

THE STUDENTS' PREFERENCES OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This research aimed to find out the kind of online learning the students prefer and the reasons why the students prefer the online learning in learning English at SMA Negeri 16 Makassar. This research applied mixed methods research design. The data were collected from the questionnaire and interview. The subject of this study was the second-grade social science students. The questionnaire was conducted on 98 students and the interview was conducted on 12 students. The result of this research showed that the mean score of the students' preference in synchronous was (46,17) indicated "like" category and the mean score of the students' preference in asynchronous was (44,64) indicated "neutral" category. From the result, the researchers found that the mean score of synchronous was higher than asynchronous. The reasons why the students prefer synchronous are because there is the direct interaction between the students and teacher, being easy to understand, direct demonstration, and good emotional relationship between the students and teacher. Meanwhile, the students prefer asynchronous because there is saved task history, the materials can be repeated, providing clear materials, and facilitating assignment submission. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students prefer synchronous. Synchronous can be used to deliver the material and asynchronous can be used to provide the material or task, and students' assignment submission.

Keywords— Preferences, Online Learning, Synchronous, Asynchronous.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, the whole world was shocked by a new virus. This virus is called Corona Virus Disease 2019 or Covid-19. WHO declared Corona Virus Disease 2019 as a pandemic status on March 11, 2020, the virus had infiltrated 114 countries, resulting in more than 118.000 cases and more than 4.000 deaths (Gennaro et al., 2020).

Physical distancing must be applied in all aspects of community life, including the education sector. As a result, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, issued his

Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 Regarding the Implementation of Education Policies in The Emergency Period of The Spread of The Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). According to the circular, the schools are encouraged to conduct online teaching and learning. The regulation was established to ensure that the education sector did not become an epicenter for the virus' spread. The policy impacts the sustainability of education because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

English subject is often considered one of the complex subjects. The difficulties students often face in learning English are English language skills. These skills can be in the form of writing, reading, speaking, or listening. In the class, the teacher gives assignments to students, such as providing questions, sharing materials, giving instructions for making videos or recordings, presenting, discussing, and so on. Therefore, online learning requires a high level of motivation so that students receive and provide the same level of support they receive in offline classes. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to student preferences for online learning to become evaluations and references for use in the future. Especially in learning English, students need to pay attention to every material provided by the teacher because English requires four skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Therefore, the researchers want to explore students' preferences for online learning, especially the kind of online learning, both synchronous and asynchronous, and how students can choose these online learning. Based on Kuzmanovic et.al. (2019) findings, it is possible to conclude that student preferences serve a crucial role in designing an e-learning system. With the results, we will know the student preferences and what can be an evaluation in online learning so that students can participate actively in the learning process and improve their learning achievements in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition of Online Learning

Amiti (2020) defined online learning as a process in a virtual classroom environment, where teachers as instructors try to use different strategies to deliver the material and students as participants try to receive as much information as possible and then take part in understanding daily lessons. Carliner (2004) defined online learning as a new learning delivery format that uses technological tools such as computers and the internet to bridge the transfer of learning materials (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020). Hermanto & Srimulyani (2021) explained that any learning process that uses learning applications or social networks is called online learning. The teaching and learning atmosphere in the online classroom are significantly different from the face-to-

face classroom setting (Pinar, 2021). The researchers might infer that online learning is carried out using current technology in the learning process.

2. Online Learning in Pandemic Era

Academic institutions have been impacted by the pandemic and have emerged as a major cause of worry due to student mobility and socialization (Shrestha et.al., 2020). Nearly 75 countries have closed or announced the closure of educational institutions by mid-March (Perveen, 2016). Principals are required to make quick decisions in response to a circular letter from the Minister of Education and Culture that requires schools to implement learning from home. Febrianto et.al. (2021), in their study, said that comprehensive content is a must require for learning. There are various tools available for online teaching and learning, such as Microsoft teams, e-mail, WhatsApp, Instagram, google meet, zoom meetings, YouTube, google classroom, and others (Nikmah & Azimah, 2020). Because students from home no longer conduct learning activities in schools, but instead, the implementation of the emergency curriculum requires teachers to change their paradigms in terms of learning strategy, implementation, and assessment of learning outcomes (Dewi & Wajdi, 2021). In order to create a more effective and appropriate learning environment, schools and teachers attempt to incorporate digital learning media (Febrianto et.al., 2021). Everyone enters a new era to build creativity, hone student skills, and improve self-quality by changing systems, perspectives and patterns of interaction with technology. In the context of classroom learning, especially the process of evaluation, assessment and measurement, transformations must be conducted that can lead to the ideals or goals of national education.

3. Types of Online Learning

Hartanto (2016) divided online learning into two types; synchronous and asynchronous.

a. Synchronous

The synchronous type allows students to communicate with instructors and other students through the internet at the same time using technologies like videoconferences and chat rooms (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014). Synchronous learning allows teachers and students to interact online. Synchronous learning is more commonly referred to as a virtual classroom. Some examples of digital platforms for synchronous learning are ZOOM cloud Meetings, Google Meet, WhatsApp, etc.

b. Asynchronous

The asynchronous type allows students to communicate with teachers and among themselves through the internet at different times (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014). Students have more flexibility in accessing learning materials in asynchronous learning, and the teachers set the time. Some examples of digital platforms for asynchronous learning are Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Youtube, etc.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages

According to Chitra and Raj (2018), there are some advantages and disadvantages of online learning for students. The advantages are that online learning accommodates everyone's needs, lessons can be taken several times, offers access to update content, quick delivery of lessons, consistency, reduced cost, and less impact on the environment. Meanwhile, the disadvantages are lack of self-discipline, health problems, and inability to access technology.

METHODS

In this study, the researchers used mixed methods research. The type of basic mixed methods research design chosen by the researchers is the convergent parallel (QUAN - QUAL) design. Quantitative and qualitative data are considered equal, emphasizing the convergent parallel mixed-methods design, and they were collected concurrently throughout the same study (Gay et al., 2018). The subject of this study was the second grade of social students at SMA Negeri 16 Makassar. The total number of students who researched for the questionnaire was 98 second-grade social science students. The students interviewed were selected randomly from each second-grade social class. The researchers took a sample of 12 representatives of the subject.

After the researchers collected data related to the problem, the research questionnaire was processed quantitatively. The total number of the questionnaire was 28 items. The synchronous online learning contained 14 items, and asynchronous online learning also contained 14 items. The researchers analyzed quantitative data using the Likert scale. There were several forms of the Likert scale in this research, starting from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 1. Questionnaire score with Likert scale

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

When students answer the item with strongly agree, they will get a score of 70, while the students who answer the item with strongly disagree would get a score of 14. Since the questionnaire used five scales, the interval of the score $70-14 = 56$. $56:5 = 11,2$. The interval that could be used as a reference to determine the category is as follows.

Table 2. Categories of the students' preferences in online learning

| Interval | Category |
|----------|------------------|
| 59 – 70 | Strongly Like |
| 46 – 58 | Like |
| 35 – 45 | Neutral |
| 23 – 34 | Dislike |
| 14 - 22 | Strongly Dislike |

The formula to find out the mean score about the students' preference for both types of online learning is as follows:

$$MX = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Descriptions:

Mx = mean

X = total of scores

N = number of samples

The percentage score was calculated by using the formula as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Descriptions:

P = percentage = percentage

F = frequency

N = amount of sample

In this research, the researchers analyzed the interview data in a qualitative narrative manner. The interview results would be used as additional information to explore the information from students. To analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, the researchers used data analysis according to Miles and Huberman (1992). According to Miles and Huberman (1992), the stages of data analysis are data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification.

RESULTS

The findings of this research are to identify the answer from the research questions which of to find out: (a) the kind of online learning the students prefer, and (b) the reasons why the students prefer the online learning.

1. The kind of online learning the students prefer

Based on the results of the questionnaire analysis, it was found that the majority of second-grade social science students at SMA Negeri 16 Makassar prefer synchronous online learning. The results of the data and mean score can be seen below.

$$MX = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$MX = \frac{4525}{98}$$

$$MX = 46.17$$

The total scores from class XI IPS 1, XI IPS 2, XI IPS 3 in the synchronous online learning questionnaire was 4525. The sample was 98 students consisting of 3 classes. The mean score resulting from the students' preference for synchronous online learning was (46,17), which is categorized as like. The mean score result is supported by distribution in the column below.

Table 3. The distribution of frequency and percentage score of students' preferences in synchronous online learning

| Interval | Frequency | Percentage | Category |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 59 – 70 | 9 | 9% | Strongly Like |
| 46 – 58 | 39 | 40% | Like |
| 35 – 45 | 38 | 39% | Neutral |
| 23 – 34 | 11 | 11% | Dislike |
| 14 - 22 | 1 | 1% | Strongly Dislike |
| Total | 98 | 100% | |

The table 3 showed that the frequency and percentage score of students' preferences of synchronous online learning from 98 students, 9 (9%) students represented "strongly like" for synchronous, 39 (40%) students represented "like" for synchronous, 38 (39%) students represented "neutral" for asynchronous, 11 (11%) students represented "dislike" for synchronous, and 1 (1%) student represented "strongly dislike" for synchronous.

$$MX = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$MX = \frac{4375}{98}$$

$$MX = 44.64$$

The total of scores from class XI IPS 1, XI IPS 2, XI IPS 3 in the asynchronous online learning questionnaire was 4375, with the total sampling was 98. The mean score resulting from students' preference for asynchronous online learning was (44,64), which is categorized as neutral. The classification in the column below supports the mean score result.

Table 4. The distribution of frequency and percentage score of students' preferences in asynchronous online learning

| Interval | Frequency | Percentage | Category |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 59 – 70 | 7 | 7% | Strongly Like |
| 46 – 58 | 32 | 33% | Like |
| 35 – 45 | 48 | 49% | Neutral |
| 23 – 34 | 11 | 11% | Dislike |
| 14 - 22 | 0 | 0% | Strongly Dislike |
| Total | 98 | 100% | |

The table 4 showed that the frequency and percentage score of students' preferences of asynchronous online learning from 98 students, 7 (7%) students represented "strongly like" for asynchronous, 32 (33%) students represented "like" for asynchronous, 48 (49%) students represented "neutral" for asynchronous, 11(11%) students represented "dislike" for asynchronous, and none of the students represented "strongly dislike" category for asynchronous.

2. The reasons why the students prefer the online learning

Based on the interview procedure, the researchers found several reasons students prefer the online learning. In synchronous; (1) direct interaction between teacher and student, (2) being easy to understand, (3) direct demonstration, and (4) good emotional relationship. In asynchronous; (1) saved task history, (2) the materials can be repeated, (3) providing clear materials, and (4) facilitating for assignment submission.

a. Synchronous

Based on interviews that the researchers have conducted about the reason's students prefer synchronous online learning, the researchers found the following reasons.

The first reason why the students prefer synchronous online learning is to interact directly online. According to the students, they can interact directly with the teacher and their own friends. The interaction is conducted in the form of video calls to see with each other. In addition, the students can ask the teacher directly if some materials or tasks are unclear or not understood. Their responses can be viewed in the following extracts as follows.

S1 (23/12/2021)

"Dengan sinkronus, siswa dapat berinteraksi langsung secara online, seperti video call"

(With synchronous, students can interact directly online, such as video call)

S2 (23/12/2021)

"Saya lebih suka sinkronus karena walaupun online tetapi siswa tetap bisa berinteraksi dan siswa bisa saling bertatapapan" (I prefer synchronous because even though online but students can still interact and students can see each other)

S4 (15/01/2022)

"Karena masih bisa berkomunikasi dalam proses pembelajaran walaupun online" (Because we can still communicate in the learning process even though online)

S6 (15/01/2022)

"... kalau ada yang tidak dimengerti bisa ditanyakan secara langsung dibandingkan hanya materi yang dibagikan di Classroom" (... even if something is not understood, it can be asked directly rather than just the material shared in Classroom)

The second reason why the students prefer synchronous online learning is being easy to understand. They argued that they understood the material because the teacher explained it directly. If the students do not understand the material, the student can ask directly to the teacher, for example, in Google Meet platform provided hand-raising feature. The Hand-raising feature allows students to raise their hands virtually if they are going to ask a question or say something. The teaching and learning process also becomes more effective because students do not need to take time to learn it themselves because they can listen directly to the explanation from the teacher. Their responses can be viewed in the following extracts as follows:

S2 (23/12/2021)

"Siswa mendapatkan materi lebih jelas daripada asinkronus yang harus belajar secara otodidak." (Students get clearer material than asynchronous that must learn self-taught.)

S3 (15/01/2022)

"Pendapat saya kak baik untuk digunakan karena saya bisa lebih memahami materi tersebut" (My opinion is good to use because I can understand the material better.)

S5 (15/01/2022)

"Menurut pengalaman saya, tipe pembelajaran online sinkronus lebih efektif digunakan untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris karena lebih mudah di pahami" (In my experience, synchronous online learning type is more effectively used to learn English because it is easier to understand)

S6 (15/01/2022)

"... lebih mudah memahami pelajaran karena langsung di jelaskan oleh guru" (... easier to understand the material because it is directly explained by the teacher)

S7 (15/01/2022)

"... karena kalau memakai google meet atau zoom pelajaran lebih mudah dipahami" (... because if I use Google Meet or Zoom, materials are easier to understand)

The third reason why the students prefer synchronous online learning is the direct demonstration by the teacher. One student argued that they could see the demonstration directly by the teacher. Especially students who prefer visual and audio will definitely like this type of learning. Students can see the body movements and pronunciations from the teacher explained in English learning. The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

S5 (15/01/2022)

"... karena bisa dicontohkan secara langsung oleh guru" (... because it can be exemplified directly by teacher)

The fourth reason why the students prefer synchronous online learning is the good emotional relationship between students and teachers. One student likes synchronous because it brings a closer relationship between teacher and students. Students can interact with teachers by accessing the online platform simultaneously so they can interact expedites. The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

S6 (15/01/2022)

"Menurut saya karena tipe belajar seperti sinkronus bisa lebih mendekatkan antara murid dan guru" (I think because learning type such as synchronous can bring students and teacher closer)

b. Asynchronous

Based on interviews that the researchers have conducted about the reason's students prefer asynchronous online learning, the researchers found the following reasons.

The first reason why the students prefer asynchronous online learning is that there is a saved task history. The student assumed that the asynchronous learning platform is more certain because the tasks given by the teacher will be stored in the system so that the list of tasks is clearer. The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

A1 (23/12/2021)

"Asinkronus bagus karena lebih pasti. Kalau guru memasukkan tugas, daftar tugasnya tersimpan" (Asynchronous is good because it's more certain. If the teacher enters the task, the task list is saved)

The second reason why the students prefer asynchronous online learning is the materials can be repeated. All learning materials can be repeated. In contrast to synchronous, students should take notes. If students forget to take notes, the material given to students is only "enter the right ear, out of the left ear." The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

A2 (23/12/2021)

"Dengan aplikasi asinkronus, materi dapat dipelajari berulang-ulang, sedangkan sinkronus jika dijelaskan satu kali bisa dilupa lagi" (With asynchronous platforms, the material can be studied over and over again, while synchronous if described once can be forgotten later)

The third reason why students prefer asynchronous online learning is providing clear materials. The student is easy to understand because the materials can be obtained or downloaded and stored on students' devices. The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

A3 (15/01/2022)

"karena mudah dipahami" ("because it's easy to understand)

The last reason why the students prefer asynchronous online learning is facilitating assignment submission. The students can submit the assignment in videos, papers, audio, links, and so on using asynchronous learning platforms. The learning platform provides a feature for task collection. The feature that students use in Google Classroom is called classwork. This feature makes it easier for students to collect assignments from teachers. The response can be viewed in the following extract as follows.

A4 (15/01/2022)

“karena memudahkan untuk mengirimkan tugas-tugas yang masuk” (because it makes it easy to send incoming tasks).

DISCUSSIONS

The researchers examined the findings concerning the problem statement in this research. The researchers found that most students prefer synchronous online learning based on students' answers from questionnaire statements adapted from TAM. TAM is one of the most commonly used research models for predicting individuals' use and acceptance of information systems and technology (Surendran, 2012). The original construction of TAM formulated by Davis (1989) is perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, behavioral intention to use, and actual system use. The items of the questionnaire in this study adopted that theory. Each item has a score generated by the student's answers, such as the result of the data analysis in this study.

Based on the results of interviews, the researchers found several reasons students liked synchronous and asynchronous online learning. The questionnaire results from 12 students were matched with interview results. The results showed that the mean scores of questionnaires of both types in online learning were supported by the reasons described in this part. Mannong (2020) stated that with Google Meet platform, class discussions become more effective. Things related to learning that can be done in this learning online type are doing virtual live presentations, sharing PowerPoint presentations, using chat features for discussions, etc. If the students do not understand the material, the student can ask directly to the teacher. For example, in Google Meet platform provided a hand-raising feature. The Hand-raising feature allows students to raise their hands virtually if they will ask a question or say something. Cisco WebEx Meeting is also one of the synchronous learning platforms in addition to Zoom and Google Classroom. Other researchers, Amin & Sundari (2020), found that the Cisco WebEx Meeting, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp gained highly favorable agreement on all criteria and the Cisco WebEx conference, in particular, received the highest ratings for authenticity and meaning focus. In asynchronous, the teacher enters the task and it will be stored his to-do list. Asynchronous material can be studied repeatedly while synchronous, if described may be forgotten later. This shows that asynchronous learning types can store learning histories such as materials and tasks. It is also supported by Okmawati (2020), for example in Google

Classroom platform, there is a classwork feature, which allows students to access materials submitted by teachers in classwork anytime and anywhere. According to Chitra and Raj (2018), one of the advantages of online learning is that lessons can be taken several times. Students can access an unlimited amount of content through online learning, and content can be accessed multiple times, so it can be needed when preparing for exams. The students can also collect assignments through an asynchronous learning platform so that the submission of the tasks is more accessible and environmentally friendly. There is no need to cut down trees to obtain a paper with online learning. As a result, online learning is an exceptionally eco-friendly learning method (Chitra and Raj, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the students' preference score obtained through statements in the research questionnaire, the majority of the students of second-grade social class at SMA Negeri 16 Makassar have more preference scores to synchronous. The result of this research showed that the mean score of the students' preference in synchronous was (46,17) indicated "like" category and the mean score of the students' preference in asynchronous was (44,64) indicated "neutral" category. From the result, the researchers found that the mean score of synchronous was higher than asynchronous. Therefore, the researchers can conclude that the students prefer synchronous online learning.

The researchers found several reasons why the students prefer the online learning. They are direct interaction between the students and teacher, the students can understand the materials clearly, direct demonstration, and good emotional relationship between the students and teacher. Meanwhile, the students prefer asynchronous online learning because there is saved task history, the materials can be repeated, providing clear materials, and facilitating assignment submission. Based on the interview result, the researchers can conclude that synchronous online learning can be used to deliver the material and asynchronous online learning can be used to provide the material or task and students' assignment submission.

Based on the conclusion above, the researchers put forward suggestions: It suggested for the teacher to use asynchronous learning platform to deliver the material and uses asynchronous learning platform in task submission. In addition, the teacher can share the material text with the students in an asynchronous learning platform. It suggested for the

school to implement a learning platform that the students are more interested. It suggested for the future researchers to study the teacher's preferences in online learning.

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