CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Behaviour is generally defined as what someone does. When it comes to education, the behaviour of students is usually the highlight of the learning activity. Student behaviour has also been referred to as "academic behaviour." Snipes et al. (2017) stated that academic behaviour can be inferred as students' behaviour towards their studies, commonly associated with being a "good student." Therefore, it is important to maintain positive academic behaviour. As stated by Kaminski (2022), students who exhibit positive behaviour will develop competence, trust, and cooperation among themselves in class, which will help them achieve their learning goals. One of the factors that influences student academic behaviour is the learning environment. As claimed by Cantero et al. (2016), the learning environment is considered one of the factors that influences the behaviour of students. Furthermore, Al Haq (2020) also stated that the environment includes all the conditions in the world that exist in certain ways that affect students' behaviour, growth, development, and learning processes. It can be inferred that the learning environment plays a crucial role in academic behaviour. Therefore, academic behaviour is very important as it affects students' performance, which potentially affects the outcome of learning.

Regarding the behaviour of students, the shift in the learning environment could bring out a behavioural impact, in which students happen to find the changes affect them negatively or positively. A study by Muangmee et al. (2020) investigated students' behaviour towards the shift in the learning environment from face-to-face to online learning in Thailand during the pandemic. The result shows a change in students' learning behaviour. Social influence, student effort, facilitation, learning value, and technological use had the largest positive effects on the student's behaviour towards online learning. In other words, students positive

towards the online learning environment largely resulted from influences outside the classroom. Another study by Boca (2021) investigated factors influencing students' behaviour and attitude towards online education during COVID-19 in Romania. The study revealed that students' interest, teacher skills, and the addition of good online materials had a positive effect on students' behaviours. From the study above, it can be concluded that the shift in the learning environment from face-to-face to online learning is affecting students' academic behaviour, which could be detrimental or beneficial for their learning goals. On the other hand, it also raises questions about their behaviour and perspectives on the newly established blended learning activity.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on education. Thankfully, after two and a half years of struggle, the number of infected is slowly dropping, especially in Indonesia. As the country lifts the lockdown regulation, many universities in West Java are implementing blended learning as an alternative to academic activity in the post-pandemic era. After the pandemic, blended learning has gained widespread acceptance as the new standard worldwide, especially for universities, where students are typically adults and demonstrate a higher level of self-reliance in their learning methods (Zhu, 2022). According to Vallée et al. (2020), blended learning refers to the integration of traditional face-to-face learning and asynchronous or synchronous remote online learning. Universities view blended learning as beneficial because it offers students the opportunity to engage in a combination of face-to-face and virtual learning, along with a mix of structured and flexible coursework (Singh et al., 2021). In Indonesia, blended learning is typically used in a rotational model where students rotate between learning modalities, including online learning, full-class instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring (Hrastinski, 2019). In one course, lecturers could decide to rotate between face-to-face or asynchronous/synchronous online learning, one after the other. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the current state of the world, schools and universities find it helpful to keep the benefits that remote online learning offers and combine it with face-to-face classroom learning as a new method of learning activity.

The shift from online to blended learning environments post-pandemic also potentially affects students' academic behaviour. Previously, a preliminary interview was conducted with several students from an Indonesian university in West Java who expressed their views on blended learning post-COVID-19. The students mentioned that it is challenging for them to manage their time, recreate new learning strategies, and be in a crowded classroom. All of these factors have led to a lack of attention, poor learning performance, and poor learning strategies in the classroom, significantly impacting their academic goals. On the other hand, they also appreciate the flexibility and interactivity that are offered by remote online courses, which, in line with Zhang et al. (2022), claim that online learning offers freedom, affordability, and easy access compared to traditional face-to-face learning. Students especially gave a very positive impression of the flexibility aspect because it gave students instant communication with two-way text, images, voice, data, and video/audio and allowed geographical separation from other students and teachers (Yuhanna et al., 2020). Thus, this study will investigate the behavior of undergraduate EFL students in blended learning environments. Concerning the shift in the learning environment due to the end of the pandemic, the study will focus on evaluating engagement-related aspects of students' behaviours at the classroom level as follows: attention, attendance, effort, verbal participation, persistence, positive emotion, and learning strategy. The study is conducted with EFL students at one university in West Java, Indonesia, regarding the ease of access and the recency of the transition. With several majors and departments still or recently transitioning to blended learning, this could provide richer data for the study.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

In this study, the researcher addressed the following question:

How do the students behave towards the shift of the learning environment from online learning to blended learning post-pandemic?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To prevent misunderstandings regarding the terms used in this study, the researcher offers the following definitions related to the study:

1.3.1 Student Academic Behaviour	:	Student academic behaviour refers to the way students engage with their studies and learning environment. It includes actions such as attending classes, participating actively, completing assignments, managing time effectively, and maintaining a respectful and ethical approach to education. Positive academic behaviour is essential for achieving academic success.
1.3.2 Blended learning	:	Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face learning activities with online learning, which encompasses various approaches. In this study, we are focusing on synchronous and asynchronous methods. Synchronous learning occurs in real-time interactions, while asynchronous learning provides flexibility for students to access materials and study independently.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The present study aims to:

To identify students' academic behaviour towards a blended learning environment after the transition from remote online learning post-pandemic.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Empirical use : This study aims to provide an empirical understanding of student behavior toward blended learning following the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5.2 Theoretical use : This study contributes to enriching the literature review on students' behavior in a blended learning environment, particularly post-outbreak, as there has been limited research in this area.

1.5.3 Practical use : The findings of this research will be valuable for educational scholars seeking a deeper understanding of students' behavior' towards a blended learning environment after a pandemic outbreak has ended.