learn (Fraire et al., 2013; Hen & Goroshit, 2016).

Teachers can enhance social and emotional competencies to improve their AfL implementation. These competencies help teachers develop solid and supportive relationships with their students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Jennings et al. (2013) argued that social-emotional competencies provide the necessary skill base and dispositions that help teachers to form supportive relationships with their students and effectively manage their classrooms. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2019) had provided five competencies which are (i) manage emotions (self-awareness), (ii) set and achieve positive goals (self-management), (iii) feel and show empathy for others (social awareness), (iv) establish and maintain positive relationships (relationship skills) and (v) make responsible decisions (responsible decision-making).

For example, in the strategy of AfL - engineering good classroom discussions, teachers would ask questions to elicit students' understanding. Oliveira (2010) broadly describes teacher questioning as a social activity in forming identities and relationships and a cognitive activity in developing students' thinking. The social activity aspect is where the teacher has conversations that build rapport with their students by creating warm relationships and a safe environment for learning (Rich & Schachter, 2012). Teachers do not discuss the subject matter outside of students' interests but connect the subject matter with personal experiences in a story-telling manner and encourage students to be engaged in the discourses. Teachers must be able to establish and maintain positive relationships (relationship skills). Thus, when these teachers ask questions, students can answer them honestly and without fear of being wrong. In addition, teachers can get valuable feedback about their students' (mis)conceptions through these discourses, giving them better opportunities to modify their teaching to suit their students' learning needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

When teachers provide feedback (an AfL strategy), teachers aspire to generate accurate student learning decisions (Wiliam & Leahy, 2015). In the feedback process, the teacher usually recognises when in conversations with their students what their ideas are and how to respond to help students construct scientifically accepted arguments (Cowie et al., 2018). However, they must take into consideration students' personalities. Some students require more time to understand the input, and teachers need to be patient (Ryan & Henderson, 2018). There would be students who feel that they had failed because of the gaps in the learning. Teachers must motivate and show students that they can easily overcome these gaps if they persist and are determined to succeed. When teachers do so, they could be considered as having responsible decision-making.

When teachers conduct peer assessment, it involves providing feedback and commenting on peers' work. Teachers must teach students how to communicate well. Often peers give input in an intonation that may sound hurtful even though it is constructive, or students do not value what their peers have to offer (Rotsaert et al., 2017). Teachers ought to create social awareness so that students are sensitive to talking and listening to their peers. Teachers can scaffold students to provide accurate feedback and guide them to speak politely, respectfully, and collaboratively. Table 1 shows AfL strategies and the SEC that teachers could acquire to enhance their AfL practices.

Table 1: The Strategies of AfL Strategies and the Accompanying Teachers' SEC

Assessment for Learning (AfL) Strategies		Social and Emotional Competencies (SEC) That Complement AfL Strategies	
Sharing Learning Goals	Teachers share learning outcomes/ Teachers show and discuss the success criteria with students	Teachers help students to manage the stress, regulate their emotions about their learning and help them to be motivated	Self-management
Engineering Good classroom discussions	Teachers develop suitable quality tasks and ask high order thinking questions	Teachers prepare tasks with consideration of students' interests. Build a warm rapport and safe learning environment, so students are free to give comments and suggestions.	Relationship Skills
Constructive Feedback	Discuss students' strengths and weaknesses and provide content-accuracy feedback	Understand students' personalities and are aware of the manner to provide feedback (having patience)	Responsible Decision-making
Peer-assessment	Teachers create opportunities for students to use peers' as learning resources.	Teach students to be sensitive to peers' feelings – being polite, modelling practical speaking and listening skills, and working collaboratively.	Social Awareness
Self-assessment	Techniques to encourage students to do self-assessment like 'exit tickets.'	Teach students to be honest about their self-evaluation and remind students to be optimistic about their assessment.	Self-awareness

Source: Ryerse & Ark (2018)

Thus, creating a safe learning environment when implementing "key strategies" of AfL can get their students to take ownership and control of their learning and at the same time improve their cognitive competencies (Haertel et al., 2008; Willis, 2010). Since AfL is associated with enhancing knowledge, we investigated how science teachers' SEC influences the implementation of AfL strategies in this study (Ryerse & Ark, 2018).

The Context of the Study

Malaysia had introduced a school-based assessment initiative known as *Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah* (School-based Assessment, hereafter referred to as SBA), which was implemented in stages, beginning with Year 1 (primary education) in 2011 and Year 7 (secondary), the first year of secondary school, from 2012. This policy was a response to the sufficient literature that points to the drawbacks of the external public examinations (Berry, 2011). SBA is a holistic assessment that considers the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning within the framework of the National Education Philosophy and national curriculum (Ministry of Education, MOE, 2019). According to the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the purpose of SBA is to emphasise the importance of assessment in monitoring student progress in learning rather than merely relying on scores or grades from centralised examinations (MOE, 2013). This school-based assessment initiative was based on the principles of AfL, which gave teachers the autonomy to design forms of assessment tailored for their teaching-learning needs; to use feedback from assessment to diagnose learning problems and to recalibrate their teaching strategies (Kamal & Rahman, 2006; Md-Ali et al., 2015). In this study, the focus is the SEC of the teachers and how these competencies influence their AfL practices.

Methodology

In the main study, 153 teachers teaching the four core subjects (Mathematics, Science, Bahasa Malaysia, and English language) participated. They were observed via video recordings for three lessons of their choice. Video data were collected to gain an insight into teachers' AfL practices. The teachers' AfL practices were measured from the video recordings, then analysed using a priori coding framework called Malaysian Teachers' Assessment Practices Instrument (or MTAPI). The analysis of the video data using MTAPI was focused on how the observed practice most resembled established good practices, as defined by AfL literature (Black & Wiliam, 2006, 2009; Heritage, 2013; Wiliam, 2009, 2018; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007; Wylie, Lyon & Mavronikolas, 2008).

The dimensions in MTAPI included (i) Sharing learning target, (ii) Engineering good classroom discussions, (iii) Descriptive feedback, and (iv) Peer assessment. Each teacher's practice level was coded as '*Unsatisfactory*', '*Basic*', '*Proficient*', and '*Distinguished*' (Sathasivam et al., 2019). For example, a teacher who predominantly provide evaluative feedback is coded as '*Unsatisfactory*' for Descriptive Feedback Dimension and has the descriptors: a. Feedback is absent or of poor quality; mostly evaluative and b. Feedback is not oriented towards learning objectives. Table 2 shows the Descriptive Feedback Dimension and its descriptors. Validity and reliability procedures for video data coding included training, establishing a pair-coding system and a quantitative post hoc approach. For details of how this process was developed, please refer to Tee et al. (2016).

The analysis from the main study showed that the teachers' AfL practices were so skewed that most of the teachers' AfL practices were at the *Basic* and *Unsatisfactory* levels. In the main study, 92.6 % of the teachers were assigned to the *Unsatisfactory* level for the Dimension Peer Assessment. Among the 153 participants, there were 30 science teachers. However, when scrutinised, it was found that only two teachers were at the *Basic* level, and the rest were at the *Unsatisfactory* level (Sathasivam et al., 2019). Thus, this study placed the lens on two teachers, one randomly picked from the '*Unsatisfactory*' and '*Basic*' levels, respectively, to compare if the differences in SEC among these teachers led to the differences in their AfL performance-rating level. The two teachers were chosen, Tharini and Aishah (pseudo names), based on their AfL practices' performance ratings. Tharini's overall AfL practices were at the *Basic* level, considered as one of the 'outliers' in terms of AfL practices among the science teachers. In contrast, Aishah's AfL practices were rated *Unsatisfactory* and represent the typical Malaysian science teachers' AfL assessment practices.

Table 1 was used as a framework for coding the various AfL practices and teachers' SEC. For example, when conducting their classroom discussions, the teacher attempted to build a warm rapport and safe learning environment for the students so that they felt free to give comments and suggestions. If there was active participation among the students, it might be said that the teacher did exhibit some relationship skills.

Findings

The findings showed that both teachers did not practice all the five AfL strategies proposed by Wiliam and Thompson (2007). Therefore, only three strategies would be discussed –*Engineering good classroom Discussions*, *Constructive feedback*, and *Peer assessment*. We are aware that Tharini was not implementing these AfL strategies at the '*Distinguished*' level. However, we aimed to explore if the social and emotional support during the classroom discourses was the reason for the differences in our scoring rubric (MTAPI framework) for the implementation of AfL. The video recordings showed that both teachers did not explicitly discuss the learning target with their students but simply stated what they would be learning for that lesson. The differences between teachers were that Tharini began her class with a smile and asked her students if they were ready to study. In contrast, Aishah expressed annoyance when some of her students came in late and began the lesson with irritation. The following sections discuss three dimensions of the AfL: Engineering Good Classroom Discussion, Constructive Feedback and Peer Assessment.

Table 2: Example of MTAPI for the Dimension Descriptive Feedback

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Descriptive Feedback	a. Feedback is **absent** or of **poor quality**, mostly **evaluative**. b. Feedback is **not oriented** towards learning objectives.	a. Feedback is given in a **general way**. b. Feedback is **limited** on the lesson's learning objectives. c. Feedback is **not uniformly** specific towards learning objectives.	a. Feedback is **not only limited** on the lesson's learning objectives. b. Oral feedback provided appears planned, constructive, informative, regular and frequent. c. Written or oral feedback provides description of the student's **strengths** and **weaknesses.** d. Written or oral feedback provides description of how students can **improve their work** and **make the next step.** e. Feedback includes **specific** and **timely** guidance, at least for **groups** of students.	a. Feedback is **not only limited** on the lesson's learning objectives. b. Oral feedback provided appears planned, constructive, informative, regular and frequent. c. Written or oral feedback provides description of the student's **strengths** and **weaknesses**. d. Written or oral feedback provides description of how students can **improve their work** and **make the next step**. e. Feedback includes **specific** and **timely** guidance, at least for **groups** of students. f. The students are given time to **reflect**, **respond** and **plan** their next actions in the light of the feedback given.

Source: Sathasivam et al (2019)

Engineering Good Classroom Discussion

In Engineering Good Classroom Discussion, teachers must develop suitable quality tasks and ask high order thinking questions. Teachers must prepare these tasks with consideration of students' interests. In addition, teachers are considered to have relationship skills to build a warm rapport and safe learning environment, so students are free to give comments and suggestions.

In Aishah's class, she began her lesson by asking questions about the content taught in the previous class. As she asked them the question – *What is the definition of density,* many of her students remained silent and had typically kept their heads slightly lowered. When Aishah's students did not respond to her question, she immediately asked another more close-ended question.

Aishah : Objects with low density are the objects that will sink or float?
Ss : Float

Since this question was much easier to answer, the students were able to answer the question. Aishah seemed satisfied with the answer and had moved on with her lesson. As she continued questioning her students about the topic she was teaching, many students appeared to be confused. However, Aishah seemed very focused on the content matter and asked students' what factors could influence density. No student responded to her question. Aishah looked around the classroom expecting an answer until a student answered meekly.

Aishah : What is that? (*Simultaneously cupping her hand to her ear*)
S : Inaudible (*Student said something about compressibility*)
Aishah drops and shakes her head, a gesture to show disappointment.
Aishah : Others, please use your brains! (*Using a louder tone of voice and showing frustration*)

Aishah's AfL practices on asking high-quality questions were not successful. Aishah asked low-level questions and seemed more interested in eliciting the correct answers from her students instead of getting to know their understanding of the lesson. Though Aishah asked her students questions, she did not seem interested to help them overcome their difficulties, even though there were clear indications that her students did not understand the topic well. She had not built a warm rapport and safe learning environment, primarily when she used a louder voice and showed frustration when her students could not answer her questions. The students' body language and the lack of response may indicate that they do not feel free to state their lack of understanding.

When Tharini was about to start her lesson, a student reminded her about the previous day homework that she had given them. Tharini smiled and said, '*oh whoa…*' (*showing she was pleased that her students reminded her*). Tharini had asked her students to find out if a rock was renewable or not. Many of her students were eager to give their answers. They were putting up their hands and saying *Me! Me!* Tharini smiled and put her finger to her lips (*telling them to be patient*).

Tharini : Wait, wait, who found out about the rock. (*Many students put up their hands*). I want to know how you found out…from which website.
S1 : I asked my brother-in-law.
S2 : Teacher, I found it at WikiAnswers.
Tharini : Oh, WikiAnswers. Ok, wait. Do you all remember the question? Is a rock…is it renewable or not? Turn around so your friends can hear you. (Speaking to S2)
S2 : Rock is renewable but takes a long period of time to renew. Rock cannot be renewed in a short period of time.
Tharini : Can you all hear that? Ok, his answer, which is WikiAnswer, says that rock is renewable, but it takes a long time to be renewed (*showing gesture with arms spread out wide*). Ok, one answer, thank you.
Similarly, she received answers from other students and repeated them to hear what their friends had found out.

Tharini provided her students with an open-ended question. She allowed her students to take responsibility for their learning as they explored and found the information by themselves. Tharini's students felt valued because Tharini listened to them and repeated their answers, showing them that she was paying attention to their thoughts and ideas. Tharini even asked how and where the students had their answers, indicating her interest in their learning process. Tharini's classroom

environment was warm and friendly, and students felt safe to give their answers as many of them were willing to answer by putting up their hands eagerly. She also made a point to get her students to speak to their friends, indicating the importance of speaking and hearing about the content with peers. When Tharini can receive various answers from her students, she has valuable information about her students' learning.

Constructive Feedback

In this AfL strategy, teachers must discuss students' strengths and weaknesses and provide content-accuracy feedback. Teachers with SEC would do so by understanding students' personalities and are aware of the manner to provide feedback so that students are more receptible to receive that feedback. Teachers must have patience when giving feedback. The teachers' SEC would be responsible for decision-making.

Aishah's AfL practices on oral feedback appear to be evaluative, where when students could not answer the question, she seems to belittle the student. For example, when a student answered one of the questions wrongly, Aishah repeated the wrong answer a few times but louder.

Aishah : point five? point five? POINT FIVE? Please read the question well. Others, what is the answer? *Other students answer*. Yes, 5.5. Your answer after this will be problematic, ok? (*Informing the student*).

Aishah did not seem to have the patience to explain explicitly to her students where and why she had gotten the wrong answer. In another classroom discourse, Aishah's student had given her the correct answer. So Aishah asked that student to explain how she arrived at her response. When the student could not justify how she got the answer, Aishah did not probe further to clarify the student's difficulties in the learning process. Instead, Aishah immediately provided her with the solution.

Aishah : 1.2, yes. How did you get this answer? (*Student is silent*)
Aishah : Mass over volume.

Aishah's AfL feedback practices were evaluative. She was more interested in obtaining or giving the correct answer. There were no words of encouragement or motivation. She did not show any patience when students were struggling to answer. Instead, she was upset when they gave the wrong answers. Moreover, Aishah did not attempt to show her students where they had gone wrong and how they may move on with their learning. Her current feedback practices did not give her students the chance to enhance their knowledge, and these students are likely to resort to rote memorisation.

In contrast, Tharini provided feedback that explained and incorporated answers from her students. After receiving responses such as '*teacher, it is non-renewable, but I don't know why*', '*rock is a geothermal energy, and it is renewable*', and '*renewable*', she asked the students if they wanted to know the answer. Tharini provided examples from her students' responses to summarise what was discussed.

Tharini : It's both – renewable and non-renewable. *Tharini smiles, and some of her students smile and laugh.*
Tharini : …It's also non-renewable because, like Ryan said just now, it takes a long time, a super long, a super, duper, super, duper, luper long time for it to be renewed. (*Putting hands apart to imply a long period of time*). Does that make sense to you?... And if you ask me, I will go with non-renewable because…

When students provided her with their answers, Tharini acknowledged all her students' answers. She was patient and listened before she delivered her feedback. She valued what each

student had said. Thus, Tharini accepted various answers and acknowledged these answers before she decided to give her point of view about the subject matter - '*if you ask me, I will go with non-renewable*'.

Peer-Assessment

In this AfL strategy, the teacher must purposefully create opportunities for students to use peers' as learning resources. In the interactions between peers, teachers with SEC would also teach about social awareness. Teachers would point out how to be sensitive to peers' feelings – being polite, modelling practical speaking and listening skills, and working collaboratively.

Aishah asked her students a question when she noticed that one of her students was talking to his friend. She pointed to that student and told him that the next question would be for him. Aishah punished students for speaking, and thus, peer talk was discouraged in her classes.

On the other hand, Tharini asked her students to work in groups to create a short story to show their understanding of the concept of heat. She then made them share their ideas with the class. One pair shared the following example.

Tharini	:	Ok. You can hear this. This is really funny. Let's turn behind (*So the girls can face their friends*). Ok, so listen to this.
S1	:	A guy in WWE (*World Wrestling Entertainment*) and Sugen (*their classmate*). A normal person comes and hugs both of them; the guy who hugs the WWE person will have more heat. … Like he is bigger. (*Students were laughing)*
Tharini	:	(*Smiling*) Her point is - bigger people have more heat. We should do this experiment (*Playfully*)

As seen in Tharini's class, the learning environment was safe as students trusted each other and were willing to use their friend's name (Sugen) in their example. In addition, Tharini up-took her students' interest in learning and did not belittle or scold them when they provided examples that some teachers could consider as bad-mannered.

Though there was no clear evidence of peer assessment, Tharini had initiated ideas of peer assessment when she asked her students to listen to their friends' stories and see if the story was funny and interesting. By allowing her students to work in groups and create their own stories, they would have evaluated the quality of their work before presenting it to their classmates. By allowing her students to participate in the classroom actively, Tharini turned the learning classroom discourses into more meaningful and folksy conversations that enable students to relate the new learning material to their personal experiences. In contrast, Aishah's lessons revealed fewer students' voices, and there were no student-student interactions. Student-student interactions are a prerequisite for peer assessment and are the heartbeat of AfL practices, and these components were absent in Aishah's lessons.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that Tharini was more successful when compared to Aishah in implementing AfL strategies. Bearing in mind, Tharini was placed at the *Basic* level in the MTAPI framework as there were many aspects of the AfL strategies she was not implementing well. For example, she did not explicitly share the learning target as suggested in the literature (Black & Wiliam, 2006, 2009; Heritage, 2013; Wiliam, 2009, 2018; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007; Wylie, Lyon & Mavronikolas, 2008). Moreover, when there were hints of Tharini using peers as resources for learning, these practices did not progress to the *proficient* level as she did not encourage her students to evaluate their peers' work. It was Tharini who decided which students' example was good. She did not involve other students and asked them how it was related to the content matter or how they may improve the story to make it more relevant to the topic under discussion.

The MTAPI framework placed Tharini's practices as more successful when compared to Aishah's practices. In terms of engineering good classroom discussions, there were hints of her creating learning opportunities for her students took responsibility for their learning. She did not constantly spoon-feed her students with information (Sach, 2012). Tharini also created a sense of belonging through her calm and witty approach during her lessons, inducing humour and making the class safe for her students to experiment with new and innovative ideas (Willis, 2010). Tharini had, at instances during her lessons, inspired her students to heed to their peers' thoughts and ideas, and encouraged teamwork, cooperation and trust among her students (CASEL, 2019; Taylor & Parsons, 2011). She provided an environment where her students felt support from her, which made them feel more motivated and actively involved in the learning process (Hen & Goroshit, 2016). Thus, by creating a more social and emotional learning environment, Tharini exhibited a more successful AfL implementation.

Aishah did not seem to encourage conversation in her class, whether it was peer-to-peer or teacher-student. According to Oliveira (2010), good classroom discussions are an important social activity in forming good rapport with students and a cognitive activity that helps students develop their thinking. However, an environment such as this makes students feel unsafe to express themselves, hence finding Aishah's students less engaging in learning. Furthermore, when teachers such as Aishah do not provide good feedback, students will struggle to understand and identify aspects of learning where they are not grasping (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Aishah is still very comfortable with the hierarchical teacher-student relationship (Hofstede et al., 2010; Marshall & Drummond, 2006). These hierarchical teacher-student relationships do not allow students to receive feedback that can move their learning forward and does not allow them to take responsibility for their learning; these two actions are an antithesis to AfL principles (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Heritage, 2013). Aishah can be seen as a teacher who operates in high power-distant culture, as Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) mentioned. She probably sees herself as a knowledge keeper and does not feel the need to change.

Therefore, this study demonstrated the importance of good classroom discussions, constructive feedback, and peer assessment for successful AfL implementation if accompanied by the teacher's effort to encourage active learning participation in the classroom. However, AfL implementation requires both teacher and student to engage in multifaceted practices. Therefore, there is a need to educate teachers not only on the strategies of AfL but also on the creation of social and emotional learning environments to boost the positive effects of AfL (Pryor & Crossouard, 2008, p. 6). In line with this, teacher education and teacher development programmes should help pre-and in-service teachers to create and marry AfL strategies with content matter and, at the same to create classroom cultures that are socially and emotionally conducive (Ryerse & Ark, 2018). In addition, assisting teachers in developing positive and engaging learning relationships with their students (Willis, 2011) can lead to more effective implementation of AfL strategies and, finally, the success of school-based assessment that many educational systems inspire to achieve. This is to help achieve the aim of the Ministry of Education in Malaysia to encourage more AfL in the classroom (MOE, 2019).

Researchers have conceptualised AfL as a collaborative process involving teachers and peers and how this may affect student learning. AfL and social and emotional learning have been often treated separately by researchers and practitioners, but both are necessary to build students' competencies (Ryerse & Ark, 2018). To date, researchers have investigated teachers' cognitive and emotional resources mostly in separate studies stemming from different theoretical traditions, neglecting a possible relevance for effective teaching, especially for the implementation of AfL strategies (Steinberg, 2008; Wiliam, 2018). In this study, we combine both perspectives. Although cognitive resources such as professional knowledge are crucial for effective instruction, we argue that teachers will profit from this only if they possess sufficient emotional resources due to the complexity of teaching. Teachers' SEC help students to communicate with others persist in challenging assignments, comply with classroom norms, and find the motivation to achieve.

Teachers' ability to express and understand their own and students' emotions is essential for today's teaching profession. Teachers must manage their students' challenges faced in emotional activities that cover aspects of motivation, abilities, and personal backgrounds (Bahia et al., 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to equip them with the skills that will ease their daily activities. This is in line with one of the aspirations of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 to instil strong ethics, emotions and spirituality in students that will help them be resilient in facing life's challenges (MOE, 2013). It is also important to mention that the cultural context and the subject teachers teach should be considered because they can play an important role when considering teachers' emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Research shows that teachers acknowledge the importance of emotions in transferring knowledge because they feel students are more motivated if they use positive emotions in their teaching (Weissberg, 2016).

Thus, allowing active participation of students in their learning, developing warm and sustainable relationships, and identifying and responding to individual needs have shown to be significantly essential factors in learning (Humphrey, 2013; Osher et al., 2020; Pianta, Vandergrift, Houts & Morrison, 2008). A classroom environment that considers the importance of students' emotional well-being provides a conducive learning atmosphere for students to strive and grow positively.

Note:

[1] The authors reported no potential conflict of interest. This work was supported by University Malaya Research Grant (UMRG) Project Number RP004-13SBS.

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The Many Contexts of the Social Responsibilities of Universities

Colin Brock[†]

Zhou Zhong
Tsinghua University

Abstract: *It has long been established that universities have three main functions: to teach, to research and supervise research, and to benefit the communities and regions in which they are located. In reality, the third main function permeates the other two. There are clearly social responsibilities to the students and to the staff who teach them and/or maintain their well-being through administration and other services such as counselling. Including issues of physical, social and economic well-being in their research portfolios is also common, though not universal. In this paper, we take a spatial scale approach to social responsibilities, which can take us from social responsibilities within the university, through what might be termed 'civic responsibilities', on to the immediate populations of a town or city, and then to 'regional and international responsibilities'. The impact of the COVID19 pandemic in line with the sector's social responsibility dynamic is also examined.*

Keywords: *University Social Responsibility; Education for Sustainable Development; Spatial Approach to Social Responsibility*

Introduction

It has long been established that universities have three main functions: to teach, to research and supervise research, and to benefit the communities and regions in which they are located (Boyer, 1996). In recent times, in the context of near-global neo-liberalism, a fourth may have been added: to make money (Kasperkevic, 2014). Private universities, being by definition businesses, have always had this function as an institutional necessity, but there are concerns in the United Kingdom (UK) hat new private providers are emerging, with some government encouragement, that are seeking the title 'university' but which are in fact lacking the social and intellectual dimensions of such institutions that traditionally hold that title.

In reality, the third main function permeates the other two. There are clearly social responsibilities to the students and to the staff who teach them and/or maintain their well-being through administration and other services such as counselling. Including issues of physical, social and economic well-being in their research portfolios is also common, though not universal. Some highly respected institutions of higher education are, by definition 'institutes of technology' in which few, if any, issues of the well-being of humanity may exist in their academic activities. Whether such institutions should be regarded as 'universities' is a moot point and beyond the scope of this paper, but they would have similar social responsibilities outside of the academic sphere.

Nicholas Maxwell, in his important letter to *The Guardian* newspaper of October 2013, in effect places the social responsibility of universities at the core of their *raison d'etre*:

> Of course universities should invest in the future (Letters 25th October). The problem is they don't. Climate change, population growth, mass extinctions and other global problems mean that we are heading towards disaster. If we are to make progress towards as good a better world as possible - or at least avoid the worst of disasters – we need to learn how to do it. That in turn requires that our institutions of learning are rationally designed and devoted to the task.

This implies a social responsibility of universities on a global scale and connects with what James Martin (2006) termed 'the skills-wisdom gap'. He was referring to the increasing danger for humankind of technological expertise outreaching the ability of governments, and people in general, to control and direct it to peaceful and constructive objectives. One such example would be the capacity of humans to cope with the ever-decreasing scale of nanotechnologies involved in everyday life. Of the seventeen existential issues ranged by Martin (2006), he saw the closing of the skills-wisdom gap to be a role for elite universities. To this end, he founded The Oxford Martin School in 2005, which, though based in Oxford, has over 200 associated researchers worldwide and supports the work of others provided that:

> (…) to qualify for our support, the research must: be of the highest academic calibre; tackle issues on a global scale; could not have been undertaken without our support; and have a real impact beyond academia (Oxford Martin School Website).

This global initiative of social responsibility is paralleled by the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, founded in 2011 by Martin Rees, former Astronomer Royal and Master of Trinity College. It has somewhat of a focus on ICT and economics (Brock, 2016).

The efforts of Maxwell, Martin and Rees are examples of universities exercising their social responsibilities on a grand, indeed global, scale. Spatial scale is one way of recognising the range of social responsibilities of universities. It is one dimension of context, what the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) termed: 'a geographical, institutional and administrative approach'. Such an approach has now been overtaken by the advances in Information Communications Technology (ICT) that have long since liberated the geographical from the political, though to different degrees in the range of countries and regions. ICT has enabled innumerable pathways of influence, included those of social responsibilities, to escape the bounds of regulated spaces of various scales.

Nonetheless, in broad terms, we may accept the spatial scale approach to social responsibilities, which can take us from social responsibilities within the university, through what might be termed 'civic responsibilities', on to the immediate populations of a town or city, and then to 'regional responsibilities'. This means the contiguous region or sphere of influence of the town or city within which the university resides. Beyond that lies the nation (or in some cases autonomous regions within it) and any multinational grouping to which that nation might belong, such as The European Union (EU) or The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Sometimes there may be multiple regional responsibilities such as, in addition to the EU, the Council of Europe and The European Educational Area. For example, the Bologna Process, which has no spatial limit, has within its rationale an element of social responsibility towards the populations within its terms of their tertiary educational entitlements and mutual recognition. In addition, there is the phenomenon of 'education hubs', which are independent and dynamic, but which still have social responsibilities.

Social Responsibilities within the University

This can begin before students arrive at the university. Most undergraduates have little understanding of the ambience of a university before they arrive there. Increasingly universities in the UK are organising 'open days' or other access experiences. These are invaluable, especially, as with the exception of some elite institutions, selection interviews are now uncommon. Hopkins (2006)

examined the LEAPS programme in Scotland (The Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools), which has been in operation since 1995. This might also be regarded as an aspect of social responsibility to the community, but for this particular potential clientele is a matter of transition from one to the other. LEAPS participants were attentive to issues within the university that they hoped would be a transition rather than a break; issues such as "money, finance, exams, drinking, clubbing and socialising" (p 246), and the social class make - up of the institution, avoiding institutions popular with a 'rich upper-class elite' (ibid.).

Once at university, two main areas of social concern to students are provision for those with disabilities and a sophisticated understanding of the concerns and needs of social and cultural minorities. There can be an overlap between these two. For example, Horton and Tucker (2014) ask: "are spaces of academia conducive to poor public health?" (p 76). They surveyed students and staff mostly in the UK, but also in Canada, finding evidence of both having to hide their problems due to their institutions being somewhat unforgiving. Once 'outed', so to speak, such individuals and minorities tended to take the lead in questioning the shortcomings of their universities in respect of minority issues. One such group is Muslim students, as examined by Hopkins (2011), on a campus some way out of the city context in the UK. In general, responses were quite positive, mainly on the grounds that the campus population is necessarily more educated than the general public in the areas they have come from. Nonetheless, the inevitable penetration of the campus by national and social media followed them with negative reactions, which the university should try to alleviate as far as possible. There were issues such as the Mosque often being in a peripheral location, which had some kind of message and posed dangers for female students, especially. Also, whereas every college or hall had a bar (or pub as they called it), coffee bars and other such facilities were not so regularly available. In general, however, universities are reckoned to be 'enabling environments' (Swain et al., 1993), where students and staff with any kind of minority issue or condition can form spaces for themselves. Johnson and Castleden (2011) report on an example of involving students in the design of a campus, praising "the desirability of student-based involvement in the evaluation and mapping of future land development on the campus" (p 353).

The provision of residential facilities for students is another important social responsibility for universities. It varies as between countries where living away from home is seen to be part of the university experience. This is somewhat different between England and Scotland, wherein the latter studying at the local university and living at home is longstanding. In England, the collegiate tradition of Oxford and Cambridge, followed by Durham, has been an influence, though the increase in student numbers means that few undergraduates in the two ancient universities are fortunate to get more than one year in college residence. Durham City is very small, so the university still maintains a tradition of offering most undergraduates there years in college residence. A few modern universities, such as Kent and York, are collegiate. Most universities, however, have developed halls of residence for those students who opt for in-house accommodation. Others prefer or may have to seek residence in the private sector, but even here, universities have a duty to monitor the schemes and organisations that offer it.

Beyond the particular issue of residential responsibility is that of the wider wellbeing of students. Fleuret and Prugneau (2015) build on and adapt the theoretical framework of Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), which looks at student wellbeing from a spatial view and suggests four dimensions of space in the university setting that are relevant: spaces of a) security, b) capability, c) therapeutic and d) integrative. With respect to their study of these issues in relation to the University of Angers, France, they conclude:

> The results reveal that the student population has a specific relation to space due to a transitory presence in the university town, with, as a consequence, a simultaneous embedding in different places. This could explain why the students do not perceive the characteristics of place to be a major influence on their wellbeing; instead it is the perception they have of their well-being that influences their perception of place (Fleuret & Prugneau, 2015, p 110).

One may infer from this that how a university cares for the wellbeing of its students has, at least to some extent, to do with how it lays out the locations of academic facilities in relation to its social and residential facilities. Angers is referred to as 'a university town', with its faculties centred in three areas and sports facilities in another.

The idea of a university town in itself seems to infer some kind of social responsibility. In such places, universities can have a very significant multiplier effect. This is an economic concept but not entirely unconnected with the social. In attempting to respond to the UK government cuts in university funding and capacity in the early 1980s, it transpired that the University of Hull was the second largest employer in a city of over 250,000 people. This does not directly mean that the university had a social responsibility to the city and its people, but it did illustrate a considerable and intimate economic and social relationship between the university and the community.

The University and the Community

With the exception of universities in so-called greenfield sites, most, at least in the UK, are in towns or cities. There may be more than one, as in Birmingham, Bristol and Leicester, and of course, London. In the case of Manchester, there were several that have now coalesced into one. They vary according to the degree to which their foundation corresponds to the development of the city concerned. In the case of the so-called 'redbrick' universities associated with nineteenth and early twentieth-century urbanisation in England, they range from colleges founded to help address the severe health and engineering issues of industrialisation to a kind of civic status recognition. That is to say, from Owens College, Manchester in 1840 to University College, Hull in 1927. Indeed, both had antecedents with distinct civic objectives in the form of the Manchester Mechanics Institute (1824) and the Hull University Extension Society (1876), the latter being founded by a small group of businessmen in association with the University of Cambridge adult education extension services. During the 51 years leading to the foundation of University College, Hull, the Hull University Extension Society "fitted into the matrix of voluntary organisations in Hull, and, given the apathy of the Corporation to its responsibilities in this field, alone provided the basis of higher education in the later nineteenth century" (Bamford, 1978, p2). Such responsibilities were also the interest and role of the Oxford Delegacy, "an organisation dedicated to bringing educational opportunities to adults in many locations throughout the country" (Brock & Alexiadou, 2013, pp 9-10). Michael Sadler, later to become the founding father of comparative education, was appointed Secretary to the Oxford Delegacy in 1885, and in 1891 co-authored with Halford Mackinder, Professor of Geography at Oxford: *University Extension, Past Present and Future.* Given that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were engaged in adult extension activities prior to the beginnings of state education for all at the primary level in 1870, that is an interesting commentary on the social responsibilities of universities in itself. But it is with the aforementioned so-called civic foundations from Manchester onwards that the scale of interest could be called one of community. As far as England is concerned, such universities were part and parcel of a rapidly growing and new kind of community, the city. To what extent the term civic university can reasonably be applied to them is one of the considerations.

Nonetheless, there is a significant place and function in the university to go beyond the early work of adult extension education mentioned above to a wider engagement with the town or city in which it is located. That of being an employment multiplier, beyond that of academic staff, has already been mentioned. The Council, or governing body, of most universities in England, is largely made up of local leaders of industry, commerce, politics and religion. Among other things, they appoint the Vice-Chancellor, the leader of the university, who then also becomes a local figurehead also involved in various aspects of civic life. In some cities, new universities have developed, often from well-established local technical colleges and polytechnics, which already have community connections and in some cases may develop more of a contemporary social responsibility function than the older university foundation itself. This may be seen in Bristol, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge.

Universities in all four constituent parts of the UK engage in a range of initiatives that are of benefit to their local communities, from primary schooling to social welfare. For example, Swain (2016) reports on universities involving themselves in establishing and supporting 'free schools' and 'university technical colleges'. On the free schools' issue the Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University is quoted as stating that "sponsoring a free school is part of a 'civic duty'" (ibid. p36). But this view is challenged by Nadia Edmond in the same publication: "They talk a lot about partnership with the community but it's undermining those partnerships because it is privileging particular relationships with particular schools and not others" (ibid). Where university technical colleges are concerned, these are less contentious. They aim to be a bridge between school and university in towns that are within the wider sphere of influence of a city but somewhat on the periphery. The university colleges promoted by the University of Hull, for example, are located in Grimsby and Scarborough.

Within the immediate, wider and more peripheral sphere of influence of a town or city, universities engage in a wide range of social and economic activities. Notable in researching and indeed supporting such activities is the well-established Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) at the University of Newcastle, established in 1977. Since then, it has generated over 30million British Pound Sterling (GBP) of research activity, including on local and regional cultures and identities through the UK. Among the 2016 research and development programmes of Curds are: a) The Civic University Study Programme (CUSP), Creativity, Culture and Education in Schools and Civic Universities, and Social Inclusion through the Digital Economy (SIDE). These are clearly seen as part of the social responsibility of the university.

Universities and the International Community

Universities have, almost by definition, long been seen to be international institutions. International staff and student migration generate and serve clear social responsibilities. (Findlay et al., 2012), argue with respect to UK students enrolled in six overseas institutions that significant social and cultural capital accrues from such experiences. The international hierarchy of universities in the form of a global league table was seen as a determining factor in choice of destinations, but the criteria on which the tables are based have little to do with social responsibilities of such institutions. Yet, as the writer has argued (Brock 2012, p.49), internationalism as opposed to internationalisation:

> ….has its roots in the free association of scholars that predates the establishment of nation states with their frontiers securing a regulated space. As such internationalism is a fundamental feature of an ideal university, one that signifies its integrity

In these terms, it could be seen as a social responsibility, especially in the face of the potential and likely imminent social and environmental catastrophes predicted by Martin (2006) and Maxwell (2013) that predicate this discussion. Through their high level of skills in ICT, universities can operate simultaneously at global and local levels. In the latter context, a university, or in less developed communities, some other post-secondary institution, could lead and contribute towards educational and social innovation "to enable the community to come to terms with its environmental challenges both physical and socio-cultural" (ibid. p 60). In so doing, in Martin's (2006) terms, universities would be serving their function of social responsibility through a new type of thinking about the future by reflecting on what might now be possible in particular localities and regions.

But universities are in general related to cities, and as the world of education has become globalised, so those cities that are expanding have become nodes of global information and knowledge networks. This goes beyond the political, social and cultural activities of their respective locations and communities, and indeed beyond the countries in which they are located. It has even been suggested that such city nodes are the 'new countries', freed from national political regulated space, 'spaces of identity' (Morley & Robins, 1995). Such spaces can influence and change the spatial and social morphology of cities, as in Buenos Aires (Ciccolella & Mignaguil, 2002) and Amsterdam

(Riemens & Lovink, 2002).The numerous international networks of ICT that now exist and overlap sometimes have nodes that are, in effect, 'education hubs'. Some such hubs have been developed by commercial and/or national policy and are sufficiently numerous to suggest a typology of education hubs (see Symaco & Brock, 2016)

Transnationalism has become a common feature of the universities in "the thickening of interdependence" (Keohane & Nye 2000, p. 21). Transnationalism generally refers to a multi-layered process of expanding and accelerating activities and impact across national borders. As the 'multiversity' (Kerr 2001, p. 1-34) and the 'city of the intellect' (Kerr 2001, p. 64-95), the universities, especially those with intensive research, serve as both localised nodes and global hubs of networks in educational, socioeconomic, political and cultural processes stretching over many spatial scales. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 caused unprecedented disruption to the education sector (UNESCO, 2020). Amid the public crisis gloom, universities worldwide serve as a lighthouse to sustain an array of academic and social responsibilities: innovating online and hybrid education to its students and the public, research in vaccine and other pandemic coping solutions while maintaining safety and health on campus. There is also the provision of advice to the government and counselling to the general public, creating an ethos of resilience and mutual support in society.

In the COVID-19 pandemic context, the pandemic's 'physical distancing' resulted in a dislocated and disparate university communities across the world. Many universities took their first emergency response to go virtual and collaborated with domestic and overseas universities and organisations for humanitarian efforts. The students and staff became 'digital transmigrants' (Schiller, Basch & Blanc 1995, p. 121). They maintained multiple and constant digital interconnections across physical or social borders, and their public identities were re-configured about several 'territorial spaces'. In this context, universities were re-spatialized across physical and virtual spaces (through a network of networks or a process of networking). As pointed out by Brock (2016, p.168), the basic spatial issues in such context are that of "(a) access to the digital dimension of education provision; (b) the nature and quality of that provision and (c) technical ability to interpret and manipulate it, are all extremely disparate in spatial and location terms."

Such efforts were diverse and distributed but also often transactional and fragmented. Disparities generated a more prominent 'digital divide' in terms of differences in digital skills and infrastructure and social-emotional well-being. Many students and scholars found themselves unable to function well without the ambience of a close-knit, well-served, and often highly-regulated time-space of a physical campus or even a classroom. The higher education sector has taken the social responsibility to tackle such a digital divide in its community. A key issue is to harness technology to make the university more open and integrative and promote a more resilient and responsive institution.

The University for Sustainable Development (USD)

In today's world full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, survival depends on innovative learning-based solutions through collaborations. The university's social responsibility has increasingly integrated into the notion of the University for Sustainable Development (USD) or Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). A major ESD landmark is the Talloires Declaration (1990) for 'incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities'. Initially signed by 22 universities in five continents in 1990, more than 500 universities signed the Declaration in 2021 (ULSP, n.d.). Another major ESD landmark was the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. It included an article on 'the development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects' (UN, 1992). Since 2015, ESD has been recognised as 'an integral element of SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 4 on quality education and a key enabler of all other SDGs' (UNESCO, 2021). The latest ESD global framework for the year 2030 proposes a roadmap for "ESD's

key role for the achievement of the 17 SDGs and the great individual and societal transformation required to address the urgent sustainability challenges" (UNESCO 2020a, p. 3).

In this context, USD engages the university in its entirety. USD aims at the mutual reinforcement of the university, maintaining its sustainability while playing a creative and crucial role in achieving sustainable development in societies and the world at large. USD encapsulates holistic, transformational, and multi-scalar responsibilities simultaneously with education and training, academic inquiry, empirical application, and cultural development for sustainability. In essence, USD fosters cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioural learning in terms of the content, outcomes and the learning environment for quality lifelong learning. USD today is closely connected with SDG 4.7, which refers to sustainability competence development in the university sector: "to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through Education for Sustainable Development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (UN 2015, p. 19).

This paper surveyed the 'landscape' of the university's social responsibilities at multiple scales, illustrating the topographical concept and the mental schemata of the idea of a university in terms of both tradition and innovation. Moreover, the university's intrinsic features of transnationalism and globalism have become increasingly prominent in the context of both rapid technological development and mounting challenges to sustainable development. Therefore, the landscape view of the university's social responsibilities offers **"**a conceptual framework that can accommodate all these changes, that would help us understand the transformations and inter-connections, inform our thoughts and decisions through a particular comprehensive perspective" (Brock 2016, p. 188).

Editorial Note

This unpublished article was one of the last written by Colin Brock before he passed away in 2016. Additional writing was added by his former doctoral student, Zhou Zhong (DPhil, Oxon). The Journal of International and Comparative Education (JICE) is publishing this article in memory of Colin, who was instrumental in the formation of the Journal and who served as Chair of the International Advisory Board until his passing.

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BOOK REVIEW

British Scholars of Comparative Education: Examining the Work and Influence of Notable 19th and 20th Century Comparativists. By David Phillips (Ed.) (2020), 178 pages. ISBN: 9780367250270. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

For students and early career researchers exploring comparative and international education for a course, a career or a project, this book spanning over 170 years of the history of the field is invaluable. Long before some British politicians began to talk about 'Global Britain', it is evident that the group of eleven scholars and policy makers covered in this volume had demonstrated powerfully the value of understanding better '*other schools and ours'* (King, E. J., 1958). The group whose lives and work are thoughtfully analysed here travelled widely, and in some cases long before it was so easy to do so. They examined countries as different as India and Russia, Japan and Belgium, Germany and France, small states and large – and many more. Their purpose was not so much to describe systems as to understand contexts and cultures.

What makes this edited volume so special is that the nine commentators on the group of British comparativists are themselves critical analysts of the history and development of comparative education. Their lens on the group is hugely valuable as they are able to look across the very considerable productivity of the group and identify some generative themes that contributed to the emerging field of comparative education.

It is valuable that all of the chapters pay attention to the early stages of these different biographies. This allows the reader to see the influence of schooling and particularly of the subjects such as the classics and other languages that several of them followed from school into university. But also evident in their lives was the influence of travel, already mentioned above.

It is intriguing to consider how did this hugely diverse group of scholars and policy makers achieve their impact. Was it through their publications which in most cases were prodigious? Probably not. In most cases, I doubt if most members of the British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE) will have bought even one or two of the very large number of publications associated with this group. In my case I bought just two of their publications some fifty years ago, and I do not believe I have used them in my own work yet.

Impact through an enabling institutional environment may be a much more frequent modality of influence. All of these individuals were associated with a particular institution or institutions, and it was through these that they were able to influence younger scholars and graduate students. In my own case, it was because of one of their links to the Comparative Education Society of Europe (CESE) that I decided to attend a CESE conference in France for the first time. That led on to several significant developments. In other cases, it is clear that around some of these scholars a kindergarten of younger scholars formed, often pursuing research connected to that of the enabling catalyst. Clearly, the provision of travel funds or of even quite small research funding can also lead to new work by a next generation of scholars.

This institutional development associated with these individuals is perhaps the way they most made their mark. Societies and associations for the study of comparative (and international) education were directly linked to several of these individuals, as were journals of comparative education, and the connected conferences. Book series was another of the institutional developments associated with members of this group. These modalities drew many hundreds, even thousands, of younger people into orbits where many of the ideas and theories of the group became accessible. Unlike their publications which may sit unread on shelves or go out of print, the conferences and journals continue to spark debates many decades after their founders had helped set them alight.

This is not to say that there are not particular ideas or views that derive from these eleven individuals, and sometimes because they strike the right chord, they become part of the canon. This is uncommon but in the case of Michael Sadler 'A mundane talk at a minor meeting in Guildford, Surrey, on 20th October 1900 has somewhat surprisingly achieved the status of a core text in comparative inquiry' (Phillips 2020, p. 25). The key sentence from this talk, which is often utilised to warn against the dangers of policy transfer in education, is reproduced below; but to make the point about impact and influence, it should be recalled that another British comparativist, Philip Foster, who moved from London to Chicago, also wrote a hugely memorable article called 'the vocational school fallacy'. This was not the result of years of research and writing:

> Funny about the 'vocational school fallacy' – I wrote it in a few days as a "spin-off" from my own major interest in education, class formation and stratification in LDCs. You never can tell what's going to sell as the ad men say! (Foster to King, personal communication in King & Martin 2002, p.25).

This edited collection is subtitled: *Examining the work and influence of notable 19th and 20th century comparativists*; and that is precisely what it achieves. It illustrates from the 'great lives' of this group a very considerable richness of insight into the influence and impact of individuals responsible in large part for creating the field of comparative and international education in the United Kingdom.

> We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world… and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. (Sadler quoted in Phillips 2020, p. 27).

Kenneth King
University of Edinburgh

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BOOK REVIEW

Modern in China. By Paul Willis (2020), 196 pages. ISBN: 9781509538300 Cambridge: Polity Press

Paul Willis is renowned in China (as elsewhere) for his work *Learning to Labour*. The present work, based on three years of living in Beijing and teaching at Beijing Normal University, takes many of the concerns of that earlier work and transports them to the Chinese context. Willis skilfully draws upon that experience, using the postgraduate students in his seminar as his primary sources of information, to draw a rich picture of the impact of modernity on the lives of young people in China.

Many of the preoccupations of the earlier work persist in this volume. There is a concern over how young people negotiate their place in society, and in particular how those who fail in, or are failed by, the system manage their position in the system. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the overpowering competition in the education system, the choices present themselves as delaying gratification in order to secure a comfortable economic position that rarely if ever arrives, or opting instead for immediate gratification, but without the necessary economic wherewithal to gratify. This is at the core of the paradox Willis describes as consumerism without consumption.

Overall, then, this delightful book works on three levels. At the middle range, Willis offers his interpretation of the phenomena described by his student-informants. He does this through the three 'arrows of change': urbanisation, consumerism, and the rise of the internet. This account is not so much about the material manifestations of change and technology, as about the place of these changes in the imagination of Chinese youth. For example, the urban-rural divide is important in the imagination of these young people, but it is not a simple dichotomy between urban good and modern, rural old and backward (even if one chapter is titled 'City Good, Country Bad'). Rather the city and the country offer different aspects of modernity, and the losses and costs are keenly felt, both by those who move to the city and those who do not. Willis expertly captures the texture of this complexity in his account.

But where the text really comes alive is when Willis allows the reader to hear the voices of his informants directly, as he does with generous quotes in the main text, and a separate section devoted to longer statements. It is here that one can see the subtle evaluations of ordinary, admittedly well educated, young Chinese adults, as they reflect on their reading, and look back over their formative years. These are no one-dimensional figures bullied or brainwashed into conformity. They are carefully balancing the demands of the teachers with the responsibilities of family and solidarity with their less successful peers in school.

At the most general level, Willis claims to offer 'cultural and sociological insights of the approach I have taken and lessons learned to encourage and enable further work along the same lines'. This may be necessary academic hubris, to claim to blaze a trail that others could follow. But it is at this level that I find Willis least convincing, and I doubt that his approach could easily be duplicated by one who had a less deft touch. As it is, his personal and idiosyncratic scholarship, and careful avoidance of claiming to have a monopoly on interpretation, are an enjoyable companion through the intricacies of the text.

Willis set out with the intention of writing a text that would be of interest to both the specialist and the generalist. My pleasure at reading his work may well be enhanced by the time that I spent in Beijing Normal University, talking with him and sharing some experiences with him. But even allowing for that, I would say that he has produced a work which deserves the wide readership that he was aiming for.

David A. Turner
Beijing Normal University