# Students' Insight into Online Platform during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Putra Sang Fajar Blitar State Community Academy

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## A B S T R A K

**Objektif.** Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi mahasiswa Putra Sang Fajar Blitar State Community Academyterkait penggunaan platform online sebagai pengganti pembelajaran tatap muka di masa pandemi Covid-19. Penelitian ini berangkat dari dampak yang ditimbulkan oleh penyebaran pandemi Covid-19, dimana seluruh kegiatan pembelajaran dilakukan secara daring.

**Material and Metode.** Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif. Sumber data penelitian ini merupakan hasil kuisioner melalui google form dan wawancara yang dilakukan terhadap 5 mahasiswa terpilih dari masing-masing program studi, yang dianalisis secara detail sebanyak 20 mahasiswa. Teknik random sampling digunakan oleh peneliti untuk mengumpulkan data dengan mengirimkan kuesioner melalui google form dan melakukan wawancara untuk menggali persepsi siswa tentang penggunaan media sosial dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

**Hasil.** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan platform online dalam pembelajaran sangat berbeda dengan yang digunakan siswa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Dari hasil kuisioner yang diperoleh menunjukkan bahwa aplikasi zoom paling sering digunakan sebagai alternatif pembelajaran daring. Sementara itu, aplikasi WhatsApp sering digunakan mahasiswa dalam komunikasi sehari-hari.

**Kesimpulan.** Pemanfaatan platform online sebagai alternatif pembelajaran memberikan beberapa kemudahan dalam proses belajar mengajar di era pandemi, seperti fleksibilitas waktu, interaktif dan suasana menyenangkan. Namun tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa penggunaan platform online dalam pembelajaran juga memiliki kendala, seperti pembelajaran yang sangat monoton, kuota internet, kesulitan dalam mengekspresikan kreativitas, respon yang kurang baik, dan jadwal yang tidak menentu.

*Kata kunci:*
*Persepsi siswa, platform online,pembelajaran alternatif, era pandemi*

## A B S T R A C T

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to identify the insight of Putra Sang Fajar Blitar State Community Academy students regarding the use of online platforms as a substitute for face-to-face learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research departs from the impact caused by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, where all learning activities are carried out online.

**Materials and Methods.** The method used in this research is qualitative. The data source is the result of a questionnaire via google form and conducted interviews with 5 selected students from each study program, of which a total of 20 students were analyzed in detail. Random sampling technique was used by researchers to collect data by sending questionnaires via Google form and conducting interviews to explore students' perceptions about the utilization of social media in learning English.

**Results.** The results of the research show that the utilization of online platforms in learning is very different from what students use in everyday life. It obtained that the zoom application is most often used as an alternative to online learning. Meanwhile, the WhatsApp application is often used by students in daily communication.

**Conclusion.** The utilization of online platforms as learning alternatives provides several conveniences in the teaching and learning process in the pandemic era, such as time flexibility, interaction, and fun. However, it cannot be denied that the utilization of online platforms in learning also has obstacles, such as very monotonous learning, internet quota, difficulties in expressing creativity, poor responses, and uncertain schedules.

**Keywords:**
Students' perception, online platforms, alternative learning, pandemic era.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia now has big challenges in handling COVID-19 in all aspects. Of all, education is the most essential thing to be discussed by the authors in this research. This was raised by the author because of the massive spread of the COVID-19 virus in various countries, especially Indonesia, which requires all educators (teacher and lecturer) and students to carry out teaching and learning activities without meeting face to face. Therefore, it is undeniable that the role of technology is very large as a solution to overcoming this problem. Technology in education can be defined as how to use technology for teaching and learning activities. Current technological developments help students and lecturers in the learning process at the university. Where learning is currently very closely related to the internet as a source of learning and a means of learning today (Akbar & Noviani, 2019).

The application of technology in the field of education improves the ability of lecturers to convey material to students easily in this COVID-19 era. This makes lecturers teach effectively and efficiently. Patrick & Powell (2009) stated that online learning has the potential to transform teaching by redesigning traditional classroom learning approaches and improving the quality of the learning experience. Online learning not only offers an increase in the quality of education but is also a solution to the problems faced in traditional learning. Learning using technology will certainly present various advanced features that will have a positive impact on the learning process. For this reason, social media as part of technological advances is very useful in supporting the learning process.

According to Cambridge Assessment International Education (2018), Social media is a public space where adolescents usually spend hours browsing, sharing photos, videos, and information, as well as commenting on other people's posts that also use a similar platform. It is interesting to understand the benefits of social media to students in Indonesia because, presently, adolescents are inseparable from these platforms (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Social media also becomes the primary source of information, especially in the current circumstances where several individuals are being isolated in hospitals or quarantined at home (Pappot et al., 2020). Due to the pandemic, social media serves as an efficient source of information and an effective means to stay abreast of media knowledge (McGowan et al., 2012) and other relevant matters associated with education and economics. However, as a feature attached to the community, it also has positive and negative impacts. One of the negative impacts is the wide spread of information, which causes panic (Ahmad & Murad, 2020). Regardless of the negative effects, it is undeniable that the utilization of social media is supporting the teaching-learning process in schools and universities in the pandemic new norm. Consequently, this educational paradigm shift requires further surveys to explore the potential and limitations (Rahim, 2021).

Bilfaqih & Qomarudin (2015) stated that online learning is a program for organizing online learning classes to reach a massive and broad target. Through the network, learning can be held massively with unlimited participants. Online learning can be organized and followed for free or paid. This means that online learning is the right learning strategy in the midst of this corona outbreak as a substitute for offline classes that have been carried out so far. Hartono (2012) said that the utilization of information and communication technology in learning can help teachers or

students. Thus, the utilization of several types of social media applications is the right alternative for facilitating teaching and learning activities in the COVID-19 era.

In this research, the researcher analyzed the insight of students at Putra Sang Fajar Blitar State Community Academy consisting of Computer Network and Server Administration Department, Digital Office Operations Department, Audio Video Editing Department, and Poultry Product Processing Department as a source of research data because the researcher wanted to know students' insight of learning English by using social media in particular to see the advantages and disadvantages they face in the virtual learning process by using several social media. Therefore, lecturers can maintain things that are already good and anticipate the obstacles so that this can be handled as well as possible so that the learning process can run well in the future.

Based on the explanation above, the research question in this study is how students perceive the use of social media platforms as an alternative to learning in this pandemic era. The researcher focuses on knowing students' insights in using social media platforms, especially in learning English to see the positive and negative impacts they face when they learn virtually by using several online platforms. So that lecturers can overcome and get solutions to obstacles in online learning with online platforms properly so that the entire teaching and learning processcan run smoothly without obstacles.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this research, the researcher take the qualitative method by using a descriptive approach by collecting, describing, analyzing, and describing data by sending questionnaires and interviewing the students. Stake (2010) stated that qualitative research is dependent on human perceptions of the subject and the time that has been used on a matter discussed. The research was done at Putra Sang Fajar Blitar State Community Academy. The population is all students of that university. The technique of collecting data in this research was random sampling by sending questionnaires through a closed google form where the researchers gave questions and answers to respondents. Students are asked to choose their answers to multiple choice questions, and write answers to essay questions. Then the interview was done with 20 students who are selected to dig deeper into students' insight of the utilization of social media in learning, such as learning using Google Classroom, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Zoom Meeting, and so on. Interview questions are conversation, which is questioning and listening. The characteristics of each student greatly influence the methods in this study, especially when the student utilizes social media in the learning process. The following questions were then developed based on the answers given by the students. After the research data is collected, the next step is to analyze the data to draw conclusions. Data were analyzed by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. Then the data that has been collected will be presented descriptively..

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the results of the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher separated them into two parts to make them easier to understand:
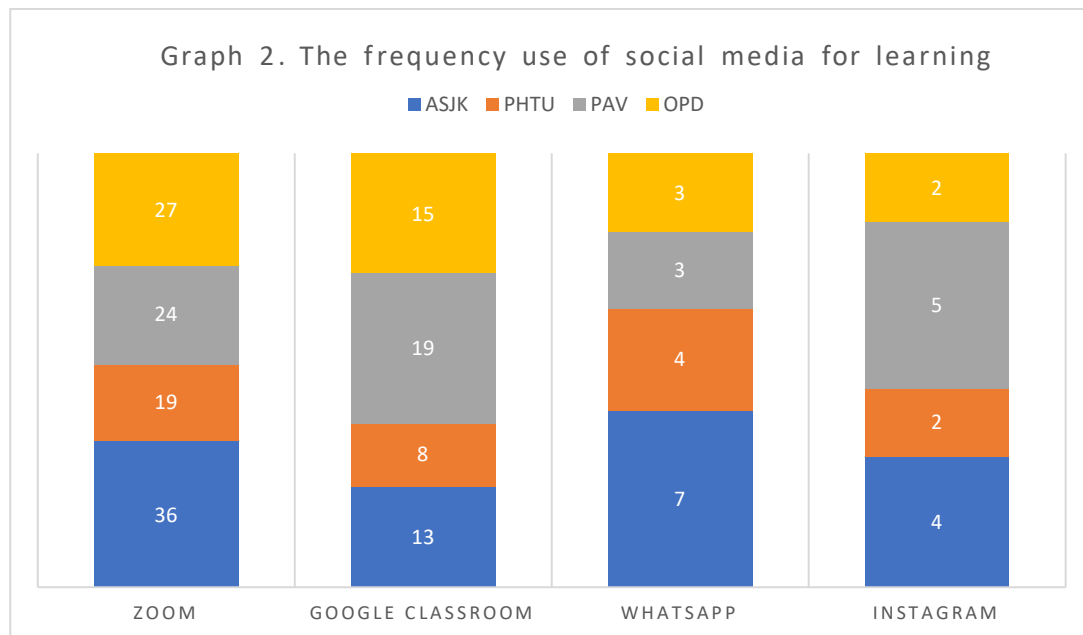
### (1) The result of questionnaire

The researcher analyzed the results of questionnaires that were distributed to students to find out which applications were most dominantly used, the positive

impact of using these applications, and the obstacles in using them. In this technological era, it is undeniable that the presence of social media platforms is very numerous, coupled with their very easy use. It's no wonder that all students are used to using social media platforms on their devices. But the most commonly used are Instagram and WhatsApp. The following is a graph that can see the amounts of social media used by students:

Graph 1. The social media platform for everyday use
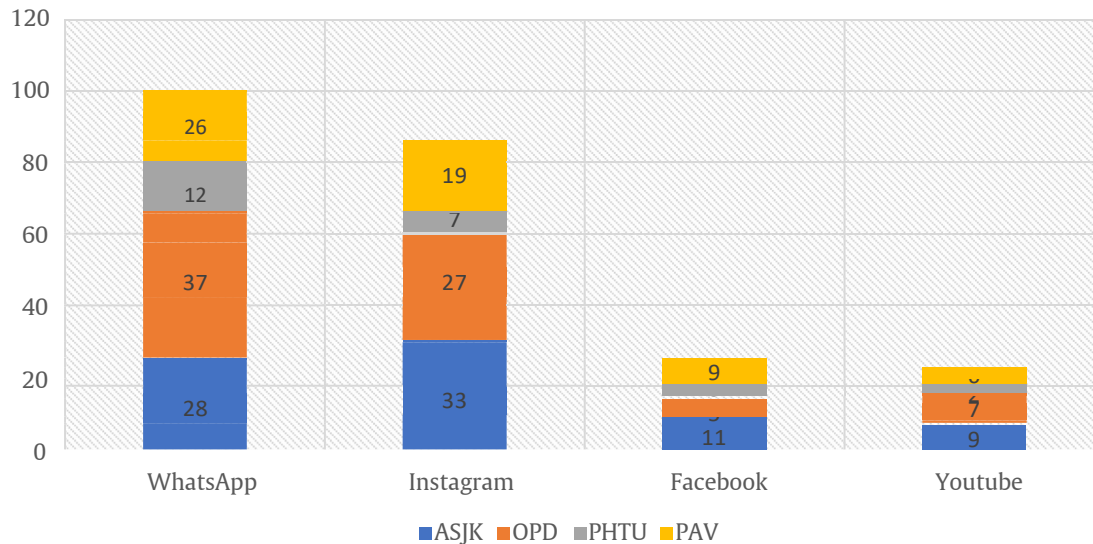


Based on the graph above, it can be seen that the Instagram platform is often used by students in their daily activities. The utilization of social media is also used to study during this pandemic, and also to interact socially with lecturers and their peers. This different utilization is also based on several reasons because some applications also have different functions. Instagram applications patterned to express themselves, such as uploading photos and videos, coupled with live features that can interact directly with their friends. It's also different from the WhatsApp application which focuses more on sending and receiving voice and text messages. The WhatsApp application also has a feature to interact directly with and without video, which is almost similar to the live feature on Instagram. There are also zoom applications and Google Classroom which are not social media applications that are commonly used, but are specifically patterned as learning applications. Inversely proportional to the results of using online platforms for everyday utilization, which are very different from platforms for learning media. From the results of the questionnaire, most of the virtual classes were conducted using a different social media platform from the graph above. The following graph is performed from the online platforms the students use virtually during learning:

Graph 2. The frequency use of social media for learning

■ ASJK ■ PHTU ■ PAV ■ OPD

| | ZOOM | GOOGLE CLASSROOM | WHATSAPP | INSTAGRAM |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OPD | 27 | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| PAV | 24 | 19 | 3 | 5 |
| PHTU | 19 | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| ASJK | 36 | 13 | 7 | 4 |

Based on the graph above, the zoom application is often used by students as a learning alternative, which is followed by the utilization of Google Classroom. The utilization of zoom is indeed very effective during this pandemic. The capacity is also sufficient to accommodate the number of students in 1 class. So, it cannot be denied that the Zoom application is the right alternative to face-to-face classes as usual. Same with the Google Classroom application, which is also not a social media application that is commonly used, but is specifically patterned as a learning application.

Furthermore, the questionnaire given was about questions to explore students' insight regarding the utilization of online platforms. From the results obtained, students are assisted in online learning amidst the increasingly uncertain corona virus pandemic. To find out the insight of the students, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The result of questionnaires

| No | | Questionnaire Students Answer | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | |
| 1 | Does the utilization of online platform make you more stressed in studying? | 9 | 65 | 74 |
| 2 | Are you confused in digesting the material taught through the online platform? | 12 | 62 | 74 |
| 3 | Does the online platform allow you to interact with other teachers and friends? | 71 | 3 | 74 |

| 4 | Does the online platform excite you in learning? | 68 | 6 | 74 |
| 5 | Does the utilization of social media make you bored faster? | 34 | 40 | 74 |

The results of the questions on the questionnaire show students' insight in responding to the utilization of social media platforms as an alternative learning. In the first question, only 9 out of 74 students felt stressed when using online platforms as an alternative to learning. Then, another 65 people feel comfortable without pressure in this situation. For this reason, online learning by using platforms does not put too much pressure on students. For question number 2, as many as 62 students digested the lesson well through social media without confusion. While the rest, 12 people felt otherwise. Then it can be concluded that students can still follow learning material without feeling confused or dizzy even though it takes place with social media.

Then in question 3, as many as 71 students revealed that they could still actively interact as usual with lecturers and other friends even though the lectures were held online. For this reason, alternative learning using social media does not hinder interaction between students and lecturers. In question 4, as many as 68 students felt happy and excited in the online class even though the class was not held face to face as usual. The rest, about 6 students feel monotonous because they are not able to express themselves in class. In the last question, as many as 34 students experienced boredom quickly when learning took place through social media. Meanwhile, as many as 40 people feel normal. The number of students who feel bored quickly in online learning, and students who don't, almost shows the same results. For this reason, the result of this fifth question is almost balanced in that the utilization of platforms as an alternative to learning is very quickly boring and sometimes too normal.

**(2) The result of interview**

Then, the analysis of the questionnaire is a continuation of the interview results. The researcher also interviewed student representatives from each study program regarding students' insight of using online platforms as an alternative learning. The questions asked were the same to get the appropriate results and are attached in the table below. These insights were showed in the following table.

In this step, the researcher conducted interviews with only a few random students from representatives of each study program to get more in-depth student personal opinions about the use of social media in learning activities. The interview is in the form of a semi-structured where the researcher is able to find out the students' insight in depth through the utilization of online platforms in learning. Interview results can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. The result of students' interview in Putra Sang Fajar State Community Academy

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| What do you think about the utilization ofonline platform in learning? | The online platform that I have helps me in studying in the era of COVID-19. Which usually I study face-to-face with lecturers, but now<br>through an alternative by studying online. |
| Do you feel motivated to learn English through online platforms? | Learning through social media makes me happy because basically I like playing with online platform. However, sometimes I feel bored because I haven't studied face-to-face<br>for more than a year. Sometimes it feels very empty studying at a distance like this |
| Do you encounter many difficultie in learning              s ? | No, because every online platform guides itsusers in operating it. So, even with a new<br>platform, I can still use it. |
| What are the advantages of using onlineplatforms in learning activities? | It makes it very easy for me to study in a pandemic situation like this. It is also very flexible because it can study anytime and<br>anywhere. |
| Would you rather learn using an online platform than not using it? | I prefer to study with online platform. However, after learning face to face later, I hope learning with social media can be applied as well |

From the results of the interview, the researcher found that many students experienced a positive impact in learning by using online platforms, where its utilization is very easy and familiar with daily life makes students feel closer and accustomed to using it. Then, this also raises student motivation to study through online platforms and also makes students feel enthusiastic to continue learning. However, not only that, but students sometimes feel bored in using online platforms continuously. Therefore, lecturers who have an important role in the learning process must really be able to balance learning both face-to-face and by utilizing social media as an alternative in this pandemic era. Thus, students can find learning patterns that suit their needs and can achieve good learning goals.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, it can be interpreted that the use of social media platforms has several positive impacts in its implementation, such as time flexibility, effectiveness of use, convenience, interaction, and fun. However, the problem is that learning tends to be a little passive (not colored), boring, and difficult to express creativity, as well as a poor response between the teacher and students. In the learning

process using various kinds of online platforms, student learning methods and motivation can be influenced by the roles and tasks of the lecturer as a figure who acts as an important figure in learning who must be truly evaluative in choosing the right type of platform to use in the learning process. Lecturers must also be able to ensure that students do not experience problems in using various platforms as learning tools so that both lecturers and students can be connected to each other to achieve learning goals. Therefore, student insights regarding the use of social media platforms in learning can provide readers with an overview of the situations faced by students during virtual learning. So that readers can understand the conditions faced by students when studying virtually. From the results of this study, readers can take advantage of this research as an overview to conduct further research that has a correlation with the theme of this research so that it can broaden research insights. Finally, this research is only limited to knowing students' insights in using platforms for learning, so further studies are needed regarding the use of certain social media technologies to improve students' English skills in the future. Researchers hope that there will be further research on the use of technology in learning English.

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