CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the research. It comprises the background to the problem, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study

1.1. Background

The phenomenon of online learning sparks some problems for the students, especially for first year undergraduate students. They do not feel like university students since all they do are taking classes at home. In addition, one of the major challenges of online learning is that the teacher and students are in different places, creating the potential for students to feel a lack of social connection with the teacher and other students (Moore & Kearsley, 2005; Sung & Mayer, 2012). Their new identities as university students are things that should be explored since they contributed to their learning.

Today, online learning is ubiquitous and transformative, offering unprecedented access to diverse educational opportunities across subjects and institutions. Its flexibility allows learners to study at their own pace and schedule, accommodating various lifestyles and responsibilities. Interactive tools and multimedia content enhance the learning experience. Despite challenges such as unequal access to technology, online learning continues. The new learning policy lets the teaching and learning process carry on albeit teachers and students do not gather directly at school. In addition, online learning is a part of distance education that precisely mixes electronic technology and internet-based technology or ICT in learning (Efriana, 2021). Therefore, students are able to take online classes, in addition, first year students that mostly undertake them without meeting offline even for once.

Identities are necessary to investigate this online learning occurrence. For this reason, distance affects the learners. Online learning settings can be

tough due to the limited communication frequencies and transactional distance that can lead to the room for misunderstanding (Moore, 2007). Lack of 'real interactions' makes it difficult. In the learning environment, attitudes are frequently conservative, and students are more at ease with old teaching approaches which makes change regularly faced resistance (Vuorela & Nummenmaa, 2003). A preliminary study has been conducted regarding this issue and the result indicated that these problems did occur. Thus, the limited interaction of online learning makes it challenging for the students' identities.

A previous study related to this phenomenon has been investigated by Juliette Sweeney, Qin Liu & Greg Evans in 2020. They examined how the online environment influenced students' socialization processes and perceptions of learning to a better understanding of the individual and especially environmental factors that have influenced engineering students' socialization processes while learning online during the pandemic, as well as the importance of social interactions to student learning. This is such a fascinating phenomenon to be investigated, especially in Indonesia.

There is a serious topic for more research to investigate this phenomenon. This study will be focused more on first year undergraduate students' identities and it is shaped as university students in online learning. First year students' views on this phenomenon are definitely required to be observed more thoroughly for better online learning in the future. This research will be conducted to investigate using the qualitative method.

1.2. Formulation of the Problems

The issue of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. How are the first-year undergraduate students' identities as university students during online learning?

2. What are the factors contributed to first-year undergraduate students' identities as university students during online learning?

1.3. **Operational Definitions**

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to this study as follows:

1.3.1. Students' identities

Student identity refers to the collection of characteristics, beliefs, and experiences that shape how a student perceives themselves within an educational context. It encompasses their sense of belonging, academic self-concept, values, goals, and roles within the learning community.

1.3.2. Online learning

Online learning is a method of learning which relies heavily on the use of technology as a medium of learning.

1.4. **Aims of the Research**

This research aims at exploring first year undergraduate students' identities as university students in online learning and the factors contributed to it.

1.5. **Significances of the Research**

The finding of this research aims to give a contribution to:

1.5.1. Theoretical Use

This research will expand the theoretical insight and empirical understandings towards first year undergraduate students' identities as university students in online learning to be a guidance for the next researchers to investigate more about this related topic.

1.5.2. Practical Use

The results of this research will convey about first year undergraduate students' identities as university students and sense of community in online learning, which is important to know about how is the impact of online learning towards those aspects. This will help for the educators to create ideal learning and for next research to find out what is the solution to these problems.

1.5.3. Empirical Use

The results of this research will convey about first year undergraduate students' identities as university students and sense of community in online learning, which is important to know about how is the impact of online learning towards those aspects. This will help for the educators to create ideal learning and for next research to find out what is the solution to these problems.