VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GOOGLE CLASSROOM IN FULL ONLINE LEARNING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

G. R. Dantes[1), N. K. A. Rinawati [2), N. K. A. Suwastini [3), N. N. Artini[4)
[1]Department of Information Management, Faculty of Engineering and Vocational, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
email: rasben.dantes@undiksha.ac.id
[2]English Language Education, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
email: ayurinawati123@gmail.com
[3]English Language Education, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
email: arie.suwastini@undiksha.ac.id
[4]English Language Education, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
nartini@undiksha.ac.id

ABSTRAK
Pandemi global Covid-19 berdampak pada semua lini kehidupan, termasuk pembelajaran siswa. Guru dan siswa diinstruksikan untuk "belajar dari rumah" dengan memanfaatkan pembelajaran daring. Beberapa platform pembelajaran daring dimanfaatkan, misalnya Google Classroom. Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk mengungkapkan persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran online yang berlangsung lewat Google Classroom di awal masa pandemi, dengan melibatkan empat puluh siswa kelas IX di sebuah sekolah menengah kejuruan negeri di kota Denpasar. Data dikumpulkan dengan menyebar kuesioner dan melakukan wawancara. Ditemukan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki persepsi yang baik mengenai implementasi Google Classroom di kelas mereka, meski perubahan moda pembelajaran terjadi tiba-tiba. Namun, siswa mengungkapkan mereka merasa pembelajaran dengan Google Classroom dalam moda daring ini meminimalkan interaksi dalam proses pembelajaran sehingga siswa kehilangan kesempatan untuk mengkonfirmasi informasi dan pengetahuan yang mereka terima selama pembelajaran Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya guru membangun interaksi dalam pembelajaran terutama dalam moda daring, baik antara siswa dan guru maupun antar siswa.

Kata kunci: Google Classroom, pembelajaran daring, pandemi, persepsi

ABSTRACT
The global Covid-19 pandemic affects all aspects of life, including students learning process. Teachers and students were instructed to "study from home" using the online learning mode. Many online learning platforms were used during this time, including Google Classroom. The present study aimed to reveal students' perceptions of the implementation of Google Classroom at the beginning of the pandemic. The study took place in one of the state vocational schools in Denpasar City, involving forty students in Grade IX. The data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The study revealed that most students positively perceived the implementation of Google Classroom in their online learning, even though the sudden shift to online learning. However, students viewed the implementation of Google Classroom in online learning mode lacked interactions during the learning process, causing them to feel that they had no chance to confirm information or knowledge that they had learned. This finding implies that teachers must build interaction between teachers and students during the online learning process.

Keywords: Google Classroom, online learning, pandemic, perception

INTRODUCTION

Information/Communication Technology has become an essential part of people's lives in this 21st century [1], including education [2]. Its inevitability in education became apparent during the outbreak of Covid-19, where the spread of the virus can only be contained by limiting interactions between patients and healthy people. Thus, the Indonesian government prompted the community to limit their public activities, including education [3]. People were instructed to work and study from home to lessen the interaction among people as a preventive way to halt the spread of the virus [4]–[7].

During the mandatory stay-at-home policy, online learning becomes the only choice for teachers [8], [9]. Online learning is internet-based learning that focuses on a full range of computer-based learning platforms and adjusts them to the online contexts [10]–[13]. Standard media needed to conduct online learning are computers, laptops, and smartphones over an internet connection [12], [14], [15]. Some online platforms are Google Classroom, Google Meets, Zoom, and WebEx [9], [16]–[18]. Many online learning processes incorporate social media as a primary medium or as supplements, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram, and Facebook [19]–[21].

Many teachers consider Google Classroom their favorite online learning platform because it offers many features, i.e., paperless activity and ease in creating classes, distributing assignments, communicating, and organizing activities [22]–[24]. Furthermore, it provides features that allow a collaborative learning environment [22], [25]–[27]. In terms of language learning, Google Classroom is argued to facilitate interaction and motivating learning spaces [28], [29]. Google Classroom is free and practical, allowing teachers and students to utilize their Google accounts from their personal digital devices, such as smartphones or notebook [30]–[32]. Users can set up and create classes and share the class code with the class participants to let them join the class online. The platform can be used for distributing assignments, uploading course materials, post announcements, and sending feedback for the class participants to view.

However, online learning has many challenges, ranging from technical aspects to human readiness [5], [6], [9], [13], [33]–[37]. Kuama & Intharaksa [38] list four significant challenges in online learning: cognition, meta-cognition, technical anxiety, and learning styles and preferences. Cognitive challenges related to personal cognitive ability to deal with multi and complex learning tasks. Meta-cognitive challenges refer to self-directed learning where students can monitor and set their learning schedule to ensure they can complete their lessons. Technical anxiety covered technology and internet anxiety. For instance, when students lack skills in technology use and have troubled internet connection during online learning, they would be frustrated, influencing their learning process. The last was learning style and preference. At this point, students need to adapt new learning environment. For instance, the learning shift from on-site learning to online learning would be a challenge for students in online learning [38]. Besides, Google Classroom is also argued to pose challenges regarding time management, autonomy, and technical problems [39], [40].

The success of learning is strongly affected by students' perceptions of the learning process [41]. Likewise, students' perceptions of online learning and the platform selected to conduct it also affect the success of the learning process [8], [13], [37], [42]. A positive attitude in language learning will always guide the students to get back to their goals when facing obstacles during learning. Considering the many challenges of online learning and Google classroom highlighted by previous studies, the present study aimed to reveal students' perceptions of implementing Google Classroom in a vocational school in Denpasar at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak. Before the outbreak, the platform was often implemented in a blended setting, where online learning was combined with a conventional face-to-face meeting at school. However, during the pandemic, the platform was used fully in online setting. Thus, it was essential to observe students' perceptions of its implementation when Google Classroom was fully implemented online. Such a study can highlight students' perceptions of sudden changes in learning modes to provide recommendations for swifter transitions should changes in learning modes occur.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was qualitative descriptive, following the interactive model of qualitative data analysis from Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [43]. The data classification, display, and conclusion drawing were conducted in this design. At the same time, the data collection is continuously affected by the data classification and data display as it is also continuously affected by the conclusion (see Figure 1). The research enrolled forty students from a state vocational school in Denpasar, Bali., conducted at the beginning of the mandatory online learning in April and May 2022. The research object was the students' perceptions of the implementation of Google Classroom during the stated period.
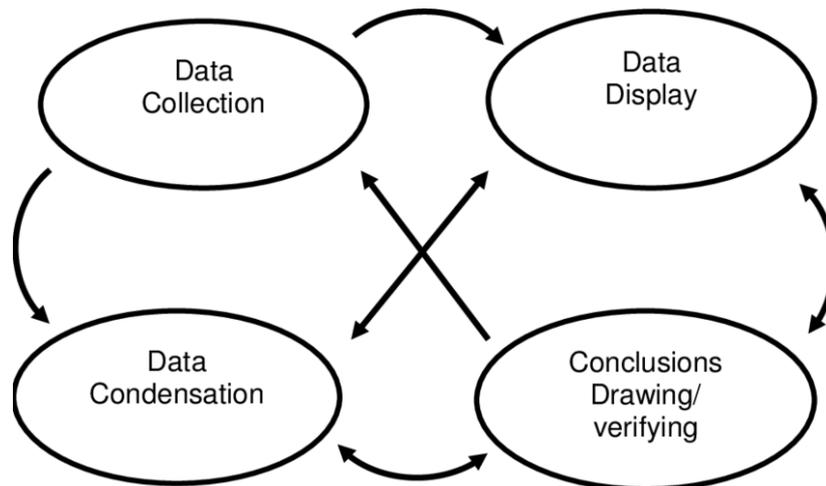
Figure 1. Qualitative data analysis from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014)

The research's primary instrument was the researchers, aided by a questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was adapted from Sepyanda [25] and Kirmizi [44], consisting of ten questions that explored students' perceptions of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the learning process (See Table 2), arranged into a balanced composition (see Table 1). The questionnaire was designed with close-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The research employed semi-structured interviews to triangulate responses gathered from the questionnaire.

Table 1. Aspects of perceptions

No	Indicator	Sub-indicator	Item
1	Cognitive aspect	- Students' belief and understanding about the use of Google classroom	1, 2, 3
2	Affective aspect	- Students' experience in using Google classroom	4, 5, 6
3	Behavioral aspect	- Students' actions toward Google classroom	7, 8, 9, 10

Table. 2 Items of Questions adapted from Sepyanda (2018) and Kirmizi (2015)

Cognitive aspect
1. Google Classroom is an online learning media easy to access anytime and anywhere.
2. As online learning media, Google classroom could facilitate every online learning activity the teacher gives.
3. It is easy to communicate and discuss school assignments with classmates and teachers in Google Classroom.
Affective aspect
4. Overall online learning through Google classroom is positive
5. Google Classroom can help me to improve my learning participation
6. Google classroom let me know the deadline to submit the assignment from the notification
Behavioral aspect
7. I have my own study plan
8. I seek assistance when facing learning problems
9. I can manage time in learning
10. I have higher expectations for my learning performance online.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to reveal students' perceptions of using Google Classroom in their learning process at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The study employed a questionnaire and interview to reveal the students' perceptions, covering cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the learning process. The cognitive aspect of the questionnaire covers students' beliefs and understanding about using Google Classroom. The affective aspect covers students' feelings when experiencing Google Classroom. Cognitively, there were three statements that the students had to observe, namely easy access, facilitate students' learning, and flexibility of access. Effectively, the questionnaire results reflect the students' beliefs about the implementation of Google Classroom, which were covered in statements concerning students' attitudes toward the application, their experience in using the platform, and how it improved their learning process. The behavioral aspects of the students' perceptions were four statements concerning the students' students' autonomy in planning their studying and assessing their learning needs, their time management, and what they expect from their learning process. The result of the questionnaire n be observed in the following table, where SD stands for Strongly Disagree, D stands for Disagree, PA stands for Partially Agree, A stands for Agree, and SA stands for Strongly Agree.

Table 3. Survey Result

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Score				
		SD	D	PA	A	SA
Cognitive aspect	- Students' belief and understanding about the use of Google classroom	0%	4.2%	41.7%	43.3%	10.8%
Affective aspect	- Students' experience in using Google classroom	0%	4.2%	41.7%	43.3%	10.8%
Behavioral Aspect	- Students' actions toward Google Classroom	0%	4.3%	32.5%	38.8%	24.4%

Table 3 above shows that cognitively, 10.8% of the respondents strongly believed that Google Classroom helped facilitate their learning, 43.3% of the students agreed that it made their learning more manageable, and 41.7% only partially agreed on the benefit of implementing Google Classroom. About 4.2% of the students did not believe that Google Classroom benefits their learning, while none were firmly against it. The questionnaire revealed that students agreed with the three statements regarding the easy access to Google Classroom anytime and anywhere, the various applications that support the online learning activities, and the flexibility to communicate and discuss the assignments. The features provided by Google Classroom are believed to improve students' participation. According to Al-Maroof & Al-Emran [22], Hidayati & Saputra [5], and Mulyani et al. [8], this increase in students' participation among Google Classroom users happened because students feel less pressure when interacting with other students as the teacher is not always online and supervise the interaction. Moreover, the flexibility and variety of learning activities can potentially support students' learning process [5], [16], [23]. However, 10% of the students perceived the platform failed to facilitate communication and discussion about the school assignments with other students or with the teacher. It could be explained by the difference in students' metacognitive skills, as their lack of positive perception renders the failure to search for solutions for their problems. Previous studies have argued that students with higher metacognitive skills perceived Google Classroom and other online learning platforms bring them closer to their learning goals, while those with lower metacognitive skills tend to be disoriented [16], [23], [38]. When they are highly motivated, they would at least find discussion tab in Google Classroom [17].

The questionnaire results reflect the students' positive beliefs about implementing Google Classroom. A total of 10.8% of the students strongly feel positively impacted by the implementation of Google Classroom, 43.3% of them agreed with the same sentiment, and 41.7% of the students only partially agreed that they feel helped by the application. Some 4.2% of the students did not feel that Google Classroom helped their learning, and none of them felt strongly negative about Google Classroom.

While most students agreed to the three questions indicating their experience in using Google Classroom as online learning, 10% of the students disagreed with the statement, "*Google Classroom can help me improve my learning participation.*" It was due to the lack of direct communication they acquired in the online learning they conducted. It may be rooted in pre-pandemic learning, where the conventional classroom held more direct communication than its online counterpart. Online learning, however, replaced direct interaction with online interaction. Therefore, they seemed to participate less since the classroom setting would directly show how they interacted and participated. Moreover, Google Classroom did not cover learning practices primarily required in vocational education [26]. The practice was mainly conducted during the face-to-face on-site meeting. Schools usually provide practicing pieces of equipment. While the students were learning from home, they could not access those different types of equipment. It can explain the feeling of lacking learning participation.

From the behavioral aspect, 24.4% of the students strongly agreed that they took the necessary actions to support their learning through Google Classroom, 38.8% of them agreed, and 32.5% only partially agreed that they managed their learning well when learning through Google Classroom. The rest of them (4.3%) disagree that they had behaved positively during the implementation of the application. Student's behaviors during the implementation of Google Classroom produced slightly more positive results than its cognitive and affective counterparts.

Most students agreed they could manage their time to accomplish the tasks given in the Google Classroom they attended. Previous studies supported that using Google Classroom improved students' learning management [5], [16], [23]. Google Workspace for Education provides complete service to work seamlessly. Google Calendar allows its user to create an event and set a reminder. Notification can be sent to users' emails and others invited to the event. Those familiar with Google Service may benefit from the transition towards Google Classroom for their learning. Google Calendar and its notification provide an overview of their weeks which was helpful for them in managing their studying time.

On the other hand, 4.2% of the students disagreed with the statement, *"I seek assistance when facing learning problems."* It indicates that some students encountered difficulties in time management during online learning. Furthermore, they found that seeking guidance from their teacher could be inconvenient. It probably resulted from a completely online environment where online interaction was not limited by the learning environment but also to every daily transaction that may exhaust the students and the teachers. Furthermore, Kuama & Intharaksa [38] emphasize that students could build anxiety during online learning due to unfamiliarity with the learning platform. However, because this study was conducted at the beginning of the pandemic, where the shift to online mode was sudden, such inconvenience could be expected to fade as they used the application for longer.

From the explanation above, over 60% of the students in this study showed positive perceptions and attitudes toward using Google Classroom in the beginning of the pandemic. The three aspects analyzed, namely: the cognitive aspect, affective aspect, and behavioral aspect, revealed a positive range of points. This finding was in line with research from Ridho et al. [29] and Sepyanda [25], which revealed that learning through the Google Classroom application was perceived positive. Accordingly, gaining more information about the student's opinions and experiences during online learning through Google Classroom will be clearly described and interpreted in the interview session.

The interview aimed to confirm their answers to the questionnaire. The interview also tried to reveal the students' opinions about using Google Classroom for online learning, related to the strength and weaknesses of the application, and their preferences for online learning or classroom learning. The interview confirmed the data gathered from the questionnaire, where most students considered learning through Google Classroom during the beginning of the pandemic helpful. They found that Google Classroom supported their online learning during this pandemic. Some points collected from the interview are as follows.

First, they could learn how to manage their time and schedule to accomplish the instruction offered by their teacher. They tend to be more disciplined in time management and self-learning autonomy. This finding aligns with the survey result regarding students' improvement in managing their studies. The pandemic has forced them to study at home, with the teachers' assistance drastically reduced. As they relied more on themselves, they learned to adjust their learning and finish their task on time. Second, Google Classroom notifies class participation when learning materials, instructions, announcements, or tasks are requested to be known, understood, and finished. Therefore, they knew the notification read and could submit the tasks on time. Third, they commented that Google Classroom was an easy online learning platform that was effective and efficient to be operated. It is easy to send the task properly. Luckily, it can be accessed anytime and anywhere as long as there is internet connection support. Fourth, they could submit the tasks efficiently without any paper needed, and there was not much time consumed since they did not need to write them manually. Fifth, they could learn in different ways and

find many sources of knowledge online with Google and YouTube, allowing them to develop their idea broader. Last, they were satisfied that they could find the score of the task they made. Freedom of learning and quick updates on learning progress are the positive sides of online learning [16], [23], [30], [33], [36].

Unfortunately, the abrupt shift to full online affected students' perceptions of the implementation of Google Classroom, resulting from challenges that the students had to face in their first weeks. First, Google Classroom posed technical issues, such as lousy internet connection, affecting their punctuality in submitting tasks. According to APJII [45], internet services in Indonesia have various connection speeds, even in more advanced areas. Although the school was located in the city, the students came from different areas with different connections. Therefore, they still had issues with their connection. While doing an online presentation became a new habit, it needed extra time to upload files to fulfill the learning task. Previously, it has been identified that technical issues still inhibit students' learning, from low internet bandwidth to students' operating skills [5], [16], [23], [33].

And then, some students mentioned that they did not get proper assistance when they encountered learning problems while learning with Google Classroom. It seemed that they could not ask questions that they needed to ask. Some students admitted that their teacher sent some summary and requested them to answer the exercise independently at a given time. Third, students found it confusing to understand the instruction or information given online, especially in understanding the material correctly. They felt they were not welcome to consult their difficulty as the teacher instructed them to browse and find the answer using a search engine. However, it is necessary to note that having digital access does not guarantee students' digital skills. APJII [45] has analyzed that teenagers mostly use the internet for entertainment. Thus, they had not figured out what to do regarding online learning, which was similar to the findings in the research conducted by Suwastini, Nalantha, & Dantes [17]. Fourth, most students mentioned they preferred classroom learning rather than online learning because they needed to get confirmation of information provided virtually. They felt it was easier to understand the material of learning when they were involved physically and directly with their teacher. Last, the participants of this study were vocational high school students who needed more practice in learning to improve their skills. Therefore, students need personalized responses to their understanding so they would not get confused in understanding a particular material a teacher teaches them in the learning process. Previous studies have argued that feedbacks and discussion could be provided through the platform, while personalized approach can be managed through any online learning platform [17], [46]–[48].

The result of the interview was in line with findings in the studies conducted by [5], [23], [40]. Most students got accustomed to punctuality and learning autonomy during online learning through Google Classroom. Bali & Liu [34] also mention that online learning lacks student and teacher interaction rather than a lack of social presence and interaction. Thus, it affects students' satisfaction with the outcome of the online learning process they joined.

CONCLUSION

The present study observed vocational school students in Bali on the implementation of Google Classroom at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The study revealed that most participants perceive Google Classroom positively from cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. However, students also faced challenges in the initial implementation of Google Classroom during the sudden change to fully online learning at the beginning of the pandemic. The challenges included technical issues related to low-quality internet connections, sparse communications between the students and their teachers, difficulties in understanding learning material online, and lack of practice with the presence of the teachers' guidance to improve their skills as vocational school students.

These findings suggest that students and teachers should provide technical and pedagogical guidance when they shift to a different learning mode. The correct guidance can smoothen their adaptations to the new learning mode, so the students can take more benefits offered by Google Classroom and online learning in general. However, the quality of internet connections should be adequately provided by the stakeholders for the online learning process to run swiftly.

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