

## EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AS LEARNING TOOLS

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### Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread to all parts of the world including Indonesia. The existence of the Covid 19 problem has changed many aspects of human life, including in the field of education. Therefore, the use of social media devices has become an alternative learning tool in providing material to students during the Covid-19 pandemic. With this new challenge, every human being is challenged to change old habits into new ones, especially in the world of education. This study aims at determining the EFL students' perceptions regarding the use of various social media tools to support online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The method used in this research was qualitative using a descriptive approach. The sampling technique used in this study was random sampling by distributing questionnaires via google form and conducting interviews with 25 selected students to explore students' perceptions about the use of social media in English learning. The data that has been collected is analyzed in an elaborated way. In the application of learning using social media, there are many positive responses given by students, but there are also students who experience some problems in the application of learning using social media. Even among them, they also experience various difficulties in using it, especially in internet access. The results show that the use of social media platforms provides several advantages in its implementation, such as the flexibility of time, the effectiveness of its use, ease, interactive, fun use. However, the challenges are very monotonous learning activities, spending quotas, boredom and difficulty expressing their creativity, bad responses and an erratic schedule.

**Keywords:** Perceptions, Social Media Platforms, Learning tools

### 1. Introduction

The world was shocked by the emergence of a new virus that caused a very worrying disease, the Corona virus or abbreviated as Covid 19. Initially this virus originated in the city of Wuhan, China, and spread throughout the world and caused a global pandemic. The presence of this virus has caused a huge impact on human life, including in Indonesia. This means that the existence of a pandemic has had an impact in all sectors of life, including one in the educational sector. The corona virus has stopped face-to-face learning activities both at school and in college. Teachers and teaching staff are required to change in their teaching methods as schools and the government have designed face-to-face learning to online learning because of the pandemic. This recommendation is in accordance with the instructions given by the Ministry of Education and Culture, this policy leads the education sector to close schools that require students to study from home. Rajab (2020) argues that the presence of the corona virus had an effect on

the education sector. Therefore, every teacher must be able to find solutions in teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Technological developments have changed teaching methods in schools from traditional teaching methods using technology use methods. This is in accordance with the opinion of Bakia, Shear, Toyama and Lasseter (2012) which state that available evidence shows that schools use information technology with the aim of expanding access, increasing the quality of teaching and reducing costs related to learning. From this opinion, it can be concluded that with the development of technology, changes in teaching methods also have an impact on teaching and learning activities. Ounis (2016) states that the current generation is technology-savvy. This means that the use of technology in modern human life cannot be denied. Here the term is often used as online learning. Online learning has the potential to transform teaching by redesigning traditional classroom instructional approaches and improving the quality of the learning experience (Patrick & Powell, 2009). Online learning not only offers an increase in the quality of education but also a solution to the problems faced in traditional learning. Learning using technology will certainly present a variety of advanced features that will have a positive impact on the learning process.

Xu & Jaggars (2013) explain that from a student's point of view, the convenience of online learning is very valuable and having a scheduled schedule; thus, online learning can be an advantage in workforce development, helping adults to return to school and complete additional educational tasks that they cannot do in their routine. To support this statement, Reimers (2020) states that online learning is a very supportive medium in conquering the problems of the world of education during the Covid 19 pandemic. With the application of online learning, the term virtual class appears. Ferriman (2019) states that a virtual class is an online class that offers students to communicate, view presentations or videos or discuss with groups through a social media platform. This means that students will be able to continue learning as usual but with the use of technology to support their learning in the midst of this corona outbreak. Hartono (2012) says that the use of information and communication technology in learning can help teachers or students. Thus, the use of some kind of social media application can facilitate teaching and learning activities, especially during a pandemic like this, which will be very useful as an alternative to learning. The previous research has been conducted by Makura (2014), where the results of his research state that the use of technology in learning has given a good impression in its use so as to provide a positive perception in the use of communication and information technology. Then, Tristiana and Elvira (2018) explain in the results of their research that students have a good perception of combining communication and information technology in learning, so that it provides many advantages in obtaining material using communication and information technology.

The increase in the role and activeness of students in the use of various media and technology for the success of online lectures is very much influenced by perceptions (Khan, 2020). This is because perception is the process of interpreting the stimulus received by the five senses into an understanding. This perception, then, will motivate students to be able to organize and manage themselves in online lecture activities. By knowing the opinions or perceptions of students about the media used will form a teaching process that is in accordance with the criteria needed by students during the learning process. This can make it easier for teachers to determine learning media that are suitable for students' conditions in order to create and implement English learning objectives.

Based on the explanation above, the research question in this study is how EFL students' perception on the use of social media platforms as leaning tools? The researcher focused on to know the students' perception toward the use of social media platforms especially in learning English to see the strengths and obstacles their face when they learning virtually with use some social media platforms. So that teacher can anticipate the problems or obstacles in the use of social media platforms can be overcome as well as possible so that the teaching and learning process can be carried out properly in the future.

## 2. Literature Review

### The Role of Social Media As A Learning Tool

Social media in the world of education functions as a form of collaboration, creativity, and learning for teachers and students. Through social media, the learning process can be carried out in order to make learning easier to do. Learning by using social media can also be an alternative for teachers in delivering learning materials, where teachers are not only focused on providing material but also support students to understand and master the use of learning technology. The use of social media in education focuses on an individual learning by making other people the subject of learning. Furthermore, social media is not only about the impact of communication and information technology, but also about the communication technology that is absorbed and adopted. The role of social media now occurs in the process of distance education or e-learning, namely when the teaching and learning process is no longer limited to classrooms, distance, and time. So, the benefits using social media in education such as:

#### 1. Adaptability and Collaboration

With social media, it triggers student adaptation which is not only limited to friends in the same group, but also about communication with other students in the same class or school. They can form learning activity groups and collaborate with each other to form better friendship management.

Students can also invite teachers to join study groups so they can provide input. Hapsari (2020) says that using social media is something that very useful to support the learning system with the new trend people can connect each other and do all activities through social media. It should be noted that the study group network does not have to be limited to the same school. Students can collaborate with other schools, even with students from different countries. Students will be encouraged to become 'experts' in the involvement of the internet aspect whose activities do not interact, but also learn how to use social media wisely.

#### 2. Improving Student Learning Motivation

The positive impact of student friendship on social media can encourage self-development related to subject matter and input from new friends who are connected via the internet. This of course also has an impact on increasing students' learning motivation, who previously had difficulty digesting the lesson, becoming understanding because of the explanations of their friends. Prayudha (2022) states that social media is an easy way to communication and people always use it for so many purposes. It means in this era the use of technology including social media is something that cannot separated in the daily life. So many things that people can do with social media, including study. They can learn by using social media and teacher as the main key in the classroom can use that technology to deliver and bring the class to online learning.

Also, starting a study group network can save time and effort. Students can use free video conferencing applications, such as Google Hangouts as a collaboration facility when studying in groups. Students who want to ask questions to teachers or other resource persons can use other social media to build connections through the exchange of questions or answers between users.

#### 3. Supporting Study Materials

Social media also gives students a role to get more complete learning materials to broaden their horizons. YouTube, for example. The platform helps provide video and audio to clarify learning materials. It could also be other types of social media, chat applications for example, which allow students to send various documents, such as videos, reminders, voice notes, pictures, data and others. Geubrina (2021) adds teacher can deliver the material easily by using help of social media because the feature of the technology is very good support to use. Students can directly give and receive various information. They can share tips, tricks, and useful information for study materials. The long-term positive impact is that

their ability to access, analyze, and share information continues to improve over time. This also needs to be balanced with knowledge of how to wisely use social media.

### 3. Research Method

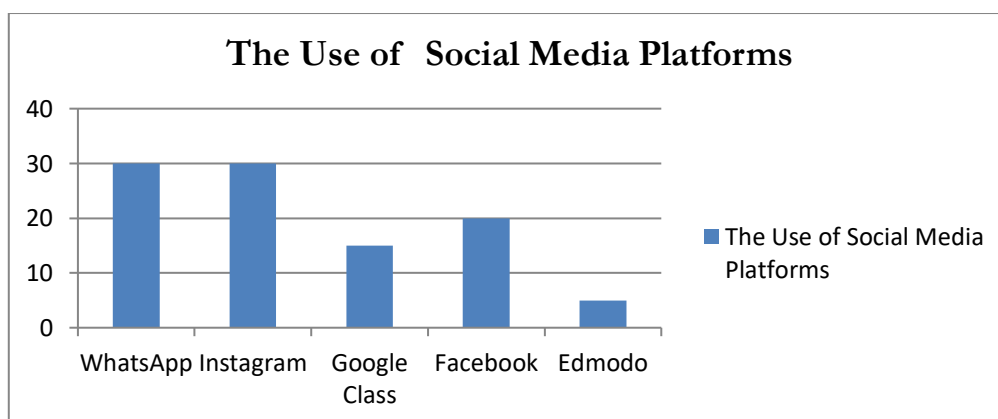
The method used in this research is qualitative using a descriptive approach. Stake (2010) states that qualitative research is dependent on human perceptions of the subject and the time that has been used on a matter discussed. Descriptive research is a type of research that describes a problem. Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation or phenomenon accurately and systematically. The approach used was descriptive approach by collecting data, describing, analyzing and describing the data. Merriam (2009) states that in qualitative research, the researchers try to explain their experiences, their perceptions and express their opinions about the object being carried out. Sugiyono (2014) also adds that descriptive qualitative methods are used to see the condition of an object being studied naturally where the researcher is the key instrument in the process of implementing the research. Stake (2010) states that qualitative research is dependent on human perceptions of the subject and the time that has been used on a matter discussed.

This research was conducted at SMAN 02 Lebong. With the population is all students of SMAN 02 Lebong. The sampling technique used in this study was random sampling by distributing questionnaires via google form. The kind of questionnaire in this research was using close questionnaire where the researcher gives the respondent the question and the answer. Students just write the answer based on the answer on the paper. Then, semi-interviews were conducted to 25 selected students to explore students 'perceptions deeper about students' perceptions about the use of social media platforms in learning, such as learning by using Whatsapp, Zoom application, Google classroom, Edmodo, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and so on. The question of interview was a conversation, the art of question and answer and listening. This is not a neutral-tool, the interviewer creates a real question and answer situation. In this situation the answers are given. Thus, the interview produces an understanding that is shaped by the situation based on specific interactional events. The method is influenced by the individual characteristics especially when they use the social media for learning. Questions are developed based on the answers given by respondents. After the data is collected, the next step is to analyze the data to get a conclusion. The data was analyzed by some steps, they are data reduction, data display and conclusion. Then the data that has been collected will be described descriptively.

### 4. Results and Discussion

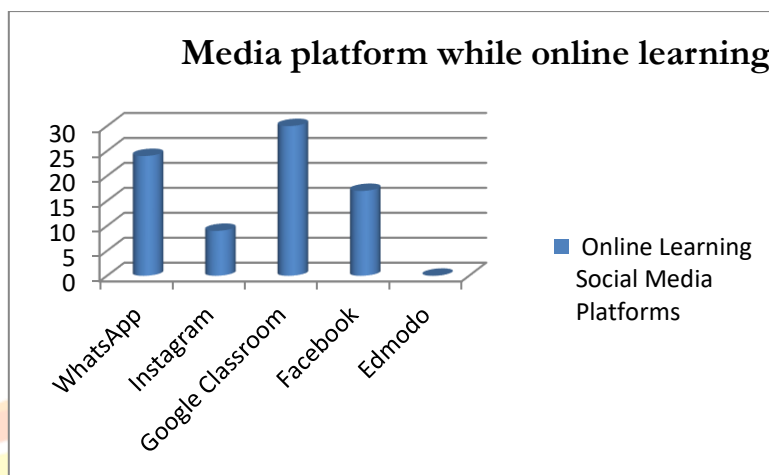
- a) The result of questionnaire

This section presents the research findings, the most dominant applications students use, the benefits of using them and the barriers to using the platform. Most of the students have been using social media platforms since they had their devices. There are many social media platforms they use. But the most commonly used are WhatsApp and Instagram. As shown in the following graph:



Graph 1. The frequency use of social media for learning

From the graph above, it can be seen that students often use the social media platforms WhatsApp and Instagram in their daily lives. Not only for learning, but in social interaction they tend to use the application. This is due to several reasons for its use. For example, the WhatsApp and Instagram applications are designed for communication and entertainment, while the Google Classroom and Edmodo applications are not commonly used applications for social media but are designed specifically as learning applications. However, from the results of the questionnaire that has been given regarding learning, most virtual classes are carried out with a different social media platform from the graphic above. The following graphs are displayed based on the social media platforms they use virtually during their learning:



**Graph 2.** The social media platform for online learning

From the graph above, it can be concluded that there are differences in the use of social media platforms that students use when filling their free time with the use of social media platforms when studying. The social media platform they use the most while studying online is Google Classroom, with the highest graph figures among other social media platforms. This is because the school has indeed initiated learning using the Google Classroom social media platform. However, sometimes the teacher also often provides material and questions and answers through other social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook, while the use of Edmodo's social media platform has never been applied during the online learning process.

Furthermore, in the results of the questionnaire that had been given regarding students' perceptions in learning using social media platforms, it was stated that they were greatly helped in the midst of this increasingly erratic corona virus pandemic. To find out this perception can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. The result of questionnaires

| No | Questions  | Students Answer |    | Total |
|----|--|-----------------|----|-------|
|    |  | Yes             | No |       |
| 1  | Did online learning help you learn during the COVID-19 pandemic?                             | 30              | -  | 30    |
| 2  | Are social media platforms very helpful in learning activities during the Covid 19 pandemic? | 30              | -  | 30    |
| 3  | Is the use of social media platforms easy to use?  | 27              | 3  | 30    |
| 4  | Does using social media platforms hold you back from learning?                               | 5               | 25 | 30    |
| 5  | Does using social media platforms make you even more stressed about studying?                | 14              | 16 | 30    |
| 6  | Are you confused about digesting the material taught through social media                    | 6               | 24 | 30    |

|    |   |    |    |    |
|----|---|----|----|----|
|    | platforms?  |    |    |    |
| 7  | Are social media platforms able to allow you to interact with teachers and other friends? | 30 | -  | 30 |
| 8  | Is the use of social media platforms effective for you?                                   | 23 | 7  | 30 |
| 9  | Does the social media platform make you excited about learning?                           | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| 10 | Does the use of social media make you bored faster?                                       | 28 | 2  | 30 |

From the results of the questionnaire on students' perceptions of using social media platforms, it shows that there are various results in addressing the use of social media platforms in learning. For question number one, as many as 30 students felt very helped by the online learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Where with online learning, students do not have to face anxiety about the spread of the corona virus. So that online or online learning is the right alternative during this pandemic. For question number two, as many as 30 students felt very helped by the existence of a social media platform in learning, especially with various applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook which are the applications they use most often so that it doesn't make it difficult for them to learn.

Question number three, as many as 27 students said that the social media platforms used in learning were easy to use. Meanwhile, there were 3 students who felt that using social media platforms was difficult to use. The reason given is that some of the features in Google Classroom confuse them. Question number four, as many as 5 students felt that learning using social media platforms was hindering them. The reason is virtual learning cannot get all the learning points like face-to-face learning, then according to them online learning makes them less deep in gaining knowledge. However, on the contrary, as many as 25 students did not feel hampered in learning online. The reason is that online learning is the right choice in the midst of tense situations like this, which requires everyone to dare to try or try to do something new.

Question number five is related to feeling pressured during online learning using social media platforms, as many as 14 students said that they felt pressured by online learning. Their reason is that there are tasks that make them overwhelmed in carrying out them. Then with this online learning requires students to always be ready to provide internet quota so they can carry out learning. However, as many as 16 students said that they did not feel pressured by this online learning. Question number six, as many as 6 students felt confused digesting the material during online learning. they assume that the learning is sometimes confusing because the material made by their teacher is incomplete or sometimes not easy to understand. They also added that when they were confused about digesting materials, they would immediately look for such information and material on the internet. Then 24 students said that they did not feel confused in digesting the material through online learning. According to them, online learning provides an opportunity for them to find many sources both from books and the internet while studying without having to be caught by teachers and other students so that they don't need to be confused in understanding the material provided through social media platforms.

Question number seven, all students said that learning through social media platforms was able to provide space for them to provide input, questions, ideas and so on in the social media application. In addition, the platform also has a comment or question and answer feature so that it can help students use it. With the questions and answers feature, the virtual classroom also becomes communicative between teacher-students or between students and students so that the virtual class becomes more alive in the implementation of the teaching and learning process. For the eighth question regarding the effectiveness of learning using social media platforms, 23 students said that online learning using social media platforms was deemed effective enough during the COVID-19 pandemic like this. They also said that the use of social media platforms is a good alternative in the midst of the epidemic that is haunting everyone. The existence of online learning does not stop the student learning process, from face-to-face learning to online learning.

The ninth question, as many as 15 students said that learning using social media platforms made them enthusiastic about learning. The reason is because online learning does not require them to come to school and do not need to use complete school supplies. There was even a student who said that online learning provides a learning experience while playing social media. This means that students are able to learn as well as play social media without having to be known by their teacher. However, as many as 15 students also said that learning online using an online media platform made them feel discouraged. Due to the atmosphere, the learning environment that is always monotonous makes them feel a stagnant or unchanging atmosphere. The tenth question, as many as 28 students gave their opinion that online learning using social media platforms quickly made them feel bored in learning. This is because they feel bored who just stay in front of their computer just to listen and do the instructions given by their teacher. The students said online learning with social media platforms did not provide space for them to express their expressions while studying, the atmosphere they felt was just that, so this is what caused them to be less enthusiastic about learning online. However, there were two students who said that online learning did not make them feel bored. They assume that online learning using social media platforms makes them better able to understand the material provided because they can look for other sources if they don't understand and they can learn while using their social media for browsing.

b) Interview result

The interview only conducted to some students randomly to gain their deeper personal opinion about the use of social media in learning. The interview question was semi-structured interview where the researcher tried to gain students perception widely through the use of this technologies. The results of the interviews can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. The result of interview

| Question   | Answer   |
|--|--|
| What do you think about the use of social media in learning? | Learning with social media is more interesting and fun. Because sometimes I focus more on studying and not being disturbed by friends. Then the easy of using social media made me feel more interested in learning.               |
| Do you feel motivated to learn by using social media?        | Yes, sometimes I feel excited to learn to use social media instead of face-to-face learning. But sometimes I get bored if I keep learning to use social media. There needs to be a change in the way I study so I don't get bored. |
| Are you having trouble using social media to study?          | No, I feel easy to use social media in studying.   |
| What are the advantages of using social media for learning?  | More flexible, more focused, lots of learning resources, and not distracted by naughty friends.  |
| Would you rather learn to use social media than not use it?  | Yes, I prefer to learn to use social media, but sometimes I don't like to use social media too much.   |

From the results of interviews that have been carried out, it is concluded that many students feel very positive about learning by using social media assistance, where the use of social media which is very familiar in everyday life makes them feel closer and more accustomed to using the technology. Then a high sense of motivation to learn to use social media also makes students feel enthusiastic to continue learning even though sometimes there is a sense of boredom that comes when the use of social media is continuously used. The teacher as the main key in the classroom must be really smart to balance learning both face-to-face and by using social media as online learning. So that students can find learning patterns that suit their preferences and can achieve good learning goals.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results it is conclude that the use of social media platforms provides several advantages in its implementation, such as the flexibility of time, the effectiveness of its use, ease, interactive, fun use. But the challenges are learning activities that are very monotonous, bored and difficult to express their creativity, bad responses and an erratic schedule. In the learning process using various kinds of social media can affect the way and motivation of student learning so that the teacher as the main key in learning must be really evaluative in choosing the appropriate type of social media used in the learning process. Teachers must be able to ensure that students do not have obstacles in using various social media as learning tools so that both teachers and students can connect with each other to achieve learning goals. Therefore, students' perceptions regarding the use of social media platforms in online learning can provide readers with an overview of the situations faced by students during virtual learning. So that readers can understand the conditions faced by students when learning virtually. With the results in this study, readers can use them as a reference for conducting other research that has a correlation with the theme of this research so that it can broaden their research insights. Finally, This research is only limited to knowing the perceptions of students in using social media for learning so that there is a need for further studies related to the use of certain social media technologies to improve students' English skills in the future. The researcher hopes that there will be further studies on the use of technology in learning English.

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