# EFL Students' Perception of Online Learning During Covid-19 in SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu

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*Abstract*

*This study used mixed method research design. This method is the combination of qualitative and quantitative approach in gaining complete understanding of students' perception. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire consists of 25 items. The participants in this study were 7th grade students in SMPN 3 Busungbiu. The result found that the 7th grade students in SMPN 3 Busungbiu had a positive perception towards online learning during Covid-19. They had positive perception in the perceived usefulness and perceived instructor characteristics dimensions. They felt online learning was useful to be implemented during Covid-19 and the teacher also motivated, encouraged them to express their opinion, and gave them sufficient time to submit assignments. Meanwhile for the perceived ease of use dimension, it got neutral perception because they felt difficulty in understanding the material taught online, experienced challenges, and had difficulty socializing with others during the online learning.*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning is the main way to gaining success in life. One of the compulsory subject matters that should be learned by students in school is English. It is because English is an international language which used to communicate with people from different countries. It has been taught as a foreign language subject at all education levels in Indonesia. It is taught from primary school until higher education. Learning English from an early year is so important to prepare the generation who have knowledge which makes them able to compete in this globalization era (Hartati, 2013). Therefore, the role of English is needed in direct interaction and mastering communication technology (Wiraningsih & Santosa, 2020).

Unfortunately, due the spread of Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease) changes many aspects of life, especially in the education field. Firstly, this virus was discovered in Wuhan, China, and in an instant, it spread all over the world. In early 2020 the case of Covid-19 was reported to have spread in Indonesia. Then to prevent the rapid spread of Covid-19, Indonesian government instructed restrictions on community interaction (Siahaan, 2020). It caused the ministry of education and culture, Nadiem Makarim, sets a policy of study from home to

prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the education unit which is attached in the circular letter of the ministry of education and culture No. 3 2020.

This sudden switch raises online learning as an alternative learning which use to facilitate both student and teacher conduct teaching and learning process during Covid-19. This is because of the rapid advances in technology and education which makes possible to conduct distance learning. According to Wiguna (2022) , the advantages of online learning are it is flexible (in time and place), enhances the efficiency of knowledge, saves cost, motivates students to interact with others, allows self-placing, takes consideration of individual learners' differences, and helps compensate scarcities of academic staff. Before the emergence of Covid-19, online learning was rarely implemented because teachers mostly prefer face-to-face. However, Covid has changed the face of our education to shit to online learning.

Learning from home needs teachers and students to use e-learning media as an alternative in this pandemic era. Several applications can be used to accommodate e-learning, namely WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube, Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, and so on (Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020). Teaching by using e-learning gives advantages in learning English. According to Cai (2012), the advantages of e-learning in English teaching are abundant learning resources, easy access to information, the effect of direct interest, and teaching students following their aptitude. The use of e-learning is very helpful to be implemented for students amid the Covid-19 pandemic (Allo, 2020).

E-learning or online learning defined as a learning experience that delivered through Web and Internet technology (Prawisanthi & Permana, 2022). Seeing today's situation, the emergency of Covid-19, it is important to be conducted. This learning method can expanding the learning community because the learning process can be done using electronic media both formal and informal and it was also not limited by time and places (Wijaya et al., 2022). Online learning is learning that uses various digital technologies to present content and instructions of a specific lesson (Alshammari, 2020; Hendrastomo, 2008). Students need to follow this new learning method which relies on technology. So, they should be ready to carry and prepare what they need in learning process that delivered through electronic media.

However, the students and teachers may not get used to the implementation of online learning. This situation leads them to experience problems with the implementation of online learning in online classrooms. Jamila, et al., (2021) revealed the problems faced by teachers including limitations in providing material that is easy for students to understand, and limitations in regulating and providing student values during the learning process. In addition, the problems that students experience while online, namely the lack of internet network access, inadequate supporting facilities, and students tend to be less active during online learning (Dube, 2020; Jamila et al., 2021). Moreover, in distance learning students in rural areas which are far from the city certainly have an inequality of abilities and facilities with the students who are in urban areas or the city center (Songbatumis, 2017).

One of the areas in Buleleng Regency that can be said as a rural area is Sepang Village. The rural area itself has the meaning of an area far from the city and the majority of community activities in agriculture. In Sepang village, there is only one secondary school namely SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu. The students at SMPN 3 Busungbiu, especially the 7th-grade students who are new to carrying out online learning tend to face problems during Covid-19. During pre-

observation with the English teacher, it found out that the availability of internet connection and data package were the main problem encounter by students and teachers. Since online learning is implemented to support the learning during the Covid-19, it is necessary to investigate the use of online learning to know whether it is effective or not. The students' perceptions can be used to measure the effectiveness of online learning in Covid-19.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate students' perception on online learning during Covid-19. EFL student's perceived of the use of online learning positively because they consider online learning was helpful, flexible and interesting (Witanaya et al., 2022). On the other hand, Allo (2020); Harmilawati & Khaerunnisa, (2020) found that the students had a negative perception of online learning because of the burdensome internet quota, difficulty to communicate with lecturers, unsupported facilities, and poor internet access. From a number of studies conducted, during Covid-19 emergency in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 the teaching and learning process is carried out online. Even though, online learning method was chosen as alternative of learning in this situation but there were still pros and cons in its implementation. The students' perception on online learning were varying. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the EFL students' perception of online learning in SMPN 3 Busungbiu during Covid-19.

**METHOD**

The mixed design was employed in the design of this investigation. This approach was chosen to get more information on how EFL students at SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu perceived online learning during COVID-19. Mixed method research is a research methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative data in a research study. The subjects in this study were 65 students. Three classes were selected as the subjects in this study, there were class 7A, 7B, and 7C. The quantitative data was obtained using a questionnaire, meanwhile, the qualitative data was obtained through interviews. The questionnaire in this study was adapted from the model of the questionnaire used in the study conducted by Rahman (2020), regarding Learning Amid Crisis: EFL Students' Perception on Online Learning During Covid-19 Outbreak. It consists of 25 items. The questionnaire was in the form of closed-ended questions where the alternative answers are provided in the form of the Likert Scale. The Likert Scale includes strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then the interview guide is created based on the questionnaire and added with a question that is adapted from the study conducted by Kang and Duong (2020). There were 9 questions in the interview guide to support the result of students' perceptions obtained from the questionnaire.

**Table 1. The Categorization of Mean Score of Students' Perception Towards Online Learning**

| Criteria | Interval | Categorization | Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mi+1.5 SDi≤M≤Mi+3.0 Sdi | 100≤M≤125 | Very High | Very Positive |
| Mi+0.5SDi≤M<Mi+1.5 SDi | 83.33≤M<100 | High | Positive |
| Mi-0.5 SDi≤M<Mi+0.5 SDi | 66.67≤M<83.33 | Average | Neutral |
| Mi-1.5 SDi≤M<Mi-0.5 SDi | 50≤M<66.67 | Low | Negative |
| Mi-3.0 SDi≤M<Mi-1.5 SDi | 25≤M<50 | Very Low | Very Negative |

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 2. Results of Students' Perception

| Category | Mean Score | Category | Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Perception | 84.7 | High | Positive |
| Perceived Usefulness | 25.6 | High | Positive |
| Perceived Ease | 24.9. | Average | Neutral |
| Perceived Instructor Characteristics | 34.2. | High | Positive |

Table 1's classification of the mean score's results shows that the mean score falls into the high group. Due to the fact that the mean score is 84.7 and falls within the range 83.33≤M<100. Thus, it can be said that students showed a high perception of the online learning that they participated in during Covid-19 at SMPN 3 Busungbiu, according to the results of the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire in the high category. Therefore, the overall perception of EFL students towards online learning during Covid-19 is positive. The data were categorized into three categories namely; (1) Perceived Usefulness, (2) Perceived Ease of Use, and (3) Perceived Instructor Characteristics.

The perceived usefulness covered 8 items. The calculation revealed that the average perceived usefulness value across all goods was 25.6.It can be seen that the second interval, which has a high categorization, had the mean score of students' perceptions of the usefulness of online learning. It corresponded to positive perception. Students gave a positive perception of the usefulness of using online learning during Covid-19 at SMPN 3 Busungbiu. This is supported by the findings of a study conducted by Weldon, et al (2021) which states that the benefits of online learning are that it provides flexible learning time, saves time and money because there is no need to go to school, provides a variety of ways of learning, provides clear learning and assignments that support knowledge of the material being taught and can see replay material in the form of videos recorded online. This adheres to the objective of online learning, which is to offer top-notch learning services on a sizable open network or web to reach more enthusiasts (Sofyana & Rozaq, 2019). This is also supported by the results of interview which said the benefits of online learning were practical and flexible, increase confident in expressing ideas, save cost and time, easier to learn, became more motivated, and able to use technology.

The perceived ease of use was the second category used in this study. This category was investigated by using 8 items. From the calculation, the average of the 8 items value was 24.9. This mean score corresponded to neutral perception. Syarafina (2021), revealed that in her study the obstacles that students and teachers experienced during online learning were a lack of interest and motivation in learning, students were not ready to take part in online learning, students became less active during learning activities, learning materials were difficult for students to accept, and delays students in collecting assignments. The interview results below stated that the students had difficulty understanding the material taught online, had difficulty interacting with teachers and other students, low internet network and quota, full memory, and got lots of assignments.

Students' perception of perceived instructor characteristics was investigated using 9 items in the questionnaire. The average of the item was 34.2. The mean score 34.2 was in the

second interval which belonged to high qualification. It also meant that the students perceived positively instructor characters during the online learning. Students have a positive perception of this dimension. In this millennial era, an English teacher should have some characteristics of an effective teacher. These are good relationships with students and other teachers, motivate them to learn, create a good learning environment, understand students' characters, give feedback for their work, can explain and ensure the students understand the lesson, the teacher also should have a personality like caring, friendly, disciplined, creative, kind, patient, humorous, open-minded, professional, and responsible (Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021). It is supported by the interview result that stated the teacher gave enough time to the students in completing the task given.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion online learning was perceived positively by the students of SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu. They had a positive perception of perceived usefulness and instructor characteristics in online learning conducted during Covid-19. The students also had a neutral perception of perceived ease of use in online learning practice.

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