

Teaching Online During Pandemic COVID-19

French Teachers Perceptions of Online Learning in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Enforcement of community activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) to extend distance learning. This study was conducted to investigate how teachers perceived their readiness for online learning systems. This research was conducted during June – July 2021 on a number of French language teachers at Senior High Schools (SHS) in West Java. Conducted using qualitative methods, the findings reveal teachers' positive perceptions about e-learning and their acceptance of this new learning system. E-learning has emerged as a new way to improve the learning process, where learning applications and Learning Management Systems (LMS) can further improve learning outcomes. The findings of this study will make it easier for educational institutions and policy makers to take this online learning process to the next level in a better way.

Keywords: *COVID-19, distance education, e-learning, French as a foreign language, teachers' perception*

1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the mobility of all citizens of the world limited and impacted many sectors of life, including education. According to UNESCO (2020), schools are closed in many countries due to a public health emergency. Likewise in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture on March 24, 2020, issued a regulation regarding the implementation of distance learning through online learning.

In distance learning or online learning, teachers are required to look for various alternatives in delivering teaching materials so that learning objectives can still be achieved. Online learning is access to learning experiences through some technology. During the pandemic, teaching and learning activities have been conducted online, and teachers teach from home using technology such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Many platforms have been offered to facilitate online learning, such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Teacher Room, Quipper, Zoom meeting, and others (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020).

The internet has been a perfect learning tool that offers teachers flexibility and usability while offering

unlimited opportunities to innovate in teaching. As teachers play a significant role in implementing online learning and controlling the teaching and learning process (Bao, 2020), they should be able to adopt some roles and skills in this learning situation. Teachers can play their roles as instructors (who impart information to students), neutral chairs, consultants (from whom learners can ask questions), devil's advocates, the wanderers (in a larger workshop), and absent friends. In addition, teachers should be able to attract students' attention so that students can engage in the learning process (Kalogiannakis, 2010).

Several studies investigated how teachers and students experienced online learning. Nashir and Laili (2021) found that 68% of teachers experienced harder work during online learning than face-to-face learning, and only 35% of students remained active in online learning. Meanwhile, a study by Nursalina and Fitriwati (2021) found that despite the pros and cons related to online distance learning, most teachers have positive perceptions about online learning. Rahayu and Wirza (2020) also revealed that teachers showed positive perceptions about the usefulness and ease of online learning systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, more than half of the teachers disagreed with the effectiveness of this learning.

Although previous studies were to see the perceptions of English teachers in Indonesia, there has been limited research on the French teachers' perceptions. For high school teachers, especially French teachers in West Java, Indonesia, online learning is still a new teaching system. Therefore, their perception of online learning is very important to be able to facilitate an effective online learning environment, and the benefits and obstacles of implementing online learning can be better understood.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Online Learning Media

Mason (in Dhull & Arora, 2017) states that most online learning is in a partially online or fully online learning course series. Partial online learning means learning that integrates source materials available in print such as textbooks, handouts, and exercise books with several elements of online learning. On the other hand, full online learning is where most of the learning and teaching activities are done online including the learning resource materials.

In achieving learning goals in both face-to-face and online classes, teachers use learning media in delivering their teaching materials. Currently, conventional learning media are transformed into online learning media.

The digitalization of learning media does not only occur during a pandemic but has begun to develop several years earlier. On the other hand, online learning complements the broader classification of learning expansion, which includes previous technologies such as correspondence courses, educational television, and video conferencing (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2009).

In language learning, especially foreign languages, there are many online media that can support learning so that they can be used as online learning media. Teachers use video-editing tools like Screencast-O-Matic and Loom platforms. They can also use some assessment tools, such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall, Learningapps, and others. Several French learning sites can also be used, such as <https://apprendre.tv5monde.com/fr>. Hughes, Wickersham, Ryan-Jones and Smith (2002) also state that if online education is to succeed, both students and teachers must carry out their functions properly and have confidence in the media and various online platforms in the learning process.

2.2. Online Learning Strategy

Satisfaction is one of the important indicators to pay attention to both in terms of teachers and students. Nambiar (2020) and Orhan and Beyhan (2020) argue that a critical area for teacher and student satisfaction is the interaction between them. For teachers, face-to-face

learning is more successful than online learning because of full communication and interaction with their students.

Even though online learning can be done anywhere by relying on an internet connection, many factors influence online learning to succeed or fail (Hughes, Wickersham, Ryan-Jones, & Smith, 2002). One of the methods used to increase the success of online learning is synchronous and asynchronous. Mason (2003) proposes the positive values of the synchronous interactions, including increasing students' motivation to follow their friends in doing assignments, providing instant feedback and allowing collaborative activities between students, creating a sense of belonging to the group, allowing explanation on subjects easier than asynchronous method, and allowing students to use technology easier. On the other hand, the asynchronous method provides time flexibility so that it can combine activities with other activities, allows teachers and students to take time in considering the answers given, and gives students the opportunity to learn at their own pace of learning.

The use of LMS like Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Schoology can be used in asynchronous distance learning to make it easier for teachers and students to achieve learning goals. However, the learning process through LMS must be supported by interesting and motivating learning materials, such as the use of videos, and make this process work in two directions where students and teachers can interact through discussion or comment sections (Darmawangsa & Racmadhany, 2018).

2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

Online learning certainly has advantages including giving a more flexible place to study and saving costs and time. It also has some drawbacks, including poor communication, lack of motivation, lack of quality, and poor accessibility. Some teachers have difficulties in using ICT in online learning activities, operating or creating online learning media, and making good strategies in online learning.

Several studies on learning patterns and perceptions of learning in the COVID-19 era revealed the belief of teachers that online teaching can improve their knowledge, positively influence the future of students, and increase active participation (Dubey & Singh, 2020). Online learning can indeed be a solution to difficult pandemic conditions like today, although it cannot be denied that there are many obstacles faced in the learning process. Windiarti, Fadilah, Dhermawati, and Pratolo (2019) found that learning using the internet is an obstacle. Some teachers found that using technology with internet connection has drawbacks, like inefficient time management, reduced student motivation, increased internet quota costs, and network disconnections (Konca,

Ozel, & Zelyurt, 2016; Lindahl & Folkesson, 2012; Yurt & Cevher-Kalburan, 2011).

However, online learning is more cost-effective as online learning reduces the travel and other costs required to attend face-to-face classes and can also provide learning opportunities for adult students while also engaging in full-time or part-time work (Fedynich, 2014; Yilmaz, 2019). Anderson (2008) mentions several advantages of online learning for students: there is no time zone, location, and distance. In asynchronous online learning, students can access online materials at any time, while synchronous online learning provides real-time interaction between students and teachers. Students can use the internet to access up-to-date and relevant learning materials, and can communicate with experts in the field they are studying. Giovannella, Marcello, and Donatella (2020) conducted a study of the Italian school system to capture how teachers perceive and experience online education two months after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that teachers have a positive perception of using technology, and teacher professional development programs in digital skills are needed to prepare for future teaching activities.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

To investigate the French teachers' perception of French online learning activities during the pandemic, a qualitative descriptive method was used in this study. The population in this research was fifteen high schools in West Java who has French subjects as their main foreign language subject.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire containing 24 closed questions which are divided into four question sections. The first section contains participant demographics which include gender, age, education level, teaching experience, school origin, and platforms used in online learning. The second part is about the teacher's perception of the media used in online learning activities. The third part is about teachers' perceptions about the strategies used in online learning activities and the last part is about teachers' perceptions about the advantages of online learning activities. The questionnaire was administered using a Google Form, and each item was rated using a five-point Likert Scale from Strongly disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). Then, the data generated from the questionnaire is processed by calculating the central tendency (CT) with an interval of 20 and is divided into 5 parts, namely Very Less Positive, Less Positive, Quite Positive, Positive, and Very Positive.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected about a year and four months after the government implemented online learning across the country. Researchers contacted French teachers from 22 different schools in West Java to become respondents via WhatsApp messages. Of the 22 French teachers, there were 15 respondents who were willing to join this study. After the teachers agreed to participate, they were requested to fill out the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed through several steps: scoring the questionnaire, finding the percentage, calculating the central tendency (CT), interpreting data analysis, and stating the conclusion.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed the proportion of participants (87.5% female and 12.5% male). Half of the total participants were in the age range of 43-50 years, then 25% each were in the age range of 22-28 years and 35-42 years. All participants have an S1 education level, and half of the participants have teaching experience between 11-15 years, the other 25% are more senior teachers with more than 16 years of teaching experience. About 25% of the participants were young teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience.

Most of the teachers (87.5%) use WhatsApp Groups for their online learning which means learning takes place asynchronously. Around 87.5% use Google Classroom as the LMS which is often used compared to other LMS, such as school-owned LMS (50%) and Ministry of Religion's E-learning (12.5%).

To support asynchronous learning, 12.5% of participants use the Loom platform to create learning videos. In the process of achieving the best learning objectives, participants also use the synchronous method with various platforms, namely 75% Google Meet and 62.5% Zoom. In both synchronous and asynchronous learning processes, participants also used online game platforms 37.5% Kahoot and 37.5% Quizizz.

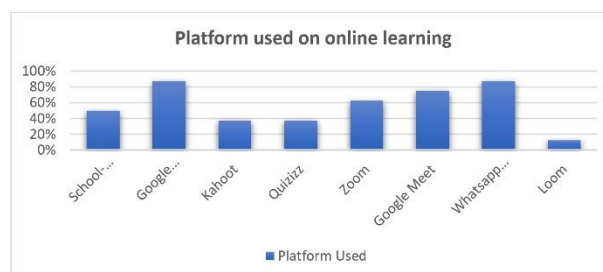


Figure 1 Platform used by French teacher on online learning.

Table 1. Teachers' perception on media as Indicator of online learning activities

No	Statements	CT	Category
1	Online learning media is more complete than face-to-face.	60%	Positive
2	Online learning media is easier to use than face-to-face.	55%	Quite Positive
3	Online learning media will replace conventional learning media.	58%	Quite Positive
4	I find it easier to teach students using online learning media.	53%	Quite Positive
5	I feel comfortable teaching using online learning media	50%	Quite Positive
6	I prefer to answer student questions directly rather than answering via online media (asynchronous).	70%	Positive

Table 1 shows six questions about the use of media as an indicator of online learning activities. The average central tendency for the use of media in online learning is 57.66% and falls into the category of quite positive perception. The highest percentage, which is 70%, teachers prefer to answer student questions directly compared to answering via asynchronous online media. While the lowest percentage of 50% is in the question which states that teachers are more comfortable teaching using online learning media.

Teachers perceived that online learning media is more complete than face-to-face learning. Some teachers think that online learning media is easier to use and easier to teach using it. They also think that this online learning media will replace conventional learning media and the teachers also feel comfortable when teaching using online learning media.

Table 2 shows teachers' perception of strategies in online learning activities. The average central tendency of the online learning strategy shows a percentage of 57.66% which means that the teacher's perception is quite positive. The highest percentage of 73% is in statement number 3, the teachers believe that online learning is good but learning French is quite difficult. So that teachers (60%) feel that teaching face-to-face is better than teaching online.

Table 2. Teachers' perception on strategy as indicator of online learning activities

No	Statements	CT	Category
1	I feel that teaching live in class is better than online.	60%	Positive
2	I feel there is no difference between teaching face-to-face and teaching online.	40%	Quite Positive
3	I believe online learning is good, but it's difficult for French.	73%	Positive
4	I am more creative when I teach online.	68%	Positive
5	I find it easier to teach online.	50%	Quite Positive
6	Online learning has made a great contribution to my satisfaction in teaching students.	55%	Quite Positive

Table 3. Teachers' perception on advantages and disadvantages of online learning

No	Statements	CT	Category
1	Online learning helps me manage my time more effectively.	60%	Positive
2	Online learning is useful for teaching.	75%	Positive
3	Online learning can save costs.	60%	Positive
4	Online learning makes me think innovatively and creatively.	73%	Positive
5	Online learning makes students study better.	40%	Quite Positive
6	Online learning is fun for teachers and students.	53%	Quite Positive

Even so, the teachers also felt that their online teaching had a high contribution to their satisfaction with teaching during this pandemic (55%). In addition, 50% of teachers feel that teaching online is easier and 68% feel more creative when teaching online. Furthermore, the indicators of the advantages of online learning according to the teachers' perceptions are shown in Table 3.

The last indicator shows that the teacher gives an average positive perception of 60.16% of the advantages of online learning. Most teachers (75%) consider online learning to be useful and online learning makes teachers think innovative and creative (70%). In addition, 60% of them think that online learning can help manage work time from home more effectively and at the same percentage, the teachers think that online learning can save costs compared to face-to-face learning. Some teachers (53%) find online learning fun for both themselves and their students and online learning makes students learn better (40%).

The challenge of overcoming learning difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic has made French teachers at least have experience in conducting online learning. Some of them have difficulty adapting from the face-to-face learning process to face-to-face either through video call platforms Zoom or Google Meet. It is a very convenient way of keeping teachers teaching and ensuring that the education system continues even during these hardships (Mukhter & Chowdhary, 2020).

From the results of studies, the use of media in online learning has a quite positive perception (57.66%). This is in accordance with previous research from Nursalina and Fitrawati (2021) that online learning media were useful and easy to use, and the teachers were quite satisfied with the advantages of using online learning media.

Furthermore, teachers' perception on strategy as an indicator of online learning activities also had the same value as online learning media, which was 57.66% (quite positive). Teachers consider online learning to be easier, as stated by Dhull and Arora's (2017) study showing teachers could find unlimited information that they could access via the internet.

Then, the teachers gave a positive perception (60.16%) on online learning which was useful for distance learning. This is in accordance with previous research by Rahayu and Wirza (2020) on the usefulness and ease of online learning systems during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, teachers still consider online learning to be ineffective.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that overall teachers tend to have positive perceptions about online learning activities despite facing some difficulties in the use of online learning media. The difficulties were due to the lack of technological knowledge from the teachers. Meanwhile, although perceptions tend to be positive, such as teachers being more creative, many teachers think that face-to-face teaching in class is better than online learning.

Teachers also tend to have positive perceptions about the advantages and disadvantages of online learning activities. Most of the teachers have a positive perception of time management, increased innovation, and creativity. However, the perception tends to be negative that online learning makes students learn better than face-to-face learning. Online learning can be applied continuously, but it needs several revisions so that online learning can be carried out effectively. Online learning is an excellent choice in the world of education, especially when there are obstacles in carrying out face-to-face learning.

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