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## Balancing Structure and Autonomy: EFL Tutors' Psychological Perceptions in Web-based Distance Learning

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### Abstract

The rapid expansion of web-based distance learning (WBDL) in higher education has significantly changed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in universities that implemented a distance learning system where flexibility and technological integration are vital. While most research focuses on technology or students, this study explores how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutors at an Indonesian university perceive web-based distance learning. Employing a descriptive qualitative design within an interpretive paradigm conceptually grounded in Qiong's (2017) six-dimension framework, the study analyzes interview data from two experienced tutors. The tutor was intentionally chosen to facilitate an in-depth, rich, and detailed comparative analysis of their subjective psychological perceptions, aligning with the study's interpretive paradigm, which seeks depth over generalizability. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then thematically analyzed with multiple rounds of open coding, thematic grouping, and interpretive synthesis in order to establish how tutors' perceptions reflected their negotiation between institutional expectations and professional agency. The results illustrate a key tension reflecting the study's central dichotomy: one tutor prioritizes institutional structure and professionalism, while the other emphasizes pedagogical autonomy and learner-centeredness. The study concludes that successful web-based distance learning requires a dynamic psychological balance between the system and autonomy. Practically, these findings suggest that institutions must move beyond mere technical training and provide robust psychological and affective support, recognizing tutors as critical agents in negotiating this balance rather than just as system operators.

**Keywords:** *Web-based distance learning; EFL tutors' psychological perception; Institutional demands; Pedagogical autonomy.*



## 1. Introduction

Rapidly, growing distance education has revolutionized the world of English language teaching, particularly in higher education context where flexibility and access have become ever more important. The integration of web-based platforms has allowed universities the opportunity to extend learning experiences for geographically-distanced students, maintain academic continuity in a population with varied geographical context including post pandemic (Olaf Zawacki-Richter and Terry Anderson, 2014; Olcott D, 2021). From an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching perspective, online environments have been increasingly supported contexts for developing writing skills, collaboration and feedback conducive to academic communication. For example, in Indonesia – open and distance education institutions have been adopted web-based learning systems to provided inclusive and mass education scale. However, the extent to which such systems are successful depends on tutors' attitudes and psychological readiness to change pedagogically and technologically.

Perception, as highlighted by (Qiong, 2017) is more than sensory and cognitive process but it also involves the human sense in beliefs, values, attitude, needs interests and motives. These dimensions affect how tutors embrace institutional values, pedagogical change and build their professional identity when teaching online. So, it will be interesting to examine the psychological perceptions of tutors so as to gain a better understanding of where human factors play in web-based instruction.

Within distance learning institutions, organizational structures are key in determining tutors' professional practices. Institutes of higher education frequently rely on standardized syllabi, centralized content and prefab LMS templates to preserve quality and uniformity. While such frames create accountability and coherence, they have been shown to limit pedagogic freedom and a sense of agency for tutors (White, 2021). On the contrary, providing autonomy promotes creativity, contemplation and learner-centered approaches to teaching, all of which are crucial ineffective writing instruction in EFL settings (Borg, 2018; Farrell, 2020). Thus, the institutional structure-pedagogical autonomy interconnection here becomes lived through in a dynamic psychological negotiation that tutors participate in their daily teaching experience key factor identified in enhancing learning within Indonesian digital classrooms (De Vega & Rahayu, 2023).

In this tension, then tutor's perception of the psychological aspects of tutoring operates as a lens through which their understanding their roles, responsibilities and pedagogic potential. Beliefs are connected to the confidence towards web-based teaching; values influence sociocultural construct revolving around commitment for access and equity in e-learning; attitudes relate to affective attitude toward computer technology; needs and interests determine participation in an institution solution system, finally motives drive continued investment of time and effort into work skills

(Qiong, 2017). Considering both these dimensions at once permits researchers to study the complex interrelations of institutional requirements and individual action. It also explains how the individuals lead us to learn about the inner state of disposition and what types of material pedagogical moves and habituated behaviors unfold in virtual classrooms.

Although web-based learning is becoming increasingly popular, the psychologist issues of tutors' perceptions in open and distance learning are not sufficiently explored. Most previous literature has also focused on technological affordances, learning management systems and students' engagement (Martin F, 2022; Xin Zhang, 2020). However, only few attentions have been paid to the internal and psychological dimension through which tutors understand and respond to these systems.

This research aims to investigate how EFL tutors at an Indonesian distance open university perceive web-based distance learning in teaching basic English Writing using their psychological perception dimensions. Through examining two online tutors drawing from different but related space of variation, this study seeks to enrich our understanding of how beliefs, values and attitudes, needs interests and motives represent the interaction between structure and autonomy in online distance Education.

## **2. Methods**

The study used a qualitative interpretive design to investigate EFL tutors' perceptions of web-based distance learning in teaching basic English writing. A qualitative approach was chosen because perception in this study is conceptualized as a contextually constructed and multidimensional psychological phenomenon that cannot be fully captured through numerical measurement. Consistent with an interpretive paradigm, a descriptive qualitative design enables an in-depth exploration of tutors' subjective meanings and their negotiation between institutional structure and pedagogical autonomy. Citing (Qiong, 2017) the psychological dimension of perception that involves beliefs, values, attitudes, needs, interest, and motives, this study explored how these psychological dimensions actually affect tutors' engagement and pedagogic decisions concerning e-learning. The study was conducted at a university that had implemented a web-based distance learning system through eLearning platform in delivering basic writing courses to geographically dispersed learners.

Two tutors as participant were intentionally chosen to facilitate an in-depth, rich, and detailed comparative analysis of their subjective psychological perceptions, aligning with the study's interpretive paradigm which seeks depth over generalizability. The two tutors were purposively selected because they represented information-rich cases that closely aligned with the analytical aims of this study. Their inclusion was not intended to imply that other tutors lacked comparable qualifications or viewpoints; rather, these two participants were chosen due to the distinct and clearly expressed differences in their orientations toward institutional structure and pedagogical autonomy. This

contrast offered a meaningful basis for comparative analysis, allowing the psychological dimensions of perception to be examined more closely. Consistent with the interpretive qualitative approach adopted in this research, the objective was not to achieve representativeness, but to gain deeper conceptual understanding and analytical insight.

The data were collected through semi-structured online interviews. The interview guide was built on Qiong's six psychological dimensions to ensure comprehensive examination of Tutors' perspectives. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then thematically analyzed based on (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding involved multiple rounds of open coding, thematic grouping, and interpretive synthesis in order to establish how tutors' perceptions reflected their negotiation between institutional expectations and professional agency. The researcher's reflexive position as an insider within the same online distance learning platform allowed for a balance between familiarity and critical distance, which was necessary to enable an authentic interpretation of the participants' (Denzin N, 2013).

In order to achieve trustworthiness, this study followed the four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) for qualitative rigor proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Iterative analysis and member checking to verify interpretive accuracy strengthened credibility through prolonged engagement with the data. Transferability was facilitated through thick description of the institutional context and participants' experiences, enabling readers to evaluate contextual relevance. Dependability was upheld by maintaining an audit trail documenting coding processes and analytic decision-making. Reflexive journaling and continual self-reflection mitigated potential researcher bias to strengthen confirmability. All of these strategies increased the methodological integrity and interpretive robustness of the study.

In general, this approach was characterized by contextual depth and critical interpretation which in turn enabled a rich understanding of how tutors' psychological beliefs influenced their pedagogical practices in Web-based distance education.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

The results are reported in relation to the six psychological levels of perception, such as beliefs, values, attitudes, needs, interests and motives. The findings of this study showed that 1st Tutor and 2nd Tutor held mainly favorable attitudes toward Web-based distance learning (WBDL), but they interpreted these from different perspectives where the attitude of the 1st Tutor was predominantly on institutional formality, professionalism, and adherence while that of the 2nd tutor focused on pedagogical freedom, creativity, and motivation for learners. Those dimensions collectively illustrate a psychological balance between structure and autonomy in web-based distance EFL writing instruction.

#### **3.1. Beliefs: Flexibility and Systematic Design.**

Both tutors argue strong beliefs about the advantages of Web-based distance learning, however their differences in perspective were consistent with their general

orientation to institutional systems and pedagogical independence. The first tutor noted the flexibility and independence of pace offered by an asynchronous learning environment.

*“Web-based distance learning gives me the freedom to manage time according to my own teaching schedule; it helps both tutors and students organize their teaching and learning more efficiently.” (1st Tutor)*

He stated that online learning as a medium that empowers both tutor and students to control time dealing with tasks, making teaching and learning accessible and efficient. His belief is in line with the argument that distance learning brings about democratization of education and encourages professional self-regulation within institutional boundaries.

On the other hand, the second tutor expressed a faith in systematic design and institutional dependability when she said:

*“The LMS help the process of online learning more organized, reliable, and well-structured.” (2nd Tutor).*

She argues that the web-based distance learning not merely as a teaching tool but as an institutional framework that ensures pedagogical consistency and administrative coherence. Her belief reflects a high level of trust in institutional design and technological infrastructure as enablers of effective teaching.

These statements interpret that the tutors' beliefs are both cognitive and affective, grounded in their direct experiences with the pedagogical potential of web-based distance learning. While the first tutor's emphasized notions of individual control and professional autonomy, the second tutor's highlights institutional confidence and recognition of system coherence. Together, their viewpoints exemplify the role of beliefs as the cognitive foundation of psychological adaptation in distance education, linking personal conviction with institutional reliability in sustaining effective online instruction.

### **3.2. Values: Accessibility, Equity, and Autonomy**

Values influenced tutors' understanding of the way they positioned themselves within institutional structures, as well as their personal and professional obligations ethically as educators. The first tutor stressed accessibility, and University alignment displaying an awareness of the learning environment as he stated that;

*“The University already provides equal opportunities for all students to digital libraries, e-books, and online materials that everyone can access anytime.” (1st Tutor)*

He said that, it is how the university fulfils its educational equity mission. He went on to emphasize his ethical obligation to upholding institution standards, as he stated;

*“As tutors, we must follow UT's syllabus and guidelines because that ensures consistency and fairness for all students.” (1st Tutor)*

This statement showed his strong alignment with institutional professionalism and his believes that standardization is necessary to uphold educational quality in distance learning. In contrast, the second tutor held the principle of autonomy as a core value alongside learner-centered flexibility which included the freedom to teach creatively within institutional constraints, as she stated;

*“Even the university has prepared all the things, such as the learning materials, syllabus, etc, the university also allows us to adjust our teaching approach; as long as we achieve the learning objectives, we can modify the materials to make them more interesting and relevant for students.” (2nd Tutor)*

Her quote demonstrates her sense of the faith that tutors can be trusted to make instructional judgements in context, which could imply a belief in pedagogical liberty as central to engaging learners. Further, she stressed that in one class, the students are vary with different backgrounds which reflects her concern for inclusivity and responsiveness in the online learning process.

*“... students have different backgrounds, so we need to adapt the materials based on their needs,”*

The tension between the institutional conformity and pedagogical autonomy, manifests two complementary orientations to value such as collective professionalism and individual creativity, that coexist within the open and distance learning context. Each tutor reflects a mutual emphasis on equity and quality in their moral reasoning, but the pathways through which that comes to matter are different. The 1st Tutor focuses on consistency, accountability and institutional integrity, while the 2nd Tutor emphasizes innovation, flexibility and customization. Collectively, their views suggest that good web-based learning in the university relies on institutional alignment of pedagogical approaches and consistency across the system and flexibility as to what individual teachers do with each of these options.

### **3.3. Attitudes: Adaptive Optimism and Realistic Awareness**

The tutors' attitudes toward web-based distance learning were optimistic as well as realistic, revealing an emotional flexibility and professional robustness to tackle the challenges of teaching over the internet. Adaptive optimism was demonstrated by the first tutor who said he felt optimistic to deal with online learning despite its inherent limitations. He explained that

*“Teaching writing online is challenging, but it also gives me opportunities to learn new things and to be more creative with technology.” (1st Tutor)*

His statement indicates an affective orientation that transforms potential obstacles into opportunities for growth. He also mentioned that

*“...as long as we motivate ourselves and communicate clearly with students, online teaching can run effectively.”*

It expressed the belief that a proactive attitude and self-efficacy in sustaining

engagement. Such remarks show his emotional stability and constructive outlook, suggesting that his positive attitude is rooted in professional commitment and self-regulation. The other tutor, on the other hand, presented a realist optimistic attitude to web-based instruction that recognized both its possibilities and limitations. She shared that;

*“I enjoy online teaching because it allows flexible interaction, but sometimes internet instability makes the process slow and less effective.” (2nd Tutor).*

Her recognition of the real challenges and constraints is emotionally rooted in the context of distance education. Thus, she added that,

*“I am happy that even if it is online, when I see students respond actively to me in discussions; at least it means they are motivated to learn,”*

It highlights her involved (affective) engagement and satisfaction while digital contact succeeds. This quote encapsulates her measured position of being enthusiastic about the potential of the medium while also recognizing where its limitations are.

Those perspectives from both tutors demonstrate a dual emotional disposition toward web-based distance teaching that is a hopeful flexibility and a realistic consciousness. The approach of the first tutor focuses on determination and intrinsic motivation, and focus on empathy for the second. Both also show a collective potential for emotional regulation and instructional resiliency, key psychological resources to promoting successful online teaching. This emotional flexibility indicates that tutors' feelings are not static dispositions but responsive framings generated out of their encounters with technology, communication and institutional support.

#### **3.4. Needs: Professional Support and Infrastructure Stability**

The two tutors emphasized the role that technical and institutional support played in web-based distance learning. Their views indicated that professional requirements in online teaching were not only technical but also systemic and emotional ones. The first tutor, who represents an organizational focus, suggested that technology should always be improved, as he stated in the interview;

*“maybe the integration of AI into the LMS will make learning more perfect and in line with current developments.” (1st Tutor).*

His statement reflects a mindset and a belief that university must adapt to global educational trends. To him, technology is a device of authority as well as progress in pedagogy. His language further points to a cognitive and professional necessity to modernize, articulating the certainty that integration would prove instructional efficient and put the university in line with global models of digital learning. In contrast, the second tutor, representing an autonomous orientation, articulated a more practical and relational perspective. She expressed that

*“We need stable connectivity and timely communication so that*

*students remain active and motivated.” (2nd Tutor)*

Her statement highlights the point that, while technological sophistication is valuable, stable infrastructure and communicative responsive structure are needed to maintain learner participation and tutor satisfaction. She also added that;

*“Sometimes, delays in response or unstable internet make students feel disconnected, so institutional support is very important.” (2nd Tutor)*

This demonstrates her sensitivity in relation to the affective and motivational dimensions of online teaching where digital instability impacts engagement and moral for the lecturer.

On the whole, these canvassing results make it appear that tutors' needs in online distance learning are multi-faceted. These include not only technological and infrastructure advances, but even psychological confidence that institutional systems are attuned to the pedagogical realities of tutors. While the first tutor's position expresses a cognitive and rational inclination toward innovation, the second tutor's stance suggests an affective and relational necessity for stability and dialogue. Both challenges can be addressed when organizations combine innovation with empathy; being innovative by leveraging breakthrough technology and at the same time being empathetic in providing responsive supportive systems. This balance is critical to build tutor confidence and pedagogical coherence, in the open and distance learning long term.

### **3.5. Interests: Engagement and Innovation**

The tutors' interests differed in accordance with the personal curiosity and pedagogical enthusiasm in web-based distance learning they exhibited. Both tutors showed favorable use of technology-enhanced teaching, while they approached this phenomenon from two different positions. One focusing on the interactivity feature and the other one focusing on innovative learner-centered practices. The first tutor was enthusiastic about the possibility of using new technology and interacting with it while he saw online learning environments as a venue for teaching experimentations. He explained that

*“I like using the discussion forum and online feedback tools because they make students more active and help me monitor their progress more easily.” (1st Tutor)*

His response betrays an enthusiasm for the possibilities afforded by digital technologies, and a desire to explore their didactic potential. He further added,

*“With online systems, I can give comments directly on students' drafts—it feels efficient and interactive,” (1st Tutor)*

It hits at a level of professional fulfilment from regulated digital engagement. Accordingly, he is interested in how technology-mediated communication fosters, along the lines of his institutional orientation and belief in system-based success, better instructional engagement as well as efficiency. The second instructor, in contrast, was interested in pedagogical innovation and learner-centered design which humanizes

online learning. She remarked that

*“I like to use pre-tests in introduction session to see students’ learning preferences before teaching; it helps me choose the right approach.”*  
(2nd Tutor)

Her anticipatory focus on student uniqueness demonstrates a reflective and responsive perspective. She also shared that,

*“Sometimes I add project-based writing tasks or short video materials so students don’t get bored and can express their creativity”.* (2nd Tutor)

It manifests her concern with keeping affective commitment through diversity and change. Her passion is a reflection of a commitment to inquiry-based education that puts the emphasis on creativity, empathy and student-centered engagement.

These two views indicate that the tutors' interests are intertwined and support each other in ensuring the sustainability of online teaching. The first tutor is focus on technology-interactivity corresponds with the institutional aim of technological optimization, and the second tutor is focus on pedagogical creativity fosters learner interaction and motivation. The combined approaches of both exemplify the two strands of professional interest in distance education, technology and humanity. Both are necessary to keep the fabric of online English writing instruction alive and vibrant. This blending of digital engagement and pedagogical imagination guarantees that web-based platforms for distance learning will be kept vibrant, stimulating, and psychologically rewarding to both tutors and students.

### **3.6. Motives: Professionalism and Pedagogical Fulfilment**

Motivation was the psychological dimension which enables tutors to unify their beliefs, values, attitudes, needs and interest in a coherent professional activity. Although both tutors strongly desired to maintain their participation in web-based distance learning, but they had the different orientations in terms of the focus areas driven by institution professionalism and pedagogical fulfilment. The first tutor, a proponent of an institutionalized approach, expressed his motivation in terms of professional duty and institutional loyalty. He stated that

*“As tutors, we must give our best because we represent the university; our professionalism reflects the institution’s quality”.* (1st Tutor)

This statement uncovers an extrinsic reason based on organizational loyalty and responsibility. He also mentioned that,

*“Teaching online motivates me to improve my own skills, technology changes, and we have to keep learning,”* (1st Tutor)

It is a demonstration of an ongoing desire for self-improvement and professional development. Consequently, his motivation is the seesaw balance between the rights and obligations to be fulfilled and cognitive curiosity, based on a psychological

compatibility between institution-oriented needs and individuals' aspirations for ongoing learning as completion of an applied field. In contrast, the second tutor indicated motivation based on pedagogical satisfaction and emotional ties to students. She expressed that,

*"I feel happy when students show progress in their writing; it makes all the effort worth it." (2nd Tutor)*

Her statement reflects an intrinsic motive based on affective reward and relational fulfilment. She further noted that

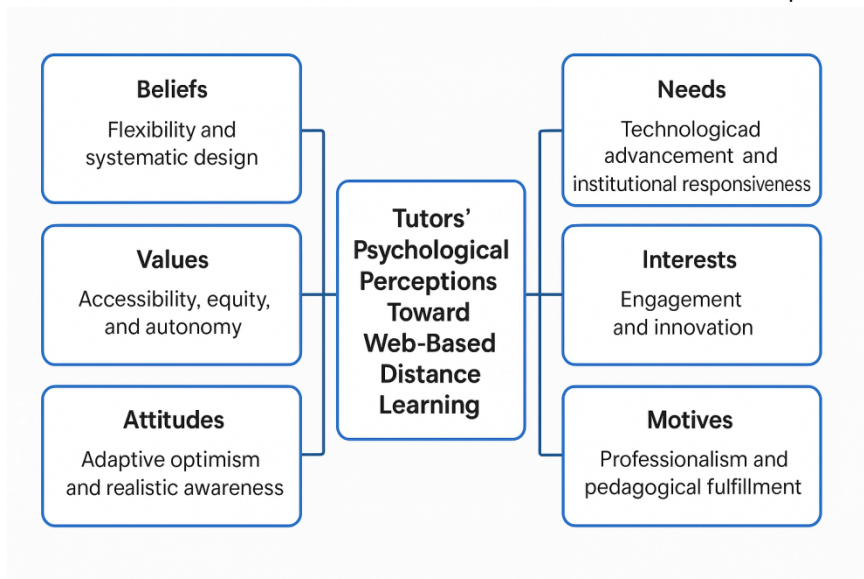
*"When students become more confident to express their ideas in English, I feel proud as a tutor," (2nd Tutor)*

The focus is the emotional reward of a student's success. Because this indicates that her motivation for teaching comes from the interpersonal and life engagement in teaching rather than institutional approval. Her investment in virtual teaching is born out of compassion and the sheer delight of seeing students evolve.

The motives of both tutors uncover a reciprocating dynamic of tutors' professional psychology. The extrinsic-professional motive of the first tutor focusses on loyalty to institutional ethos, accountability and lifelong learning. While the second tutor is motivated by intrinsic-pedagogical driver provides satisfaction, empathy and transformation. Both reasons together contribute to maintain distance learning persistence and motivation. This ambivalent motivational orientation, which blends professional obligation with pedagogical passion, epitomizes the psychological position in which tutors tread between the world of external demands and the nuances of self-satisfaction. In the final sense, equilibrium of these dimensions leads to long-last patient involvement, emotional resistance and occupational integrity in English writing instruction on web in open and distance learning.

In general, the findings of tutor's psychological dimension above can be simplify described in the following figure;

Figure 1. Tutors' Psychological perceptions towards Web-based Distance Learning



The contrasting perspectives identified across the six psychological dimensions are not incidental. Rather, they seem closely tied to participants' varying professional backgrounds and role orientations within the institution. It is worth noting that even though both of the tutors are experienced in teaching EFL writing in a web-based distance learning context, there emerges markedly different professional positioning based on their engagement with institutional systems.

The first tutor emphasized on institutional alignment, professionalism and system reliability which reflects a more institution-oriented role identity. A professional approach based on accountability and structural coherence is evident in his adherence to the syllabus, technological modernization, and representation of the university. This orientation explains his preference for routinization and institutional trust across the dimensions of beliefs, values, needs and motives.

Conversely, the second tutor emphasized pedagogical flexibility, learner diversity and affective engagement. While the references to developing and adapting materials, adjusting to the backgrounds of her students, and taking satisfaction in their progress suggest a more learner-centered professional identity. With respect to each of the six dimensions, her perceptions reflect a relational and autonomy-oriented perspective in which institutional systems are perceived as support structures rather than defining authorities.

These orientations, rather than representing opposing positions, demonstrate how tutors' psychological responses are informed and shaped by their professional identities and lived experiences in web-based distance learning. The results indicate the relative nature of perception, which is contextualized and mediated by role orientation, strengthening the call for institutional models that can support structure-oriented and autonomy-oriented forms of tutor agency.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings provide evidence that EFL instructors' psychological beliefs regarding web-based distance education are multifaceted and shaped by the interplay between institutional expectations and personal pedagogical/professional ideologies. While previous research has showed that teacher cognition influences classroom practice (Borg, 2018) and that autonomy shapes professional identity (Smith, 2008), most of the studies look at beliefs or motivation as isolated constructs. In contrast, this study integrates six interconnected psychological dimensions (beliefs, values, attitudes, needs, interests and motives) into one holistic analytical framework. To do so, it brings (Qiong, 2017) perception conceptualization into empirical application in an open and distance EFL writing context, beyond theoretical descriptions. This integrative approach fills a gap in the literature, which more often investigates psychological dimensions in isolation rather than as an interdependent system.

Concerned with beliefs, previous studies has demonstrated how teachers' beliefs are contextual and influence their instructional decisions (Borg, 2018; Farrell, 2020). However, most of this work has occurred in traditional or blended environments. The current findings deepen these discussions by demonstrating the workings of belief systems in the context of a very highly standardized open and distance learning context. The fact that beliefs favoring autonomy or structure are reciprocally related shows that institutional systems are not just limiting or enabling practice, but rather mentally reframed by tutors. This nuance builds on (White, 2021) argument about institutional trust by showing that trust and autonomy are negotiated cognitive stances, not oppositional stances.

Likewise, the values perspective in research on distance education tends to highlight equity and access among institutional goals (Zawacki-Richter, 2021). This study builds on that discussion by demonstrating the inclination of such values to be internalized differently among tutors as collective professionalism (Evans, 2011) or learner-centered ethics of care (Noddings, 2013). Instead of comparing standardization and autonomy as two opposing paradigms, the findings suggest that tutors morally reconcile these orientations, thus reframing structure–autonomy relationship from a dichotomy into a productive social relation.

Regarding attitudes, early literature regarding online teaching presence (Garrison, 2017) and emotional adaptability in relation to engagement (Sun & Chen, 2016) reinforced the need for affect-based aspects of instructor practice. However, these models tend to treat emotional presence as an instructional-level concept. The current study adds to our understanding by highlighting tutors' internal affective regulation as an action tendency that can be viewed as a psychological resource undergirding and influencing teaching presence. By linking emotional resilience directly to perception theory (Qiong, 2017), the study contributes depth of understanding about how affect functions not just as performance but also as internal mediation.

The need dimension further exposes a gap in technology-centered research. While

studies on Artificial intelligent integration learning systems (Huang et al., 2020) adopt the lens of innovation capacity or transactional distance theory (Moore, 2013) highlights structural communication gaps, this study demonstrates that tutors' needs encompass both technological advancement and relational stability. This dual emphasis signals that institutional responsiveness requires handling psychological reassurances as well as infrastructural development that underexplored in open and distance study.

For interests and motives, the majority of literature deals with teacher motivation via self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Rahayu & Weda, 2024) or frameworks of professional identity (Gao & Zhang, 2020). Although these approaches identify motivational drivers, they rarely place them in a larger perceptual system. This paper demonstrates that motivation can be perceived as an articulation of cognitive, affective and ethical negotiations through the integration of intrinsic and extrinsic motives using the six-dimensional perception framework. These two angles of focus complement each other and yield a more multidimensional account of tutor agency in online EFL writing instruction.

Collectively these findings build on previous research in three ways. First, they transcend narratives of technology effectiveness by placing tutors' psychological agency at the center. Second, they integrate disparate constructs of belief, emotion and motivation to a perceptual system above the level of resolution of empirical data. Third, they reconceptualize the structure–autonomy relationship not as a binary opposition but rather as a dynamic equilibrium that is negotiated through tutors' inner professional life.

Due to interpretive design and small sample limit generalizability, the study contributes conceptually rather than statistically. It offers a grounded approach to explaining how tutors maintain engagement, innovation, and resilience within standardized web-based system. Thus, the findings represent a step towards more human-oriented theoretical coherence in understanding sustainable EFL pedagogy through open and distance learning context.

## **5. Conclusion**

EFL tutors' perceptions of web-based distance learning are influenced by complex interactions among the cognitive, emotional and motivational constructs which collectively determine how they experience, believe and respond to online teaching. Hence successful online teaching is not only a matter of technological skills and institutional effectiveness, but also tutors' psychological preparation, reflection skills and sense of meaning. With flexibility and responsive leadership, tutors can more meaningfully interact with learners, innovate with technology and maintain motivation in facing the challenges. On the contrary, if institutional rigidity limits independence or psychological resources (emotional support), tutor can be less engaged in their work and/or suffer career fatigue. The results of the studies suggest that university need to regard tutors not only as facilitators and deliverers of teaching initiatives, but rather,

they should see them as constructive agents whose emotional and cognitive state have a direct impact on the quality of instruction they provide.

Most importantly, this study contributes to EFL pedagogy by providing a psychologically-rooted framework for conceptualizing tutor agency in web-based writing instruction. The research thus offers more than discussions centered on technology by weaving six interrelated dimensions of perception that reveal the importance of tutors' inner professional life in defining what quality instructional practice looks like. The findings offer conceptual understanding on how the balance of institutional structure and pedagogical autonomy can help to sustain effective EFL writing instruction in distance learning contexts. It also has practical implications for relevant policy and professional development, suggesting a need for not just technical training but structured psychological and reflective support offered to tutors. Thus, this study advances a more human-centered and theoretically integrated perspective on sustainable online EFL pedagogy.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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