Teachers' Perception on the Implementation of Smart Learning System to Junior High School Students

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Abstract:

Online learning has become one of the teaching models employed in high schools and higher education nowadays due to the unstoppable virus covid-19 which spread all around the world including in Indonesia. It is one of the ways to minimize the deadly virus to spread to wider areas by avoiding physical contact among students. However, the limitation of the simple and practical platforms provided makes the students find difficulties in operating the system. That is why it is a challenge for teachers or lecturers to develop innovative platforms to feel the needs of the students, the simple and practical ones particularly for junior high school students. This study aimed at knowing the teachers' perception after implementing Smart Learning Platform, to junior high school students. Ten teachers from ten different schools in Semarang were given Likert scale questionnaire to find out whether or not the platform was suitable and filled the needs of the junior high school students. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.The findings showed that 60% of the teachers stated totally agree and 40% agree dealing with the question of whether the process of Smart Learning Platform was easy to operate and interesting; 90% totally agree and 10% agree for its easiness to login; the content of this platform was completed with the space for presentation, quiz and video; it can be used for synchronous, asynchronous and blended 70% totally agree and 30 % agree. Thus, Smart Learning Platform is very appropriate and can fill the needs of junior high school students to learn.Based on the interview, most teachers agreed and confirmed that Smart Learning Platform of online learning was suitable for junior high school students to learn. It can enhance their motivation to study as well.

Key Word*: Smart Learning Platform, online learning, implementation.*

I. Introduction

The enactment of Indonesian regulation no. 16, 2007 concerning the academic qualification standard and teacher competences which states that teachers should be able to make use of Information and communication technology (ICT) for instructional purposes pushed teachers to be literate in IT. In response to this regulation several schools were challenged to realize the government's demands by upgrading the teachers to learn IT or ICT and equipped themselves with laboratories of language, computer and multimedia for their instructional purposes. Then bit by bit teachers were accustomed to make use of ICT in their teaching learning process and it was a fortune that by the time of the outbreak of covid 19 in 2020, the Indonesian teachers have a bit prepared in facing this problem where teaching learning should be conducted through online. What is meant by online learning, according toBakia, Shear, Toyama, & Lasseter, (2012) is language teaching services that use the Internet in educational environments. Poe, M & Stassen (2014) further state that online teaching is the delivery of learning instruction via the internet by faculty. Online learning has been practiced by the teachers since 2020 when covid 19, the deadly virus, spread rapidly all around the world. Since online learning was relatively new in Indonesia at that time, the platform provided was still limited and a bit complicated that students in junior high schools found it hard to operate the system. That is why the development of an innovative platform of online learning system addressed for educational purposes is paramount important for the teachers or lecturers due to the fact that the spread of new babies of covid 19 is unpredictable to stop. In the past few days, it was announced that a new type of covid 19, omicron XBB has spread widely in Singapore and was predicted to spread to other countries as well. So, teaching learning through online is still badly needed to avoid the crowd and to minimize the spread of this virus particularly among the students; besides, online learning, a distance learning evolving platform enables users to work flexibly beyond the limits of time and place (Chaney, 2010). Marsh (2012, p 5) stresses that using online learning can enhance students' learning. In online learning students and teachers can practice conversation skill and form discussions on topics of interest. Therefore,

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online learning is still needed nowadays and even shows an increase as the teaching model implemented in high schools and universities (Torrisi-Steele, 2011). This is due to the fact that online learning, enables teachers to teach flexibly beyond the limits of time and place where some experts like Deegan and Rothwell (2010) even call it as a mobile learning, "the intersection of mobile computing and e-learning". Kukulska-Hulme et.all (2011) who are of the opinion of Deegan and Rothwell (2010) also state that mobile learning is a learning using mobile technologies for educational purposes where opportunities such as spontaneous, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous, pervasive and personal are offered. What is meant by mobile learning here is teaching learning using technology and mobile apparatus such as PDA, cell-phone, laptop, tablet PC etc.

However, not all platforms of online learning provided are easy to operate because of the complicated instructions, or too many features that students are not yet familiar with to follow. The unavailability of suitable platforms of online learning, makes the students desperate and unmotivated to learn whatever subjects. Junior high school students need simple and practical platform so that without the help from the instructors or from the teachers and they can be self-educated, self-learned, and self-assessed.

As a response to the aforementioned reasons, Smart Learning platform using an instructional model was developed. The platform is accompanied with operational guide which covers the way how to login in the system. In order to login, every student is given user name and password. When everyone is successful in login, he/she is directed to the menu dashboard to choose the course being followed. Each course takes 7 phases to finish. Teaching learning process in this platform can be done as follows: phase 1 asynchronously, phase 2 asynchronously, phase 3 synchronously, phase 4 asynchronously, phase 5 synchronously, phase 6 synchronously and phase 7 asynchronously. In the last phase, the students are required to fill out the form on their perception regarding the topic and the platform used. This platform also provides enough space for presentation, question and answer session, discussion, video, audio-visual, quiz.

It is simple and easy to operate. The simplicity of this platform can be seen from its easy instruction and easy ways of its operation in which students can learn it by themselves without being coached by instructors. Since this Smart Learning Platform was believed to be easy to follow and enjoyable for the students to do it basically gives much benefit to the students whose knowledge of IT is still limited and to those who are not yet accustomed to using it for the online learning. Besides, this platform can be used synchronously, asynchronously and even blended.

Synchronous means that everything happens simultaneously where a teacher and students communicate directly through video conference, telephone conversation and instant messages (Routledge, 2011; Serdyukov, 1022). On the other hand, asynchronous means that teaching learning may happen at a different time where a teacher may post the teaching materials that can be accessed by the students in a flexible time within a defined number of days (Routledge, 2011). Furthermore, blended learning is the combination of two types of online learning, synchronous and asynchronous.

However, to assure whether the innovative platform of Smart Learning System is greatly acceptable for the teachers and the students where the steps of operating the system are easily understood, a research on the teachers' perception was done. What is meant by perception here is giving meaning and interpretation about what one evaluates, judges of things. According to Suwandi&Ardini(2015) perception is what we think or believe. Ten teachers from different schools in Semarang who were upgraded before, implemented the platform followed by 300 students. The focus was to ascertain that the platform was acceptable and easy to operate without the help of others for students of junior high schools. Therefore, based on the experience, after implementing the platform, the teachers were assigned to give their perception with the following questions: (1) to what extent is the completeness of the features in the platform? (2) to what extent is the practicality and the easiness of the platform to login?(3) to what extent is the implementation of synchronous, asynchronous and blended in teaching learning activities

Basically, research on the perception of the students and teachers toward the use of technology for educational purposes has been done by many researchers and in general showed that teachers' perception on online English language learning was positive in the sense that it was useful, positive attitude during online learning and it could enhance learning skills (Rahayu&Wirza (2020). Lavin et al. (2010), for example, after studying the impact of technology used in university concluded that adding technology in courses give positive impact on students' perception of the instructor and on students' behaviour. Nomass (2013) also studied the use of modern technology in teaching EFL and concluded that students preferred the use of various types of technology, especially computers to enhance their second language skills. In short, the use of online learning is perceived to have a positive impact to enhance the mastery of second or foreign language skills.

II. Method
This study used a descriptive case study with the focus on answering the questions of the feature completeness of the platform, the implementation of synchronous and asynchronous in teaching learning activities and the easiness of the platform to login. Ten teachers from ten Junior High Schools in Semarang

implemented the Smart Learning followed by 300 students. The instruments used for collecting the data were questionnaire, interview guide and observation. So, after finishing the implementation of the smart learning platform, the teachers were given questionnaires to be filled out concerning their perception on the extent to which smart learning was suitable for junior high school students. Interview was also done to get to know the suitability of the platform for the students.

III. Result

In this part, the findings are presented in the form of the description on the completeness of the features in the platform, the implementation of synchronous and asynchronous in teaching learning activities, the easiness of the platform to login.

The Completeness of The Features in The Platform

Based on the result of the data analysis concerning the content of the platform, 60% percent of the teachers answered totally agree and 40% agree. None of them answered disagree or totally disagree. It means that their perception towards the completeness of the platform was positive. So, it was admitted by the teachers that Smart Learning Platform was complete in its features for the teaching learning activities such as completed with operational guide, and enough space for presentation, questions and answer session, discussion, video, quiz and audio-visual and it can also be accessed through website. Since this platform is instructional based, the steps of operating the system are in accordance with the way a teacher teaching. Various kinds of teaching media are also provided so as to ease teachers to facilitate the students with whatever teaching media they need. The appropriateness of the platform of online learning may enhance the students' learning skill (Marsh: 2012, p 5). The following figure indicate the teachers' perception toward the completeness of Smart Learning platform.

Figure 1. The completeness of the features in Smart Learning platform.
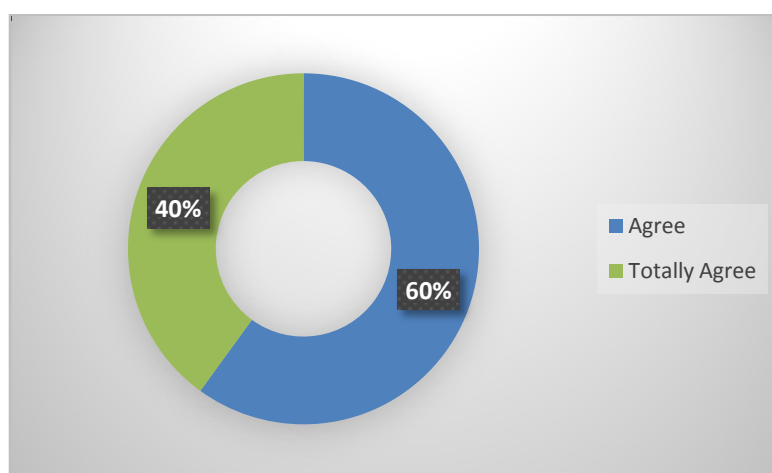
The Practicality of LMS Smart Learning Platform

It was perceived by the teachers that Smart Learning Platform was very practical, easy to operate where students did not have any difficulties in operating the system. Just once or twice after the couching of how to operate the Smart Learning platform, the students were able to do it by themselves. The ability of the students to operate the system without much effort, where teachers did not take much time for explaining it, made the teachers so impressed and they could start the lesson all at once. All students could login easily without the help of teachers. After several days of practicing using smart learning platform, the students were showing their enthusiasm in learning shown from their active participation, for example many questions were raised during the lesson.

Figure 2. The Practicality of Smart Learning Platform
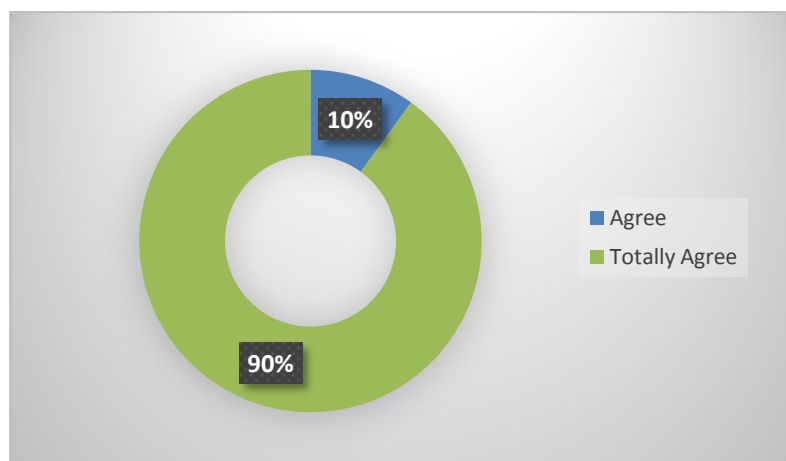
Synchronous, Asynchronous and Blended

This platform is also considered to be flexible because it can be used synchronously, asynchronously and blended. Synchronous learning is teaching learning conducted from distant and students can attend the class virtually at the same time as the teacher and classmates. Asynchronous, on the other hand, allows the students to learn on their own schedule within a certain time frame and blended is the combination of digital learning tools and traditional classroom face to face teaching. In his case, the students and teacher should be physically located in the same space. Because of its flexibility in using this platform, the teachers perceived this to be effective and flexible for the teaching learning.

Figure 3. Synchronous, Asynchronous and Blended
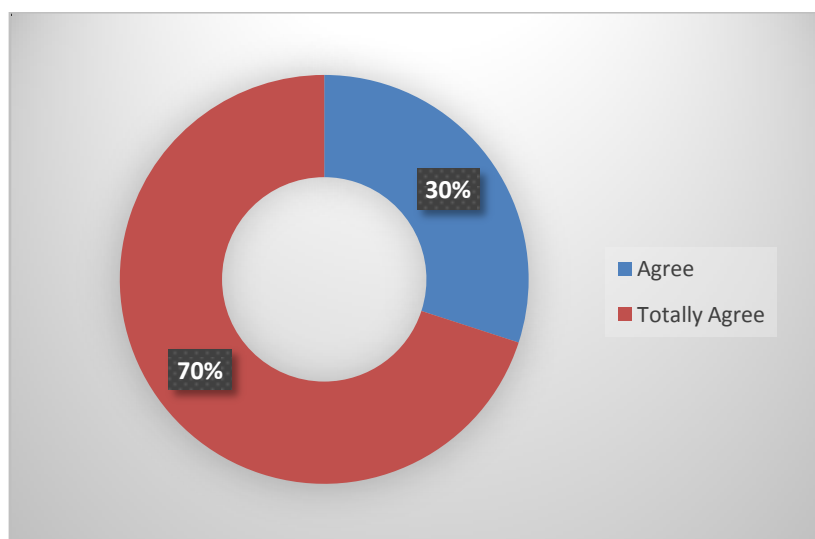
IV. Discussion

The research findings showed that most English teachers at junior high school were impressed by the completeness of the features of Smart Learning platform where none of them stated disagree or completely disagree. It implies the meaning that this platform could facilitate them in teaching English through online. They could feel at ease in operating the system completed with operational guide and enough space for the teaching learning process where presentation, question and answer, discussion, video, quiz and audio-visual are available. They admitted that the platform could fill the needs of instructional process which covered planning, executing and assessing.

Concerning the practicality of the platform, it was found out that 90% stated totally agree and 10% agree and none of them stated disagree or totally disagree. It indicates that viewing from the practicality, it is almost perfect that it is quite easy either for the teachers or students to operate the system. Thus, this platform

helps the students to achieve the success of learning process through online for it is simple, complete and easy to login. They do not need much effort to operate the system and it seems that it can stimulate the students to learn.

With the help of technology, the teachers' presentation of English lesson seemed to be more interesting and challenging because they could choose varied instructional methods and materials. They could use the platform flexibly through synchronous, asynchronous and blended. So, it is quite rational to say that Smart Learning platform can facilitate the students and teachers to accomplish the objectives English learning.

V. Conclusionand Suggestions

Deriving from the findings aforementioned above, with reference to the teachers' perception, it can be concluded that Smart Learning Platform is a platform which can fulfil the needs of the students in getting a simple and practical platform and complete in its content. It is simple and practical because the system is easy to be operated by the students effortlessly and the content is complete for it is completed with the provision of enough space for presentation, quiz, video or audio-visual. It can also be accessed through website that it can promote students' learning skills. Besides of its simplicity and completeness in its content, it is also flexible where the teacher can use the platform synchronously, asynchronously or blended. Then it can ease the teachers to choose which type of online learning will be used depends on the condition of the teachers and students. It is also practical because it is easy to operate so that students do not encounter any serious difficulties. Besides, the content is already complete.

Thus, it is recommended that teachers at junior high schools, whatever subjects they teach can use online learning with this platform. As indicated by the teachers, this platform is very practical that can motivate students to learn or even can enhance their learning skills. It is also suggested that EFL teachers may develop more complete and more practical platforms that can enhance students' learning skill.

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