

Digital Transformation in Higher Education System: Learning Technologies at Open University of Mataram

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of technology has significantly impacted learning development. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of learning technologies based on students' perspectives and to discover the challenges encountered when using technologies. In conducting a qualitative case study, the researcher collected data using an open-ended questionnaire at the Open University of Mataram. The data from six informants were analyzed by using the thematic analysis technique. The analysis procedures were based on Kawulich's (2004), which encompassed narrative, coding, interpretation, confirmation, and presentation. The result showed that the students found technology in their learning was effective primarily in creating attractive, practical, and accessible learning experiences, promoting flexible learning and independent learners, and enriching and deepening understanding. Meanwhile, three main challenges were identified: an unstable network, social media, environmental distraction, and a lack of technological competence among students. This study recommends researching teachers' perspectives on digital transformation for further studies

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary higher education institutions aim to train qualified individuals possessing valued competencies in the labor market. A potential strategy for attaining these objectives is the digital transformation of the educational environment within a higher education institution, serving as a platform for advancing contemporary methodologies and innovations. The digital learning environment of a higher education institution must facilitate the enhancement of digital competence in future professionals by extensively employing digital technology and implementing innovative approaches and solutions (Henseruk et al., 2020). In the knowledge era, it is crucial to comprehend the value that information technology (IT) projects may provide to organizations. Several sectors have been significantly transformed due to the incorporation of value added to products and services via technological applications. Information Technology has facilitated integrated value chains and customized products and services (Rodríguez-Abitia & Bribiesca-Correa, 2021). Effectively harnessing the myriad opportunities and capabilities of digital technology while reconfiguring comprehensive business models throughout the entire value chain is complex and undoubtedly a formidable challenge (Castro Benavides et al., 2020).

Like all other revolutionary shifts, digital transformation necessitates significant adaptation and re-adaptation. The considerable transformations in the socioeconomic framework due to the globalized economy have catalyzed notable changes in higher education, including standards, quality, decentralization, and the rise of virtual and independent learning (Lemoine et al., 2017). These trends in the field of education jointly foster transnational education. Digitalized education delivery may be an alternate method to address the enrollment gap. Universities use offshore branches or transnational distant learning to enhance their digital transformation skills. Students will eventually rely significantly on the digitalization of education, principally propelled by information and communication technology (Alenezi, 2023). The pervasive worldwide education has significantly impacted universities in shaping their learning, growth, delivery, and continuous improvement processes. Universities may no longer rely on traditional learning methods to address the difficulties presented by globalization (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022)

Moreover, the proliferation of internet-based technology has transformed the academic landscape and facilitated the digital transformation of colleges and universities (Haleem et al., 2022). Given the requirements of an evolving national analogue industrial economy, higher education experienced substantial transformation in the 19th and 20th centuries. Higher education is currently undergoing a change to address the requirements of a digital, global information economy (Komljenovic et al., 2024). The specific nature of the revolution remains

a subject of significant disagreement among individuals. In technological advancement, the confusion surrounding the optimal strategies that higher education institutions should adopt to establish robust and adaptable educational support systems to meet academic and future job goals is critical (Chugh et al., 2023). Universities will remain essential in providing students with the competencies required for success in the twenty-first-century workforce. Higher education institutions are struggling to efficiently plan, plot, and foresee the spectrum of intended educational goals due to the swift progression of technology. They must accomplish all the goals to effectively fulfil their position as significant contributors to student workforce preparation (Akour & Alenezi, 2022).

Digital transformation signifies that digital applications facilitate or promote novel forms of innovation and creativity across various sectors, including business, government, education, global communications, healthcare, art, and science (Wang et al., 2022). Particularly in education, technology plays a crucial role in the abilities and skills required for students to integrate into society and acquire information and Knowledge (Kalyani, 2024). This revolution manifests in various styles, techniques, and chances; however, a crucial consideration is how to reform higher education in a digital landscape characterized by needs and inequities that jeopardize this transformation. Technological advancement signifies a rapid transition in higher education (Gopalan, 2016). This phenomenon rapidly expands and has achieved a macroscale due to the proliferation of virtual learning and its worldwide implications. The presence of technical initiatives globally facilitates the implementation of quality standards in orchestrating digital transformation within institutions and events. From this perspective, initiating a systemic approach within this educational setting highlights the necessity to focus on many indicators across multiple levels of management in higher education (Suárez et al., 2021).

The influence of digital transformation extends beyond technology. Organizations employ many new digital technologies throughout digital transformation to attain enhanced performance and enduring competitive advantage (Marks & Al-Ali, 2022). Despite numerous assertions that technology could improve university instruction, there exists considerable disparity in its actual application by educators. Subjects may be linked to specific technologies rather than exhibiting consistent technology usage overall (Shelton, 2014). Technology allows universities to adapt and thrive in evolving circumstances, potentially facilitating more flexible and accessible pathways to education (Bradwell, 2009). This study investigates digital transformation, especially for technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), which the Open University of Mataram adopts for curriculum practices. While most studies investigated TPACK to determine teachers' competence, the researcher studied TPACK by examining students' perspectives on digital transformation implemented at the Open University of Mataram and the students' challenges to digital transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopted a theory of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge by Mishra and Koehler (2006) to correlate digital transformation as the focus of this study with the technology adopted by the Open University of Mataram. This TPACK framework is based on three principal knowledge components (J. M. Spector et al., 2014).

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge (CK) refers to educators' understanding of the subject matter to be taught or learned (Rohmitawati, 2018). The curriculum for middle school science or history differs from that of an undergraduate course in art appreciation or a graduate seminar in astrophysics. Mastery of subject matter is essential for educators. Knowledge and inquiry vary significantly among disciplines, and educators must comprehend the foundational principles of the subjects they instruct (de Jong et al., 2023). This encompasses understanding scientific facts and hypotheses, the scientific method, and evidence-based reasoning. In art appreciation, such Knowledge encompasses art history, renowned paintings, sculptures, artists, and their historical contexts, in addition to aesthetic and psychological theories for art evaluation.

Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

Pedagogical Knowledge encompasses educators' profound understanding of the processes, procedures, and methodologies involved in teaching and learning (Leijen et al., 2022). They include, among other aspects, overarching educational objectives, principles, and goals. This fundamental understanding pertains to comprehending student learning, general classroom management techniques, course design, and student evaluation. It encompasses Knowledge of pedagogical procedures, the characteristics of the target audience, and methodologies for assessing student comprehension. Educators with profound pedagogical expertise comprehend how pupils construct information, acquire skills, and cultivate habits of mind and favourable attitudes toward learning (Dumaguing & Yango, 2023). Consequently, pedagogical Knowledge necessitates comprehension of cognitive, social, and developmental learning theories and their application to students in the classroom.

Technology Knowledge

Technological Knowledge refers to comprehending the synergy between technology and human resources, which can enhance students' Knowledge. Educators must choose and identify the technology employed in the instructional and learning processes (Wuryaningtyas & Setyaningsih, 2020). The integration of technology in education is more intricate and presents challenges for educators. Obtaining TK in this manner allows an individual to execute various tasks with information technology and to devise alternative methods for performing a specific work. Moreover, the three domains of TPACK are constrained by four components (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), including Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Technological instructional Knowledge (TCK), and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK).

Technological Content Knowledge (TCK)

The link between technology and content understanding is historically profound. Comprehending the influence of technology on the methodologies and Knowledge within a specific discipline is essential for creating suitable technological tools for educational objectives. The selection of technologies enables and limits the types of content concepts that can be imparted. Similarly, specific content judgments may restrict the types of technology that can be employed. Technology can limit the types of viable representations while enabling the creation of novel and diverse representations. TCK is the comprehension of the interplay between technology and content. Teachers must possess expertise not only in their subject area but also in the transformative impact of technology on that subject matter (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). Educators must comprehend which particular technologies are most effective for facilitating subject-specific learning in their fields and how the content influences or potentially alters the technology or vice versa (Harris et al., 2009).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

PCK aligns with pedagogical methods pertinent to the instruction of particular material. PCK encompasses the fundamental aspects of education, including teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment, and reporting, as well as the factors that facilitate learning and the interconnections between curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy (Shing et al., 2015). Recognizing prevalent misconceptions and perspectives, the significance of establishing connections among diverse content-based concepts, students' prior Knowledge, alternative pedagogical approaches, and the adaptability derived from examining various viewpoints of the same idea or problem are all crucial for effective instruction.

Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)

TPK refers to comprehending how the dynamics of teaching and learning might transform with the specific application of certain technologies (Benson & Ward, 2013). This encompasses understanding various technological instruments' pedagogical advantages and limitations regarding discipline-specific and developmentally suitable instructional designs and tactics (Yeh et al., 2021). Hence, constructing TPK necessitates a comprehensive grasp of the limits and affordances of technologies and the disciplinary settings in which they operate. TPK is particularly significant as most widely used software applications are not tailored for educational objectives. Software applications like the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Entourage, and MSN Messenger) are typically intended for professional settings. Web-based technologies, like blogs and podcasts, are designed for entertainment, communication, and social networking. Consequently, TPK necessitates a proactive, innovative, and receptive approach to technology utilization, aimed not at the technology itself but at enhancing student learning and comprehension (Bruner-Timmons, 2018).

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

TPACK represents an advanced type of Knowledge that transcends the three fundamental components: content, pedagogy, and technology (Schmidt et al., 2014). Technological pedagogical content knowledge is an understanding that arises from the interplay between content, pedagogy, and technological expertise. TPACK encompasses a profound integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge, distinguishing it from an understanding of each subject in isolation (Jiménez Sierra et al., 2023). TPACK serves as the foundation for effective technology-integrated teaching, necessitating comprehension of concept representation through technology; pedagogical strategies that employ technology constructively to impart content; awareness of the challenges and facilitators in learning concepts, alongside the role of technology in mitigating student difficulties; insight into students' prior Knowledge and epistemological theories; and understanding how technology can enhance existing Knowledge or foster new epistemologies (Schmidt et al., 2014).

Expert teachers apply TPACK by concurrently integrating their understanding of technology, pedagogy, and material throughout instruction (Lestari, 2022). Every scenario educators encounter combines these three elements; thus, no universal technical solution applies to all teachers, courses, or pedagogical perspectives. Solutions are in a teacher's capacity to adeptly navigate within the realms defined by material, pedagogy, and technology, as well as the intricate interconnections among these aspects in particular circumstances (M. Spector et al., 2018). Disregarding the intricacies of each knowledge component or the complexities of their interrelations may result in oversimplified solutions or failure. Consequently, educators must cultivate fluency and cognitive flexibility within each core domain (T, P, and C) and understand the interrelations across these domains and contextual elements to devise practical solutions (Vitiello et al., 2011). This represents a profound, adaptable, useful, and nuanced comprehension of technology integration in teaching as we engage with TPACK as a framework for professional Knowledge.

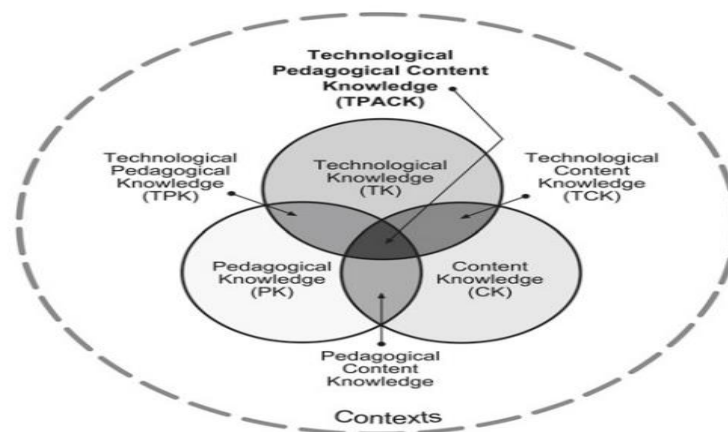


Figure 1. The TPACK Framework

Previous Studies on TPACK

TPACK has continued to receive attention from researchers in the past decade. A literature review was conducted by Irwanto (2021), which took numerous previous studies from 2010 to 2021 regarding the use of TPACK in educational settings. Research has also investigated multiple facets of TPACK, encompassing its evaluation, enhancement, and implementation. Wu et al. (2022) also indicated that teachers with robust learner-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical attitudes might exhibit more confidence in implementing TPACK. The findings suggest a necessity for professional development initiatives to focus predominantly on the technology-related aspect of TPACK. As a result, educational institutions must enhance learning and training for potential instructors to include technology in education, improving their TPACK competencies (Efwinda & Mannan, 2021).

Moreover, Huang et al. (2022) determined teachers' self-regulated learning (SRL), a crucial predictor of their emotional experiences throughout a technology-enhanced activity to strengthen TPACK skills educators who expressed positive emotions employed more effective self-regulated learning strategies during the TPACK development assignment. The pedagogical and conceptual framework of the teaching plan has demonstrated a beneficial impact, highlighting the efficacy of a holistic approach that can adjust to the particularities and problems of social studies education (Miguel-Revilla et al., 2020). Successful TPACK development initiatives necessitate teacher comprehension of the framework, demonstration, and cooperative lesson planning (Tseng et al., 2022).

Further study was conducted by Albeta et al. (2023) focusing on TPACK-oriented blended learning as an application of progressive education. Through a literature study, the researchers determined that the notion of blended learning grounded in TPACK embodies the implementation of progressivism, fostering development and advancement in education. Progressivism encompasses evolving and transforming all educational domains, including materials, curricula, and objectives, in response to the shifting times and environment. The philosophy of progressivism posits that education should evolve following contemporary advances and incorporate blended learning grounded in TPACK, serving as a response to the dynamic landscape of education. TPACK-based blended learning focuses on creating pedagogical approaches that align with technological advancements and contextual demands.

In addition, the advancement of technology necessitates support for teachers in integrating new tools into education, as Su (2023) found. Educators must have the skills to implement and utilize technology to enhance learning effectively. The utilization of technology can offer numerous opportunities for students to succeed. All educators must include TPACK in their methodologies, as it is considered an advanced framework for technical Knowledge. Instructors possessing advanced TPACK may consistently integrate technology into the curriculum to improve effective, context-specific teaching tactics and advance learning objectives. Consequently, this teaching innovation impacts teachers' digital literacy, as such skills empower instructors to navigate the contemporary

obstacles associated with implementing blended learning models in education. Advanced digital literacy abilities enable educators to enhance learning through creativity and innovation.

Compared to the current study, most previous studies investigated the significance of TPACK from teachers' perspectives and the advantages of each technology used in teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, this study aims to scrutinize the students' perspectives regarding using TPACKS and the types of technology implemented in the open University at Mataram. The study's results are hoped to have a significant impact, particularly in evaluating the progress of TPACK used in the University based on students' viewpoints for better learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design and case study to determine the types of digital transformation implemented by the Open University of Mataram and students' adaptation to the transformation during their study journey. Kumar (2011) defined a case study as a method wherein a specific instance is the foundation for a comprehensive, holistic, and in-depth examination of the subject of interest. In order to gather the data, the researcher employed two data collection methods: observation and open-ended questionnaires to answer the research questions. The researcher visited the University to get a broad insight into the use of technology for the students as part of the observation. Besides, the open-ended questionnaires were distributed through an online Google form that the students should fill out. This study involved five students from the Open University of Mataram, who focused on scrutinizing the University's digital transformation types. Besides, their viewpoints on the implementation of digital tools were also required as a means of answering research question two. The data was analyzed with thematic analysis by following procedures proposed by Kawulich (2004), commencing with *Narrating, Coding, Interpreting, Confirming, and Presenting the data*. This study also utilized Atlas. Ti software as a tool to capture the data analysis process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First are the students' perspectives on digital transformation implemented at the Open University of Mataram. There is always a debatable argument regarding the utilization of technology in higher education, whether it brings more drawbacks caused by ineffective teaching and learning activities or enhancing the effectiveness of instructional activities. In this study section, the researcher analyzed and discussed the students' perspectives on using technology as instructional aids at the Open University of Mataram. Through open-ended questionnaires, this study found that TPACK has beneficial aspects for the students that further foster their learning effectiveness. More specifically, according to the students, using digital technology in instructional activities brings three primary positive impacts on their capacity, which will be elaborated further below.

Creating an Attractive, Effective, and Easy Learning Experience

Utilizing learning aids profoundly impacts students' educational activities and thus determines their academic results. They must swiftly embrace and adapt to the technology to enhance their learning efficacy. This study revealed that some facilities at the Open University of Mataram can be effectively integrated into the learning process, as educators may utilize the media to its fullest potential. The application of media can engage pupils more enthusiastically in classroom activities. Moreover, in addition to enhancing the appeal of learning, integrating learning technology is posited to facilitate a more efficient process during and after instructional activities, fostering learning outcomes. Yue et al. (2024) also found that technological tools can enable customized learning experiences, augment student engagement, and boost educational outcomes. Likewise, the pupils could optimize their potential through technology while advancing to a more refined learning method. Equally significant, students may enjoy facilitated learning, enabling them to comprehend the materials presented via digital platforms more readily than the traditional paradigm, which predominantly emphasizes blackboards or whiteboards as teaching mediums. A more detailed explanation can be found in the informants' data in the subsequent passage.

"Teachers adapt their teaching methods with this technology as it can create a more engaging, effective and easier learning experience."

"Technology enables the creation of more interactive learning materials, e.g. through simulations, learning videos."

"They simplify the flow of lectures so students can learn in a more organized way. Video Conferencing Tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet for distance learning"

Moreover, using teaching and learning platforms must align with the resources. The educators must meticulously evaluate whether instructional technologies align with their pedagogical activities and the desired learning objectives. As mentioned earlier, the snippet illustrates that Video Conferencing Tools enhance students' online learning. Additionally, students can access the educational resources provided by their instructors via simulations or instructional films, which may constitute asynchronous teaching and learning activities.

Easy Access to Materials

Integrating technology into education can enhance students' comprehension and mastery of the content presented by their instructors. The enhancement of comprehension allows students to explore their learning materials more deeply through the pedagogical technologies employed by their lecturers. Instruments like Kahoot or Quizziz can assess students' learning comprehension while facilitating engaging educational activities. Some instructors use videos, podcasts, and digital simulations to elucidate intricate concepts, enhancing visualization and increasing engagement with the material. The availability of learning materials can enable students to engage in active learning across many methods and locations. Likewise, Humairah and Safutri (2023) also found that technological learning media is an auxiliary tool that facilitates the elucidation of facts, concepts, principles, and Knowledge more visually and engagingly. Consequently, the utilization of technology and technology-driven educational media can enhance the efficacy of learning and assist both students and educators in attaining educational objectives. The following is the informants' response concerning this issue.

“Posting assignments online. Teachers use learning platforms to post homework assignments online. This way, students can access assignments easily and in an organized manner.”

“It is conducive even in sharing the many lessons we can take so that when teaching each other, it is easier to understand the help of digital with the discussion of a theme in learning.”

“Integrating technology in education can help make content more relevant and easy to understand.”

“For example, science concepts such as atomic structure can be visualized in 3D, making it easier to understand than text explanations alone.”

“With the help of technology, materials can be tailored to individual needs and abilities. For example, adaptive learning platforms can provide additional practice if a student struggles with a particular topic or go faster if the student already understands the material.”

The informants' explanation indicated that learning media, as supportive platforms, enhances students' comprehension through its efficacy and assists them in adapting to learning materials by providing supplementary content when challenges arise. Moreover, delivering educational content can assist students in completing their assignments systematically, necessitating a well-structured learning timetable.

Promoting Flexible Learning and Independent Learners

The students can readily access the materials' content at any time and from any location, allowing them to study without attending a university or library. Utilizing technology does not inherently preclude offline learning; instead, blended learning methodologies can effectively integrate both forms of learning. In this context, flexibility in learning pertains to students' access to online and offline educational experiences facilitated by appropriate technology. Furthermore, using technology empowers students to augment their learning autonomy, necessitating independent exploration and access to Knowledge and educational resources available on learning platforms. Similarly, Haleem et al. (2022) found that educational technology can facilitate students' preparation for lifetime learning. These technologies offer students a virtual environment and the autonomy to acquire digital information according to their learning preferences. Digital content production technologies that personalize education enable students to learn at their speed. The digital classroom uses electronic devices and software to educate pupils, integrating technology into learning.

In addition, the pupils contend that autonomy in learning would provide broader opportunities to comprehend technology and materials before the commencement of class. This approach to education is referred to as blended learning. Therefore, employing technology to assist students is essential for enhancing the efficacy of classroom learning. The subsequent explanations the informants provide on this topic are accompanied by the results of the researcher's investigation utilizing Atlas. Ti Software.

"Provides flexibility for students to attend lectures from anywhere, and allows for interactive discussions."

"Lecturers who combine online and face-to-face lectures use a blended learning model, where technology provides flexibility and extends learning beyond the physical classroom."

"The integration of technology enables easier access to learning resources, strengthens interaction between students and lecturers, and provides more flexible tools for learning."

"Provides opportunities for students to learn independently: Students can access learning materials anytime and anywhere through online platforms."

"Technology allows me to access and process large amounts of data and information from multiple sources. This means I can find answers to complex questions and provide information relevant to a given topic."

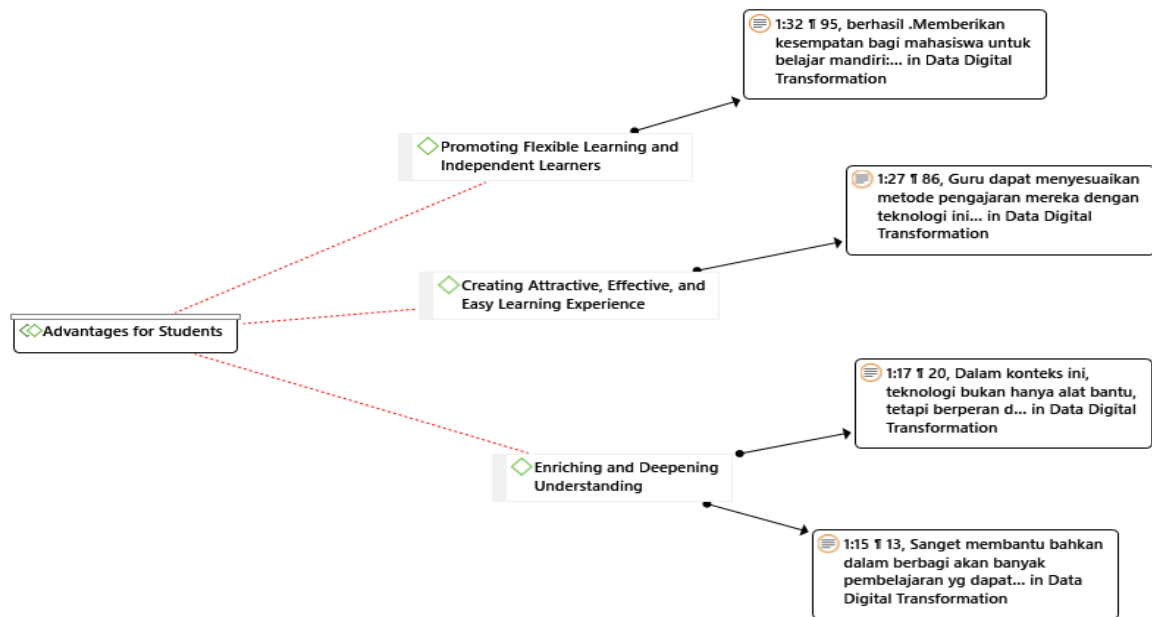


Figure 2. Students' Perspectives on TPACK in Learning

Second are the students' challenges in technology-based learning. Despite the advantages of technology in learning, the students at the Open University of Mataram expressed some challenges they faced during the teaching and learning activities. These include Internet Connection Issues, Distraction, and Lack of Technological Competence. Getting involved in technology requires both the teachers and students to possess a stable internet connection. The internet pace can subsequently determine the fluency of the teaching and learning activities. However, in this study, the students sometimes found connection errors when accessing the platforms, disturbing and wasting their adequate learning time. Similarly, Erlangga (2022) also found that students' technical difficulties were related to particularly when accessing the platforms. Besides, due to the low signal, it is challenging for the students when they want to download particular material through the platform. In addition, Agung and Surtikanti (2020) also discovered that Accessibility remains the primary determinant of online learning success. The University needs more user-friendly platforms to enhance student involvement in online learning. This is mainly intended for students living in rural regions with restricted internet access and insufficient support networks.

Besides an unstable network, being distracted during online teaching and learning becomes another issue. Letting access to social media during online teaching and learning leads to a loss of focus and consequently decreases understanding. Besides, since the students are outside the classroom, distractions can emerge from their friends, family, and other surroundings. Hence, selecting a comfortable place is a wise choice not only to support a stable network but also to find an environment where the students can study without being disturbed by the people around them. Likewise, Agarwal et al. (2021) also discovered that the frequent utilization of social media among university students is increasingly a prevalent distraction. This distraction adversely impacts their overall well-being and academic achievement. In this case, Winter et al. (2010) propose that students

distinguish between learning and non-learning activities through technology and software applications, which may provide insight into student reluctance towards online education.

Lack of technological competence becomes the next challenge in digital transformation at the Open University of Mataram. Some students faced difficulties understanding the features of the technology used when learning. In this case, the lecturers should introduce the technology before conducting the classroom teaching and learning activities. In this matter, Coman et al. (2020) contend that it is essential to create training programs for educators to facilitate their adaptation to changes and to elucidate that the future of higher education institutions encompasses the online environment. Similarly, Santoso and Lestari (2019) discovered that technological literacy and technology integration significantly impact students' teaching competencies. The faculty should enhance support for students majoring in accounting education to ensure the improvement of their technological literacy. Faculty should enhance technological resources for students and instructors to facilitate their adaptation to technological advancements.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, incorporating technology in education has substantial benefits, especially in facilitating flexible learning and cultivating autonomous learners. Technology enables access to abundant resources and educational platforms anytime and anywhere, empowering students to assume control of their learning at their own pace, tailored to their specific requirements and preferences. Furthermore, technology establishes engaging, efficient, and accessible learning environments via interactive tools, multimedia content, and gamification. These components attract students' attention and enhance the engagement and Accessibility of learning, hence augmenting motivation and retention. Ultimately, technology is essential in strengthening and deepening comprehension by offering varied and multimodal resources that accommodate unique learning styles. Students can investigate intricate concepts more comprehensively using simulations, virtual experiments, and real-time feedback, leading to a profound understanding of the subject matter. Technology significantly improves the learning process, rendering education more dynamic, individualized, and effective.

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