

Students' Perceptions on Online Learning: A Study on EFL University Students in Pandemic Era

Nur Aini Ulfah^{1*}, Noor Eka Chandra², Fahmi Hidayat³

^{1,2,3} *Lambung Mangkurat University*

*Corresponding author. Email: 1710117120013@mhs.ulm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused almost all activities to be carried out remotely, including learning and teaching activities. This is one way to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus in the school environment. Therefore, online learning is used to make learning and teaching activities possible even though the teachers and the students can only meet and communicate online. This study aimed to discover students' perceptions on the use of online learning at English Language Education Study Program of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat. The study used descriptive quantitative research involving 80 students. The study used questionnaires and interviews as instruments to collect the data. The study found that students feel comfortable in terms of social interaction, both with fellow students or lecturers; students were present and actively engaged in the online learning. In addition, students felt satisfied with the use of online learning. However, internet connection was an obstacle that students often faced during online learning; hence, it prevented them from interacting, attending, and actively participating in online learning. Based on the findings, most students had a positive perceptions of the use of online learning.

Keywords: *Perception, Online Learning, Covid-19 Pandemic.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that began to hit Indonesia in early 2020 brought changes to Indonesian society. The government issued an appeal to the community to carry out all activities that must be done from home, and learning activities must also be done from home. This online learning policy was taken to prevent the spread of the virus and maintain the security and safety of students and educators. With this appeal and circular, the learning and teaching activities previously carried out face-to-face are carried out online. The online learning system strives for students to continue learning even though students can only study at home; hence students can still participate in learning activities even though it is done online. Online learning is a learning environment that allows students to carry out learning activities flexibly; online learning also allows students to be more independent in the learning process [14]. It means that online learning requires an internet network to keep teachers and students connected and communicate; besides, online learning allows it to be done anywhere and anytime.

Teachers or educators need more understanding of how students view and react to online learning. Knowing students' perceptions is important because perception is how individuals choose, organize, and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to

their environment [13]. Therefore, information about students' perceptions on the use of online learning can help teachers adjust and improve teaching quality. That is why knowing student perceptions is important to help improve student learning outcomes, especially in online learning during this Covid-19 pandemic.

Several previous studies about students' perceptions of online learning. The first research shows that students have a good perception of online learning materials, because they can improve learning; besides that, some students have the perception that online learning has several obstacles [10]. The second research show that there are several factors that influence students' perceptions of online learning, such as the internet network, difficulties in communicating, and so on; this is what makes students in this study have not very good perceptions of online learning [12]. In addition, there is also the third research that shows that students feel comfortable implementing online learning because students can learn technological innovations using online learning [2].

Online learning has been around for a long time, even though students at Lambung Mangkurat University, especially in the English Language Education Study Program, are still not used to online learning because most learning activities were carried out face-to-face or offline before the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously, online learning was only used in

several courses, and online learning activities were not carried out in full; for example, online learning was only to access material studied in class, collect assignments, or take quizzes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all learning activities must be carried out online within a period of time. Students must adapt again to online learning because students can only interact, attend, and engage in learning activities online.

Based on what has been described above, researchers are interested in examining students' perceptions of the use of online learning in terms of social interaction, social presence, student satisfaction, and student engagement. Hence, the researcher proposed the following problem: "What is students' perception on the use of online learning in the pandemic era at English Language Education Study Program batch 2019?"

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online Learning

This term refers to a learning environment that allows students to carry out learning activities flexibly; online learning also allows students to be more independent in the learning process [14]. The system in online learning can facilitate students and teachers to exchange their points of view flexibly [15]. Then, online learning allows learning and teaching activities to be carried out anytime and anywhere [9]. In online learning activities, students can learn through various online learning platforms. WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom, Google Meet, Edmodo, Google Classroom are some applications that support online learning; these applications were created due to the development of technology in the world of education [12]. Therefore, it can be concluded that online learning is a process of learning and teaching activities carried out remotely using the internet and online learning applications to make learning activities still be carried out, even though teachers and students cannot learn face-to-face. Through online learning, teachers and students can connect and communicate during learning and teaching using internet access.

2.2 Perception

Perception is an understanding or opinion of an individual towards other people or anything around him, which plays a role in his life and can be one of the factors for the individual's success; this also applies to students [4]. Besides, it is also defined as the way an individual interprets things around him [1]. It means that perception is a person's view of something like the people around him or the environment around him. Knowing students' perceptions is important because perception is how individuals choose, organize, and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment [13]. Hence, it can be said that perception is a process or way in which individuals

understand or interpret things or objects around the individual, or in short, how individuals interpret things based on ideas, beliefs, images, beliefs, or expectations of something that the individual sees and observes.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive quantitative research. The study used descriptive quantitative research because the data collected were numbers, and the research data were analyzed by finding the percentage value, which will be explained descriptively. The population of this research is students of the English Language Education Study Program, FKIP, ULM, Banjarmasin. The sample of the study was students from the English Language Education Study Program batch 2019. Researchers used a total sampling technique because the number of samples studied was less than 100 people, namely 80 people.

A questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. The questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect on students' perception on the use of online learning. The interview was used to obtain additional data that support the data obtained from the questionnaire. The questionnaires distributed to collect data are closed-ended questions by using a Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of 24 statements classified into four dimensions: social interaction, social presence, students' satisfaction, and students' engagement. Then, a questionnaire distributed through Google Form. As for the interview, the researcher conducted interviews with 16 of the students from the total sample. The questions given in the interviews are open-ended questions so that researchers can get deeper information to support the data obtained from the questionnaire, interview activities conducted online through WhatsApp call. To measure the construct validity of the instrument, the researcher used expert judgement. Expert validation was used in validating the questionnaire and interview. Besides, to test the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used Cronbach Alpha formula.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed with the help of the SPSS application. The researcher used descriptive statistical analysis by looking for the percentage of respondents. The results of the percentage obtained with the help of the SPSS application help researchers know, understand, and classify students' agreement and disagreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The researcher also analyzed the data obtained through interviews. Researchers make transcripts of interviews that have been conducted by listening to the recordings of the interview activities; this is to make it easier for researchers to carry out the analysis. The researcher then reads the transcript repeatedly to understand the information obtained through the interview. The researcher then summarized the data obtained from the interviews.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Social Interaction

This dimension discusses social interaction in online learning. Social interaction is one of the crucial

factors in teaching and learning activities. There are six statements related to this social interaction; for more details, the results of the questionnaire on the dimensions of social interaction can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Social Interaction

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable interacting with other students during online learning.	1.2%	8.8%	40%	38.8%	11.2%
I feel that learning activities in online learning encourage me to interact with other students.	2.5%	20%	41.2%	26.2%	10%
I feel there is no opportunity to actively study in online learning.	11.2%	27.5%	33.8%	25%	2.5%
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from other students in online classes.	0%	6.2%	32.5%	43.8%	17.5%
I feel more comfortable interacting with lecturers online than face-to-face.	8.8%	18.8%	38.8%	21.2%	12.5%
I feel more comfortable receiving feedback from lecturers in online learning.	5%	8.8%	47.5%	23.8%	15%
I feel comfortable interacting with other students during online learning.	1.2%	8.8%	40%	38.8%	11.2%

Based on the table, The highest percentage value in statement 1 is 40% who choose neutral as their response. It means that most students feel that they are quite comfortable when interacting with other students during online learning. A statement from one of the interviewed students supports it; a student sometimes feels comfortable interacting with other students in online learning. Sometimes the students also do not feel comfortable because they cannot interact freely with other students like offline learning. After all, sometimes there are problems in the internet connection that make interaction difficult.

The highest percentage value of statement 2 is neutral, with 41.2% choosing neutral as their responses. It means that most students feel compelled to interact with other students in online learning or not. Like the statement from one of the interviewed students, some lecturers require students to actively participate in online learning to feel compelled to interact with other students or lecturers in online learning.

The highest percentage value of statement 3 is 33.8%, who chose neutral as the response. It means that most students feel that they have enough opportunities to be active in learning during online learning. It is

supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that students can actively participate in online learning activities.

The highest percentage value in statement 4 is 43.8% who choose to agree. It means that most students feel comfortable when receiving feedback from their friends in online learning. One of the interviewed students agreed that students feel comfortable when they have to receive feedback from other students in online classes because they feel that there is little pressure in online learning.

The highest percentage value of statement 5 is 38.8% who chose neutral as their responses. It means that most students feel quite comfortable when interacting with lecturers in online learning. The explanation supports from one of the interviewed students that the interaction between students and lecturers becomes easier in online learning. Hence, students are quite comfortable when interacting with lecturers.

The highest percentage value of statement 6 is 47.5%, who chose neutral as their response. It means that students feel quite comfortable when receiving feedback from the lecturer. It is like the statement from

one of the interviewed students that students always receive feedback after discussion activities and make them feel comfortable because the lecturer tries to explain the subject matter being studied.

Based on the findings, During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning activities are conducted online, so students cannot meet and interact directly with other students or lecturers. The interactions in online learning, both between students and students or students and lecturers, are quite good, although not as good as offline learning. Students still have the opportunity to be active in online learning because students can still interact with other students or teachers in online learning. Students continue to interact or relate to other students or teachers during online learning to achieve learning

goals. It is compatible with the theory that said social interaction encourages students to be involved in learning activities that have been identified as having a positive influence on student learning outcomes [3].

4.2 Social Presence

This dimension discusses the social presence that exists in online learning. More specifically, how social presence by students and students or students and lecturers during online learning. There are six statements related to the social presence in online learning. For more details, the results of the questionnaire on the social presence dimension can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Social Presence

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Lecturers facilitate discussions for students in online learning.	0%	1.2%	21.2%	60%	17.5%
I feel comfortable participating in discussion activities in online learning.	0%	5%	31.2%	47.5%	16.2%
I feel more comfortable expressing my opinion in online learning.	1.2%	3.8%	45%	33.8%	16.2%
I feel comfortable introducing myself to other students in online learning.	0%	6.2%	46.2%	33.8%	13.8%
Communication carried out in online learning is carried out impersonally.	0%	6.2%	62.5%	26.2%	5%
Online learning activities allow me to form a sense of community with other people.	2.5%	12.5%	40%	36.2%	8.8%
Lecturers facilitate discussions for students in online learning.	0%	1.2%	21.2%	60%	17.5%

Based on the table above, the highest percentage value of statement 7 is 60% who choose to agree as to their responses. It means that students agree that the lecturer during online learning facilitates their discussion activities. It is supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that lecturers facilitate discussion activities carried out by students in online learning by sending Zoom Meeting links or opening discussion activities in WhatsApp Group or Simari E-Learning.

The highest percentage value in statement 8 is 47.5% who choose to agree. It means that students agree that they are comfortable when participating in discussion activities during online learning. It is supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that these students feel more confident when they have to participate in discussion activities in online learning than offline learning; that is why students feel more comfortable in discussion activities during online learning.

The highest percentage value of statement 9 is 45% of students who choose neutral as their response. It means that students sometimes feel comfortable and sometimes do not feel comfortable expressing their opinions during online learning. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that sometimes students feel quite comfortable expressing opinions during discussion activities in online learning, even though the discussion activities are not very effective and some students are passive.

The highest percentage value in statement 10 is 46.2% of students who choose neutral as their responses. It means that students feel quite comfortable introducing themselves to other students in online learning, and sometimes they also feel uncomfortable introducing themselves. It is supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that online learning is more or less the same as offline learning; the difference is that learning activities must be done online and cannot interact directly. Students also feel comfortable when they have to talk, like introducing themselves in online learning.

The highest percentage value in statement 11 is 62.5% which chooses neutral as the response. It means that there are students who are unsure whether the communication made during online learning is impersonal. It is supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that maybe communication in learning is more or less done impersonally because all students can get the same information from the lecturer.

The highest percentage value in statement 12 is 40% who chose neutral as their responses. It means that students feel it is quite possible to form a sense of community with others in online learning. It is supported by a statement from one of the interviewed students that in online learning, both between students and students or students and lecturers can still create a sense of community because there is an intention to stay connected to each other during online activities.

Therefore, based on the findings, most of the lecturers facilitate learning activities in online learning,

including discussion activities. Lecturers usually open discussion rooms on WhatsApp Group, Simari E-Learning, Zoom Meeting, or Google Meet. It is compatible with the theory that said the system in online learning can facilitate students and teachers to exchange their points of view flexibly [15]. Students feel comfortable expressing their opinions to show that they are present and actively participate in online learning. These results match the theory that social presence can be a student's ability to provide a picture of himself emotionally and socially as a natural person in an online learning activity association that supports the student community's cognitive and affective goals [6].

Communication in learning is more or less done impersonally (impersonal communication) because all students can get the same information or knowledge from the lecturer regarding the subject matter that students must learn. A sense of community between students and students or students and lecturers can be formed in online learning; with a sense of community between fellow students or students and lecturers, it can build better communication improvements for students and teachers. This finding is compatible with the theory that said social presence is needed for online learning; this improves good communication for students and teachers [8].

4.3 Students' Satisfaction

This dimension discusses student satisfaction with the use of online learning. This dimension was created because knowing the extent of student satisfaction can help teachers improve teaching and learning activities.

There are seven statements related to student satisfaction with the use of online learning. For more details, the results of the questionnaire on the dimensions of students' satisfaction can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Students' Satisfaction

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with the online learning activities carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic.	6.2%	15%	48.8%	23.8%	6.2%
I am satisfied with the interactions between students and lecturers in online learning.	3.8%	13.8%	46.2%	31.2%	5%
I feel satisfied with the subject matter provided in online learning.	2.5%	8.8%	51.2%	27.5%	10%
Discussion activities help me understand the subject matter given.	0%	1.2%	27.5%	46.2%	25%

Diverse discussion topics in online learning encourage me to participate in discussion activities.	0%	2.5%	42.5%	42.5%	12.5%
Online learning activities are a useful learning experience.	0%	5%	26.2%	48.8%	20%
Overall, the learning activities carried out in online learning fulfill my learning expectations.	1.2%	13.8%	47.5%	31.2%	6.2%
I am satisfied with the online learning activities carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic.	6.2%	15%	48.8%	23.8%	6.2%

Based on the table, the highest percentage value of statement 13 is 48.8% who chose neutral as their responses. It means that students feel quite satisfied with online learning activities during this Covid-19 pandemic. One of the interviewed students' statements supports that students are quite satisfied with online learning during this Covid-19 pandemic.

The highest percentage value of statement 14 is 46.2% who chose neutral as their responses. It means that students feel quite satisfied with the interaction between students and lecturers during online learning. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that the student's satisfaction with the interaction between students and lecturers during online learning depends on the lecturer teaching the courses the students are taking if the lecturer explains the material being studied, and allows students to ask questions when there is something that students do not understand. Hence, it makes students feel quite satisfied. However, students sometimes also feel dissatisfied when the lecturer only provides subject matter without an explanation, which means there is not much interaction between students and lecturers.

The highest percentage value in statement 15 is 51.2% who choose neutral as their responses. It means that students feel quite satisfied with the subject matter provided by the lecturer during online learning. It is also reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that the subject matter provided in this online learning is quite satisfactory and not difficult to understand.

The highest percentage value in statement 16 is 46.2% who choose to agree as to their responses. It means that students agree that they feel helped understand the subject matter provided by the discussion activities. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that discussion activities in online learning are the same as offline learning. Students feel that discussion activities provide some additional knowledge for students.

The highest percentage value in statement 17 is equivalent between students who choose neutral and agree as to their response because the total percentage of neutral and agree is 42.5%. It means that most students feel that the diversity of topics usually discussed in online learning quite encourages them to participate in these discussion activities. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that

discussion activities in online learning are quite good with various topics to be discussed so that students feel compelled to participate in these discussion activities.

The highest percentage value in statement 18 is 48.8% choosing to agree as to their responses. It means that students agree that the use of online learning is a valuable experience for students. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that online learning is something new; lecturers and students can take full advantage of technology.

The highest percentage value in statement 19 is 47.5%, who chose neutral as their response. It means that students feel that their learning expectations in online learning are quite fulfilled. One of the interviewed students stated that online learning is sufficient to meet student learning expectations because students have more time to prepare themselves to study in online classes.

Based on the finding, the level of student satisfaction can indicate how willing students are to accept extensive online learning. Overall, students are quite satisfied with online learning during this Covid-19 period, and online learning provides students with a new, helpful experience to maximize the use of information technology. Satisfaction in online learning depends on the course and the lecturer who teaches the course. Students are quite satisfied with the interaction, the subject matter provided by the lecturer during online learning, and discussion activities that can provide students with additional information to understand the subject matter being studied. This finding fits with the theory, which says that there are three parts related to pleasure, among others: satisfaction with the direction and support of the instructor or teacher, satisfaction with one's commitment to learning, and satisfaction with the course or institution's policies [11].

4.4 Students' Engagement

The students' engagement dimension discusses how students are involved in online learning. This dimension is used because by knowing student engagement, lecturers can make learning designs to be more effective, and activities that will later encourage students to become active students during online learning activities. There are five statements related to students' engagement. More details of the results of a

questionnaire related to student engagement can be seen in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Students' Engagement

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I often interact with lecturers during online learning.	3.8%	11.2%	51.2%	28.8%	5%
I often participate in discussion activities, either synchronous or asynchronous.	0%	5%	45%	40%	10%
I am not very active during online learning activities.	6.2%	18.8%	45%	27.5%	2.5%
I discussed with other friends what we had learned outside of the online class that was taking place.	3.8%	6.2%	37.5%	33.8%	18.8%
I reviewed the subject matter that was given during online learning.	1.2%	6.2%	43.8%	41.2%	7.5%
I often interact with lecturers during online learning.	3.8%	11.2%	51.2%	28.8%	5%

Based on the table, the highest percentage value in statement 20 is 51.2% who chose neutral as their responses. It means that students quite often interact with lecturers during online learning. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that students do not interact often; they only interact with the lecturer only when students want to ask questions or when students know the answers to questions given by the lecturer.

The highest percentage value in statement 21 is 45% who chose neutral as their response. It means that students are quite active in discussion activities, whether they are carried out synchronously or asynchronous. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that the student is quite active in discussion activities, both synchronous and asynchronous, because student 2 argues that there is no difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning.

The highest percentage value in statement 22 is 45% who chose neutral as their response. It means that students are quite active during online learning. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that students are usually quite active in online learning depending on the course and the lecturer who teaches the course.

The highest percentage value in statement 23 is 37.5% who choose neutral. It means that most students quite often discuss the subject matter that has been studied in online classes with other students outside of online classes. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that students usually discuss the subject matter they do not understand with other friends outside the online class.

The highest percentage value in statement 24 is 43.8%, who chose neutral as their response. It means that most students quite often review the subject matter they have learned in online learning. It is reinforced by a statement from one of the interviewed students that the subject matter is usually distributed into Simari E-Learning. Students often reread the material to understand the subject matter better.

Based on the finding, students are quite involved during the process of online learning activities during this Covid-19 period. It is because students are quite active in participating in online learning activities. Some students only interact with lecturers when they want to ask questions related to the material being studied or when they know the answers to questions given by the lecturer. However, students quite often participate in discussion activities both synchronously and asynchronously. It means that students are willing to participate even though they are not very active during online learning activities. These results match the theory that student engagement is defined as students' willingness, desire, need, and compulsion to participate in learning activities and succeed in the learning process [7].

Some students outside the online class also quite often discuss the material they have learned; because of the Covid-19 pandemic, students can only discuss through the chat feature on WhatsApp. Students can also make meetings via video conferencing using the Zoom application. In addition, because these online learning materials are usually given in PDF or PowerPoint form and sent to Simari E-Learning, WhatsApp Group, or Telegram, it makes it easier for students to access these learning materials. It is compatible with the theory that said one of the

advantages of online learning is accessibility, where students have access to learning from wherever they are at that time [5]

5. CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students from the English Language Education Study Program batch 2019 had positive perceptions on the use of online learning. The use of online learning is appropriate with the learning needs of the students during this Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of social interaction, students felt quite comfortable during the interactions either between students and students or students and lecturers. Most students were also present and engaged during online learning activities. In addition, students were also satisfied with the use of online learning during this Covid-19 pandemic. The main obstacle that students in online learning often faced was the problem of internet connection. These

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findings imply the potentials of online learning as a mode of teaching and learning and that teachers should be aware of technical problems due to the internet connection.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 is responsible for designing research instruments, collecting the data, and analyzing data. Author 2 is responsible for analyzing the data while. Author 3 is responsible for literature review and writing format.

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