

Students' Perceptions on Blended Learning in English Class during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The improbability of continuing the traditional classroom during the pandemic Covid-19 caused by unavoidable condition where blended learning was the most proper solution to conduct the learning process. This study intends to investigate how students view blended learning, particularly in English classrooms. The research's population is the eighth-grade students of MTS Fadhilah Pekanbaru with 93 students involved as the research samples. Descriptive analysis with a quantitative approach was applied in this research. The instrument used to gain the data is a questionnaire consisting of 35 items divided into four aspects (behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and economy). The data were scored using a Likert scale with four options; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The findings showed that the students' perception on blended learning was high level with an average score of 107.46. So, it can be determined that the students had positive perceptions when learning English through a blended learning method. They showed positive behaviors, can explore their potential, and be more enjoy in the learning process.

Keywords: *blended learning, students' perception, pandemic, COVID-19*

1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, a virus was first identified in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province, China. This virus was named COVID-19 and soon became a worldwide pandemic. Indonesia was first exposed to this virus in early March 2020. Due to the widespread Covid-19, all of Indonesia's functioning systems, including the economy, government, and education, have been affected. The governor of DKI Jakarta has decided to close all schools in the DKI Jakarta Area as of March 16, 2020, and implement a distance education and learning strategy using online learning to break the infection cycle. This arrangement is additionally taken after by the Governor in other cities all through Indonesia, counting the city of Pekanbaru. However, On September 13th, 2021, the Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture agreed that face-to-face learning would take place in 2021–2022. Unfortunately, face-to-face instruction is only given occasionally and under specific restrictions. For the teaching and learning process to continue, many teachers have to actualize and adapt the Blended Learning class.

Meanwhile, particularly for the usage of the blended learning approach in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic, student perception is one of

the aspects that can affect students' learning motivation in the classroom. Saeed & Zyngier (2012) assert that every student has a unique reason for participating in class. It describes the level of effort and concentration a student devotes to their studies in order to succeed academically. In this instance, students' perspectives toward student learning results may be influenced by how they perceive the usage of blended learning in the English classroom. Positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning among students can influence their perceptions of the implementation of blended learning in English classes. Students who lack positive attitudes and motivation during the learning process may, in turn, have unfavorable opinions about the usage of blended learning in English classes.

To find out and measure students' perceptions on blended learning, the researcher used three aspects of student engagement which were developed and defined according to (Trowler, 2010). The three aspects include: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. The first aspect of the three aspects is behavior. It related to the student attitude. (Pietarinen, Soini, & Pyhältö, 2014) said that behavioral engagement is concerned with cooperation and active involvement of students in social groups, classroom interactions, and teaching and learning activities at school and at home as well as school-related extracurricular activities. The second aspect is emotional, emotions are related to students' reactions to learning. Manwaring (2017) says that student involvement in the emotional aspect includes enthusiasm, satisfaction, comfort and interest. The last one is cognitive. Cognitive focus on student psychology in learning related to the students' knowledge. Pietarinen et al. (2014) said that student involvement in the cognitive aspect refers to students' ability in learning activities, including self-regulation. Then, in this study, the researcher also measures students' perception of the used economy aspect to understand how accessible they are for joining the blended learning class.

Bakhshialiabad, Bakhshi, & Hassanshahi (2015) stated that the learning environment dramatically affects student achievement. Thus, this study was intended to find out how students perceive blended learning in English classes during the COVID-19 epidemic. This study would like to know how students' perceived their attitude, skills, enthusiasm, and accessibility while using blended learning method. The result of this study is presented considering the four characteristics of students' views (behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and economy). This study will be necessary for educators to evaluate and improve their teaching methods. According to (Van Petegem, Aelterman, Rosseel, & Creemers, 2007), student perceptions is very important to measure learning outcomes. Freiberg, Stein, & Huang (2005) state that student perception is an important way to observe and explain classroom conditions for the purpose of evaluating and developing teaching.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive analysis with a quantitative approach was applied in this research. The researcher used that method to analyze and describe the students' perception on blended Learning in English classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The population of this research is the 8th-grade students of MTS Fadhilah Pekanbaru. Using a total sampling technique, the samples of this study were 93 students. The research instrument used is a questionnaire. The type of questionnaire is a close-ended question containing 35 items divided into 4 aspects (behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and economic). This questionnaire was adapted and modified from that of Trowler (2010), Maulina et al. (2022), Talis, Akib, & Baso (2018). To measure the data, the researchers used the Likert scale. Specifically for this study, there are 4 options for each item. They are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Each option has a score that can be seen below:

Table 0.1 Likert Scale

NO	ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS	SCORE	
		POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
1	Strongly Agree	4	1
2	Agree	3	2
3	Disagree	2	3
4	Strongly Disagree	1	4

In addition, to see the level of perception in order to answer the research question, the researcher also categorized the data using the following formula of classification by Hadi (2004) (Hadi, 2004, p. 126) :

Table 0.2 Classification

Criteria	Categories
$X > (M_i + 1,5SD_i)$	Very High
$M_i \leq d (M_i + 1,5 SD_i)$	High
$(M_i - 1,5 SD_i) \leq d < M_i$	Medium
$X < (M - 1,5 SD_i)$	Low

Next, validity and reliability tests were conducted to see whether the research instrument was valid and reliable or not. The item is considered valid if the calculated R value is greater than the value in the R table. To determine the validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument, the researchers conducted a try-out first to the 8th grade students of SMPN 21 Pekanbaru. With the number of participants being 32, the value of the R table is 0.349, resulting in all 35 items indicated as valid. Additionally, the coefficient of the

Cronbach-Alpha is 0.943, denoting the questionnaire as reliable as a research instrument.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Student Perception toward Blended Learning on Behavioral Aspect

Table 1.1 The Value of Behavioral Aspect

Indicator	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	MIN	MAX	MEAN
Presence and discipline in learning	Q1	25	67	0	1	1	4	3.2 (High)
	Q2	36	54	0	3	1	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q3	16	76	1	0	2	4	3.2 (High)
	Q4	21	71	1	0	2	4	3.2 (High)
	Q5	12	72	9	0	2	4	3 (High)
Learning participation and multi-tasking participation	Q6	33	41	17	2	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q7	3	65	24	1	1	4	2.8 (High)
	Q8	28	47	17	1	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q9	35	47	8	3	1	4	3.2 (High)
	Q10	40	40	13	0	2	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q11	15	44	15	0	2	4	3.2 (High)
Learning collaboration and discussion involvement	Q12	33	41	17	2	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q13	34	44	15	0	2	4	3.2 (High)
Total								40.9
Mean								3.14 (High)

Table 1.1 on the behavioral aspect showed that students can actively express their opinion to the teachers (item 10 with the mean of 3.3). Also, they always participated actively (item 6), did their English assignments (items 2, 7, 4, 5, and 9), and were always present (item 1). In addition, they can discuss and collaborate with their friends (items 11, 12, and 13) as well as manage their time effectively (item 3). The positive response about all of the items on the behavioral aspect can be assumed that students have a more positive attitude towards blended learning. As Vaksalla et al. (2019) in his research claimed that blended learning can enhance students' commitment and persistence in learning activities and class presence.

Student Perception toward Blended Learning on Cognitive Aspect

Table 1.2 The Value of Cognitive Aspect

Indicator	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	MIN	MAX	MEAN
Thinking Competence	Q14	4	68	21	0	2	4	2.8 (High)
	Q15	27	52	14	0	2	4	3.1 (High)
	Q16	39	42	12	0	2	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q17	26	50	17	0	2	4	3.1 (High)
	Q16	39	42	12	0	2	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q18	18	56	19	0	2	4	3 (High)
Total								15.3
Mean								3.07 (High)

Table 1.2 above presents the cognitive aspect which only has one indicator. As can be seen from the table, item 16 with the statement "The implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp allows me to explore the potential within myself" has the highest value, which means it is the most 'agreed' statement. Then the total mean score is 3.07, indicating that the students have a good perception regarding their critical, effective, and efficient thinking competence through blended learning. Ali & Sofa (2018) said that one of the advantages of blended learning is that it can improve students' skills.

Student Perception toward Blended Learning on Emotional Aspect

Table 1.3 Value of Emotional Aspect

Indicator	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	MIN	MAX	MEAN
Enthusiasm & motivation	Q19	12	62	19	0	2	4	2.9 (High)
	Q20	29	49	14	1	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q21	1	65	24	3	1	4	2.8 (High)
	Q22	28	56	8	1	1	4	3.2 (High)
	Q23	35	55	0	3	1	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q24	44	48	1	0	2	4	3.4 (Very High)
	Q25	36	56	1	0	2	4	3.4 (Very High)
Comfort	Q26	33	57	1	2	1	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q27	32	37	20	4	1	4	3 (High)
Satisfaction	Q28	15	32	31	15	1	4	2.51 (High)
	Q29	27	20	31	15	1	4	2.6 (High)
	Q30	21	27	39	6	1	4	2.677 (High)
Total								36.187
Mean								3.01 (High)

The findings showed that the highest perception scores were item Q24 and Q25 in the indicator of “Enthusiasm & Motivation” where blended learning can make students active and challenge them to focus more on learning. This implies that blended learning motivates students to learn in class. This finding is relevant to the research by Aji et al. (2020) stating that the benefits of blended learning are; flexible learning, motivation, interaction, and improving ICT skills. The students like blended learning and claim that it helped increase their motivation to study English. The reasons are that it is easy to do, can be done everywhere, and is not boring. As El-Seoud, Taj-Eddin, Seddiek, El-Khouly, & Nosseir (2014) stated that one of the main reasons for the adoption of e-learning such as blended learning is that it gives students more access to education compared to traditional teaching methods as students can continue their studies anytime and anywhere and can choose part-time or full-time study hours.

Student Perception toward Blended Learning on Economy Aspect

Table 1.4 Value of Economic Aspect

Indicator	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	MIN	MAX	MEAN
Accessibility	Q31	33	41	17	2	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q32	35	55	0	3	1	4	3.3 (Very High)
	Q33	3	65	24	1	1	4	2.7 (High)
	Q34	28	47	17	1	1	4	3.1 (High)
	Q35	15	32	31	15	1	4	2.5 (High)
Total								14.8
Mean								2.96 (High)

The researcher used one indicator “Accessibility” to know what the students’ perception toward blended learning in the economic aspect. As can be seen from Table 3.4, item Q32 with the statement " Internet access is available at my house " has the highest value, which means it is the most 'agreed' statement. Internet connection is available in most of the students’ homes.

As claimed by Ratnasari & Haryanto (2019), nowadays, having a mobile phone or gadget has become one of the basic needs in human life. Given the pandemic conditions where many schools are implementing blended learning, gadgets have become an important learning instrument to support blended learning. Luckily, most of the students in MTS Fadhillah have gadgets such as handphones and laptops (item 33), and their devices are compatible to support learning platforms (item 31). MTS Fadhillah is located in Pekanbaru and most of the students are staying in Pekanbaru. So, an internet connection is available in most students' homes (item 32 with a mean of 3.3), and the internet signal is also stable (item 34). Then most of them also used WiFi at their home (item

35). As Agung & Surtikanti (2020) that accessibility may lead to unsuccessful learning processes, especially in online sessions. In addition, to get a summary of the research findings to understand the students' perception of blended learning, the researchers totaled all the mean scores of students' perceptions.

Table 1.5 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students' Perception	93	54	78	132	107,46	14,534
Valid N (listwise)	93					

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the highest score of the students' perception is 132 while the lowest one is 78. Also, the mean score of the students' perception is 107.46. To see what classification the students' perception belongs to, the researchers categorized it using the formula by Hadi (2004). The classification is as follows.

Table 1.6 Students' Classification

Scale	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
$X > 118.5$	Very High	27	29%
$105 < X \leq 118.5$	High	19	20%
$91.5 < X \leq 105$	Medium	32	35%
$X < 91.5$	Low	15	16%
TOTAL		93	100%

Table 3.6 shows that there are 27 students (29 %) included in the category very high, 19 students (20 %) in the high category, 32 students (35 %) included in the medium category, and 15 students (16 %) included in the low category. With the mean score being 107.46, it can be concluded that the students' perception on blended learning is positive and belongs to the high category. This result is similar to research by Talis, Akib, & Baso (2018) where the results of their research show that students give positive perceptions on the implementation of blended learning methods in teaching English. The positive assessment of the respondents came from their experiences in learning using the blended learning method. They enjoy the learning process when the teacher applies the method. In addition, the blended learning method is very useful for students. This makes them more interested in learning and inspires them to be more active and responsible.

4. CONCLUSION

To answer the research question “how are students’ perceptions on blended learning in English class during the covid-19 pandemic?” Based on the result and discussion in chapter 4, this study concludes that the students have a positive perception toward blended learning in English class. As can be seen from the table of descriptive analysis, the mean score of Students’ Perception is 107.46, which was classified as the “high” category. Therefore, it determines that students have positive perceptions when learning English through a blended learning method.

Students exhibit positive behaviors such as attending blended learning classes regularly and enthusiastically. In addition, students feel more comfortable and enjoy learning English through blended learning. Furthermore, the students demonstrated their skillful and enjoyable learning through blended learning.

For the teachers or other educators, although blended learning helps students learn effectively and motivates them to participate in learning, a variety of class activities is required to encourage more student involvement. Thus, the researcher would like to suggest that teachers to have prepared better and different activities that can engage the students' participation even through online study.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

PI conducts conceptual research. PI manages data collection. PI compiled data analysis and interpretation with the help of RA and E. PI compiled articles. E and RA provided critical revisions to the article. E and RA gave approval for publication.

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