THE USE OF MICROSOFT TEAMS AS AN ONLINE PLATFORM IN ELT CLASSROOM DURING THE PANDEMIC: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia is currently implementing a new policy that is teaching and learning activities from a distance, or we can call it learning from home or online learning. All education institutions require teachers and students to use online platforms to continue the learning process. The research aimed to find out the students' perception of using Microsoft Teams as an online platform during the pandemic. This research was categorized as an explanatory-sequence approach. This study involved 8th-grade students (N=18) from the public junior high school in Surabaya. Eighteen items of questionnaires have been distributed. The findings revealed that the majority of the students involved in this study have a good perspective on using Microsoft Teams as an online platform; because of the ease of the use of Microsoft Teams, the students feel that the features of Microsoft Teams are pretty useful for them as the students, but even though most of them enjoy using Microsoft Teams, they prefer to choose to do classical learning which can be known as traditional learning.

Keywords: Microsoft Teams, Online Platform, The Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

This study intense to observe the students' perception on the use of Microsoft Teams as an online platform during the pandemic. Several studies have found a phenomenon that the Covid-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on the education sector (Rahardjo & Pertiwi, 2020). Indonesia currently implementing a new policy that is teaching and learning activities from a distance or we can call it learning from home or online learning. This is written in Permenkes number 9 dated April 3, 2020 (Permenkes 9/2020). Mulenga, Eddie M. & Jose M. Marban (2020) also explained that online learning is a way of combating the spread of a communicable virus-like COVID-19. Online learning is a learning method using information and communication technology. Through online learning, students and educators can interact and communicate with each other without worrying to meet directly (Goodyear, 2004).

Although this rule has been around for a long time, many people still have difficulty reaching their educational goals. This is not a problem for universities and schools that already have an online academic system. But it will be a problem for universities and universities that do not yet have an online educational system. Facts among the public show that this online distribution system creates several difficulties and concerns. A study conducted by Ahmad (2016) found a phenomenon that EFL learning which requires a lot of practice for its application also experiences obstacles when the learning system is applied. Not everyone could be adapted to this new situation because not all can get an easy understanding during online classes. There are still many shortcomings of online courses, either technical problems or the materials that make the learners inconvenient to understand. Based on the previous studies, the result showed that in the teaching and

learning challenges section, most of the students had no training in using an online platform for learning. But in general, students often learn independently and find out more about technology (Irfan et al., 2020). In another study (Yuzulia, 2021), it is stated that parents thought that the most problem they had while online learning was the lack of discipline in learning at home. The parents often spent their time helping children with online learning (especially for children under grade 4).

To overcome to the crisis that are happening right now, the application developers are competing to market their learning applications that aimed to qualify the students' needs in online learning. There are several learning management system (LMS) selected and used by many schools and universities, such as Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Whatsapp, Quipper, Google Classroom, etc. All of those applications have their respective advantages and disadvantages. Eliasanti and Bambang (Agustina & Cahyono, 2017) stated that sometimes some of the teachers are not able to have a synchronous class, so the teacher will use an online learning platform, such as Quipper to keep the students learning from home even though the teacher cannot teach them directly. To keep the students engaged with the subject, the teacher needs to be active in giving the material on the online platform. Based on Rismiyanto and Fitri's (Rismiyanto & Suryani, 2021) paper, Zoom Meeting as a teaching platform is the use of Zoom Meeting as an online classroom in which the teacher and the students have direct and live teaching as the traditional class in the classroom.

Based on the preliminary study involving students of public junior high school in Surabaya from august to December 2021, it was found that approximately 70% of the students had low speaking skills and high inactivity during the implementation of an online class. Among the many online learning applications available nowadays, the junior high school chose the Microsoft Teams application as the primary application used in online learning during the pandemic. All face-to-face learning schedules are replaced with online learning using the Microsoft Teams Application. The use of Microsoft Teams was also based on the regulation city government of Surabaya during the pandemic.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

According to previous research conducted by Ahmad Ridho Rojabi (2020), he stated that Microsoft Teams supports the students' learning environment optimally and most respondents of the study gave a positive perception of the application as an online learning platform. Also, the respondents said that this application supports the teacher and the student interaction. Research about students' perception of online learning is an important thing to do because the aim is to want to measure students' perspectives on the teaching-learning process (Lorenzi and Riley, 2000). Based on the previous study conducted by Phan and Huynh (2021), stated that after using MS Teams with the non-majored students for their speaking class, the students had better interaction with their friends and teacher, and they also more motivated and the students' fluency in their performance was enhanced.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research approach is designed for the explanatory-sequential approach. This study involved 8th-grade students (N=18) from the public junior high school in Surabaya. To collect the data, the researcher used a random sampling technique. There were 18 items of a questionnaire about the practical & effectiveness of Microsoft Teams distributed to 18 participants in 8th-grade students to get quantitative data. To gain the qualitative data, the researcher used a mini-interview with the students. This study was conducted in this school because previously, the researcher had experience teaching and learning activities in this

school, and the researcher found that approximately 70% of students in that school had low speaking skills during the implementation of the online class. The use of Microsoft Teams was taken as asynchronous learning. The researcher gave material and one assignment per week for one month on Microsoft Teams, so the students could learn and do the assignment from home. The kind of homework given by the researcher requires the students to submit it before the deadline set by the teacher. The results were analyzed to determine the students' perspective on the use of Microsoft Teams as an online platform during the pandemic COVID-19. The data were obtained using the four points of Likert's Scale: 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree, and 4 for strongly agree. (Sugiyono, 2017). For the result, the researcher showed the precentage of the result and describe it qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the questionnaire distributed to students will be explained, where the results are statistical data that has been processed according to the method in this study. This study measured through a group of statements consisting of four statements with a score of 1 to 4. 1 correspondent strongly disagree until 4 correspondents strongly agree. Students' questionnaires are classified into two aspects: Practical & Effectiveness of Microsoft Teams and Comparison between Traditional Learning and Online Learning. The results of taking values can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Practical & Effectiveness of Microsoft Teams

No	Question	Aspects	Score				Comment
			1	2	3	4	
1	Microsoft Teams motivates me to study more diligently	Motivation	5,6%	16,7%	66,7%	11,1%	Microsoft Teams is easy to use, so it motivated us to be more diligent
2	I feel more comfortable to collect homework in Microsoft Teams	Features in Line with Students' Needs and Interaction	5,6%	33,3%	44,4%	16,7%	Submitting homework on Microsoft Teams is simple, we just need to take a picture of the homework and then submit it. Done.
3	The features in Microsoft Teams are quite useful for us as the students		5,6%	5,6%	16,7%	71,2%	It is so useful. The usage of each features

							also easy to operate.
4	The usage of Microsoft Teams is easy		0%	11,1%	27,8%	61,1%	
5	Speaking Classes in Microsoft Teams make me easier to interact with the teachers and friends		5,6%	33,3%	38,9%	22,2%	It is better to us to interact with them face-to-face rather than meeting them via video meeting.

The table above shows that in the motivation aspect, most of the students who chose to agree that Microsoft Teams motivated them to study more diligently was 66,7% and those who decided strongly agree was 11,1%. The three students (16,7%) chose to disagree, and only 5,6% strongly agreed. Most of the students agree because they enjoyed and did not feel any difficulties using Microsoft Teams as an online platform, making them diligent when studying. Based on the students' perspective, they said that Microsoft Teams is relatively easy because they don't need to exert much energy to submit their homework. All they need to do is take a picture of the homework and send it to the Microsoft Teams. This case has also been discussed in the previous research by Zuhratul, Asnawi, and Saiful (2021), the result showed that the students of MAN 1 Banda Aceh used the Zoom platform very easily and they stated that it motivated them during teaching and learning English by using that platform.

In the features in line with students' needs and interaction aspect, the students who agreed that they were more comfortable collecting homework in Microsoft Teams was 44,4%, and those who decided strongly agree was 16,7%. The students who chose disagree was 33,3%, and the rest who chose strongly disagree was 5,6%. Same as the explanation above, they felt that Microsoft Teams is easy to use in many aspects, including collecting the homework. They stated that managing assignment on Microsoft Teams is relatively straightforward than ordering homework directly from the teacher because all they have to do is take a picture of the assignment they have written in the textbook and then submit it on Microsoft Teams. It can be seen from their answer that the students nowadays love instant things. They like to collect paperless homework rather than collecting homework as usual to the teacher because it makes them put much effort. But despite that, some students said that even though handing in assignments was more effortless, sometimes there were network problems then they missed the deadline. As cited by Oviera (2016) that the lack of online assignment submission is when the internet connection is having problems and the deadlines are close to each other. It can make the students stressed and decrease their motivation in submitting their homework.

In terms of the usage and features of Microsoft Teams, most of the students strongly agree that the features in Microsoft Teams are pretty helpful for them. It can be seen that the percentage was 72,2%, and the number of students who chose to settle was 16,7%. Only two students disagreed about that statement (5,6% chose to disagree and 5,6% chose strongly disagree). The statement about the usage of Microsoft Teams is relatively easy.

More than half of the students agreed with that statement. The table shows that 61,1% chose strongly agree, 27,8% chose to agree, 11,1% chose to disagree, and none of the students chose strongly disagree. According to Arunraj (2021), he stated that Microsoft Teams has a lot of good features and he even ensure that Microsoft Team would be the upcoming learning platform in this pandemic situation. Based on the students' perspective, they uttered that the features of Microsoft Teams were simple but very useful and easy to operate. For example, most students like to use Whiteboard on Microsoft Teams and the emoji during video meetings because it makes their interaction more fun and alive. Using Microsoft Teams as an online platform is new for the students. They felt excited about trying something new because it was pretty challenging. For example, before the pandemic, they need to collect their homework directly from the teacher, writing notes for every explanation from the teacher. But when using Microsoft Teams, they don't need to do that anymore. They can submit their homework efficiently and take notes via Microsoft Teams without using a pen, paper, etc.

In the statement speaking classes in Microsoft Teams makes them easier to interact with the teacher, and the students who choose to agree and disagree look equal. It can be seen that 38,9% chose to agree and 22,2% chose strongly agree, 33,3% decided to disagree, and only 5,6% chose strongly disagree. In teaching, teacher–student interaction behaviors, which refer to the process of interaction between teachers and students during classroom teaching through a variety of situations, forms, and contents, are diverse, giving full play to the parties' personal characteristics (van de Pol et al., 2010). Overall, high-quality daily interactions between teachers and students provide socially-mediated reinforcement through which teachers can influence children's development (Pianta et al., 2008). Based on the students' answers while interviewing, some of them stated that they did not enjoy during an online meeting with the teacher because they felt awkward and didn't know what to say. They also noted that the teacher was not trying to break the ice or make the situation more alive. A good connection between teacher and students is a must. We cannot force the students to understand the material while the teacher is only giving the material without concerning the connection between them. A good teacher is not only good in academics, but they need to be good at providing positive affirmation, could bring student interest beyond school discussion, and always appreciate their effort and achievement.

Table 2. Comparison between Traditional Learning and Online Learning

No	Question	Aspects	Score				Comment
			1	2	3	4	
1	I prefer to choose learning via Microsoft Teams rather than traditional learning in the class	Traditional Learning vs Online Learning	16,7%	61,1%	22,2%	0%	When we are in a class, we can interact directly with others, we can discuss more, and also there is no awkwardness anymore between us.

The table above shows that traditional learning is preferable to online learning. Almost all the students disagreed with that statement. Based on the result, it can be seen

that 61,1% disagreed, 16,7% strongly disagreed, 22,2% agreed, and none of them were chosen strongly agree. Based on the students' perspective, they said that it is better to interact with friends and teachers face to face, the teacher could scold the students who don't submit the assignment directly, and it will more fun discuss and learn together with the friends without any kind of awkwardness anymore. A virtual class is part of the distance learning platform, which usually includes course materials, themes, tests, assessments, and other tools outside the classroom experience (Vali Ilie, 2019). Traditional learning is the learning under the scope of the classroom, viewed as teacher-center and static. The learning is conducted with the whole class participating, taking place within the classroom and the school (Titthasiri, 2013). According to Wanwipa (2013), the research showed that there is no difference between Traditional Learning and E-Learning but the mean score of the students under traditional learning seems to be higher compared to the E-Learning. The advantage of E-Learning is flexibility. We can learn without staying in the classroom, know new things, have good time management, etc. But, there are disadvantages too such as E-Learning has a lack of social interaction and it depends on the internet connection. Not everyone can afford the high cost only for an internet connection.

Other than the reasons above, they also found that online learning is quite boring because it makes them lock themselves at home and avoid interacting with others directly. It also affects their social attitudes because when the teacher asks them to answer questions during the lesson, they tend to be silent and feel afraid to answer. It has also been discussed in the research conducted by Siti Aisyah (2021). The research showed that online learning causes effectiveness in learning, and interaction with the environment is reduced because while carrying out online learning, the students will feel bored, bored, and stressed. The study also gave the solution to overcome the psychological impact of online learning, one of which is not to pressure them to be able to do many tasks simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that most students involved in this study have a good perspective on using Microsoft Teams as an online platform. The factor that makes them active in learning to use Microsoft Teams is the ease of the use of the Microsoft Teams application, especially when collecting the homework. They find that managing assignment in Microsoft Teams is more comfortable than collecting as usual before the pandemic. It is something new for them. After all, it is paperless because all they need to do is only upload it in Microsoft Teams. Although the features in Microsoft Teams look simple, many of the students say that these features are pretty helpful in their online learning. However, apart from that, they feel that Microsoft Team is not enough to help them in interacting with friends and teachers. The reason is that the teachers are less able to build a pleasant atmosphere during learning through video meetings that are held using Microsoft Teams. Even though most of them enjoy using Microsoft Teams, they prefer to choose to do classical learning, which can be known as traditional learning. They said that it is more exciting and fun if they could meet their friends face-to-face and discuss more with their teacher. Also, they would feel the reality of the condition of the class.

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