

## **A Survey of ELE Students' Perception about Online Class through WhatsApp**

### **Survei Persepsi Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris terkait Pelaksanaan Perkuliahan Daring Menggunakan WhatsApp**

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#### **Abstract**

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) has affected education system around the world. Schools and universities including Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) are not able to continue face-to-face meetings, thus online classes become an option to carry out. However, as our education system tends to adopt conventional system, moving to the online mode is challenging at all aspects. Therefore, this study is set out to explore the implementation of online learning. More particularly, the study looked at how students of English Language Education study program perceive the online classes they undertake during pandemic using WhatsApp as the primary medium of teaching and learning. By distributing an online survey and analyzing the data using a descriptive quantitative approach, the result of this study showed that the students had positive responses towards online teaching and learning process via WhatsApp. However, the students still needed direct interaction, which involved affection from their teacher, which cannot be obtained through online classes. In conclusion, WhatsApp as a supplementary tool has been proven effective in substituting face-to-face learning activities, as perceived by students participated in this study.

**Keywords:** online learning, perception, WhatsApp

#### **Abstrak**

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) telah mempengaruhi sistem pendidikan di seluruh dunia saat ini. Banyak sekolah dan universitas termasuk Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) tidak dapat melanjutkan pertemuan tatap muka, sehingga perkuliahan secara daring menjadi alternatif yang dipilih. Akan tetapi, oleh karena sistem pendidikan di Indonesia cenderung menggunakan sistem konvensional, perkuliahan daring menghadirkan berbagai tantangan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini didesain untuk mencermati implementasi dari perkuliahan daring. Secara spesifik, penelitian ini meneliti persepsi mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris tentang pelaksanaan perkuliahan daring yang mereka telah jalani selama pandemi ini melalui media WhatsApp. Dengan menyebarkan angket dan menganalisa data secara kuantitatif deskriptif, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki respon positif terhadap proses belajar mengajar daring melalui WhatsApp. Namun, tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa mereka tetap membutuhkan interaksi langsung dengan dosen yang tidak dapat diperoleh melalui kelas daring ini. Dari penelitian ini dapat diambil kesimpulan bahwa WhatsApp sebagai media pendukung terbukti efektif dalam menggantikan kegiatan pembelajaran offline sebagaimana dipersepsikan oleh mahasiswa yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini.

**Kata kunci:** pembelajaran online, persepsi, WhatsApp

#### **1. Introduction**

Today's world still fights the COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019) that threatens humans' health. COVID-19 is a virus that attacks the human respiratory system (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2020). Kementerian Kesehatan RI (2020) also stated that people who got infected by Coronavirus will develop mild to moderate illness so that they need a self-healing process at home for 2 weeks' minimum and check the body temperature 2 times per day. This

case not only affects human body resistance, but also affects some social activities, including many aspects such as education, politics, and economy. In education, COVID-19 has affected education systems. Many countries choose to close schools and universities which make students unable to learn at school as usual. This decision is taken by many countries, including Indonesia. Indonesian government declares to dismiss all face-to-face educational activities and create some alternative planning to continue the learning and teaching process. On March, 12th 2020, in response to school closures caused by COVID-19, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programs to limit the disruption of education. This matter is important to push down the spreading of COVID-19 and to make teachers and students safe. Because of that situation, learning activities are carried out from home by utilizing the internet and some applications. All universities and schools that previously used face-to-face meetings in learning activities, now carry out online classes.

Regarding this issue, Indonesia has shifted face-to-face class with online class that is supported by some applications to continue learning activity. According to Kemendikbud RI (2020), learning from home through online learning is carried out to provide a meaningful learning experience for students, without completing all of curriculum achievements for grading and graduation. Learning activities and learning tasks may have some variations for students, depending on students' condition and their interest, considering students' access or students' facility at home.

E-learning is an internet system that can connect teachers and students in an online room. E-learning is created to overcome the limitations between teachers and students, especially in terms of time, space, conditions, and circumstances (Darmawan, 2014). This is very beneficial for teachers and students for example to access online resources in order to get information and to have online discussion via applications that provide video, audio, or video conference (Barhoumi & Rossi, 2013). The function of E-learning in school or university is to be part of solving teachers' and students' problems as teachers can give exercises to students via online and there is no need to conduct face-to-face meetings.

E-learning plays a main role in helping both students and teachers to achieve their teaching purposes, it also plays an important part in the educational system for their future teaching (Heirati & Alashti, 2015). In English Language and Education, Universitas Negeri Malang, especially year 2017, 2018, and 2019 have already used WhatsApp to have online classes during COVID-19 because face-to-face meeting in the class is impossible to do. The E-learning system is needed to follow the globalization era that is supported by a sophisticated technology of information where everything will go to a digital era (Elyas, 2018).

The use of E-learning during this time is necessary to establish since almost everything which the students and teachers need are available on the internet. Therefore, teachers could take advantage of internet use or online learning techniques to improve students' skills. Teachers have to be familiar with the online learning environment and platform so they can help students to participate in online courses (Wang, Shannon, & Ross, 2013). Some applications like Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Edmodo are needed to ease teachers and students in communicating during online learning activities. Despite many advantages of using education platforms or online learning media to ease both teachers and students' communication, it is also necessary for the students to understand the material that is given by teachers. Since students have a limitation to ask questions and answer, in implementing online

learning, students expect that material and assignment must be preceded by explanation and have a clear instruction (Allo, 2020).

Success in online learning requires an interaction between the learner instructor, learners, and technology (Kauffman, 2015). For example, ELE teachers in Universitas Negeri Malang tend to use WhatsApp to support their online activity during COVID-19. Some ELE students stated that some teachers are using WhatsApp to continue learning during pandemics like in Curriculum course, Reading, Grammar, Asian Studies, and Writing. The WhatsApp application presents some features like group chat, text message, photo sharing, video sharing, and voice note.

Kholis (2020) conducted research about the effectiveness of using WhatsApp in distance learning during a pandemic. The result from this study showed that the use of WhatsApp is effective and efficient during online learning. It has a good impact for students in order to reach their four basic English skills completely. Another previous study by Wijaya (2018) who conducted a research asked the lecturer's experience in utilizing WhatsApp, free instant messaging, in the students' learning of students at English Department, Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya. The result showed that most students enjoy the learning even though some problems arose such as internet unstable connection.

Therefore, the researcher is interested to conduct the same field of the research but with a different place. The question of the study is formulated as: "What are the ELE 2017, 2018, and 2019 students' perception towards the effectiveness of online class through WhatsApp?". Hence, this study aims at widening the topic particularly concerning the students' perception about online learning through WhatsApp. According to Efron (1969), perception is the main cognitive contact of humans with the world around them. All conceptual knowledge is based on this primary form of awareness. In addition, the students' perception about online learning through WhatsApp is necessary to be observed. Their perception whether it is a positive or negative point of view using online classes during a pandemic is worth considering for the goal of learning and teaching activity.

## **2. Method**

The research design used in this study is quantitative research using surveys as data collection. According to Bhandari (2020), quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations. Meanwhile, survey research is generally used to evaluate opinions, feelings, behavior, and so forth (Scheuren, 2004). This study focused on the students' perception about online class through WhatsApp. The data were collected using survey tools. The questionnaire used in the form of multiple choice in order to ease students in answering questions.

The study was conducted at the Department of English, Universitas Negeri Malang. The subjects of this study were English Language and Education students of 2017, 2018, and 2019. This subject was chosen because only these cohorts were using WhatsApp as a supplement media during the pandemic and the researcher wanted to know the students' perception towards the effectiveness of online class via WhatsApp. The estimated total of all respondents from 3 cohorts are 356 students, but the researcher could only collect the data of 180 students from 3 cohorts or 50,6 %. Below is the description of division of the total respondents from 3 cohorts.

**Table 1. Total Respondents**

Cohort	2017	2018	2019	Total
Population	120	117	119	356
Sample	60	60	60	180
% of Sample	50%	51%	50%	

All respondents from 3 cohorts were chosen because they used WhatsApp as a media to support offline learning during the pandemic. Therefore, the researcher did not use sampling technique instead the researcher used the whole population to collect the data.

The statements in the questionnaire are related to the effectiveness of online class, the problems during online learning and teaching activity. The data sources in this study were English Language and Education students' cohort 2017, 2018, and 2019. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents in English Language and Education students at Universitas Negeri Malang. Those items in this survey explore ELE 2017, 2018, and 2019 students' perceptions. For more detail information in the questionnaire can be seen in table 2

**Table 2. Blueprint of ELE Students' Questionnaire**

Variable	Sub-Variable	Item Number
Students' perception about online class	- Perception	1-6
	- Interaction	7-12
	- Teacher's role	13-16
	- <i>WhatsApp</i> utilization	17 - 25
	- <i>WhatsApp</i> as a supplementary strategy	26-30

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher using English since it was related to the major of the respondent. The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's advisor. The first six numbers of the questionnaire focused on students' perception about online class through WhatsApp (6 questions). The purpose of asking students' perception is because they might have various thoughts towards the use of WhatsApp in online learning. Therefore, the researcher decided to put those items in the first place. The questions include their perception towards their feelings when using WhatsApp as media for learning such as their convenience, difficulties, and enjoyment.

Second part, the researcher asked students about students' interaction during online class in WhatsApp group (6 questions). The purpose of those questions is because the researcher wanted to know the students' participation, interaction, and their confidence in expressing their ideas in a WhatsApp group. Third, the questions focused on English teacher's role during online class (4 questions). The questions included how teachers control the class like provided material, explaining the material and consultation sections when students got difficulties. Fourth, the researcher also asked students about the impact of using WhatsApp in learning English during a pandemic (9 questions). The purpose of those questions is to know the effectiveness of using WhatsApp as a medium to learn English and to improve their skill. The questions focused on some features in WhatsApp, internet problem connection, and their feelings when doing learning activity via WhatsApp. Last, the questions focused on the need of online learning through WhatsApp to supplement face-to-face learning activities (5 questions). In this part, the researcher asked students in order to know students' perception and feelings if offline classes do not need to be implemented because online class via WhatsApp is a good way to substitute offline class. The total number of questionnaires were 30 items and all the

questions were in English language. The researcher also has put clear instruction and information for the questionnaire to decrease misunderstanding towards the questions.

Before the questionnaire was distributed to the students, the researcher tried out the questionnaire for 10 students and divided it into two groups. The first group came from 2017, 2018, and 2019 students. Second group came from 2016 students in case there is beneficial feedback given so that the researcher can revise the questionnaire well. After the instrument was revised based on the feedback from the tried out process the questionnaire was distributed to the whole population. The researcher asked some students as representatives from each cohort to continue distributing the questionnaire. It was distributed during COVID-19 and started with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study. The respondents were given 5-10 minutes to answer the questions. The questionnaire was distributed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2021. The respondents gave their perceptions to the statements in the questionnaire by expressing their agreement or disagreement. The answers of the questionnaire were submitted by students right after they finished. The items in the questionnaire were scored 4 points. Those were 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree. According to Frary (2003) when giving students scale to choose, it is better to avoid a neutral position. The basic reason is that the middle position has multiple interpretations such as “no option” or “neutral”, so that the researcher decided to omit that option. The researcher asked the respondents to choose an option that reflects their perception and expectation.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The data gathered from the questionnaire were calculated to find out the means and the percentage answers. The students' perception was assessed from Likert scale 4-3-2-1. Scale 4 and 3 indicated that they had a positive perception about the item description (strongly agree and agree). Scale 2 and 1 indicated the negative perception from the respondents (disagree and strongly disagree).

The total of respondents' perceptions in each item was calculated to find the percentage. The percentage of each item was summarized as the respondents' positive or negative perception to the item description of the questionnaire. Because Google Form was used, the positive and negative answers of the students automatically had been divided and calculated. To make sure that the result from Google Form is accurate, the researcher also calculated with the formula below. The result came from the number of the statements chosen, multiplying with 100% and divided with the number of all subjects.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

The sub-sections in the findings correspond to the research questions the study tried to answer. After that, the findings are discussed in light of theories and previous study in the discussion section.

#### **3.1 Students' Perception About Online Class Through WhatsApp**

Based on Table 3, 90,5% of the respondents believed that using WhatsApp for virtual class is easy. The findings showed most of the respondents agree that online classes through WhatsApp are easier, enjoyable, and interesting media to learn English. However, it is not enough to motivate students to learn English well. It showed a great number amongst sixth questions that online class via WhatsApp cannot motivate students well even though many of the students chose to agree with the statements that WhatsApp is much easier for learning, a higher percentage could be seen as they tend to disagree if WhatsApp is enjoyable, interesting, effective, and efficient. About 65,5% of the respondents showed that they agree if online

classes through WhatsApp cannot motivate the students well. The results of the statement above were in contrast with a study by Kholis (2020) who showed that students utilizing WhatsApp in distance language learning get higher motivation and satisfaction, such as enhancing the students' enthusiasm, motivation, happiness, discipline, and encouragement. According to Sudrajat (2008), motivation can be described as someone's power or energy which affects his/her persistence and enthusiasm in doing activities and it can come from within (intrinsic) or outside (extrinsic). This study proved that learning language would greatly increase their interest when they have face-to-face class.

**Table 3. Students' Perception**

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using <i>WhatsApp</i> for the virtual class is easy	1 (0,5%)	16 (8,9%)	85 (47,2%)	78 (43,3%)
Online learning activity through <i>WhatsApp</i> is more enjoyable than offline learning	68 (37,8%)	67 (37,2%)	33 (18,3%)	12 (6,6%)
<i>WhatsApp</i> is not an interesting media to learn English	16 (8,9%)	78 (43,3%)	60 (33,3%)	26 (14,4%)
In my opinion, having online class through <i>WhatsApp</i> motivates me well in learning English	25 (13,9%)	93 (51,6%)	52 (28,9%)	10 (5,6%)
My English skill has improved more since I have online class through <i>WhatsApp</i> .	35 (19,4%)	82 (45,6%)	57 (31,7%)	6 (3,3%)
I think online learning activities through <i>WhatsApp</i> is more effective and efficient	29 (16,1%)	77 (42,8%)	54 (30%)	20 (11,1%)

In short, the students believed that learning English through offline learning is better than online learning through WhatsApp. The researcher argued that students could not enjoy learning activity if the teacher uses only online learning through WhatsApp, so offline learning was still needed at least 2 meetings in a week to make sure the students could follow the learning activity and understand the material given. Therefore, they could take advantage of the course.

### 3.2 Students' Interaction During Online Class through WhatsApp

The findings of the students' interaction towards learning English through WhatsApp showed that 72,2% of the students think that they enjoyed having discussion with other students and actively participated during online class in WhatsApp groups. Students were also confident in expressing their ideas during discussion sessions with teachers and other students in WhatsApp groups. These findings were in line with a study conducted by Wahyuni and Febianti (2019) who revealed that the use of WhatsApp group have a potential not only in improving students' writing achievement, but also in facilitating cooperation, increasing social interaction, interest and motivation, sense of belonging, academic success, student-student and student-teacher interaction, and supporting anytime and anywhere learning, providing peer support, feedback, and allowing for information sharing in education. This result is also in line with a study conducted by Linda and Riaeni (2018) who stated that learning using WhatsApp groups is effective to develop their creativity in writing skill.

**Table 4. Students' Interaction**

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy having discussion with other students through <i>WhatsApp</i> group	11 (6,1%)	39 (21,7%)	87 (48,3%)	43 (23,9%)
I actively participated in my group during online class activities via <i>WhatsApp</i>	3 (1,7%)	38 (21,1%)	83 (46,1%)	56 (31,1%)
I feel confident using English when having discussion in <i>WhatsApp</i> group	1 (0,6%)	29 (16,1%)	99 (55%)	51 (28,3%)
Learning English by using <i>WhatsApp</i> makes lots of miscommunication with other members in group	8 (4,4%)	61 (33,9%)	66 (36,8%)	45 (25%)
It is hard for me to get any opportunities to study in a group or pairs via <i>WhatsApp</i>	26 (14,4%)	90 (50%)	46 (25,6%)	18 (10%)
Even though I have to work in a group or pairs, I found that learning by using <i>WhatsApp</i> did not help me to improve my English skills	16 (8,9%)	88 (48,9%)	56 (31,1%)	20 (11,1%)

### 3.3 English Teacher's Role during Online Class through WhatsApp

**Table 5. English Teacher's Role**

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My English teacher provides me with enough material (E-book, pdf, ppt, etc) and make it easier for me to learn via <i>WhatsApp</i>	2 (1,1%)	24 (13,3%)	73 (40,6%)	81 (45%)
Since I use <i>WhatsApp</i> I like to ask questions to my English teacher during online class	10 (5,6%)	75 (41,7%)	75 (41,7%)	20 (11%)
My English teacher always give me quick feedback and open consultation via <i>WhatsApp</i>	9 (5%)	48 (26,7%)	88 (48,9%)	35 (19,4%)
My English teacher facilitated me with good explanations via <i>WhatsApp</i> group in order to help me understand the material easier	3 (1,7%)	41 (22,8%)	85 (47,2%)	51 (28,3%)

The result showed that most of the students agreed that the teacher facilitated them with good explanations and always provided quick feedback in consultation during online class through WhatsApp. The result of the statement above was also parallel with study by Destianingsih and Satria (2020) who stated that the way to have success in teaching online both the teachers and students should have made an appropriate and convenient work environment. Furthermore, success in online learning through WhatsApp depends on the teacher's explanation and communication in order to make students achieve the goal of course.

### 3.4 The Use of WhatsApp in Learning

According to the result above, the researcher asked students about the use of WhatsApp in online learning activity. The findings showed that 68% of the respondents agreed that using WhatsApp for learning English makes it easier for students to ask and answer the questions related to the English material. Similarly, about 68,9% of the students also agree that WhatsApp features which integrate audio and visual help students in preparing to learn English better. The result of this current study is in line with the study by Hanisi, Risdiany, Utami, and Sulisworo (2018). Hanisi and colleagues (2018) reported that WhatsApp is beneficial for students' knowledge in learning. The cheapness and potential of this application

brings an easy way to communicate like some people ask questions, ask one another for help, and the others share their solutions.

**Table 6. The Use of *WhatsApp* in Learning**

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
By using <i>WhatsApp</i> for learning English makes me easier for asking and answering the questions related to the English material.	4 (2,2%)	53 (29,4%)	96 (55,3%)	27 (15%)
I enjoy reading the material that given by teacher through <i>WhatsApp</i>	22 (12,2%)	53 (29,4%)	79 (43,9%)	26 (14,4%)
I can submit my draft or task through <i>WhatsApp</i> effortlessly	4 (2,2%)	26 (14,4%)	80 (44,4%)	70 (38,9%)
I feel more challenging in doing writing task via <i>WhatsApp</i>	11 (6,1%)	78 (43,3%)	67 (37,2%)	24 (13,3%)
I like <i>WhatsApp</i> features which integrate audio and visual. It helps me preparing myself better in learning English	3 (1,7%)	53 (29,4%)	90 (50%)	34 (28,9%)
Expressing my ideas in <i>WhatsApp</i> is very difficult for me	27 (15%)	91 (50,6%)	49 (27,2%)	13 (7,2%)
Sometimes the time allocation to do the assignment is not sufficient for me	9 (5%)	36 (20%)	72 (40%)	63 (35%)
I often missed the class due to the internet connection and poor signal	40 (22,2%)	57 (31,7%)	53 (29,4%)	30 (16,7%)
Learning English via <i>WhatsApp</i> consumed lots of my internet data	59 (32,8%)	67 (37,2%)	32 (17,8%)	22 (12,2%)

The other aspects, which researchers asked, were the internet connection and the internet data consumed. The result showed that 53,9% of the students disagree and 46,1% of students agree if students often missed the class due to the internet connection and poor signal. Then, about 70% of the students disagree that learning English through WhatsApp consumes lots of internet data. The results of the statement above were parallel with the study by Sari and Putri (2019). Sari and Putri (2019) reported that there were some technical problems when the students used the WhatsApp group chat, such as abundant chats, poor signal, and junk notifications. Some students who chose to disagree if they missed the class due to poor signal and WhatsApp consumed lots of internet data during online class, they used Wi-Fi to support learning activity better or they have stable signal in their area. In addition, students should be preparing themselves well before online class starts to minimize any kinds of problems.

### 3.5 The Need of Online through WhatsApp to Supplement Face-to-face Learning Activities

Last, the researcher asked the students whether the use of WhatsApp is needed or not to supplement offline learning during a pandemic. The findings showed that 58,9% of the respondents disagree if online class through WhatsApp is a suitable strategy to substitute face-to-face class and 41,1% of the students agree with that statement. Then, another finding showed that 87,2% of the students disagree if offline class is not needed. Those findings were in line with a study conducted by Rachmah (2020) who stated that the students preferred offline learning because they understand the material easier, easy to communicate, students can focus, be active, and enjoy during lessons. While online learning showed ineffectiveness because of several factors, such as students felt difficult in managing their time during online class and having less interaction between students and teacher. It can be concluded that offline classes are more effective than online classes.



**Table 7. WhatsApp to Supplement Face-to-Face Learning Activities**

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Online class via <i>WhatsApp</i> is a suitable strategy to substitute face-to-face class	32 (17,8%)	74 (41,1%)	53 (29,4%)	21 (11,7%)
Online class via <i>WhatsApp</i> supports my productive skill and my receptive skill better	17 (9,4%)	79 (43,9%)	73 (40,6%)	11 (6,1%)
Online class via <i>WhatsApp</i> has proven me that I can gainful my English competence	13 (7,2%)	77 (42,8%)	79 (43,9%)	11 (6,1%)
I do not need face-to-face class because having online class via <i>WhatsApp</i> help me understanding the material easier	92 (51,1%)	65 (36,1%)	17 (9,4%)	6 (3,3%)
I do not need face-to-face class because learning via <i>WhatsApp</i> is more helpful to improve my English skill	91 (50,6%)	71 (39,4%)	12 (6,7%)	6 (3,3%)

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous sections, online teaching and learning process class through WhatsApp in English Learning and Education students in Universitas Negeri Malang has shown positive responses from the students. The researcher concluded that WhatsApp is an interesting media, which can ease students during online class such as interacting with other students or teachers and having quick feedback or open consultation with teachers via WhatsApp group or personal message.

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