

Teaching International Relations in Post-Pandemic Era: The Case of Universitas Islam Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic presented both opportunities and challenges in higher education, including in the field of International Relations. On one hand, Covid-19 accelerated digitalization, encompassing online classrooms, online assignments, and blended learning with synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction. This research will explore the process through which the Department of International Relations at Universitas Islam Indonesia adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The study will employ a qualitative method, utilizing open-ended questions and interviews with lecturers from the Department of International Relations at Universitas Islam Indonesia. The data will be analyzed using Historical Sequence Analysis as developed by Mahoney et al. (2009). This research will demonstrate that the Covid-19 pandemic and digitalization are interdependent in establishing the new blended learning mode, which continues to be utilized to this day.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, international relations teaching, Universitas Islam Indonesia, digital technology

1. Introduction

A rapid, immediate, and sudden crisis tests the institutional, structural, and individual readiness of an institution. In contrast to financial crises, where the impact is not directly life-threatening, health crises such as pandemics present an immediate emergency due to their deadly nature. As a novel virus, medical teams around the world had little to no understanding of the disease when the outbreak began. In response to this medical emergency, educational institutions closed their schools and universities. The first case of Covid-19 in Indonesia was announced by the government on March 2, 2020, and a week later, WHO declared Covid-19 a global pandemic. Following WHO recommendations, the Indonesian government closed schools and universities to prevent the spread of the virus. At the same time, according to a World Bank report, the government also had to anticipate learning loss and rising learning inequalities among students from different economic backgrounds (Yarrow et al., 2020).

The rise of digitalization is bringing about fundamental shifts in a variety of areas, including education, technology, international relations, and the existing world order. On the other hand, COVID-19 has been a global nightmare, overwhelming governments' attempts at a united response. As the pandemic wreaks havoc on families, healthcare, and economies worldwide, it's clear that its disruptions demand a major shift in how universities educate students (Smith & Hornsby, 2021). There is a lot of optimism surrounding the advancement of digital technology in education, particularly in higher education environments. As a transformation, digitalization in higher education learning environments should be perceived holistically, involving multi-purpose, multi-process, multi-disciplinary, multi-state,

and multi-actor dimensions (Benavides et al., 2020). In facing this condition, academia around the world needs to rethink how we teach and prioritize new skills in our teaching practices to prepare students to overcome these challenging times. The growing number of students in higher education, a trend seen worldwide, is putting pressure on how we teach (Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

However, in some cases, digital technology in education has proven otherwise. It may be inefficient for student learning due to distractions from social media (Lacka et al., 2021), dizziness (Wekerle et al., 2022), and cyberslacking intentions (Rana et al., 2019). Therefore, careful planning and evaluation are necessary to ensure the efficiency of digital education technology in classrooms. It is also important to note that teaching in universities requires different strategies for early adult learners. During the COVID-19 pandemic, accommodating the individual uniqueness of adult learners has become even more challenging, despite the availability of various digital technologies (Ladwig et al., 2021)

The Covid-19 pandemic posed a sudden and disruptive crisis that tested the readiness of educational institutions across structural, technological, and pedagogical dimensions. Unlike past pandemics, this global emergency occurred in a time of advanced digital technology, enabling universities to shift rapidly from face-to-face to online learning through platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. This dual pressure—from the disabling effects of the health crisis and the enabling potential of digital tools—triggered a significant transformation in higher education delivery.

This paper focuses on how this transformation unfolded in the *post-pandemic* context, specifically within the Department of International Relations (IR) at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII). Rather than merely reverting to pre-pandemic norms, UII has navigated a hybrid transition, developing a distinct mode of teaching and learning that integrates lessons from the pandemic era with prior digital capacities. This paper focuses on how this transformation unfolded in the *post-pandemic* context, specifically within the Department of International Relations at Universitas Islam Indonesia. Rather than merely reverting to pre-pandemic norms, UII has navigated a hybrid transition, developing a distinct mode of teaching and learning that integrates lessons from the pandemic era with prior digital capacities.

We argue that the shift to hybrid and digitally enriched learning in the post-pandemic era cannot be fully explained by pandemic responses alone. The post-pandemic teaching mode is a result of both the emergency-driven adoption of online learning during Covid-19 and the pre-existing digital infrastructure and practices available before the pandemic. The pandemic served as a catalyst—but not the sole cause—for lasting change.

As one of Indonesia's leading Islamic private universities, UII presents a unique case. The IR Department, established in 2012, faced the challenges of Covid-19 while still in its formative years. Under UII's 2026 vision of “value-based substantive growth,” digital transformation in teaching has become a strategic priority. In this paper, we examine how the department’s pre-pandemic preparedness and digital readiness shaped its post-pandemic pedagogy, and how it continues to adapt in light of emerging digital possibilities.

In defining the time frame of the pre-pandemic era, we adopt the Indonesian government's official recognition of the first Covid-19 case on March 2, 2020, as the start of the pandemic, despite some criticism regarding several suspicious undetected cases weeks before the announcement (van Empel et al., 2020). This is because, prior to the official case, there were no closures of public spaces, including universities, and the learning process continued as usual. However, in marking the post-pandemic era, we do not follow the official endemic status of Covid-19, which was announced on June 21, 2023, because the university we examined returned to fully offline classes starting in the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year.

This paper thus asks, how has the Covid-19 pandemic reshaped the post-pandemic teaching and learning at the Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia? We argue that the change of post-pandemic teaching is not just the result of the Covid-19 pandemic adaptation, but also because of prior changes before the Covid-19 hit. We employ Mahoney et.al. framework to examine this

change. In the discussion part, we show three main categories of changes: (1) pedagogical adaptation, (2) technological infrastructure, and (3) institutional response.

2. Research Method

In answering the posits questions, this paper will explore the teaching practice at the Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia by interviewing lecturers who taught before, during, and after the pandemic. According to the permanent lecturer list, the department had 10 lecturers that fit for this category. In interviewing the lecturers, The interview asked seven topics with 1-3 questions in each topic that were answered directly by the interviewee for around 30-45 minutes. Out of 10 permanent lecturers that taught at the department before, during, and after the pandemic, we conducted the interview with eight of them, which we decode their identity as Ms. A, Mr. B, Mr. C, Mr. D, Mr. E, Ms. F, Mr. G, and Mr. H.

To analyse the interview result, this paper aims to contextualize the post-pandemic learning mode by reflecting on the pre-pandemic condition and pandemic disruption. In achieving this goal, we manually code their answers, in which the interview transcribes is coded into three main categories of discussion: (1) pedagogical adaptation, (2) technological infrastructure, and (3) institutional response. In sense-making their answer, we aimed to interpret their actions and perceptions in answering our questions, helping us to build up the case from our study (Woodside, 2010). Furthermore, the result will help us to build a thick description of the challenges faced by the lecturer and how it shapes the post-pandemic teaching and learning experience at UII.

However, as Woodside (2010) mentioned, case study research should not stop in describing the situation. It should, he suggests, contribute a subjective significance to the events and linkage of underlying paths among concepts and variables. To achieve this goal, we follow Mahoney et al., (2009) in analysing historical sequences that lead into a distinctive change. Their sequence elaboration provides a framework to analyse the relative importance of causes and its types of causes to understand the whole sequence. In their article, Mahoney et.al. (2009) follow the Boolean logics that divide the causes to be sufficient and/or necessary and divide them into five categories: (1) necessary but not sufficient, (2) sufficient but not necessary, (3) sufficient and necessary, (4) insufficient but necessary part of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the result, and (5) sufficient but unnecessary part of a factor that is insufficient but necessary for an outcome. After deciding the type of cause of an event, this method providing sequence elaboration to show the relationship between the cause and effect. The relationship between X (cause) and Y (effect) might take one out of three possibilities: (1) contextualizes, (2) diminishes, or (3) logically impossible relations. Here, the third or intervening factor (Z), will explain the causal relationship between X and Y either as antecedent or intervening factor (Mahoney et.al., 2009).

In our research, we investigate the post-pandemic teaching as the result (Y) and Covid-19 pandemic as the critical juncture that necessitates for the result (X). The pre-pandemic teaching, despite its historical sequence situated before both conditions, is the intervening factor (Z) yet necessary for both the teaching experience during the Covid-19 pandemic (X) and post-pandemic (Y). The pre-pandemic condition shows the conventional, face-to-face learning mode with a limited technological usage. During the pandemic, due to social restrictions, we observed the full migration of learning experience into an online mode with a full usage of digital learning technology. In the post-pandemic era, the learning experience did not return fully into the conventional mode, because the adaptation has rearranged the learning mode into a hybrid by using digital learning technologies. Thus, by employing Mahoney's et.al. (2009) logic, this research will show that the pre-pandemic teaching (Z) is the antecedent factor for this historical sequence. Figure 1 will show our adoption of this sequence.

Throughout this sequence, we will investigate how the antecedent digitalization process contextualizes the pandemic mode of learning and to what extent it explains the post-pandemic hybrid and flexible learning modes.

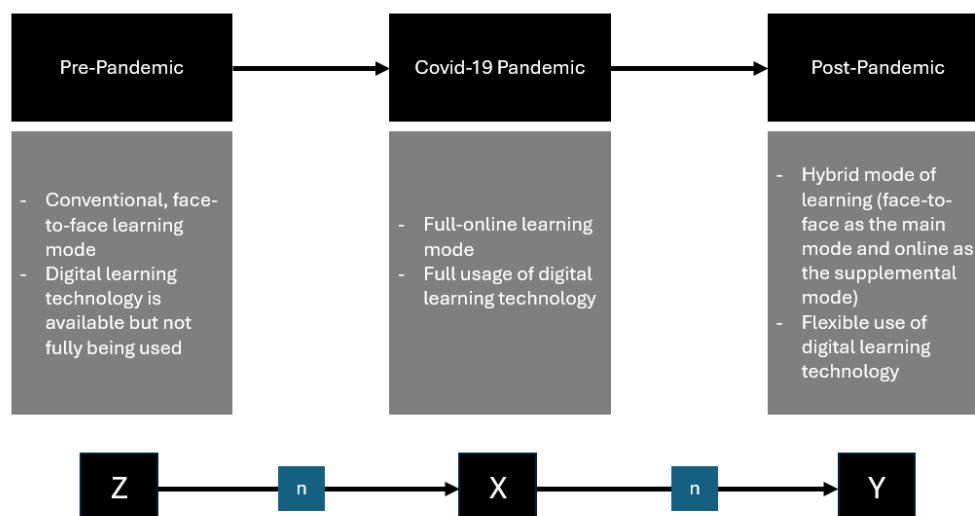


Figure 1. The Historical Sequence Analysis adopted by this paper from Mahoney, et.al., 2009

3. Result and Discussion

Pedagogical Adaptation

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the people-to-people interaction due to social distancing and mobility limitations. Since the early days of the pandemic, President Joko Widodo instructed regional heads to implement policies requiring schools and universities to conduct teaching and learning remotely rather than in classrooms. As a consequence, educators and students must now adapt to remote learning environments (Antara News, 2020). This shift involves various remote methods, including live virtual lectures conducted via video conferencing tools, pre-recorded lessons that students can access at their convenience, and digital platforms for submitting and grading assignments. The goal is to ensure that educational processes continue smoothly despite the absence of physical classroom settings. This transition presents challenges, such as ensuring that all students have access to the necessary technology and maintaining high levels of engagement and interaction. Nonetheless, it is a crucial step in maintaining educational continuity while prioritizing the health and safety of the educational community.

UII is one of the universities that swiftly responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by transitioning from traditional methods. Since March 2020, UII has implemented this policy to curb the spread of the virus and safeguard the health of its academic community (Wahid, 2020). To ensure the smooth take by university includes the provision of an online learning platform that is seamlessly integrated with the academic information system. This integration allows for more streamlined and efficient management of courses, assignments, and communications between students and faculty.

Mr. D explained that the Covid-19 pandemic prompted the Department of International Relations to accelerate their planned curriculum updates. Prior to the pandemic, online learning was only partially implemented. However, the health crisis forced both lecturers and students to fully adapt to this new method of instruction. He also addressed the ongoing paradigmatic debate concerning the merits and drawbacks of offline versus online learning. In his exploration of the fundamental differences between traditional, in-person education and modern, virtual classrooms, Mr. D considered various factors. Offline learning is often lauded for providing hands-on experiences, immediate feedback, and social interaction, which are crucial for certain aspects of education. On the other hand, online learning offers flexibility, wider access to resources, and the ability to personalize the learning experience (Mr. D, personal communication, 1 July 2024).

Mr. D's insights highlighted the complexities of integrating these two approaches to optimize educational practices. He noted that online learning could maintain and even enhance the continuity of

education through its flexibility and accessibility. Diverse and innovative tools available on online platforms support student engagement and comprehension. Despite these advantages, he acknowledged that some remain sceptical about the overall effectiveness of online learning. Critics often cite reduced face-to-face interaction, potential distractions at home, and varying quality of online instructional methods as significant concerns. Nonetheless, Mr. D maintained that with proper implementation and support, online learning can be as effective as traditional classroom settings in ensuring educational progress.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought both unforeseen challenges and opportunities for the Department of International Relations at the UII. At the onset of 2020, the department planned to update its curriculum to enhance the quality of education. However, the sudden emergence of the pandemic drastically altered these plans, compelling educational institutions, including UII, to swiftly adapt to a new reality. Prior to the pandemic, the Department of IR had initiated partial online course offerings. Despite this early adoption, the shift to a fully online learning model raised numerous questions and uncertainties. The pandemic necessitated a complete transition to online learning, accelerating the adoption of digital technologies and changing how education was delivered (Mr. C, personal communication, 1 July, 2024).

During the pandemic, the Department of IR successfully transitioned to a fully online learning model. This required lecturers and students to adapt rapidly, developing new strategies to support effective distance learning. The adaptation process involved utilizing various technology platforms, modifying teaching methods, and tailoring lecture materials to fit online formats. The successful implementation of full online learning demonstrated the department's ability to innovate and adapt to rapid changes. Moreover, having navigated the challenges of the pandemic, the department is now prepared to adopt a hybrid learning model, combining online and in-person elements. This readiness illustrates the department's resilience and capacity for flexibility in the face of evolving educational demands. The experience underscores the importance of being adaptable and prepared for unexpected situations in the future.

In the early stages of the pandemic, the Department of IR faced significant challenges in coordinating between administrators and lecturers. According to Mr. D, the Head of the Department, initial communication was managed through the WhatsApp platform. However, as remote learning needs grew, the introduction of additional platforms like Zoom and Panopto became crucial. These tools were essential in ensuring a smooth transition to online teaching and learning, allowing for better coordination and interaction among faculty and students.

A major challenge during this period was the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of online learning compared to traditional offline learning. Concerns were raised about whether online education could match the outcomes of face-to-face instruction, particularly in terms of potential learning loss. Some programs argued that online learning could not fully replace offline learning due to these concerns. Under Mr. D's leadership, the Department of IR contended that the learning loss experienced by students was not significant, provided that online learning practices were executed effectively. The department emphasized that the key to mitigating learning loss lies in maintaining ideal learning practices and engaging students effectively in the online environment (Mr. D, personal communication, 1 July, 2024).

To address these concerns, the Department of IR focused on the active involvement of lecturers in the online learning process. Lecturers were encouraged to use various interactive methods to keep students engaged and ensure that course materials were well understood. Additionally, the department conducted continuous evaluations and adjustments to teaching methods to uphold the quality of education. The pandemic experience demonstrated that with appropriate strategies and optimal use of technology, the Department of IR could minimize the negative impacts of online learning. This adaptability and innovative approach to teaching methods proved vital in navigating the crisis. The department's success in maintaining high educational standards despite the challenging conditions highlighted the importance of flexibility and collaboration between administrators and lecturers.

Technological Infrastructure

The Covid-19 pandemic acted as a significant catalyst for institutional change in how UII delivers higher education services. Before the pandemic, UII, like many other institutions, primarily relied on traditional, in-person teaching methods. Although digital platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams were available, they were not utilized to their full potential, and the integration of digital tools into the teaching process was limited. With the onset of the pandemic, UII had to rapidly shift to fully online modes of learning to ensure the continuity of education while adhering to health and safety protocols. This sudden and unprecedented transition forced the institution to accelerate its digitalization process, leading to the widespread adoption of various digital tools and platforms.

The university quickly adapted to using video conferencing tools like Zoom and enhancing online learning environments, thus transforming the delivery of education. This antecedent digitalization process laid the groundwork for the post-pandemic era, where UII has embraced a hybrid and flexible learning model. The experience of operating in a fully digital environment during the pandemic allowed the university to refine its approach, blending traditional in-person instruction with online learning elements. This hybrid model leverages the strengths of both methods, offering a more versatile and adaptable educational experience that can cater to diverse student needs and learning preferences.

UII has invested in training programs to equip both students and lecturers with the necessary skills to navigate and utilize online learning tools effectively. Technical support is readily available to address any issues that may arise, ensuring minimal disruption to the learning process (UII, 2020). Furthermore, UII has adapted its curriculum to better suit the online format, incorporating a mix of synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles and schedules. By implementing these comprehensive strategies, UII aims to maintain the quality of education and ensure that students continue to receive a robust and engaging learning experience despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Mr. C revealed that even before the pandemic, UII had already established a robust foundation for online education with several platforms such as Microsoft Education and Google Education. Additionally, UII subscribed to other services like Zoom and Panopto, allowing the exploration of various learning methods. This pre-existing infrastructure provided lecturers with the flexibility to choose the platforms they were most familiar with, whether it be Google Meet, Zoom, Teams, or others.

According to Mr. C, this level of flexibility and the availability of diverse facilities are not commonly found in many other universities. Ms. A echoed this sentiment, stating that UII already possessed the basic infrastructure necessary for online learning prior to the pandemic. However, she noted that there were still areas that needed improvement to maximize the use of these platforms fully.

Ms. A, a lecturer at the Department of International Relations at UII, shared her experiences during the first month of long-distance learning. She described this period as one of "confusion in the classroom" due to the entirely new situation and the lack of prior experience with online learning (Ms. A, personal communication, 1 July, 2024).

This transition created an awkward and strange feeling for her, and likely for the students as well. Recognizing these challenges, the Department of International Relations took proactive steps to address the situation. They organized a series of training sessions on various online learning platforms and applications, including Panopto, Kahoot, Mentimeter, and Padlet. The purpose of these trainings was to enhance interaction with students in online classes and to create a more engaging and effective learning environment.

By familiarizing both lecturers and students with these tools, the department aimed to reduce the initial confusion and awkwardness. The training sessions were designed to help educators incorporate interactive elements into their virtual classrooms, making the learning experience more dynamic and participatory (Humas UII, 2020). As a result, the Department of International Relations sought to improve the overall quality of online education and ensure that students remained engaged and motivated despite the shift from traditional face-to-face instruction.

Institutional Response

The Covid-19 pandemic prompted UII to accelerate its adaptation to online learning. Existing platforms were expected to play an increasingly significant role in the teaching and learning process moving forward. Mr. D highlighted that UII adopted several Islamic principles, such as *maqashid sharia*, to guide its response to the pandemic. This principle emphasizes the prioritization of life safety in all policy decisions. Rather than forcing transformative changes aligned with pre-pandemic agendas, UII appreciated the progress that could be achieved within the constraints imposed by the pandemic. This philosophy is encapsulated in the principle of "if you can't get everything, don't let go of everything," advocating for a balanced approach to change and continuity (Mr. D, personal communication, 1 July, 2024).

UII distinguished itself as the first institution in Yogyakarta to issue a comprehensive pandemic handling document. This document included long-term projections and contingency plans, such as the implementation of Work From Home (WFH) policies if the pandemic persisted for more than five years. These measures proved effective in the initial months of the pandemic. To address issues such as "Zoom fatigue," UII adjusted lecture hours to reduce the strain of excessive screen time. In terms of financial welfare, UII ensured that there were no salary cuts for lecturers and even offered tuition fee discounts of 5-20% for students as part of the Educational Development Contribution. Overall, UII allocated a substantial fund of 125 billion rupiah to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and support the campus community during this challenging period (UII, 2020). This financial commitment underscores UII's dedication to maintaining educational quality and supporting the well-being of its staff and students.

The Department of International Relations at UII underwent significant transformation during the Covid-19 pandemic, unlocking new levels of educational flexibility and innovation. The introduction of hybrid learning models, which blend both online and in-person instruction, exemplified this shift. While the department is still in the process of perfecting this hybrid approach, it has already demonstrated the potential to enhance the dynamic nature of International Relations as a field of study.

This shift has allowed the department to move beyond traditional issues and engage with contemporary, often unforeseen, global challenges. By embracing a more varied and flexible learning model, the department has opened up new opportunities for research and exploration in areas that were previously unthinkable (Ms. F, personal communication, 10 July, 2024). This change not only reflects the adaptability of the department in response to the pandemic but also strengthens its position as a dynamic and forward-thinking academic unit. The hybrid model, although still evolving, has laid the groundwork for a more versatile and innovative approach to teaching and learning in International Relations, preparing students to engage with both traditional and emerging global issues.

According to all of our interviewees, the shift to a fully online course format was not only a necessary response to the dangers and unpredictability of the pandemic but also an opportunity to rethink the pedagogical approach in a way that emphasized transparency, flexibility, and generosity—core principles that became essential during this unprecedented time. Transparency in this context meant acknowledging the varied challenges that students might face during the pandemic, such as personal, professional, and financial stressors. The department recognized that these difficulties could impact students' ability to engage with the course material. Therefore, clear communication and understanding were prioritized to ensure that students were fully aware of expectations and could navigate their academic responsibilities with as much clarity as possible.

Flexibility was also crucial, as the department designed courses to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Recognizing the potential issues with internet connectivity, time zone differences, and varying access to study spaces, the Department of International Relations at UII offered course materials in multiple formats, such as video recordings, PDFs, and audio recordings. This approach ensured that students could access learning materials regardless of their circumstances, thereby maintaining their involvement and engagement in the course.

Generosity, a principle grounded in mutual understanding and respect, was especially important during these trying times. The department encouraged a supportive and empathetic learning environment, where students and instructors alike were asked to be patient and understanding with each other. This approach helped to foster a sense of community and collective resilience, even in a remote learning environment.

These principles were not just temporary measures but have informed the department's ongoing evolution. As the department moves toward a post-pandemic era, the experience of online teaching has reinforced the value of a hybrid learning model. This model, which blends online and in-person instruction, allows for greater flexibility and adaptability, preparing students to engage with both traditional and emerging global issues in International Relations. The challenges and lessons learned during the pandemic have thus contributed to a more dynamic and innovative curriculum, aligning with the department's commitment to providing a relevant and forward-thinking education in the ever-changing global landscape.

As the pandemic began to subside, the transition back to in-person classes gradually commenced, guided by the directives outlined in the circular letter from the Rector of Universitas Islam Indonesia, No. 1048/Rek/10/SP/III/2020. This document signalled the reopening of classroom-based learning, marking a significant shift from the entirely remote teaching methods that had been in place. The return to in-person education was carefully managed to ensure the safety of both students and faculty, while also recognizing the need to restore the traditional academic environment. This move represented a critical step in reestablishing the interactive and immersive aspects of education that had been temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

4. Conclusion

This research shows, by borrowing Mahoney's et.al. historical sequence mechanism, the contextualization of post-pandemic teaching and learning mode is not only shaped by the covid-19 pandemic but also the pre-pandemic condition. In the historical sequence analysis, it shows the logic of contextualization, where a precedent contextualizes the antecedent so that it is linked into a causal sequence. In our examination, this mechanism works in three main interrelated areas: pedagogical adaptation, technological adoption, and institutional response. The pedagogical adaptation mainly involved the lecturers, which learned that despite all the benefits of pre-pandemic conventional learning, the usage of digital learning technologies improve the learning experiences. It was then facilitated by the Department of International Relations as well as the university, where the technological requirement was provided to enhance the adaptation.

In conclusion, this research has contributed to the understanding of logics of causal mechanisms, especially in historical sequence, from a micro-sociological case in the Department of International Relations at UII. We suggest further examination from other departments at UII and other International Relations departments from other universities across Indonesia, to evaluate and compare how the covid-19 pandemic reshaped post-pandemic teaching and learning method. It will enhance our understanding towards best practices in teaching and learning IR as a subject and further improve our teaching and learning services to the students.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONS LIST

Section	Questions
A. General Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact teaching methods in the International Relations program at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII)?- What were the biggest challenges faced by lecturers and students during the pandemic?- How did UII adapt to the sudden shift from face-to-face learning to online learning?
B. Questions about Teaching Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How did you maintain student interaction and engagement in online classes?- Did you employ any specific strategies to overcome technological barriers during online learning?
C. Questions about Curriculum and Learning Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Were there any changes in the curriculum or learning materials adjusted to the post-pandemic conditions?- Were there any new topics or issues added to the curriculum in response to the global situation influenced by the pandemic?
D. Questions about Technology and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How do you foresee the role of technology in teaching International Relations in the future?
E. Questions about Evaluation and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How did you conduct student evaluations and assessments during online learning?- Were there any changes in the assessment methods applied during and after the pandemic?- How do you ensure fairness and accuracy in assessments when using online learning methods?
F. Questions about the Future of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How do you envision the future of International Relations education at UII in the post-pandemic context?
G. Questions about Impact and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Has there been any change in lecturers' perceptions of International Relations studies after experiencing the pandemic?- What are your suggestions or criticisms for educational institutions facing similar challenges in the future?