



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

University Students' Perceptions through E-Learning Implementation during COVID-19 Pandemic: Positive or Negative Features Dominate?

Mulyani^{*1}
Fidyati²
Suryani³
Murnia Suri⁴
Halimatussakdiah⁵

¹Department of English Language Education, STKIP (Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) Bina Bangsa Getsempena, Banda Aceh 23116, INDONESIA

²Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh Utara 24355, INDONESIA

³Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh Besar 24415, INDONESIA

⁴Department of Elementary School Teacher, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Ubudiyah Indonesia, Banda Aceh 23116, INDONESIA

⁵Department of Pharmacy, Politeknik Kesehatan Kementerian Kesehatan Aceh, Aceh Besar 23352, INDONESIA

Abstract

English language instruction that moves away from offline to online should become the EFL lecturers' concern for their students' successful learning outcome. The students must be kept in the lecturers' mind when they plan and program the instruction. This study aims at investigating the students' perceptions and preferences on English instruction through e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research applies a qualitative approach in a descriptive method design by involving 106 English class students from three different higher educations in Aceh, Indonesia. The thematic and comparative analyses are applied in analyzing the data. The findings of the study show that 50% of the students impress negative features concerning the internet network, a high need of internet quotas, the limitation of learning material explanation and absorption, and the social media influences. The study also reveals that 59.6% of positive features dominate the findings

* Corresponding author, email: mulyanianwar777@gmail.com

Citation in APA style: Mulyani, Fidyati, Suryani, Suri, M., & Halimatussakdiah. (2021). University students' perceptions through e-learning implementation during COVID-19 Pandemic: Positive or negative features dominate? *Studies in English Language and Education*, 8(1), 197-211.

Received August 4, 2020; Revised December 13, 2020; Accepted December 14, 2020; Published Online January 3, 2021

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i1.17628>

associated with the students' interest in e-learning implementation as a new learning experience/exploration, engagement and enthusiasm, the flexibility of time and place, and the advance of digital technology usage and adaptation. Besides, WhatsApp, Opensimka, Google Classroom, and Google Meet have become the four most preferable e-learning platform among the respondents. It implies that e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic gives a variety of practical benefits to university students in the virtual English class. Yet, this still requires sufficient mentoring and extra supporting digital tools for the students and the lecturers.

Keywords: Perception, e-learning, higher education, COVID-19 pandemic, positive features, negative features.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak, which has struck many countries globally, has caused educational institutions to change the teaching-learning process. Sikirit (2020) noted that over 60 million students in Indonesia have been temporarily out of school since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. This affects their learning process in unparalleled conduct from elementary school to university students. In anticipating the spread of the virus, the government has issued various policies, including the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (Syakriah, 2020). This condition requires people to work and study from home to keep themselves and their families from the virus exposure. Thus, educational institutions need to innovate the learning process, such as by conducting online learning using an e-learning system. This system is significant for the continuity of the learning process during this pandemic, so teachers, lecturers, and students can avoid physical contact with other people.

Adi and Rochman (2020) reported that the government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has established work and learning from home policy starting from mid-March 2020. This policy also causes higher educational institutions to carry out online learning. Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Masyarakat Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Bureau of Cooperation and Public Relations of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020) asserted that the Ministry of Education and Culture has recommended all universities and higher educational institutions in Indonesia to implement online learning from home policy. The universities that have been equipped with the digital technology learning system do not have difficulties in adapting to the situation. However, for some others, the need to move all classes online has caused confusion. Not only are the students confronted with the lack of knowledge and skills of online learning, but many lecturers are also not adequately familiar with this system.

In an online learning process, several problems usually surface, including slow internet network connection (Angdhiri, 2020), lack of adequate ability to operate digital devices and adopt a web-based curriculum model, and reluctance to the changes of communication and interaction style. Network difficulties during e-learning are commonly experienced by many students in remote areas such as many areas in Aceh Province, namely Pulo Aceh, Bener Meriah, Simeulue, Aceh Singkil, and many others. Since not all places are with coverage of adequate internet connection, many students

complain about online classes. Some of the students must go to other places far from their houses to get a good network connection, such as beaches, hills, or mountains. Slow internet connection makes it difficult for them to download, learn, and understand the materials provided by the lecturers. A bad internet connection also contributes to difficulty in doing assignments given by the lecturers. Consequently, students are worried about the grades that they will obtain. A learning system that requires specific devices such as smartphones or tablets is another problem for those who do not have adequate gadget capacity and specification. Some of the students already have smartphones which could be used as the device in such a learning process, but many do not have such devices because of financial difficulty.

Furthermore, the existing curriculum is intended for conventional learning systems (face-to-face). Therefore, the syllabus to be revised to adapt to the e-learning system, and lecturers need to be more creative and innovative in preparing the learning materials. In addition, they must be able to change their styles, strategies, or methods of teaching. Also, lecturers and students must be able to change their communication style during online learning. Some of the lecturers do not pay attention to this requirement of switching from traditional to online teaching. The three factors above pose a vital point that should be taken into consideration in creating completely online classes.

There were some previous studies associated with the e-learning implementation but these mainly focused on the importance, problems and solutions, and positive elements. A study in the qualitative design by [Chhabra \(2012\)](#) discussed deeply the importance of using e-learning tools in teaching English in greeting the advance of technology. Another study focused on the problems and its solutions for the e-learning implementation using new technology in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in which the participants or the subject of study were three specialists were researched by [Alqurashi \(2011\)](#). There was a qualitative study by [Mutia and Leonard \(2013\)](#) that concentrated on the use of web-based learning in the University of Gunadarma interviewing two respondents, namely an e-learning administrator and a lecturer. This study focused solely on the positive sorts of implementing e-learning in the university which disregarded the student's perspective.

Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are a few related studies that concentrate on the important role and concept of e-learning, sharing some recommendations from the college students' perspectives, and the use of a certain platform in virtual learning. A library research by [Raheem and Khan \(2020\)](#), the researchers who are based in India, highly focused on the important part of e-learning in the COVID-19 pandemic discussing the e-learning concept, the features, and its part in the English language instruction. Another study by [Allo \(2020\)](#) which was conducted in one of the private universities in Indonesia addressed that online learning is virtuous in this pandemic and confessed some recommendations from the college students' perspectives using online interviews related to the e-learning implementation. There was an experimental-study by [Putri et al. \(2020\)](#), piloted in one of the private universities in Indonesia, that examined that the effectiveness of applying the open-source learning platform, namely Moodle in a designated university. The research showed that Moodle improved the learning of EFL university students effectively compared to normal lecture-style learning.

Previous studies have shown how virtual learning has improved the students' learning outcomes in certain ways. This success is a result of the fact that virtual

learning has been widely used before the pandemic, so all obstacles have been solved and further difficulties can be avoided. In Indonesia, e-learning is new for many educational institutions, especially in rural areas. In Aceh, for example, a study about the use of Instructional Computer and Technology (ICT) shows that some teachers experienced many problems due to the lack of training, financial or other supports, and their work environment (Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). The current study is essential to see the positive and the negative features of online learning from the perspective of university students who are taking English classes taught using e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is intended to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the positive features of English language instruction through e-learning experienced by university students?
2. What are the negative features of English language instruction through e-learning experienced by university students?
3. What is the most preferable e-learning platform used by the lecturers and university students?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 E-Learning

E-learning is “the use of computer network technology, primarily over or through the internet, to deliver information and instructions to individuals” (Wang et al., 2010, p. 167, as cited in Basak et al., 2018). E-learning has also been defined as the use of electronic technologies to access educational materials outside of traditional classrooms. Lawless (2018) simplifies the definition of e-learning as learning through digital resources. The term e-learning is described as learning online, it is also called internet learning, computerized learning, web-based learning, virtual learning, and so forth as it is conducted between the teachers and the students using high technological devices. E-learning or as it is widely known as online learning is critical learning, a valuable and virtuous option (Hijazi et al., 2003), and an innovative idea (Holmberg, 2003; Mamattah, 2016) even in this COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. E-learning is an integrated learning system among all the electronic media such as web pages, or computers tool to deliver teaching materials to students as an attempt to enable the teaching-learning process and improve its performance (Hartley, 2001; Horton, 2006; Keller, 2005; Tafiardi, 2005).

Since e-learning is not limited to using DVD or CD room, videotape, or television, it relies on the interactive communication between students and lecturers. In a more sophisticated platform, the students are even able to virtually raise their hands and write down notes and meaningful emoticons (Serhan, 2020). Grading the participation, assignments, exercises, and tests can even efficiently and effectively be done through selected media (FAO, 2011).

Before the term e-learning was introduced in 1999, the principles of e-learning had been practiced in many ways such as via correspondence, teaching machines, and computer-based training initiation in the 1960s (White, 2018). Since then, thousands of e-learning media have become familiar with educators. According to White (2018), it is due to schools' acknowledgment that blended learning in many ways is important

and effective and that online learning is an integral part of the curriculum. However, e-learning is lacking the human element in the learning process has raised other problems (Zaidieh, 2012). Zaidieh (2012) then advised by adding an integrative part of technology as a solution to the issue. Different from the situation in the past, these days, the pandemic of COVID-19 has massively forced the face-to-face learning process to be moved to a digital learning alternative from primary school to higher education level. Today, digital media have become an important element as supporting tools in a classroom. Also, global and social changes have caused rapid and significant transformations in higher educational institutions. Taking this quote, “those institutions that are successful in establishing administrative and academic frameworks within which rapid technological change and adaptation can occur will survive and those who stubbornly adhere to archaic styles of management and decision-making will not” (Huff, 2000, p. 635), into consideration is the reason why we need to participate and benefit from any transformation that may occur.

There are some commonly known digital devices as suggested by UNESCO (n.d.) that can be used as tools for virtual learning, for instance, Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Moodle, Quipper, Edmodo, Zoom, YouTube, Schoology, CenturyTech, ClassDojo, Nafham, Skooler, Seesaw, and the list continues. These tools are very worthwhile during this pandemic situation to keep students safe in learning.

2.2 E-learning and Its Implementation in English Instruction

For some educators and students, e-learning probably becomes challenging in teaching (Andersson, 2008). In Indonesia, for example, the change in the form of interaction from face-to-face to a more open digital platform has made both students and lecturers confused with their role. Andersson's (2008) study in Sri Lanka found that respondents assumed e-learning as something new, unnatural, and not as good as traditional face to face one. Despite the challenges, many institutions of higher education and corporate training institutes stick to e-learning both to solve performance problems and to avoid being left behind (Mapuva, 2009). Besides, this is not impossible for the majority of students at university campuses since smartphones and mobile devices have already become indispensable pieces of basic gadgets. For this purpose, blended learning which combines face-to-face learning instruction with virtual or web-based learning instruction to the EFL students should be initiated (Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017; Wang et al., 2019). There are many universities and colleges in Indonesia which have adopted blended learning using the Learning Management System (LMS) in the learning-teaching instruction either self-developed or adopted from any other service providers of free LMS (Zainuddin & Keumala, 2018). For instance, STKIP Bina Bangsa Getsempena in Aceh, Indonesia, has tried to build a self-developed LMS called Opensimka (<https://www.opensimka.com/>) as the virtual or web-based learning system in which the lecturers and the students have wide access to manage and be involved in the virtual learning-teaching process, including uploading the learning materials or tasks and credit points, building virtual interaction between lecturer and students, and disseminating other academic information. So, LMS is like a class virtually managed by the lectures to conduct the learning-teaching process as the physical classroom for the face-to-face meeting.

A study in Taiwan has shown the significance of the e-learning platform in providing learners with a diverse and rich learning experience and strengthening the

students' autonomous learning capability (Yanga & Yenb, 2016). Yanga and Yenb (2016) also found that the uses of audio-visual media have given the students access to clear guidelines and schedules for the course before the class meeting so that the students could adjust their own time to complete assignments on time, read the assigned materials, and write a report in the online discussion forum.

In English classes, four elements have been suggested by Coryell and Chlup (2007) to be taken into consideration in implementing e-learning, i.e., preparation, individualized and student-centered instruction, support, and collaboration. However, along with the enthusiasm related to implementing new learning technologies, higher educational institutions, lecturers and students faced multiple technology-related difficulties such as piracy and plagiarism, the ease of copy and paste, and congestion use of some websites which leads to unanticipated costs both in time and money (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014). What becomes the most common obstacle is that some students do not have adequate access to the internet, and professors need an excessive amount of time to develop course materials (Alqurashi, 2011).

3. METHODS

A qualitative approach in the descriptive design was applied in this study, in which the questionnaire delivered online as the research instrument was used. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative study assists researchers in understanding the conscious involvement, and the technique for such research encompasses reviewing a small number of topics or issues through wide-ranging assignation to measure forms and associations of gist. This study was conducted in higher educational institutions in Aceh, Indonesia. The participants were students of English as a foreign language (EFL) of higher education from three different universities in Aceh. They consisted of two private universities, namely Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (STKIP) Bina Bangsa Getsempena which is located in Banda Aceh, and Universitas Abulyatama which is located in the Great Aceh regency, and one state university, namely Universitas Malikussaleh which is located in North Aceh regency. The participants of this study were selected after distributing the questionnaire through the e-learning or online classes by their English lecturers in each of these universities. This study was administered during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic from the mid of April to July in the academic year of 2019/2020. There were 106 students from these three institutions who completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of 17 items using a Likert scale of the two main aspects analyzed; positives features and negative features of e-learning implementation in English language instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic and e-learning platform preference. The students were asked to specify their level of agreement on the statements displayed in the questionnaire from *strongly agree (SA)* to *strongly disagree (SD)*. The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia to better facilitate the EFL students in understanding the items in the questionnaire. This research instrument had been validated by a few other researchers in this study and an expert related to this study before it was distributed electronically to the participants. At the same time, the data related to the preferred platforms were also collected through a similar electronic questionnaire.

The data collection was hinted at, separated into different aspects of themes, and the data were tabulated and calculated. The data were then analyzed based on thematic and comparative analyses. The thematic analysis was based on the aspects established in the research questions; positive, negative features, and preferable e-learning platform. The contents of the data were then also compared to figure out the significant results between the positive and negative features. For the analysis, the students' responses were then presented in percentages. Finally, the university students' perceptions of English language instruction through e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic were grouped into the categories presented in the following table.

Table 1. The scaling of university students' perception.

Percentage	Category
0% - 25%	Very Negative
26% - 50%	Negative
51% - 75%	Positive
76% - 100%	Very Positive

4. FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented based on the three research questions. The first research question was about the positive features of e-learning implementation for university students and the second research question involved the negative features in e-learning implementation during COVID-19 for the university students. Another research question related to the most preferred learning platforms commonly used by the students and the English lecturers in e-learning was also presented as the supporting information in this study. The following table shows the students' perceptions of English language instruction through e-learning.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of English language instruction through e-learning.

No	Statement	Responses				Total
		SA	A	D	SD	
1	I like studying English subject and other related subjects	42	62	2	0	106
2	I like and enjoy studying English through an online learning	12	55	31	8	106
3	I like learning English through an online learning platform because it is attractive and challenging, which can motivate me to study more	14	51	37	4	106
4	Learning activities in English subject by using online learning platform are engaging and exciting	11	53	36	6	106
5	I can easily understand the learning material presented through online learning media	8	53	40	5	106
6	I got many other benefits from online learning such as gaining new experience, becoming adaptable to technological advance and being a critical thinker	14	77	14	1	106

Table 2 continued...

7	Learning English through online learning helps me work on the assigned assignments because I can directly search for related materials on the internet	23	64	17	2	106
8	Online learning is effective learning media to use my time efficiently and learning autonomously	9	61	29	7	106
9	The English lecturer of the assigned course is very active in coaching, controlling, and giving feedback during and after the online class meeting.	29	69	8	0	106
10	The internet connection in my hometown is fast enough to support online learning	9	42	41	14	106
11	I have a high level of discipline and basic skills in operating technology tools in supporting my online learning	16	69	19	2	106
12	I have difficulty especially in using some features such as participating in the video conference and the like	16	65	21	4	106
13	I have a financial problem in purchasing internet data when the material distributed using online learning urges me to download big files and participate in video conferences	57	37	11	1	106
14	During the English online learning meeting, I am frequently disturbed by social media and other unrelated to course materials.	17	49	39	1	106
15	I prefer face-to-face learning or a conventional way of learning than online learning	16	26	45	19	106
16	My reason for preferring face-to-face teaching and learning because of its effectiveness of material presentation and satisfactory explanation by the lecturers and more importantly the existence of excellent social interaction between students and the lecturer	44	20	0	0	64

4.1 Positive Features of E-Learning Implementation

Most of the students provide positive responses towards the English Language instruction through e-learning and online media implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic in the higher educational institutions in Aceh, as shown in Table 2. They liked studying English and other related subjects. Besides, from 106 respondents, more than half of 63% of respondents gave positive responses that they put their high interest in studying English through e-learning and online platform media. Only 38.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement that learning English using an online platform was interesting.

According to 33.9% of participants, learning English through online learning platforms was attractive and challenging, which could motivate them to study more. Also, 60% of the respondents reported that the learning activities in English language teaching by using online learning platforms were engaging and exciting. This means that the students have positive responses towards the implementation of e-learning. In terms of the students' perception of the material presented, more than half of respondents (57%) claimed that they could easily understand the English learning material via e-learning and online media instruction. Yet, without ignoring the rest of the respondents claimed their difficulties in understanding the materials, the English

lecturers are required to improve their creativity and innovation by giving detail explanation together with concrete examples, as well as giving learning motivation towards the students in the intense interaction and consultation via the online media.

From the questionnaire, it was found that there are many benefits of e-learning and online media instruction the students have experienced. Almost all of the respondents stated that many benefits they could gain from online learning, such as gaining new experience, being adaptable to technological advances, and being critical in thinking. Also, most of the respondents (82%) asserted that teaching and learning English through online learning help them working on their assigned assignments as they could directly search for related materials on the internet. Another benefit relates to time management. Based on the result, it is confirmed that 66% or almost 70% stated that online learning an effective learning medium to improve their time efficiently and learning autonomously.

Similar to conventional teaching, the role of the lecturer plays a vital role during e-learning instruction. Almost all of the respondents (93%) stated that their English lecturers of the assigned course were actively coaching; controlling and continuously giving feedback during and after the online teaching and learning conducted.

4.2 Negative Features of E-Learning Implementation

This study also found that some students experienced the weaknesses of e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic in the higher education level in Aceh. As much as 52% of respondents reported that the internet connection in their hometown was not supported for the smoothness of online teaching and learning. Only 48% of respondents had access to an internet connection. It can be said that the internet connection was the main problem for the students that often disturbed them in the e-learning instruction system process.

Most of the respondents (80%) confidently claimed that they had a high level of discipline and basic skills in operating technology tools in supporting their online teaching and learning. However, 76% of respondents stated that their major difficulty is especially in using some features of the online systems such as when participating in video conferences and the like. It could be said that more than 50% of students are lacking the ability in operating technology devices and in majoring the technology development.

Another difficulty deals with financial problems. The majority of respondents (88%) stated that they had financial problems in purchasing internet credits or quotas to download material that consumes a large size of data as well as to participate in video conferences. Besides, the students also experienced another distraction during e-learning; 62% of respondents confessed that they were frequently disturbed with social media and others unrelated to the course during English language instruction through e-learning and online media implementation. It implies that EFL learners tend to be addicted to electronic devices, such as cell phones and smartphones, tablets, etc. It is in line with the statement of [Gutiérrez et al. \(2016\)](#) that generally the students who study EFL require indeed the electronics devices for supporting their English learning not only for the e-Learning method but also for the conventional learning method. As a result, they are not interested in studying and discussing the learning materials delivered by the lecturers.

The final two questions but not least revealed the students' preference between e-learning and online media instruction. The majority of respondents (60%) preferred face-to-face or conventional learning and teaching to e-learning instruction. In line with that result, 68.8% of respondents agreed that their reason for enjoying the face-to-face or conventional ways of teaching and learning because of its effectiveness of material presentation and the lecturer's satisfactory explanation, and more importantly, the existence of excellent social interaction between students and lecturer. It means that the university students are still more preferable to face-to-face or conventional learning instruction than the e-learning instruction caused by the reasons stated above.

4.3 Learning Platforms

The last research question in this study deals with the online learning platform preferences. The data from the questionnaire (question no. 17; what kind of platforms that you and your lecturers usually used in e-learning class?) revealed that the most preferred online learning platforms used by the lecturers and the university students in English classes, namely WhatsApp followed by Opensimka, Google Classroom, and Google Meet. The least preferred platforms were Zoom, Edmodo, YouTube, and none selected Quipper.

It shows that WhatsApp was popular among the lecturers and the university students in the English language instruction class, while the others such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Edmodo, and so forth were unfamiliar among either the English lecturers or the students.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the data analyses, this section provides the discussion to the three research questions, respectively, i.e., positive and negative features of e-learning implementation towards university students, and the e-learning platform preferences.

5.1 Positive Features of E-Learning Implementation

Based on the findings of this study, it was found that there were some positive features of e-learning. First, surprisingly, the majority of the students were interested in e-learning, which might be caused by several factors, including the freedom to study anywhere and anytime and cost-efficient. These e-learning benefits are similar to what [Effendi and Zhuang \(2005\)](#) and [Yulia et al. \(2019\)](#) found in their studies. By using e-learning, students could save time and money because they did not need to travel to classes as it could be done in any location during the students' preferred time. Other positive features are the learning speed, a chance for a new learning experience, and an opportunity to experience technological advances, to develop critical thinking, and to experience a challenge in many exciting activities, including easy-handling of task and assignment accomplishment handed by the lecturer. [Vitoria et al. \(2018\)](#) found that the students were benefited from e-learning in enhancing their understanding, independence, self-discipline, learning motivation, and interactions

with other students as well as with the teacher. In addition, Mamattah (2016) illustrated that most of the students considered that the e-learning system is an advanced idea and has to be stimulated. Thus, students who are familiar with the use of information and technology had better skills in using e-learning (Vitoria et al., 2018). This is evident from the use of online learning, which is very helpful during this COVID-19 pandemic.

5.2 Negative Features of E-Learning Implementation

This study found that not all students have a similar level of understanding of the online learning system. For students who have a high proficiency in absorbing information and are also supported by their intrinsic characteristics in learning such as self-discipline, self-regulated learning, proper learning style, good time management, and high self-motivation, they may find e-learning easy (Bothma & Monteith, 2004). However, students who are unfamiliar with the learning materials and methods of learning online would experience difficulties not only in understanding the materials but also in adapting to the technology-based applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Moodle. There are eight important problems experienced by the students in virtual learning: (1) motivation, (2) accountability, (3) time management, (4) confidence, (5) lacking technical skill, (6) being proactive, (7) loneliness, and (8) persistence (GetReskilled, n.d.). As suggested by Prof. Gerhard Fortwengel, cited in Adelayanti (2020), that extra effort is required to adapt to this new learning model. Moreover, the online learning and teaching model creates space between lecturer and students in terms of interaction, changes how lecturers give motivation, engage with students, and provide feedback.

5.3 Preferred Learning Platforms

The learning platforms that were familiar and most preferred by the lecturers and the students in English classes were WhatsApp at the highest percentage, followed by Opensimka, Google Classroom, and Google Meet. Whereas Zoom, Edmodo, YouTube were not preferred. Based on the findings, it can be assumed that EFL students have easy access to familiar digital devices as a choice for their virtual learning platform. Lecturers and students are required to nurture their knowledge and skills in utilizing the other latest online learning tools such as Cisco WebEx, Zoom, Google Meet, Moodle, and so forth.

The current study has shown both positive and negative features of e-learning for university students. Some positive features of e-learning include a new learning experience, engagement and enthusiasm, flexibility of time and place, and the advance of digital technology usage and adaptation. Meanwhile, the negative features of English language instruction through e-learning involve the poor internet connection, an excessive amount of internet data usage, a limitation in material explanation and absorption, and a social media distraction. This study implies that e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic which requires sufficient mentoring and extra supporting digital tools should be applied by developing flexible, innovative, and effective learning materials, methods, strategies, and techniques at the higher education level.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings in this study, it can be summarized that the majority of the higher education students in Aceh stated that internet access in remote areas and the amount of data usages are the main obstacles faced by the students. Furthermore, the external, which could also be incorporated in the negative features, was the most influential factor, which is social media distraction. Only a few of the students found that internal factors, such as low learning motivation and other sorts of features related to the housework or house chores unrelated to learning activities and so forth, as obstacles in learning online. Hence, half of the EFL university students showed their negative perception toward the implementation of e-learning class during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the majority of the students preferred the face-to-face teaching and learning process to e-learning and online media instruction. Most of the respondents agreed that they like face-to-face or the normal teaching and learning instruction because of its effectiveness in material presentation and lecturer's satisfactory explanation and more importantly the interaction between the students and the lecturer. On the other hand, the positive features, such as a chance to a new learning experience, to adapt to technological advances, and to develop critical thinking skills, dominate the findings. These features showed a significant result in the percentages that the EFL university students expressed a positive response towards the English language instruction through e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study indicates that e-learning implementation during the pandemic still requires sufficient assistance and extra supporting digital tools. This e-learning implementation should be applied by developing flexible, innovative, and effective learning materials, methods, strategies, and techniques. Nevertheless, this study certainly has limitations in the questionnaire which did not cover a wide scale of research area and participants. The kind of questionnaire merely relied on the closed-ended questions and ignored opened-ended questions which might explore more information from the students' perspectives. For that purpose, it is suggested that future researchers address more in-depth research related to the e-learning implementation and the platforms utilized by English lecturers to find out the lecturers' and students' skills in using the latest digital devices in their teaching and learning process. In addition, studies in the field of assessment in virtual learning using both qualitative and quantitative approaches are urgently required to completely understand the implementation of e-learning at the university level, whether during the COVID-19 pandemic or post-pandemic.

Based on the research results, it is highly recommended that the government, the universities, and other higher educational institutions make an effort to ensure that the learning instruction could run well and effective during the COVID-19 pandemic such as by providing alternative, flexible, and effective learning strategies, methods, and techniques. The lecturers, however, should realize that online learning does not only mean digitizing the learning materials but it also involves creating them effectively, innovatively, and interestingly, such as how to apply the appropriate learning strategies, methods, and activities as well as learning sources that provide space for students' active learning. When participating in the e-learning, the students, on the other hand, should use time management skills and self-regulated learning effectively,

and they should develop their new learning styles and adapt to the latest information and technology advancement.

REFERENCES

- Adelayanti, N. (2020, June 13). *Revealing the challenges of online learning during Covid-19 pandemic*. Universitas Gadjah Mada. <https://www.ugm.ac.id/en/news/19554-revealing-the-challenges-of-online-learning-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Adi, G. N., & Rochman, A. (2020, March 15). *Regions close schools, cancel public events because of COVID-19*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/15/regions-close-schools-cancel-public-events-because-of-covid-19.html>
- Allo, M. D. G. (2020). Is the online learning good in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic? The case of EFL learners. *Jurnal Sinestesia*, 10(1), 1-10.
- Alqurashi, F. (2011). Short communications. eLearning in EFL: Problems and solutions. *Psychology of Language and Communication*, 15(1), 107-116.
- Andersson, A. (2008). Seven major challenges for e-learning in developing countries: Case study eBIT, Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, 4(3), 45-62.
- Angdhiri, R. P. (2020, March 11). *Challenges of home learning during a pandemic through the eyes of a student*. Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2020/04/11/challenges-of-home-learning-during-a-pandemic-through-the-eyes-of-a-student.html>
- Arkorful, V., & Abaidoo, N. (2014). The role of e-learning, the advantages and disadvantages of its adoption in higher education. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(12), 397-410.
- Basak, S. K. & Wotto, M. & Bélanger, P. (2018). E-learning, M-learning and D-learning: Conceptual definition and comparative analysis. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 15(4), 191-216.
- Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Masyarakat Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2020, March 16). *Kemendikbud dorong pembelajaran daring bagi kampus di wilayah terdampak Covid-19* [Ministry of Education and Culture encourages online learning for campuses in the Covid-19 affected areas]. LLDIKTI Wilayah VI. <http://lldikti6.id/2020/03/16/kemendikbud-dorong-pembelajaran-daring-bagi-kampus-di-wilayah-terdampak-covid-19/>
- Bothma, F., & Monteith, J. (2004). Self-regulated learning as a prerequisite for successful distance learning. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(2), 141-147.
- Chhabra, P. (2012). Use of e-learning tools in teaching English. *Proceedings of I-Society 2012* (pp. 1-7). GKU, Talwandi Sabo Bathinda.
- Coryell, J. E., & Chlup, D. T. (2007). Implementing e-learning components with adult English language learners: Vital factors and lessons learned. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 20(3), 263-278.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage.

- Effendi, E., & Zhuang, H. (2005). *E-learning: Konsep dan aplikasi* [E-learning: Concept and application]. Andi.
- FAO. (2011). *E-learning methodologies: A guide for designing and developing e-learning courses*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Ghazizadeh, T., & Fatemipour, H. (2017). The effect of blended learning on EFL learners' reading proficiency. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(3), 606-614.
- GetReskilled (n.d.). *What are the biggest challenges of online course and online learning?* <https://www.getreskilled.com/challenges-of-online-courses/>
- Gutiérrez, J. D. S., Fonseca, F. R. D., & Rubio, G. (2016). Cell-Phone addiction: A review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, (7)175, 1-15.
- Hartley, D. E. (2001). *Selling e-Learning*. American Society for Training and Development.
- Hijazi, S., Bernard, P., Plaisent, M., & Maguiraga, L. (2003). Interactive technology impact on Quality Distance Education. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 1(1), 33-44.
- Holmberg, B. (2003). *Distance education an essence: An overview of theory and practice in the nineteen and twenty first-century* (2nd ed.). Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.
- Horton, W. (2006). *E-Learning by design* (1st ed.). Pfeiffer.
- Huff, W. D. (2000). Colleges and universities: Survival in the information age. *Computers & Geosciences*, (26)6, 635-640.
- Keller, C. (2005). Virtual learning environments: Three implementation perspectives. *Learning Media and Technology*, 30(3), 299-311.
- Lawless, C. (2018). *What is eLearning?* LearnUpon. <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/what-is-elearning/>
- Mamattah, R. S. (2016). *Students' perceptions of e-Learning* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Linköping University.
- Mapuva, J. (2009). Confronting challenges to e-learning in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, 5(3), 101-114.
- Mutia, I., & Leonard, L. (2013). Kajian penerapan e-learning dalam proses pembelajaran di perguruan tinggi [A study on the implementation of e-learning in teaching and learning process in university level]. *Faktor Exacta*, 6(4), 278-289.
- Putri, S. E., Hamuddin, B., Nursafira, M. S., & Derin, T. (2020). Discourse Analysis in E-Learning-Based Course Using Moodle Platform: An Experimental Design. *Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*, 2(1), 19-26.
- Raheem, B. R., & Khan, M. A. (2020). The role of e-Learning in COVID-19 crisis. *International Journal of Creative Research Thought (IJCRT)*, 8(3), 3135-3138.
- Serhan, D. (2020). Transitioning from face-to-face to remote learning: Students' attitudes and perceptions of using Zoom during COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 335-342.
- Sikirit, D. (2020, June 2). *Learning from home during COVID-19 Pandemic*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/coronavirus/stories/learning-home-during-covid-19-pandemic>

- Silviyanti, T. M., & Yusuf, Y, Q. (2015). EFL teachers' perceptions on using ICT in their teaching: to use or to reject? *Teaching English with Technology*, 15(4), 29-43.
- Syakriah, A. (2020, September 14). *Jakarta back under PSBB, but less strict than before*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/13/jakarta-back-under-psbb-but-less-strict-than-before.html>
- Tafiardi. (2005). Meningkatkan mutu pendidikan melalui E-learning [Improving the quality of education using e-learning]. *Jurnal Pendidikan Penabur*, 4(4), 23-43.
- UNESCO. (n.d.). *Distance learning solutions*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/solutions>
- Vitoria, L., Mislinawati, M., & Nurmasyitah, N. (2018). Students' perceptions on the implementation of e-learning: Helpful or unhelpful? *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1088(1), 1-6.
- Wang, M., Ran, W., Liao, J., & Yang, S. J. H. (2010). A performance-oriented approach to e-learning in the workplace. *Educational Technology Society*, 13(4), 167-179.
- Wang, N., Chen, J., Tai, M., & Zhang, J. (2019). Blended learning for Chinese university EFL learners: Learning environment and learner perceptions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 0(0), 1-27.
- White, C. (2018, December 11). moving from the past and the present to the future of eLearning. *eLearning Industry*. <https://elearningindustry.com/future-of-elearning-past-present>
- Yanga, J. Y., & Yenb, Y. C. (2016). College Students' Perspectives of e-Learning system use in high education. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 2(2), 53-62.
- Yulia, A., Husin, N. A., & Anuar, F. I. (2019). Channeling assessments in English language learning via interactive online platforms. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 6(2), 228-238.
- Zaidieh, A. J. Y. (2012). The Use of Social Networking in Education: Challenges and Opportunities. *World of Computer Science and Information Technology Journal (WCSIT)*, 2(1), 18-21.
- Zainuddin, Z., & Keumala, C. M. (2018). Blended learning method within Indonesian higher education institutions. *Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora*, 6(2), 69-77.