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Perceived EFL Teacher Absenteeism as a Predictor of Online Test Anxiety in Blended Learning: A Study of Informatics Students

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning is becoming more common in higher education, offering both opportunities and challenges, especially in maintaining quality instruction. In Informatics program, where students need to master both technical skills and English proficiency, teacher absenteeism can significantly impact their learning outcomes. While earlier studies have explored teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety, little is known about the emotional impact of teacher absence in blended English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, especially in technical fields. Therefore, this study investigated whether students' perceptions of teacher absenteeism predict their anxiety during online tests, considering gender and age as possible influencing factors. A total of 57 second-semester Informatics students from Universitas Indraprasta PGRI participated in this quantitative correlational study. Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis in SPSS 27. Results indicated that perceived teacher absenteeism, particularly in emotional domains, significantly predicted online test anxiety. Emotional absenteeism was the strongest predictor of students' online anxiety, with male and younger students more affected by teacher absenteeism. These findings indicated the importance of emotional support in blended learning and suggest that teacher absenteeism can increase student anxiety, particularly for certain student groups. The study calls for stronger teacher accountability and policies that emotionally support students in blended learning settings.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, EFL Teacher, Online Test Anxiety, Teacher Absenteeism*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of blended learning in higher education worldwide has not only brought new teaching opportunities but also introduced a number of pedagogical challenges (Ashraf et al., 2022; Castro-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Mhlanga, 2021), particularly in ensuring consistency and quality of instruction (Bandara & Jayaweera, 2024; Faustino & Kaur, 2021; McCarthy & Palmer, 2023). While many studies have looked at the benefits of blended learning

(Fionasari, 2024; Ghafar, 2022; Hafeez & Akhter, 2021; Kumar & Moral C, 2023; Tong et al., 2022), the challenges related to maintaining good quality teaching, especially in fields like Informatics, are not as well explored. In such programs, students are required to master both technical competencies and soft skills, including English proficiency (Chuienko, 2024; Patil, 2023). English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which is part of their study program, often requires constant support (X. Li et al., 2023; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2022, 2023) from and interaction (Budiyanto, 2023; Sinaga & Ningsih, 2022; Sistyawan et al., 2022) with teachers due to the difficulties of learning a second language. In settings where face-to-face meetings are limited and online activities are more dominant, the presence or absence of teachers becomes more important in shaping students' learning experiences and emotional reactions (Acosta-Gonzaga & Ramirez-Arellano, 2021; O'Ceallaigh et al., 2023). One important issue in this situation is teacher absenteeism, especially when it happens intentionally or without clear justification. Numerous studies have shown that frequent teacher absenteeism is associated with a decline in students' academic outcomes (Aslam et al., 2023; Dekhakhena, 2023; Juma & Stonier, 2023) and classroom participation (Mgema, 2022). In Indonesia, similar concerns have appeared, especially in a subject like English. In some cases, students have reported that teachers often cancel online or in-person sessions without proper explanation, which they feel is unfair and demotivating.

In line with current blended learning in Indonesian higher education, which promote flexibility, digital learning, and student-centered instruction (Jalinus et al., 2021; Sukirman, 2022), this study becomes particularly important. Although these policies aim to improve access and support modern teaching, their application in real classrooms has shown several challenges. Observations in Informatics programs in the research location, for example, have revealed that EFL teacher presence, both in-person and online, is sometimes inconsistent. Students often report canceled sessions or unclear communication, which leads to frustration and reduced motivation. This shows a gap between policy goals and what students actually experience, especially in courses like English. Since blended learning relies heavily on teacher support to help students stay motivated and confident (Fan et al., 2023; Liu & Mantuhac, 2024), this study is important to better understand how teacher absenteeism can weaken the success of blended learning, especially in demanding fields like Informatics where English is important but often overlooked.

This concern becomes more serious when it occurs during stressful academic events such as online tests. Online test anxiety, or the feeling of worry and pressure during digital assessments, has received more attention in recent studies (Dikmen, 2023; Mastour et al., 2022; Prakasha et al., 2021). Informatics students may experience even more stress because they need to do well in both technical and language-based subjects. When they do not receive enough support from their EFL teachers, especially if they believe this absence is frequent or deliberate, they may lose confidence and feel unprepared, which can intensify their test anxiety (Dawadi, 2021). Although empirical studies have begun to explore these challenges, several important gaps remain. First, existing research on teacher absenteeism has largely concentrated on its impact on academic achievement and instructional quality (Aslam et al., 2023; Borgen et al., 2024; Nunoo et al., 2023; Utami & Vioreza, 2020), but its emotional consequences in digital EFL environments remain under-investigated, particularly in higher education settings. Second, while online test anxiety has been associated with digital competence (Alibak & Alibak, 2021; Huttayavilaiphan, 2024; Ruzgar & Chua-Chow, 2023) and learning motivation (B. Li et al., 2024; Soh et al., 2022), there is a lack of research examining how perceived negative teacher behaviors, such as recurrent absenteeism, may influence anxiety levels during online assessments. Third, although prior studies highlight the positive effects of teacher presence and support in online learning (Elsayed et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024; Huang & Wang, 2023; Pan, 2022), few have addressed the emotional toll when such support is perceived to be absent,

especially in EFL contexts. Finally, very limited attention has been given to the specific experiences of students in high-pressure academic disciplines like Informatics, who face unique dual burdens of mastering both technical content and academic English.

Addressing these gaps, this study offers a novel contribution by focusing on the emotional impact of teacher absenteeism in online EFL learning, an intersection of language education, digital pedagogy, and student psychological responses, yet remains underrepresented in current research. The study specifically investigates how students' perceptions of EFL teacher absenteeism can significantly predict their levels of online test anxiety in a blended learning environment, particularly among Informatics students, whose academic context combines both technical and linguistic demands. This focus provides context-sensitive insights for instructional practices in demanding academic fields and contributes to the broader literature on emotional well-being in digital education. In addition to examining the predictive relationship between perceived teacher absenteeism and test anxiety, the study also explores whether this relationship differs across gender and age, two demographic variables commonly associated with emotional responses in educational settings (Arzeen et al., 2023; Gong & Archer, 2021; Terry et al., 2021). To guide the investigation, the study addresses four research questions: (1) What are the levels of online test anxiety and perceived EFL teacher absenteeism among Informatics students in a blended learning environment? (2) Is there a significant relationship between students' perceptions of EFL teacher absenteeism and their online test anxiety? (3) Can these perceptions predict their level of anxiety? and (4) Does this predictive relationship differ across gender and age groups?

The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educational institutions by highlighting how teacher behavior, particularly absenteeism can affect students' emotional preparedness for online learning and assessment. Furthermore, the study contributes to a broader understanding of emotional well-being in digital learning environments by showing how the absence of teacher presence may heighten anxiety, especially among certain demographic student groups. Ultimately, the results are intended to encourage greater teacher accountability in online education and support policy improvements within blended learning systems.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between perceived EFL teachers' absenteeism and students' online test anxiety. The design was deemed appropriate because the research aimed not to manipulate variables but to examine the natural association between students' perceptions of teacher absenteeism (independent variable) and their reported levels of online test anxiety (dependent variable) within the context of a blended learning environment. The population of this study consisted of second-semester Informatics students enrolled in the English for Informatics course at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, from which a purposive sample of 57 students was drawn. This design also allowed for the identification of the strength and direction of relationships between the studied variables, providing a foundational understanding that can inform future experimental or longitudinal investigations. Demographic data showed that 45 respondents (78.9%) were male and 12 (21.1%) were female, with 33 respondents (57.9%) aged 18 to 20 years and 24 respondents (42.1%) aged 21 or older.

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire composed of two sections, each measured on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree). The first section, adapted with minor contextual modifications from Biney & Howe (2017), contained 16 items aimed at assessing students' perceptions of EFL teachers' absenteeism, covering three main dimensions: Impact on students' cognitive development (5 items), (2) social development (6 items) and emotional development (5 items). The second section, based

on Aydin et al. (2006), included 22 items to measure students' test anxiety during online assessments. The content validity of both scales assessed using Pearson correlation analysis showed that all items on the perceived absenteeism scale were valid ($r > 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), while item 9 and 18 on the online anxiety scale did not meet the validity threshold. Even so, these two items were retained because they were considered theoretically important and consistent with the original instrument structure, as supported by previous research. The reliability of the perceived absenteeism and test anxiety scales was confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.95 and 0.97, respectively, reflecting excellent internal consistency. The data collection took place in a blended classroom setting during the English for Informatics course at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. All respondents received an informed consent form embedded in the questionnaire, outlining the voluntary nature of participation.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 27.0. A normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method showed that both perception and anxiety variables had the same significance value of 0.20, indicating that the data met the normality assumption and were suitable for parametric analyses. Descriptive statistics were then used to calculate the mean and standard deviation. Based on the mean scores, perception and anxiety levels were grouped into three categories using a three-level cut-off scheme derived from a Likert scale: Low (1.91–3.55), Medium (3.56–4.56), and High (4.59–6.00). To address the four research questions, different statistical analyses were conducted. For the first research question, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to determine the levels of perceived EFL teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety. The second research question was addressed using Pearson correlation to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. The third research question was tested through a multiple linear regression analysis to determine whether perceptions of teacher absenteeism could significantly predict levels of online test anxiety. Finally, the fourth research question, which explored whether this predictive relationship varied across gender and age, was answered using Pearson correlation analyses conducted separately for each gender and age group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section is structured into three subsections based on the research questions. The first subsection addresses Research Questions 1 and 2 by reporting levels of online test anxiety and perceived teacher absenteeism, along with their correlation. The second subsection responds to Research Question 3 by examining the predictive role of absenteeism through regression analysis. The third subsection addresses Research Question 4 by comparing the predictive relationships across gender and age groups.

Students' perceived EFL teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety and their relationship

As seen in Table 1, descriptive statistics revealed moderate levels of both online test anxiety ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.04$) and perceived EFL teacher absenteeism ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.95$) among Informatics students in a blended learning environment. Specifically, the highest perceived impact of absenteeism was on cognitive development ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.88$), followed by social development ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.06$) and emotional development ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.12$), with the latter two rated as moderate. These results indicate that while students experienced moderate levels of both anxiety and absenteeism, teacher absence had the most significant effect on their learning, particularly in terms of cognitive challenges.

Further, Table 1 showed significant positive correlations between online test anxiety and all aspects of perceived teacher absenteeism. The strongest associations were observed with overall absenteeism ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$) and emotional development ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$), both indicating strong correlations. Cognitive development also showed a strong correlation ($r =$

0.68, $p < 0.01$), while social development displayed a moderately strong relationship ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that greater perceptions of teacher absenteeism, particularly in emotional and cognitive domains, are closely linked to increased anxiety during online tests.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis of Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism and Online Test Anxiety

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	M/SD
1. Impact on Cognitive Development	1					4.68/0.88
2. Impact on Social Development	0.75	1				4.35/1.06
3. Impact on Emotional Development	0.69	0.87	1			4.16/1.12
4. Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism	0.86	0.99	0.94	1		4.39/0.95
5. Online Test Anxiety	0.68	0.69	0.76	0.77	1	3.88/1.04

Students’ perceived EFL teacher absenteeism as a predictor of online test anxiety

As presented in Table 2, the multiple regression analysis showed that students’ perceptions of EFL teacher absenteeism significantly predicted their level of online test anxiety, $F(3, 53) = 28.82$, $p < 0.001$, explaining 62% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.62$). Of the three predictors, only the perceived impact on emotional development was statistically significant ($B = 0.54$, $\beta = 0.59$, $t = 3.35$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that students who experienced greater emotional disruption due to teacher absenteeism were more likely to report higher levels of online test anxiety. In contrast, the cognitive ($B = 0.36$, $\beta = 0.30$, $p = 0.22$) and social ($B = -0.04$, $\beta = -0.45$, $p = 0.81$) domains did not contribute significantly to the regression model. These findings underscore the emotional domain as the strongest predictor of students’ online test anxiety, highlighting the importance of emotional factors in shaping their responses to perceived EFL teacher absenteeism in online learning environments.

Table 2. Multiple Regression of Students’ Online Test Anxiety Based on Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	F	R ²	t	P
	B	SE	B				
Constant	0.14	0.48				0.29	0.77
1. Impact on Cognitive Development	0.36	0.15	0.30	28.82	0.62	2.37	0.22
2. Impact on Social Development	-0.04	0.19	-0.45			-0.24	0.81
3. Impact on Emotional Development	0.54	0.16	0.59			3.35	0.00

Correlation between perceived teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety by gender and age

To examine whether the predictive relationship between perceived EFL teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety differs by gender, Pearson correlation analyses were conducted separately for male and female students (see Table 3). Among male students, strong and significant correlations were observed between online test anxiety and cognitive ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), social ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$), and emotional development ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$), as well as the overall perceived teacher absenteeism ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$). For female students, while social ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$), emotional ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$), and overall absenteeism ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.01$) were also strongly correlated with test anxiety, the correlation between cognitive

development and test anxiety was weaker and not statistically significant ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.35$). These findings suggest that while perceived teacher absenteeism significantly predicts test anxiety in both genders, cognitive factors play more substantial role for male students, whereas emotional and social aspects are more consistently influential among female students.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis of Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism and Online Test Anxiety Based on Gender

Variable	1		2		3		4		5	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Impact on Cognitive Development	1	1								
2. Impact on Social Development	0.76	0.57	1	1						
3. Impact on Emotional Development	0.77	0.32	0.91	0.72	1	1				
4. Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism	0.89	0.65	0.96	0.92	0.96	0.89	1	1		
5. Online Test Anxiety	0.72	0.29	0.69	0.76	0.77	0.81	0.77	0.80	1	1

Note: M=Male; F=Female

To determine whether the predictive relationship between perceived EFL teacher absenteeism and online test anxiety differs by age, Pearson correlations were conducted separately for students aged 18–20 and those aged 21 and above (see Table 4). In both age groups, all correlations were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). For students aged 18–20, strong correlations were found across cognitive ($r = 0.72$), social ($r = 0.76$), and emotional development ($r = 0.77$), as well as overall absenteeism ($r = 0.77$). For students aged 21 and above, the strongest relationships were observed with emotional ($r = 0.81$) and overall absenteeism ($r = 0.80$), while cognitive and social aspects showed moderate correlations ($r = 0.53$ for both). These results suggest that while absenteeism predicts test anxiety across age groups, younger students are more uniformly affected across domains, whereas older students are primarily influenced by emotional and general absenteeism.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism and Online Test Anxiety by Age

Variable	1		2		3		4		5	
	18-20	≥21	18-20	≥21	18-20	≥21	18-20	≥21	18-20	≥21
1. Impact on Cognitive Development	1	1								
2. Impact on Social Development	0.83	0.59	1	1						
3. Impact on Emotional Development	0.75	0.57	0.91	0.80	1	1				
4. Perceived EFL Teacher’s Absenteeism	0.89	0.79	0.98	0.93	0.95	0.89	1	1		
5. Online Test Anxiety	0.72	0.53	0.76	0.53	0.77	0.81	0.77	0.80	1	1

Discussion

This section presents the results of the current study on the relationship between students' online test anxiety and their perceptions of teacher absenteeism, focusing on cognitive, emotional, and social aspects. The study found that students experienced moderate levels of test anxiety and felt that teacher absenteeism had a significant impact, especially on their cognitive development. This supports previous findings that teacher support impacts student

engagement in blended learning (Gao et al., 2024) and that EFL teachers' optimism and commitment contribute to students' academic success (Lu, 2021). It also confirms that teacher absence can negatively affect both emotional well-being and academic guidance (Aslam et al., 2023; Santibañez & Guarino, 2021). When teachers are emotionally unavailable, students tend to feel uncertain and stressed, which increases their anxiety during tests, something frequently observed in blended learning. However, some researchers argue that students using more self-regulated learning strategies and are more intrinsically motivated can perform well even without teacher presence (Pelikan et al., 2021) and peer support is associated with students' psychological well-being, even without teacher's presence (Hoferichter et al., 2021).

Going deeper into the analysis, the study revealed that among the three dimensions of teacher absenteeism, only the emotional aspect significantly predicted students' online test anxiety. In contrast, cognitive and social dimension did not significantly contribute to the prediction. This suggests that emotional distance from teachers matters more to students' anxiety than cognitive or social gaps. This aligns with past studies highlighting that higher student-instructor connectedness is associated with lower student anxiety in online courses (Conklin et al., 2024; Salter et al., 2024) and claiming that Teachers' social and emotional competencies are crucial for fostering social and emotional learning in students and creating a positive school climate (Odak et al., 2023). A previous study has similarly shown that perceived teacher emotional support positively affects students' online academic engagement (He et al., 2024) and that students experienced increased anxiety during due to lack of social presence and emotional disconnection from instructors (Ensmann et al., 2021). However, some researchers argue that cognitive and social factors may be more influential, especially in blended learning environments (Martin et al., 2022). Additionally, critics also argue that positive teacher emotions can increase student pleasure but decrease productivity (Cheng et al., 2022).

Subgroup analyses revealed that male students were more affected by absenteeism across all aspects (emotional, cognitive, and social), while female students were more influenced by emotional and social factors. This reflects how gender differences were found in students' perceptions of classroom emotional climate and attitudes (McLure et al., 2022), and a study suggested that adapting emotional support to suit gender differences (Shaziayani et al., 2024). However, other research finds that gender may not significantly affect learning outcomes (Widodo et al., 2023; Zhonggen, 2021), and individual differences in stress mindsets, whether stress is viewed positively or negatively, may influence emotional reactions more than gender alone (Zhang, 2022). Age also played a role, with younger students having greater reliance on on teacher support, impacting their anxiety levels (H. Li et al., 2023). Still, some researchers argue that prior online experience shapes how students manage without teacher support (Al Mamun et al., 2022), and others note that older adults may struggle more due to digital skill gaps (Vercruyssen et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The present study provides empirical evidence on how students' perceptions of EFL teacher absenteeism predict their levels of online test anxiety in blended learning settings. Informatics students reported moderate levels of both perceived absenteeism and test anxiety. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was identified between the two variables, indicating that higher perceptions of absenteeism are associated with increased anxiety. In addition, among the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, the emotional aspect emerged as the strongest predictor. Further, perceived teacher absenteeism affects students differently by gender and age with male and younger students more affected by teacher absence, adding useful insights into how students with different backgrounds may respond differently to blended learning environments.

These findings highlight the importance of teachers' emotional presence in helping students feel more secure and confident during online assessments. Therefore, it supports the need for teaching practices that focus not only on content but also on building emotional connections in online and blended settings. On a practical level, the findings support the development of institutional policies and teacher professional development programs aimed at enhancing emotional engagement in blended classrooms. For future research, it would be helpful to conduct long-term or intervention-based studies to explore how emotional teacher presence affects student anxiety and performance over time. It would also be useful to investigate how peer support, self-regulated learning, and the design of online instruction might help reduce the negative effects of teacher absenteeism.

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