

EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM IN THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the EFL university students' perception of the use of online learning platform in the covid-19 pandemic and to examine the difference in students' perception based on gender. The researcher conducted a quantitative using survey design method. The sample of this study was 80 students consists of 40 males and 40 females students of sixth year of the english education of Universitas Islam Malang. The instrument of this study was an online questionnaire by using a five-likert scale type. It uses to answer the students' perception of the use of online learning platform. The result of the study showed that the EFL students' perception of the use of online learning platforms share positive perception. The finding was also showed that there is a significant difference between male and female of the use of online learning platform. Male students' perspective is more positive than females in the use of online learning platforms.

Keywords: students' perception, online learning platform, gender

INTRODUCTION

Recently, various countries around the world have been shocked by the outbreak of corona or COVID-19 (Corona Virus Diseases-19). Education in Indonesia has been one of the areas impacted by Covid-19. With limits, the Education Ministry in Indonesia has too released a strategy aimed at dismantling educational institution and replacing the teaching and learning process (KBM) with online systems. This situation forces teachers and students to master the technology media in implementing online learning. Besides, the benefit of technology in the learning process plays an important role both for teaching and learning. According to Raja and Nagasubramani (2018), ICT has the power to increase access and boost the importance and standard of education (p.34). Mohammed (2018) stated that an LMS is a technology that provides a variety of tools to help lecturers manage their courses (p.

26). The use of platforms during the pandemic is needed to facilitate the teacher delivering the material to students.

There are some studies performed by researchers on the performance of online learning platform. Cakrawati (2017) showed that students who took part in the study see online learning platforms as a user friendly learning resource that allows them to communicate with their lecturers and friend outside the classroom. Also, students agree the utilizing electronic learning tools in the learning phase is beneficial because saves time and energy. Another study conducted by Kodriyah (2014) present that most of the participants responded positively and accepted Edmodo is a simple and meaningful learning platform that allows students to learn anywhere and anytime without meet and interaction with lecturers and other classmates. Edmodo is really simple to use since students can take assignments; apply homework, questionnaire, and conduct tasks online. Similarly, Sanad (2016) found that students have strong and positive perceptions of Facebook as an online learning platform as a learning environment. Students always had a strong positive attitude in teaching and learning process using Facebook.

The research shortcomings above address the context of learning did not fully online because it was still face to face or offline. Furthermore, the previous studies did not see the perception of the difference based on gender. Therefore, in this study, the researcher examines EFL University students' perceptions on the use of online learning platforms with full online learning carried out during the COVID 19 pandemic and looks at the differences students' perceptions based on gender.

Based on the background, the researcher formulates the following problem:

1. How do EFL university students perceive the use of the online learning platform in the COVID 19 pandemic?
2. Is there any difference in the EFL university students' perceptions based on gender?

There are some purposes based on the research questions above. This study aims to describe the EFL university students' perception of the use of online learning platform in the COVID 19 pandemic and to examine the difference in students' perception based on gender. The researcher also has a hypothesis that there is a significant difference between males and females students of the use of online learning platform.

Walgito (2003, p. 87) states that perception is the process of human thinking about certain phenomenon while Demuth (2013, p. 31) proposes that perception is a result of the interaction between stimulus and internal inference, desires and experience of the observer. Stone and Neilson (1985, p. 205) also add that perception is a cognitive arrangement of sensory stimuli related to specific person, object, or event. From the theory above it can be concluded that perception is an important psychological aspect humans in responding to the presence of various aspects and symptoms around them. Chen (2003) states that the students' perception very important for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Perception contains a very broad understanding, both internal and external. Each student has a diversity of skills and personality. The characteristics of students need to be taken into account because they can influence the course on the learning outcomes of the students concerned.

Gomez (2016) stated that the online learning platform is a way to structure the instruction, which encourages optimal content organization and student interaction. online learning platforms can reduce the workload of lecturers, improve teaching and learning process inside and outside the classroom (AS, 2011). Online learning platforms is a learning tool that brings lecturers, students, and parents have access to general resources, communication tools, and information, both inside and outside the classroom. Ouadoud (2016) stated that an Online learning platform is a software including services to assist teachers in the management of their course. Cheng (2006) claims that an online learning

platform is something supplied, allowed, or mediated by electronic technology for the explicit learning purpose. Dodun (2015) proposed that the online learning platforms are used fairly commonly in various stages of formal education processes; e-learning includes all educational circumstances where communication and information technology means are used significantly.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is the female and male students of the sixth semester of the English Department at Universitas Islam Malang because they more experienced in using online learning platforms. In this study the researcher using purposive sampling. The target of participants in this study was 80 students which consist of 40 male and 40 female students. Some procedures performed by the researcher during the study. Firstly, the researchers prepare instruments to collect the data. Secondly, adopt a questionnaire from Al-khatari (2015) which questions about students' perception in the use of online learning platforms. Thirdly, the researcher asks permission to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education office, Supervisor, and lecturers to conduct the research. After obtaining permission from several parties above, the researcher asked participants to be part of the research. The researcher distributes the questionnaire then asks the participants to open a google form and fill in the questionnaire that has been provided.

The instrument of this study consists of an online questionnaire by using a Five-Likert Scale type where the contents adopted from Al-Khatari (2015), which generates an analytical database on the participants. It uses to answer the students' perception of the use of online learning platform. There are 20 questions consists of 15 questions about students' perceptions on the use of online learning platforms and 5 questions of what the students' challenges are. In the questionnaire, there are several additional questions related to participant background information such as name, class/semester, and gender, also how

often use the online learning platform, and what online learning platform is used. The questionnaire has been translated into Indonesian and validated by the integrated laboratory team Faculty of Teacher Training and Education to make students more understand about the statements in each number. The researcher analyzes the data from students' respond in questionnaire that has been filled out by participants. It needs to calculate used the SPSS stand for Statistical Package for Social Science. In this study, the researcher used descriptive statistics to know how EFL university students' perception of the use of online learning platform and used independent sample t-test to know the difference of students' perception on the use of online learning platform based on gender.

Table 1. Level Average Adopted from Oxford (1990)

High	Strongly agree	4.5 to 5.0
	Agree	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Neutral	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Disagree	1.5 to 2.4
	Strongly disagree	1.0 to 1.4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A descriptive statistics were performed to analyze the students' perceptions, and it was found that in general, the students' perceptions on the use of online learning platforms are positive as indicate by the mean of 3.24 (Table 2.). The average score positive perception of the use of an online learning platform (3.53) followed by a perception of the students' challenges (2.94). Detailed interpretation of each aspect of perceptions is discussed in the following section.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students' Perception	80	2.10	4.90	3.53	.56
Students' Challenge	80	1.00	5.00	2.94	.91
OVERALL				3.24	

Students' perception obtains the highest mean, showing the students' positive responses towards the use of online learning platform (Table 3.). It can be seen from 6 items (1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14) and flexibility in terms of function and interface. Meanwhile, 9 items (2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 15) show a neutral mode of perception, indicating that the students are not sure that they do not need mental effort in the use of an online learning platform.

Table 3. Analysis of students' perception

NO.	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Online learning platform meets my needs such as mobility and social communication	3.68 (positive)	.70
2.	Online learning platform offers me more opportunities to interact with my teacher and peers outside classroom	3.31 (neutral)	1.09
3.	Students who are shy to participate in class, usually feel more comfortable communicating using online learning platform.	3.48 (neutral)	.90
4.	Online learning platform saves effort and time by doing and submitting assignments electronically	3.78 (positive)	.79
5.	Online learning platform services like (SMS messages, alerts, notes) give me a running record of assignments' due date and a description of what is expected.	3.70 (positive)	.77
6.	When absent, I can easily access class materials	3.65 (positive)	1.00

and assignments through online learning platform			
7.	Online learning platform reduces learning cost (e.g. photocopying, designing posters).	3.48 (neutral)	1.14
8.	Online learning platform helps me practicing my language skills through conversations	3.25 (neutral)	.94
9.	Online learning platform me a chance to share my writing with my teacher and peers	3.71 (positive)	.88
10.	Online learning platform helps me acquiring new English vocabulary	3.71 (positive)	.87
11.	Online learning platform helps to make my reading experience more interesting	3.55 (positive)	.96
12.	I can improve my listening skill through the audio files uploaded on online learning platform	3.68 (positive)	.80
13.	Online learning platform allows me to get immediate feedback from my teacher.	3.39 (neutral)	.97
14.	Online learning platform can complement classroom teaching and learning.	3.59 (positive)	.88
15.	Online learning platform promotes the effectiveness of EFL instruction at secondary stage	3.14 (neutral)	1.12

Table 4. shows 3 negative items (16,19,20) which indicate that they feel not challenged in using an online learning platform. The 2 items neutral (17,18) indicating that the students are not sure about the challenges of using an online learning platform.

Table 4. Analysis Students' Challenges

No.	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I lack access to computers or any mobile devices at home.	2.64 (negative)	1.37
2.	Online learning platform requires long time to master its use	3.09 (neutral)	1.17
3.	I need to learn some troubleshooting technology tasks to help myself when using online learning platform	3.32 (neutral)	1.11

4.	I dislike using online learning platform Mobile because the small-sized screen causes me difficulty in navigation and typing	2.89 (negative)	1.26
5.	I get frustrated by using online learning platform Mobile, because of the slow-speed internet on my mobile	2.80 (negative)	1.37

The average difference is for all aspects of perception: students' perception and students' challenges. In the descriptive variable that have been analyzed involve mean of male 3.422 with standard deviation 0.654 and mean of female 3.060 with standard deviation 0.463. The result showed mean of male student more highest then female students. It means that the students share different perspectives. Male students' perspective is more positive than females in the use of online learning platforms (table 5)

Table 5. Group Statistics

	Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>Students' perception,</i>	Male	40	3.422	.654	.103
<i>Students' challenges</i>	Female	40	3.060	.463	.073

The hypothesis testing of this research is proved through the output of the independent sample t-test calculated in SPSS 20.0 version. Based on the analysis data using independent t-test the data showed that there is a significant difference between male and female students in their perceptions on the use of online learning platforms (Table 6). It is indicated by the significance value (.006) which is smaller than 0.05. It has answered the second research question and proved that the researcher hypothesis "there is significant differences between males and females of the use of online learning platform" was accepted.

Table 6. Result of Analyzing Data Using Independent T-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
<i>Students' perception, Students' challenges</i>	Equal variances assumed	5.127	.026	2.854	78	.006	.362	.126	.109	.614
	Equal variances not assumed			2.854	70.274	.006	.362	.126	.109	.615

From all the data calculated, it is interpreted as the perception from students of English department sixth semester is an online learning platform that saves time and effort by doing and submitting an assignment electronically. This is the positive effect from online learning platform. Al-khatiri (2015) discussed students' perceptions. Al-khatiri (2015) stated that the online learning platform has a feedback feature, so students can easily give the direct question and get a direct answer from the lecturer. The above statements proof the findings in this research about "online learning platform saves time and effort by doing and submitting an assignment electronically".

Two items have been analyzed by the researcher (students' perception and students' challenges). The first item is a questionnaire of students' perception of the use of an online learning platform consist of 15 questions, with the highest mean about 3.78, it comes from question number 4 (online learning platform saves time and effort by doing and submitting an assignment electronically). It is can be interpreted as students feel that online learning

platforms help them in submitting the assignment, because online learning platform can save students times and efforts while doing and submitting the assignment electronically.

Cakrawati (2017) also found a similar result that students also think that online learning platform such as Edmodo is convenient to use especially in submitting/collecting their assignments.

The second item is about the challenges faced by the students of the use of an online learning platform. The questionnaire of the challenges in the online learning platform consists of 5 questions, with the highest mean 3.32. The highest mean from this data come from the question number 18 (I need to learn some troubleshooting technology tasks to help myself when using online learning platform). Mirfani (2019) learning troubleshooting are used to train students in making decisions while learning using an online learning platform. In this case, the students feel not sure about the challenge they faced. The lowest mean from this data comes from question number 16 with the mean 2.64 (I lack access to computers or any mobile devices at home for learning English). It showed that the lack of internet access to the computer does not become a problem faced by students because internet networks are widespread and participants may live in areas with good signals. According to Kamarga as cited in Setiawardhani (2013) the internet is a global network of thousands and millions of computers, including the local network, which is connected through channels (satellite, telephone, cable) and influence the entire of world. Setiawardhani (2013) the internet network is not an organization or institution, it's independent because they are not a part that regulates and have it. Moreover, students don't feel that internet access is a huge problem in the use of online learning platforms.

The result of the study showed that there is a significant difference of students' perception in the use of online learning platform based on gender. Male students more like use online learning platforms for online learning than female students. Based on Google form

recapitulation there are 30 male students share positive perspective while female students share 24 positive perspective of the use of online learning platform. Rantung (2015) In terms of technology use every individual's internet has a perception uses, attitudes, and learning interests are different. According to Selwyn (2008) internet usage among students very different based on gender, males showed great interest in internet usage compared to the woman. Alobiedat and Saraierh (2010), the male has a keen interest higher use of technology, because of male naturally prefers the practical and so fast when doing male assignments prefer to use technology internet.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

. The result of the research questions about how EFL university students perceive the use of the online learning platform in the COVID 19 pandemic showed that the students have a positive perception toward the use of online learning platforms. Moreover, the online learning platform has some advantages for online learning during the pandemic which is the whole learning process full online.

The researcher gives a suggestion related to the study for lecturers are expected to be able to see the state and abilities of students in using online learning platforms. One of the important things that the teacher must do is create a module for learning troubleshooting in using the platform. So students can easily make decisions when learning using an online learning platform. Lecturers also have to learn more creatively so that their students don't feel bored of using online learning platform. For future researchers who interested in doing a study about students' perception. The researcher suggested to adding an instrument for collect the data such as interviews so that the perception is clarified in more detail and analyze more in depth the differences of the use of online learning platforms based on gender.

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