

Are Learning Media Effective in English Online Learning?: The Students' and Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract. *This study aims to evaluate the use of learning media in English online learning activities. The evaluation is viewed from the teachers' and the students' perceptions. This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a phenomenological approach. The population in this study were all students in the seventh grade at one of the State Islamic Junior High School (MTsN) in Kerinci, Indonesia, and all of their English teachers. The sample of teachers was selected by random sampling, while the sample of students was taken by stratified random sampling. Five students were selected from each class. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires and interviews. In analyzing the interview data, the researcher reduced the data, then presented the data, and then concluded, while the analysis of the questionnaire data used descriptive statistics. The study concluded that English online learning was conducted quite effectively. According to the teachers' and students' perceptions, WhatsApp Group is the most effective learning media for them. The obstacles faced by students and teachers are unstable internet networks and frequent power outages.*

Keywords: *English Online Learning, Learning Media, Students' Perceptions, Teachers' Perceptions, WhatsApp Application*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic sweeping the world has caused many lifestyle changes that people must implement. These changes do not only occur in sociocultural and economic terms but also affect the education sector. Based on the circular letter of the Minister of Education and Culture number 4 of 2020 regarding the implementation of education policies in the emergency period of the spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19), the government, through the minister of education, issued regulations on online learning or distance learning to prevent the spread of the virus in the educational environment that all school must implement. The teaching and learning process carried out face-to-face has turned into online learning. This fact dramatically affects Indonesia's teaching and learning system (Santoso, 2020).

In online learning, teachers must be more creative and innovative in delivering material. There are many online learning media that teachers can use, such as Google Classroom, Zoom Cloud Meeting, and Edmodo to WhatsApp Group. This media makes it easier for students to interact with teachers during the learning process (Nadia, 2020). Many startups in the education sector, such as Teacher Rooms, Zenius, Quipper, and Smart Points, have supported government policies by providing free services along with the Covid-19 outbreak (Burhan, 2020). Teachers are expected to be able to make students understand the material presented with all the limitations of online learning. Unfortunately, online learning that has been carried out for more than nine months is not optimal, especially in the Kerinci Regency area. Based on interviews that the researchers conducted with some seventh-grade students at one State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci,

it was found that in delivering material, the teacher tended only to send photos of the material to be studied. The teacher asked students to study the material and then sent assignments for students to work on. It is not uncommon for assignments to be sent without any explanation. One of the things that students complain about in online learning is the large number of assignments given by the teacher and the lack of clarity of the material presented.

Furthermore, the unpreparedness of teachers in conducting online learning is a significant problem. The lack of teacher knowledge about technology and the lack of training for teachers in how to use learning media to teach and evaluate students make the ability of teachers to use learning media also low (Mustakim, 2020).

Learning media such as Google Classroom, Zoom Cloud, and Edmodo in online learning can significantly assist teachers in delivering subject matter. This media can also make it easier for teachers to explain and evaluate students in the learning process. Teachers in online learning can use many learning media. However, the teacher must ensure that the media used is easily accessible by students and can make students interested in learning and understand the material to be explained. Furthermore, the teacher must ensure that the media can facilitate the teacher's work in evaluating students.

Learning media serves to visualize or explain the material being taught. Learning media also attracts students' attention during learning and makes it easier for students to understand the lesson's content. According to Miftah (2013), learning media occupies a strategic position in facilitating and expediting the learning process. The range of learning also becomes more comprehensive and faster. With the use of learning media, teachers are expected to achieve learning objectives effectively. Mahnun (2012) stated that using learning media can help achieve student learning success. Sukiman (2012) also expressed the same opinion. Learning media has essential uses to help smooth the learning process and the effectiveness of achieving learning outcomes.

Teachers in online learning can use several media. Mustakim (2020) mentions several online learning media, namely Youtube, Whatsapp Group, and Google Classroom, and quizzes and materials can be given in the form of videos, powerpoints, or reading material. The success of teachers in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is primarily determined by the selection of the suitable learning media to be used in delivering subject matter. The media chosen must also be able to attract and motivate students to learn and not feel bored during the learning process. According to Waryanto in Mustakim (2020), the advantage of the online learning model is that it can be used to convey learning without being limited by space and time. Mahnun (2012) also stated that the advantage of online learning is that the interaction between teachers and students does not always have to be face-to-face but can also use ICT-based learning media. This fact shows that online learning is very appropriate to be applied during the pandemic because teachers and students can still carry out the teaching and learning process even though they are not in the same room, so the social distancing recommended by the government as a way to prevent Covid-19 can still be carried out without hampering the learning and teaching process.

Sadikin & Hamidah (2020) state that online learning is learning that utilizes the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring up various types of learning interactions. They added that in learning activities, the online method requires the support of hardware devices such as Android-based smartphones, laptops, computers, tablets, and others that can be used to access information freely.

Furthermore, Sadikin & Hamidah (2020) also explain that online learning connects students with their learning resources, either in the form of sources or lessons, as well as teachers,

who are physically separated or even far apart but can communicate with each other, interact or collaborate (both physically and mentally). Online learning is a form of distance learning that utilizes telecommunications and information technology, such as the internet.

Perception is one element of personal practical knowledge of someone or something. It can be in the form of opinion or intuition. Therefore, a person's opinion or intuition about something can be influenced by several factors—for example, the person's background knowledge, personal experience, or expectations. Therefore, teachers' perceptions are defined as personal knowledge, intuition, images, and students' views.

In addition, the teacher's perception of students and learning is one of the most crucial factors in the teaching and learning process, and more specifically, in constructing teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions can affect how students teach, media and teaching methods, how they interact with students during the teaching and learning process, and so on. Teachers communicate their expectations through interactions in various forms.

Teaching is the result of the teacher's perception. Whatever teachers do in their classrooms is the result of their educational beliefs, whether they are aware of their teaching philosophy or not (Chowdhury & Rashid, 2014). Teachers' beliefs about how well their material can be learned play an essential role in deciding how they will conduct their classes. In other words, teachers have their beliefs and perceptions about various classroom activities, so they must implement these beliefs and knowledge in their classroom practice.

Teachers need special preparations such as teacher competencies (approaches, methods, techniques, media, and materials) and the learning environment or classroom setting. These factors will certainly affect them in the teaching and learning process. A teacher in the classroom should have adequate knowledge of teaching skills for students in terms of how he conveys the material, what techniques and strategies should be used, and how to interact with students. Teachers who participate more than others in the teaching and learning process will dominate the interaction.

Several factors, directly and indirectly, influence the teaching and learning process, namely teachers, curriculum, syllabus, materials, methods, media, evaluation, students, and interactions. Each has its influence on the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In order to concentrate more on research, the discussion will focus on classroom interactions between teachers and students and whether they will affect learning activities and outcomes.

Therefore, Breen et al. (in Allahyar and Nazari, 2012) found a set of principles, factors, and practices that form the basis of the work of teachers. They found that there are five main principles of teacher beliefs, namely (a) learning materials, (b) students and their needs, (c) optimizing learning in the classroom, (d) the content to be taught, and (e) their role as teachers language. According to Allahyar and Nazari (2012), expectations influence perceptions and provide teachers with a lens through which they "see" what they expect to see and what they do not. This data means that the way teachers believe or perceive the characteristics of their students during the teaching and learning process determines their expectations and directs them to treat students differently in terms of the quality and quantity of interaction.

In line with teacher perceptions, student perceptions involve students in expressing feelings, making judgments, and making predictions about learning and teachers. Kuo (2011) states that three categories of factors seem to influence student performance in interactive classroom assignments and students' perceptions of student-student interactions. These factors are (1) self-dependent factors, (2) other dependent factors, and (3) context-dependent factors. These

categories arise from the reflections of students who think they are more or less productive during pair or small group discussions.

This research was necessary because, during the pandemic era as now, teachers and students were doing online learning which was new for all of us, so we needed to know how this online teaching and learning process was conducted, what the teacher did in the classroom, what kind of media they used, how effective that media was and how the teachers and students perception toward it. This research result hopefully could help us know what online teaching media was appropriate to use, how to use it, what the problems of online learning were and how to solve them. It could also be one of the sources used by the government, especially the government of the Kerinci region, in deciding the rules of online learning during the pandemic era.

Researchers worldwide conducted some studies to investigate media in online learning during the pandemic. In Indonesia, researchers have conducted the research to know what kind of online learning media was used by the teacher, how effective the media was, and what problems the teacher and students faced in using it. The first research showed that both the teacher and students had done the online learning well with completing learning beyond the minimum grade limit in a class (Faryani & Myori, 2021). The second research found that the mechanism of online learning has good and bad impacts. The good impacts were students' independence in learning, increased activities to find learning resources, and learning style innovations. The negative impact of online learning was boredom and decreased interest in learning due to the failure of students and teachers to overcome obstacles such as inadequate supporting facilities, lack of internet quota, and poor internet signal. The challenges faced by students and teachers during online learning are the availability of supporting facilities, innovative learning strategies, and synergies between educational components (Budiman, 2021). Furthermore, the last research indicated that the online learning program has been effective from a cognitive perspective, but from an affective and psychomotor perspective, it has not been effective (Samoling, Ismanto & Rina, 2021).

Those previous research were different from this research. The first difference is the purpose of the research. The previous research was only focused on the effectiveness of the online learning done by the teachers. Meanwhile, this research also tried to find the problems faced by teachers and students during online learning and how they overcome them. The second difference is that, unlike the previous research, this research was conducted at Islamic Junior High School (MTs), and none of the previous researchers used the same setting. The next difference was the instruments of the research. This research used interviews and also questionnaire in order to make sure there was no data left behind. On the other hand, the previous researchers have only used questionnaires. Those differences make this research unique because it is different from other research that has been conducted.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the use of learning media in online English learning activities based on the teacher and the students' perceptions; firstly, what online learning media do teachers use in English teaching and learning. Secondly, what obstacles do teachers and students face in using online learning media? Lastly, how effective the online learning media used according to teachers and students in learning English online in seventh grade one of State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research is conducted based on orientation, sources of meaning, methodology, methods, writing, and implementation. Phenomenological research explores and concludes various sources (Yasin, 2012).

The population in this study were all seventh-grade students in one Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci, Jambi, Indonesia, and all their English teachers, namely teacher Z, teacher W, and teacher E. They are five students from each class taught by the teachers (see Table 1). The teacher was selected randomly, and the students were also taken by stratified random sampling.

Table 1 Sample of the Research

The Students' Code	The Teachers	The Class
S1		
S2		
S3	Teacher Z	VII E
S4		
S5		
S6		
S7		
S8	Teacher W	VII B
S9		
S10		
S11		
S12		
S13	Teacher E	VII A
S14		
S15		

The instruments used in this study were interviews and questionnaires since this research wanted to reveal the media used in the teaching and learning process, the obstacles that appeared during the class, and the effectiveness of online learning. These three aspects were seen from teachers' and students' perceptions. There were 16 questions for the questionnaire for students and 12 items in the questionnaire for teachers. Both questionnaires contained questions with three indicators: the media used in the teaching and learning process, the obstacles that appeared during the class, and the effectiveness of the online learning. All teachers and students sampled in this study were interviewed and asked to fill out a questionnaire provided by the researcher. Interview times for teachers and students were conducted on different days while filling out the questionnaire after the interview process was completed. Interviews in this study used open-ended questions so that the researchers could ask more questions based on the answers of teachers and students in order to be able to answer research questions.

The flow chart of research activities began with the researchers' eagerness to analyze the online learning media in one of the State Islamic Junior High Schools in Kerinci. There were three aspects of online learning media as the focus of the research: media used in the teaching and learning process, the obstacles that appeared during the class, and the effectiveness of online learning. These three aspects were seen from teachers' and students' perceptions. The technique of analyzing the data from interviews and questionnaires were: organizing and preparing the data

gathered from the research, reading through all the data, creating the descriptions of the data, representing the data, and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2012). Later, both data from interviews and questionnaires were cross-checked by triangulating them. Finally, the conclusions can be drawn. The flow chart of research activities can be seen in Figure 1.

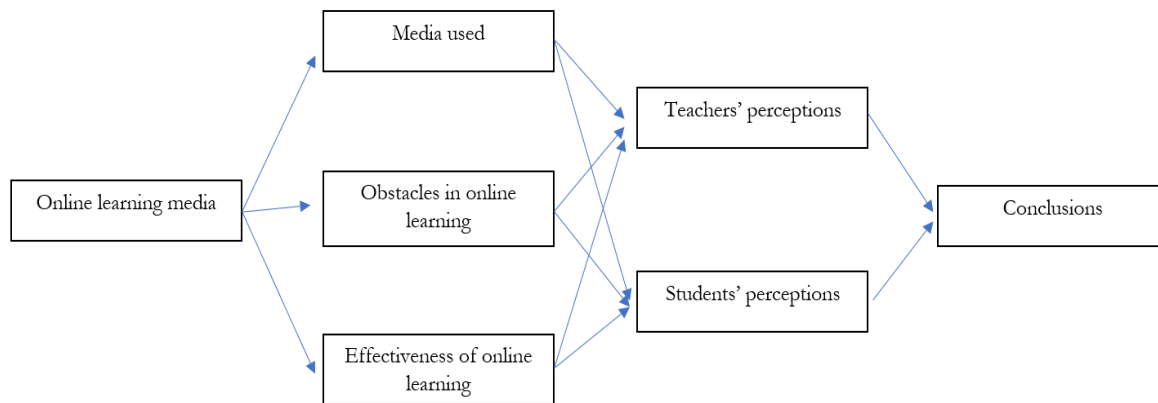


Figure 1. The Flow Chart of Research

FINDINGS

The Results of the Interview

Based on the interviews, it can be seen that the use of English online learning media is quite effective according to both teachers and students. In online learning, the teacher uses Whatsapp groups as a learning medium. The teacher considers the Whatsapp Group the most influential media in online learning because it does not require a strong network connection. This problem is essential considering that in the Kerinci district, there are still frequent internet network disturbances. Furthermore, the teacher also explained that using other online learning media such as Zoom Meeting or Google Classroom will consume too much of the internet quota. Meanwhile, not all students can afford to buy many internet quotas.

Like teacher W, teacher E also explained that the use of Whatsapp Group was more effective than other online learning media. During online learning, the teacher sends materials and assignments through this media. In explaining the subject matter, teacher Z sent an explanation video he made himself. Teacher W sometimes sends videos but often sends photos of material from books and then types explanations via chat. Not much different teacher E also did the same thing with teacher W, but teacher E never sent an explanation video.

Furthermore, in giving assignments and homework to students, all of these teachers did the same thing: sending photos of assignments and explaining what students had to do via chat. Then students were asked to send completed assignments with photos of their answers. Unfortunately, they did not evaluate the students' assignments and homework. The students admitted that they were not told the grades of their assignments and homework. They were not even told what was wrong with the tasks and homework they had done.

The most common problems students and teachers face are unstable internet connections and frequent power outages. This problem interferes with their learning and teaching activities. Sometimes students claim that they cannot attend class if the internet network is interrupted. Some

students install wi-fi at home, some rely on hotspots from their parents' devices, and others choose to find a place with a better internet network.

Even though they faced several obstacles above, students and teachers admitted that the learning objectives were still achieved. Most students think they can still understand what their teacher is explaining even though it is online. They also claimed to be able to do the assigned tasks and homework well. On the other hand, the teacher also emphasized that student scores almost always meet the minimum completeness criteria (KKM), and learning goes according to the lesson plans that have been made.

The Results of Questionnaires

The results of the questionnaire that the students have filled out can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of Students' Questionnaires

No	Items	A (%)	F (%)	ST (%)	S (%)	N (%)
1.	My teacher uses e-learning media in English online learning	53,33	33,33	13,33	0	0
2.	The e-learning media that my teacher uses is WhatsApp Group	80	20	0	0	0
3.	My teacher explains the material using e-learning media	80	20,00	0	0	0
4.	My teacher gives practice using e-learning media	66,67	33,33	0	0	0
5.	My teacher gives homework using e-learning media	60	33,33	6,67	0	0
6.	My teacher has problems using e-learning media	0	0	33,33	66,67	0
7.	My teacher makes efforts to overcome the obstacles I face using e-learning media	0	0	20,00	33,33	46,67
8.	The school helped my teacher overcome the problems that arise in using e-learning media	0	0	0	73,33	26,67
9.	The school provides training on how to use e-learning media	0	0	0	0	100
10.	My teacher makes lesson plans according to English online learning	0	0	0	6,67	93,33
11.	My teacher gives feedback to students in English online learning	0	0	20,00	53,33	26,67
12.	My teacher facilitates questions and answers with students through e-learning media	0	0	86,67	13,33	0
13.	My teacher collects and summarizes student assignments through e-learning media	0	0	6,67	93,33	0
14.	I have problems using e-learning media	0	0	60,00	40,00	0
15.	I made efforts to solve the problem	40	26,67	33,33	0	0
16.	I can understand the teacher's explanation well through e-learning media	0	40	46,67	13,33	0

Note: A: always, F: frequently, ST: sometimes, S: seldom, N: never

Based on these data, it can be concluded that the teachers always use WhatsApp Group as e-learning media in English online learning. However, the teachers rarely overcome problems that arise in using e-learning media. The school also had never provided training on how to use e-learning media. The teacher did not make lesson plans following English online learning and rarely provided feedback to students in English online learning. The teacher sometimes facilitated questions and answers with students through e-learning media but rarely collected and summarized student assignments through e-learning media. Half of the students said they could sometimes understand the teacher's explanation well through e-learning media.

The results of the questionnaire that the teachers have filled out can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Result of Teachers' Perceptions

No	Items	A (%)	F (%)	ST (%)	S (%)	N (%)
1.	I use e-learning media in English online learning	100	0	0	0	0
2.	The e-learning media that I use is WhatsApp Group	100	0	0	0	0
3.	I explain the material using e-learning media	100	0	0	0	0
4.	I provide exercises by using e-learning media	100	0	0	0	0
5.	I give homework by using e-learning media	100	0	0	0	0
6.	I have problems using e-learning media	0	0	66,67	33,33	0
7.	I make efforts to overcome the obstacles I face in using e-learning media	33,33	66,67	0	0	0
8.	The school helped me to overcome problems that arise in using e-learning media	0	0	100	0	0
9.	The school provides training on how to use e-learning media	0	0	100	0	0
10.	I made lesson plans according to English online learning	100	0	0	0	0
11.	I give feedback to students in English online learning	0	66,67	33,33	0	0
12.	I facilitate questions and answers with students through e-learning media	0	100	0	0	0

Note: A: always, F: frequently, ST: sometimes, S: seldom, N: never

Based on these data, it can be concluded that all teachers used WhatsApp Group as e-learning media in English online learning to explain the material and give homework. All teachers stated that they always make lesson plans following English online learning. The teachers sometimes experience problems using e-learning media, but the school rarely helps them overcome the problems.

Table 2 and Table 3 show that teachers always use online media, namely WhatsApp Groups, in online learning. The questionnaire results also show that teachers do not use other online learning media such as Zoom, Edmodo, or Google Classroom. Furthermore, based on the questionnaire results, it can be seen that all students already have their own devices. They also have no problem using the device. Internet connection, limited internet quota, and frequent power outages are the obstacles that students mostly choose. Meanwhile, the teachers only chose internet connections and power outages as the most frequent obstacles they faced in the online learning process.

The teacher and students filled in items 8 and 9 with sometimes, rarely to never. It proves that although online learning has been running quite effectively, the relevant parties, both the department and schools, have not conducted online learning training properly. Students and teachers admitted that they had never been told the guidelines for online learning from either the school or the department. It is miserable considering that online learning guidelines or guidelines are essential to creating effective online learning amid this Covid-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

During the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world, online learning was the government's choice to help minimize the spread of the coronavirus, especially in the educational environment. In line with government regulations, all schools, including one of State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci, conduct online teaching and learning processes. Online learning means learning that

is carried out without face-to-face meetings. The teaching and learning process is no longer carried out conventionally. The teacher and students are no longer in one room but in a place that may be quite far away. Waryanto in Mustakim (2020) stated that the advantage of the online learning model is that it can be used to deliver learning without being limited by space and time.

As stated by Sadikin & Hamidah (2020), in learning activities, the online method requires the support of hardware devices such as Android-based smartphones, laptops, computers, tablets, and others that can be used to access information freely. Teachers and students at one State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci also use hardware in the online learning process, especially smartphones or smartphones. Based on the results of interviews and questionnaires, the students admitted that they already had their gadgets. Most of them even have smartphones, so they no longer borrow their parents' or siblings' smartphones.

Azhar (2005) and Miftah (2013) explained that learning media is strategically facilitating and expediting the learning process. The range of learning also becomes more comprehensive and faster. In online learning, especially in English lessons at one of the State Islamic Junior High Schools in Kerinci, the teacher uses Whatsapp Groups as a learning medium to send both materials and assignments. Based on the interview results, the teacher said that WhatsApp groups were the only media they used. As well as being the media that is considered the most effective for use during online learning and teaching. It follows what was stated by Mustakim (2020) that several learning media that can be used in online learning are Youtube, Whatsapp group, Google Classroom, and quizzes, and materials can be given in the form of videos, PowerPoints, or reading material.

Also, Saragih and Ansi (2020), Khasanah, Nasan, & Jus'aini (2020), and Budiyantri, Ganggi, & Herlambang (2021) have done similar research on the effectiveness of WhatsApp Group during the Pandemic of Covid-19. They found that using applications during online learning is considered more effective and efficient because it makes it easier for users who can access it anywhere. In line with this finding, both teachers and students felt that WhatsApp Group is effective media for use during the online learning and teaching process online.

Although the online learning conducted at one State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci is considered quite effective by teachers and students, they face several obstacles during the online learning and teaching process. Teachers and students admitted that they experienced problems with the internet network, which was often interrupted, so the teaching and learning process could not run well. They also said that frequent power outages in the Kerinci Regency area were one of the obstacles they faced. However, teachers and students always try to find a way out of the problems or obstacles they face. Installing wi-fi is one of the options they do to overcome this problem. Several students in the interview also admitted that sometimes when the internet network is not stable, they will ask for a hotspot from their parents' smartphones. At the same time, others will choose to look for a place with a more stable signal.

Khasanah et al. (2020) and Budiyantri et al. (2021) also found similar obstacles in the online learning-teaching process. Some students had limited internet access and an unstable internet network, as well as difficulties in understanding the materials better compared to the face-to-face teaching and learning process. Also, they found that some students were distracted and found it challenging to focus on the learning while they had online classes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out at one State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci, it can be concluded that online learning carried out at one State Islamic Junior High School in Kerinci, especially in English subjects, is quite effective. In the online learning process, the learning media used is Whatsapp Group which, according to the perception of teachers and students, is the most effective learning media for them. The teacher sends materials and assignments and provides explanations to students through this media. The obstacles faced by students and teachers are unstable internet networks and frequent power outages. To overcome this obstacle, teachers and students choose to install wi-fi in their respective homes.

Suggestions or recommendations for researchers who want to research this topic should be able to choose schools on a larger scale, for example, schools in one sub-district. Furthermore, the researcher also suggested that the government, in this case, the Kerinci district government, immediately find a quick and effective solution in terms of power outages, considering that this is one of the obstacles teachers and students face online learning.

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