

The Use of Internet as Learning Media during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The present study investigated the university students' perception on the use of learning media during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially with the use of internet as the only means to learn. Besides, this research also aimed to identify some factors which might have hampered the students' learning process when using internet. The respondents recruited for the study were the second semester. There were 40 students of English literature department who were purposively recruited for this study. The research method was mixed method. In this method, the questionnaire was used as the primary instrument to elicit the students' perceptions. Further, separated interviews were applied to those giving relevant answers. The findings indicated that basically the students' perception toward the newly adopted learning process was not really positive. Even though the students perceived that internet was an ideal learning media at the moment. They did not think that learning through internet had the same quality as the face-to-face learning process. Further, they also found the explanation from their teachers was considered easier than the information available in internet. Lastly, they also perceived that internet was useful in terms of being a search engine but not to replace the whole learning aspects (interaction, motivation, teachers, etc.).

Keywords: internet, learning media, pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The use of internet as the media which support learning process during the pandemic is undoubtedly inseparable. The use of internet or the other facilities requiring the role of internet is reinforced with the policy called as "social distancing" set by the government. The use of internet

based learning program allows the learners to conduct their academic processes without making more direct physical contacts with their teachers.

Up to now, internet has been considered as the media which provides lots of advantages to the users. Some of the identified advantages are: easy access on the learning material, the chance to learn more independently, the chance to study without being limited by the schedule, etc. (Suryani, 2005; Dogruera, Eyyamb, & Menevisab, 2011; Kurniasih et al., 2018; Slavin, 2009; Chen, 2013; Alamsyah, 2020). However, despite its advantages, internet has also been found to incur unknowingly negative impact to its users (Wanajak, 2011).

The need to analyze the use of internet as the most important learning platform is therefore important so that the education stakeholders, the teachers, the lecturers, and administrators can have more thorough information on the use of internet in learning process at the present time. Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 outbreak has forced people to stay home, thus relying more on the internet-based learning model as the only solution for them. The use of internet-based learning should be analyzed so that the learning model offered through the above platform can provide more good than harms to the students. Further, the whole users of internet-based learning model can also understand that, despite the important role of internet, the learning model should not negate the important role of the teachers/lecturers as the most important factor in the learning process (Chou, 2006; Firwana, 2010).

The research questions are formulated as the followings:

1. What are the students' perceptions on the role of internet in relation to their learning process?
2. What are the students' perceptions on the role of their teachers/lecturers in relation to their learning process?

Scope and limitation

This study relies on the concept of perception as a mere point of view (Pepe, 2016, p. 18), without being connected to behaviour, as in the commonly held concepts of attitudes (Alamsyah, 2018). Further study on attitudes can also be conducted so that the relationship between opinion, emotion, and action can be detected. Besides, the present study is conducted within certain- time context. The result can possibly be different when the research is conducted in different context. For instance, when the students feel that their learning process is positive for them, they will probably voice more positive perceptions. The absence of physical contact due to the spread of pandemic had required the researchers not

to conduct interviews in longer time, thus resulting in potentially limited additional finding data. Lastly, the present study relies on the concept of internet as part of learning media offered by some scholars (Brinton, 2001; Tomlinson, 2016, Harmer, 2007, Gebbhard, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of media in language learning

The role of media to support the students' learning process has been admitted by various scholars (Brinton, 2001; Tomlinson 2016; Al-Nefai, 2015). Scholars consider that media can not only facilitate the students' learning process but also improve the students' motivation and attitudes (Harmer, 2007; Al-Nefai, 2015; El-Abbar, 2016). Further, the use of media, when it is used appropriately, can reduce the teachers' burden in conducting learning process (Harmer, 2007; Gebhard, 2009). Lastly, the use of media can possibly help students accomplish the expected objective stated in the students' academic goal (Brinton, 2001; Tomlinson, 2016; Harmer, 2007).

Previously, Gagne et al. (1992 as cited in Rahmi, 2014: 8) had also stated the same perceptions. They classified that media were various components in learners' environment which supported the learners to learn. This included traditional materials such as handouts, book, newspapers, magazine, charts, slides, overheads, real objects, flash card and videotape or film, television, and radio, as well newer materials and methods such as computers, internet, and interactive video conferencing.

Internet as part of learning media

The concept suggesting internet as part of media comes from some scholars. Brinton (2001), for instance, perceives that basically anything manipulated by the teachers to facilitate learning process can be termed as learning media. Based on this concept, internet is not only as learning sources, or the platform that provides sources to the students, but also the learning media, or the media which are used by the teachers to facilitate learning process.

Previously conducted studies on the use of internet in learning context

Kurniasih et al. (2018) conducted the study on internet as learning resources. The case study was used. There were 20 participants recruited for the study. The findings indicated that there were both advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages of using internet as learning resources were the speed, the efficiency, and the effectiveness in accessing the information that the students required. Besides, there were

also many sources of information which could be accessed cheaply rather than buying printed books in the shops. The search engine could significantly improve the students' assignments. Some of the identified disadvantages are various sources of misleading information which can possibly divert the users on internet into misleading perception or bad behaviour (e.g., believing in hoaxes, etc.).

Alamsyah and Harjono (2020) analysed the active learning students' attitudes toward the use of internet as their learning media. The students are currently studying in several departments of one private university in Tangerang (Information Technology, Graphic Design, Accounting, and Management). There were 50 students who were recruited for this study. The research was conducted in a mixed method using two instruments (questionnaires and interviews) to collect the data. They found that the use of internet was useful in terms of being a search engine, helping students to provide some relevant materials/sources, but not to replace the teachers/lecturers as role model in the classrooms. In sum, despite enjoying the sources that could be used by the students to learn, the students did not indicate positive attitudes in using such advanced technology. In fact, they believed that they still relied on the teachers/lecturers to ask for important information, such as information about the test, the problems that they encountered related to their learning activities, etc.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The present study aimed to replicate the previously mentioned studies (Kurniasih, 2018; Alamsyah, 2020). The present study adopted the concept of mixing both qualitative and quantitative paradigm. The use of mixed method is considered better than the sole quantitative or qualitative. By combining both quantitative and qualitative much more complete data can be obtained (Cresswell, 2008). Maria (2013:62) confirmed that adopting a mixed-method approach would contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon in question.

In the present study, the use of questionnaire as the primary instruments was further supported by the secondary instruments (semi-structured interview), so that the data obtained by questionnaires could be further clarified. In sum, the finding was expected not only to enable the researchers to have information on the participants/students' perceptions on the role of internet but also potentially more factors which might have become the basis for their perceptions.

Participants and sampling criterion

Participants recruited in the present study were the ones attending the second semester program. The students were purposively recruited (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The number of participants recruited was 40 students. The students recruited were the ones studying in the two classes (A, B) and were taught by the researchers. In order to avoid possible bias, due to the relationship between the students and their lecturers, the researchers provided sufficient information regarding the study (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The information given was related to the benefits of the study to the students, the right of the participants to remain anonymous. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the researchers used WA as the media to share the information regarding the present study. The 40 participants registered were the ones given information from the text messages shared by the researchers to the students and decided to participate in the study voluntarily.

Sources of data/research data

Since the present study sought to identify the students' perceptions on the role of internet/teachers in their learning process, the sources of data collected were their perceptions. The research data were taken from their responses indicating their perceptions on the role of internet/teachers. The responses were elicited with both written instruments (questionnaires) and oral forms (semi-structured interviews).

Instruments

1. Questionnaires

No	Items	Setuju	Tidak setuju	Ragu-ragu
How do the students perceive the role of internet in relation to their learning process?				
1	Apakah menurut anda media internet merupakan media ideal untuk belajar saat ini?			
2	Apakah menurut anda belajar melalui media internet sangat membantu proses pemahaman dalam mencerna materi pelajaran?			
3	Apakah menurut anda internet memberikan sumber belajar bahasa Inggris yang bagus?			
4	Apakah belajar melalui media internet membuat anda bisa belajar secara mandiri?			

5	Apakah anda setuju jika kualitas belajar melalui media internet lebih baik dibandingkan belajar tatap muka?			
6	Apakah interaksi belajar dalam media internet memiliki kualitas yang sama dengan belajar tatap muka?			
7	Apakah belajar melalui media internet memberikan motivasi yang lebih tinggi dari pada belajar tatap muka?			
How do the students' percieve on the role of the teacher/lecturer in relation to the use of internet-based learning?				
8	Apakah peran guru/dosen dapat digantikan oleh internet?			
9	Apakah penjelasan guru/dosen lebih mudah dari penjelasan yang ada di internet?			
10	Apakah interaksi dengan guru/dosen lebih penting dari penjelasan di internet?			

2. Semi-structured interview

Basically semi-structured interview doesn't limit the researcher to elicit information from the participants (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). However, the use of some basic questions was considered important to allow the researcher to have some questions to use and to prevent the researchers from forgetting the topics, themes, or information that ought to be taken. The questions directed to the participants were listed below and delivered in the participants' native language:

1. Bagaimana pendapat anda tentang penggunaan internet sebagai sarana belajar anda?
(What do you think about the use of internet as your learning media?)
2. Apakah anda yakin bahwa internet dapat memberikan kualitas belajar yang sama dibandingkan dengan belajar langsung dibawah pengawasan dosen.
(Are you sure that internet learning media can provide learning quality which is relatively the same as the learning process under the guidance of your teacher/lecturer?)
3. Menurut anda apakah peran internet dalam belajar jarak-jauh sekarang ini dapat menggantikan peran guru/dosen yang selama ini mengajar anda?

- (Do you think that the role of internet in long-distance learning conducted at the moment can possibly replace the role of the teachers/lecturers that have taught you so far?)
4. Menurut anda apakah dengan menggunakan media internet anda masih bisa berinteraksi?
(Do you think that when learning using internet learning media you can still interact?)
 5. Apakah hal yang menurut anda paling anda sukai dengan belajar melalui internet?
(What are things that you like most from the internet-based learning process?)
 6. Apakah hal yang paling tidak anda sukai dalam proses belajar menggunakan media internet?
(What are things that you don't like most from the internet-based learning process?)

Data collection procedure

1. The researchers informed the students through the WAG used by the students in both classes (A, B). The use of WAG was easier since the students have already used the WAG to communicate or share information on academic matters through the Whatsapp messages.
2. The researchers sent the questionnaires to the students in the forms of text messages.
3. After completing the questionnaires the students were requested to send the information back to the lecturers to be analyzed.
4. The researchers analyzed the result of the questionnaires sent by the students.
5. The researchers selected certain participants to be interviewed in order to provide more information to the researchers.
6. The selection of the interviewees was based on the relevance or important information given by the participants in the questionnaires.
7. There were 10 students/participants interviewed after the administration of questionnaires.
8. The process of interviews was conducted through WA call instead of text messages (writing) in order to keep natural conversation. The result of conversation was transcribed in simplified written forms.
9. The data collection was conducted concurrently so that the participants could still remember what they filled in their

questionnaires, thus resulting in more consistent answers between questionnaires and their oral responses.

Data analysis

Since there were two different research data collected with different instruments, the researchers used two different analyses. The written instrument (questionnaires) was directly analyzed by identifying the choices indicated by the participants/students. The verbal/oral responses elicited during the interview were analyzed using theme analysis (Creswell, 2008). In sum, theme analysis aimed to identify the important messages indicated in some codes (Creswell, 2008).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

1. The data findings elicited from questionnaires

The students' perceptions on the role of internet in relation to their learning process

Table 1. The students' responses indicating their perceptions on the role of internet in relation to their learning process

No	Items	Students' responses (n=40)		
		Yes	No	Doubt
1	Apakah menurut anda media internet merupakan media ideal untuk belajar saat ini? (Do you think that internet is an ideal learning media at the moment?)	24 (60 %)	9 (22.5 %)	7 (17.5%)
2	Apakah menurut anda belajar melalui media internet sangat membantu proses pemahaman dalam mencerna materi pelajaran? (Do you think that learning through internet/internet-based learning platform is helpful to improve your understanding?)	20 (50%)	16 (40 %)	4 (10 %)
3	Apakah menurut anda internet memberikan sumber belajar bahasa Inggris yang bagus? (Do you think that internet provides relevant sources for your English learning?)	36 (90 %)	4 (10 %)	
4	Apakah belajar melalui media internet membuat anda bisa belajar secara mandiri?	12 (30 %)	24 (60 %)	4 (10%)

	(Do you think that learning through internet/internet-based learning platform allow you to learn independently?)			
5	Apakah anda setuju jika kualitas belajar melalui media internet lebih baik dibandingkan belajar tatap muka? (Do you think that the quality of learning through internet/internet-based platform is relatively equal to the face-to-face learning process?)	3 (7.5%)	35 (87.5 %)	2 (5%)
6	Apakah interaksi belajar dalam media internet memiliki kualitas yang sama dengan belajar tatap muka? (Do you think that interaction in learning through internet/internet-based learning platform has the same quality as the face-to-face learning process?)	2 (5%)	36 (90 %)	2 (5%)
7	Apakah belajar melalui media internet memberikan motivasi yang lebih tinggi dari pada belajar tatap muka? (Do you think that learning through internet/internet-based learning platform motivates you more than the face-to-face learning process?)	6 (15%)	25 (62.5%)	9 (22.5%)

2. The data findings elicited from questionnaires

The students' perceptions on the role of their teachers/lecturers in relation to their learning process

Table 2. The students' responses indicating their perceptions on the role of their teachers/lecturers in relation to their learning process

No	Items	Students' responses		
		Yes	No	Doubt
1	Apakah peran guru/dosen dapat digantikan oleh internet? (Do you think that the role of your teachers/lecturers can be replaced by internet)	5 (12.5%)	34 (85%)	1 (2.5%)
2	Apakah penjelasan guru/dosen lebih mudah dari penjelasan yang ada di internet? (Do you think that the explanation given by your lecturers/teachers is easier than the explanation that you get in the internet?)	35 (87.5 %)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
3	Apakah interaksi dengan guru/dosen lebih penting dari penjelasan di internet?	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	

(Do you think that interaction with the teachers/lecturers is more important than the explanation you get from internet?)			
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3. The data findings elicited from the participants' verbal responses through interviews

Students' perceptions on the role of internet in relation to their learning process

Table 3. The students' verbal responses indicating their perceptions on the role of internet

Verbal responses	Themes
<p>Participant 1: Mencari sumber lebih cepat, tapi tidak semua bisa dapat juga karena banyak sumber harus membayar.</p> <p>Participant 2: Contoh tulisan ada, kita bisa ambil saja dengan mudah, dan kadang gak diperiksa lagi, dosennya juga gak periksa.</p> <p>Participant 3. Ada buku-buku PDF gratis untuk grammar, tapi untuk sastra susah, untuk mata kuliah lain juga susah. Yang paling banyak adalah buku yang sifatnya umum, kadang gak berhubungan.</p> <p>Participant 4: Misalkan kita mau cari jenis-jenis narrative biasanya, contohnya sudah ada di internet, jadi tinggal salin, kalau ada waktu kita tulis ulang.</p>	<p>Fast search engine</p> <p>Copy paste practice</p> <p>Free e-book for some departments</p> <p>Some samples of students' works are available</p>
<p>Participant 5: Mencari sumber materi jadi lebih mudah, jadi gak usah mencatat lagi, kalau mau tinggal ambil dari internet saja, kalau beli buku kan lebih mahal.</p> <p>Participant 6: Yang banyak sih, materi umum, misalkan English grammar, hampir semua ada, tapi yang dasar saja, jadi kalau diminta untuk membuat contoh kita tinggal lihat saja, gak usah fikir-fikir lagi.</p>	<p>Facilitate learning process</p> <p>e-book provider/learning sources</p>
<p>Participant 7: Internet itu membantu saya mencari sumber, ya bisa dikatakan mempermudah, tapi membuat kita bisa belajar mandiri sih gak, karena materi belajar kita kan bukan itu.</p> <p>Participant 7: Kalau dengan dosen kan kita bisa nanya berkali-kali, biar sudah jelas, kalau kita belum yakin, ya tanya sampe faham, kalau internet kan</p>	<p>Search engine but not enabling the learners to be independent</p>

<p>cuma dengerin penjelasan saja, ngerti gak ngerti bukan jaminan.</p> <p>Participant 8: Mudahnya sih dalam hal copy paste, itu kalau materi ada di internet gitu sih, kalau gak ya harus tetap cari di buku atau yang lain. Bagusnya buat yang kerja.</p> <p>Participant 9: Internet itu penting tapi saya sih lebih suka buat perbandingan saja, kan yang praktek itu kita jadi kita harus menulis bukan cuma copy paste saja.</p> <p>Participant 10: Belajar via internet, apa pun itu, pasti repot, pulsa banyak digunakan, tapi belajarnya berat. Materi sih banyak, tapi kita memang dituntut harus bisa. Kita pun bisa cari sumber di luar tapi kadang gak yakin itu materi benar atau tidak? Kalau lewat on-line sesi bicara dengan dosen juga dibatasi, sangat sulit.</p>	<p>No chance to question unlike teachers</p> <p>Copy paste practices</p> <p>Good for comparison</p> <p>Not economical</p> <p>Limited time to interact with the lecturer</p>
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4. Students' perceptions on the role of their teachers/lecturer in relation to their learning process

Table 3. The students' verbal responses indicating their perceptions on their teachers/lecturers in relation to their learning process

Verbal responses	Themes
Participant 1: Dosen juga ga semua bisa menerangkan, ada yang pelit ngomong. Tapi mereka bisa menjawab apa yang ditanyakan kadang diluar konteks pelajaran, itu yang internet ga bisa.	Being able to answer what the students' question.
Participant2: Dosen sering memberikan ulasan materi, memberikan kaitan materi dengan persoalan yang ada, jadi lebih memotivasi. Materi dari internet bagus untuk menambah masukkan.	Providing more reviews, implication, motivating learning process
Participant 3: Dosen bisa buat kerja kelompok, diskusi, Tanya jawab, atau kadang debat antar teman, kalau media internet hanya sumber saja. Tapi untuk jawaban singkat dan cepat ya internet.	Discussion and debating are possible Internet only for sources

Interpretation

1. An ideal learning media during the pandemic?

Based on the above findings, basically the students did not fully agree with the statement being questioned to them. In fact, there were only 24 (60 %) participants who perceived that internet was an ideal media for them to learn. Further analysis to some relevant themes voiced by the students indicates that internet is ideal for being a search engine and helping students preparing the sources, although in some cases the sources are not relevant to them. This finding was also relevant to Alamsyah and Harjono's finding (2020) in that the best use of internet is actually as a learning source and not to enable the learners to learn independently. However, despite being the fast search engine not all of the sources available in internet are relevant for the students to study. Dogruera et al. (2011), likewise, found that the students did not always find what they wanted in the internet some sources of disciplines, library web, interactive program, the internet sites for learning English, education forum platform were considered 'insufficient for the students'. Further study needs to be done so that the students' learning needs from the internet/internet-based learning platforms can be identified.

2. The invisible impact of internet

The copy past practices were also identified as quite frequent themes in the present study. This study was also relevant to latest study on the use of internet. Alamsyah and Harjono (2020) found that the students, in some cases, tended to rely on copying the text from the net and simply sent to the lecturer. Previously, Forgas, Negre, and Ramirez (2005) have also identified the bad practices of "copy paste" which continuously to occur due to the increasingly important role of internet. With the absence of physical contact between the teachers and the students, the supervision which should be done by the teachers during face-to face learning process is very difficult to be done, whatsoever.

3. The role of teachers/lecturers vs. internet

Based on the finding, it can be interpreted that the role of teachers/lecturers are still more dominant, influential, and useful for the students. The fact indicates that 'interaction' becomes the most important factors that the students perceived when learning with their teachers. The frequency of questions delivered to the teacher indicates that the students are in need of factors to support their confidence and not merely the sources for learning. The present findings confirm Alamsyah and Harjono's finding (2020) which suggests that the role of teachers/lecturers

as facilitators in supporting the students' learning process is irreplaceable regardless of the availability of sources in internet.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

It is indeed hard to overcome the whole factors in this difficult situation. However, the education stake holders should always notice that it is the learners who will definitely reap the fruit of their learning process. The application of certain learning model should always emphasize the noble deeds, such as integrity, and honesty. The fact shows that internet-based learning model has made lecturers' supervision and guidance less effective.

Learning is a change in behavior which results in spiritedly repetitious practices. This paradigm will never occur in the internet-based learning program unless, the administrators can create their own web which specifically administers the students' technical aspects, such as asking for the questions, reviewing for the material, interacting among the groups/virtual classroom, the advanced plagiarism checking facility, etc., without which the internet learning model will merely encourage the learners to find simple solution for their learning without thinking of experiencing or practicing the arduous process of learning. The present study was conducted in the university, before it applied its own learning web. Further study could be done to any institution which has already adopted e-learning programs along with their own learning platforms to compare the findings.

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