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Students' Perceptions of English Blended Learning During the New Normal Era

Arifi Dwi Fadila¹, Faurina Anastasia²

Correspondent e-mail: arifidwifadila@gmail.com

Department of English Education, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim, Pekanbaru, Riau

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine students' perceptions of the blended learning model for learning English in the new normal era. Using a quantitative research method design, the data were collected from students in classes XI, IPA, and IPS using simple random sampling. 56 students were selected as research samples using a simple random sampling technique. In collecting the data, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to students. The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the data and made it easier by using the SPSS 25 program. The results showed that students' perceptions reflected positive perceptions toward blended learning models. Students believe that the implementation of the blended learning model in learning English is beneficial during the new normal era. Students experience the benefits of learning English using a blended learning model, both online and face-to-face. Based on these results, this study provides an evaluation of the implementation of a learning model in the 21st century, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, such as using a blended learning model in the process of teaching and learning English in high schools. In conclusion, the majority of students at Senior High School 1 Harau revealed positive perceptions of English blended learning during the new normal era.

Keywords: *Students' Perceptions, Blended Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Technology is developing rapidly. The technological developments in modern concepts are also used to increase exposure and experience in the teaching and learning process. Understanding the concept of utilizing current technology can help educators develop creative teaching techniques and systems to support quicker and more thorough learning processes (Prayudi et al., 2021). This concept extends beyond the use of modern devices and



equipment. One of the technological developments is information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is also one of the recommendations for the emergence of new teaching and learning models. One of them is computer media with the internet, which in turn gives rise to e-learning (Husamah 2014).

In the context of teaching and learning, students of foreign languages, particularly those in Indonesia, have been exposed to a significant amount of teaching and learning inside the classroom as a result of the advancement of technology in the area of education (Pustika 2020). In addition, ICT can improve students' understanding, especially their' English competence, which will improve the quality of their learning experience (Sher Ryn and SC 2020). Azmi (2017) stated that the benefits of using ICT in the EFL classroom are: enhancing motivation and engagement in the language classroom; promoting learners; autonomy and centeredness; boosting interaction and communication; enhancing multisensory delivery and authenticity; and boosting students' performance on written class assessments.

Recently, the learning process, especially since March 2020, has experienced a rather rapid change. It is caused by the elevated COVID-19 pandemic case, so all public activities are restricted by the government to reduce the spread of the virus, and the government recommends that they be kept safe at home. Social distancing is practiced. One strategy that can be used to stop the virus from spreading is social distance. As long as this pandemic is ongoing, there will be no learning taking place in classrooms (Fadhilah et al., 2021). According to the situation, the learning model is that previously, learning was done face-to-face or offline, and now it has turned into online learning or virtual classes. This part also presents the review of previous studies discussing similar topic, approach, or object of study. DEE Journal encourages the authors to review at least four journal articles published in the past five years.

Various attempts were made to deal with this pandemic. According to detik.com, there is a new term to mark the beginning of action to deal with this pandemic, namely the New Normal. The new normal is a step to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 in almost all sectors, such as health, social, and economic fields. The new normal scenario is carried out by taking into account regional readiness and the results of epidemiological research in related areas. Within a significant change from dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic through the new normal era, the education sector is also responsive by adjusting the learning system used. In the new normal era, the Education Minister of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, suggested that the ideal learning model in this situation is blended learning (Sati, Sukardi, and Cahyani, 2021).

Blended learning is the combination of traditional classroom lectures and online learning that is used in the teaching and learning process (Albiladi and Alshareef 2019). Husamah (2014) stated that blended learning is basically an advantage of learning that is carried out face-to-face and virtually. Blended learning, also known as the mixed learning method (Marita & Utami, 2020), Blended learning is the main method used by most foreign language students to learn and master the target language (Sari and Wahyudin 2019).

Based on the information gathered from the teacher through an interview, the school conducted the blended learning process in a shift method that was in line with Flipped



Classroom (one of the kinds of blended learning). Students numbers 1–18 are labeled as shift-1 and the rest as shift-2. In a week, shift-1 students learned in limited face-to-face learning, and shift-2 students learned in online learning. The schedule was regulated by the school, called *Prosedur Klinik Belajar*.

In implementing blended learning in the new normal era, students face several obstacles. Based on the interview with some students, the obstacles that they faced in English blended learning during the new normal era occurred both in online and limited face-to-face learning. The obstacles to online learning that students faced were limited smartphones, limited internet data packages, and unclear instruction. In addition, the obstacle to limited face-to-face learning is the limited time in the classroom. Students learn English in just about 30 minutes for one meeting. If there are only 30 minutes of meeting time in one day, of course that is not enough.

Some researchers in Indonesia have conducted studies about blended learning. First, Octavia and Darajat (2021) studied students' perceptions of the implementation of blended learning in English language teaching (ELT), which was conducted in a qualitative manner. The second researcher is Istiqomah (2021), who discusses the students' perceptions of using blended learning for English learning during the COVID-19 pandemic among university students. The third researcher is Wijaya (2022), who studied EFL teachers' perceptions of blended learning in the post-COVID-19 era using a qualitative design.

Unfortunately, previous research about blended learning and blended learning perceptions among students in senior high school is still rarely found. Whereas most of the previous research on the perceptions of the students on blended learning in English emphasizes university students. In addition, the researcher found recommendations from previous research related to students's perceptions of blended learning. Istiqomah (2021) suggested that future research about blended learning could be conducted on different subjects and in different discussions. Octavia & Darajat (2021) also suggested conducting different population and characteristic studies for future research.

Based on this background, the researcher formulated the problem of this research as "What are the students' senior high school 1 Harau perceptions of English learning through blended learning during the new normal era of the COVID-19 pandemic?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kind of Perception

Robbins, Stephen P & Judge (2012) stated that there are two kinds of perception:

1. Positive Perception

Perceptions that are categorized as positive perceptions are forms of belief, joy and satisfaction with something so that it can be a source of knowledge and experience for the individual. Positive perceptions are dominated by positive emotions. Positive perception will make an individual feel happy, excited and cheerful at the stage of high pressure and discomfort.



2. Negative Perception

Perceptions that are categorized as negative perceptions are forms of disbelief, displeasure and dissatisfaction with something so that it can be a source of knowledge and experience for the individual. Negative perceptions are dominated by negative emotions. Negative perceptions will make an individual feel depressed, afraid, and anxious at a high level of comfort.

In the other hand, Slameto (2010) also defined perception into positive and negative:

1) Positive Perception

Positive perception is the term used to describe how students are very welcoming and seeing something's excitement in a favorable perspective. In other words, the kids perceive something positively and anticipate its success.

2) Negative Perception

Negative perception is defined as the refuse or denial of something that is prone to opposition or resistance. Enthusiasm, interest, or optimism not appears as favorable or affirmative.

In learning and teaching activity, the idea is that great learning can happen when students feel good about what they are learning (Male and Lumbantoruan 2021). It is established that the study's outcome falls under the perception of being good. The failure comes about though when they have false perceptions.

According to Ahmad (et al., 2014), perception can be categorized into different subtypes based on how it interprets the stimuli that the five senses perceive. Auditory perception, visual perception, kinesthetic-tactile perception, social perception, and extrasensory perception are the five categories into which perception can be divided. As the three primary categories of perception, auditory perception, visual perception, and kinesthetic-touch perception can be categorized.

Components of Perception

In essence, perception consists of three dimensions or components, including affective, conative, and cognitive elements. To comprehend, feel, and act toward the object, situation or stimulus, all three parts must work together. There are three components of perception, according to Woodworth and Marquis in (Walgito 2003).

1) Cognitive Aspects

The component of an attitude known as the cognitive component comprises a person's belief about an item. The belief is developed since the individual has formed a mental image of it. The person's knowledge and observations are another source of the belief. As a result, it includes elements of information, opinions, expectations, modes of thinking and learning, prior experiences, and everything learned through the perception of individual perceptions.



2) Affective Aspects

The emotional component concerns a person's perception or emotion when they perceive the stimuli, allowing the stimulus to cause anxiety or realization. The affective aspect is concerned with the elements of emotional feelings, individual states associated with an item, and any negative judgments made in light of one's emotional condition. That emotion may be favorable or unfavorable toward the thing.

3) Conative Aspects

The conative element relates to an individual's motivation, attitude, conduct, or activity in light of how he perceives a certain situation. It was further mentioned that a person's attitude and conduct are largely influenced by their beliefs and feelings. The conative aspect includes attitudes that are not only visible but also take the shape of statements that indicate how one could behave or respond to an item.

The Concept of Blended Learning

Blended learning consists of the words blended (combination) and learning (learning). Dwiyogo (2019) stated that another term that is often used is the hybrid course (hybrid means mixture/combination, course means courses). In addition, Marita & Utami (2020) stated that blended learning also known as mixed learning method. The three terms (blended learning, hybrid course, and mixed method) actually have the same meaning (Dziuban et al. 2004 in Husamah, 2014). Stein & Graham (2020) stated that between the term of hybrid and blended, the term blended is often used and both of them interchangeably.

The term blended learning is also referred to as hybrid learning, in principle both have in common, namely a mixture, only from which side to look at it, if blended learning looks at it from a technical strategy point of view, the ability to use the media, while hybrid learning in terms of techniques to process the material (Hatta et al. 2021). The basic principle of blended learning is face-to-face direct communication and online written communication. The concept of blended learning looks simple but its application is more complex (Husamah 2014).

According to (Higgins and Gomez 2014) blended learning refers to the combination of several familiar modes of learning, such as lectures, seminars, and tutorials. Blended learning could be defined as the combination of face-to-face instruction with media computer instruction (Graham, C. 2006). In addition, (Choosri 2016) stated that the concept of blended learning is understood as the existence of several points, there are instructor-delivered content, e-learning, webinars, conference calls, live or online sessions with instructors, and other media and events for example Facebook, e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, podcasting, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, and web boards.

METHOD

The design of this research was quantitative research. Quantitative research refers to examining the relationship among variables to test the objectives theories (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). The variable was measured by the instruments, and the numbered data can be analyzed



statistically. Ary et al. (2010) also mentioned that quantitative research is the research to study relationships, causes, and effects to develop prior studies through testing the theory and using statistical analysis of numeric data. In quantitative research, which is distinguished by the testing of hypotheses, numerical data, "procedural objectivity," generalization, the detection of "systematic patterns of association," and the isolation and control of factors (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018).

The research was survey research. According to Creswell (2014, p. 13), survey research would present the numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a sample from a population. Gay and Mills (2012) stated that survey research is about people's opinions on some topic or issue that are collected to answer questions or test hypotheses. This method is a widely used research method for collecting data, from physical numbers and frequencies to attitudes and opinions (Ary et al., 2010). In addition, this method also requires proper planning, appropriate sampling, supporting instruments, and careful analysis of the results.

The population of the research was the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Harau. It consisted of 11 classes from IPA and IPS. Each class had 32–36 students, with a different frequency between male and female students. Then the total number of students in the eleventh-grade science class was 373. Respondents in this study were students of classes XI IPA and XI IPS Senior High School 1 Harau, totaling 56 respondents. In this research, the researcher used a questionnaire to address the research questions. For data analysis, the researcher used descriptive statistical procedures to get the result of the response given to the targeted population in the subject (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Data obtained from the questionnaire are presented in the form of tables to determine the tendency of perceptions among students towards blended learning in learning English during the new normal era of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research used SPSS v. 25.0 and MS Excel as statistical programs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Respondent Data

This research was conducted in January 2023. The data used in this research was primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The subjects of this study were all students of class XI majoring in MIPA and Social Sciences at Senior High School 1 Harau. The following is a detailed description of the research that has been carried out.

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to each class. A total of 56 questionnaires were distributed, and all questionnaires were returned completely. So there are as many as 56 questionnaires that can be used for research. The following are details of the results of the distribution and return of the questionnaires.



Table 1. Sample Distributed Data

| No | Information | Amount |
|--|---|-------------|
| 1 | Questionnaires distributed | 56 |
| 2 | Amount returned questionnaire | 56 |
| 3 | Amount returned questionnaire and No complete | 0 |
| Response rate = $56/56 \times 100\%$ | | 100% |
| Obtained data | | 56 |

The research sample distribution data is shown in Table 1 above. The table shows that the number of questionnaires distributed to respondents was 56. All questionnaires can be returned completely, so the percentage of questionnaire returns is 100%.

Table 2. Percentage of Respondent Data Based on Gender

| Gender | F | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Male | 21 | 37.5 |
| Female | 35 | 62.5 |
| TOTAL | 56 | 100 |

Respondents in this study amounted to 56 students. Most were female with a total of 35 students and the percentage was 62.5%, while the male respondents were 21 students with a percentage of 37.5%.

2. Analysis Descriptive Results Study

Based on the presentation of the students' perceptions of English blended learning at Senior High School 1 Harau, there were 3 categories of blended learning, including the benefits of online learning, the benefits of face-to-face learning, and learning assessment. It showed that senior high school 1 Harau students have a positive perception, as indicated by the mean score of the students, which was $M = 3.86$ with a percentage of 77.2%. It means that students' perceptions are positive in English blended learning during the new normal era of COVID-19.

There are the results of three categories of blended learning in English, based on the table and the description below:

a. Benefits of Online Learning in: English Blended Learning

The respondents were given eight statements regarding the benefits of online learning. As shown in Table 3, the percentage of students who were in agreement with the benefits of online learning was higher than those who were in disagreement. The students' responses fell into the upper-middle range for 4 items that were categorized as positive perception, as indicated by the mean scores: item 1 ($M = 3.91$), item 8 ($M = 3.66$), item 7 ($M = 3.57$), and item 6 ($M = 3.29$). In the lower-middle score for item 4 items, there are: item 2 ($M = 2.88$), item 4 ($M = 2.86$), item 3 ($M = 2.77$), and item 5 ($M = 2.73$) that indicate a neutral participation level.

These data show that students provide the benefits of online learning in English blended learning, such as: (1) online learning can be reached at any time; (8) online learning



provides user-friendly features; (7) online learning provides needed materials; and (6) online learning provides comprehensive materials.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Benefits of Online Learning in English Blended Learning

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|---|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| VAR00001 | 8 | 2.73 | 3.91 | 3.2076 | .46152 |
| Valid N | 8 | | | | |

Based on Table 3, the highest percentage of benefits of online learning in English blended learning was from Item 1: students have a very positive response; 78.2% agreed that online learning can be reached at any time. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage, 54.6%, of students are undecided if online learning provides clear instruction (item 5). In addition, the researcher found that the middle percentage was from item number 6, where 65.8% of students have a positive response and agree that online learning provides comprehensive materials.

In conclusion, senior high school 1 Harau students strongly agreed with the benefits of online learning categories in English blended learning, as indicated by the mean score of the students, which was $M = 3.21$ with a percentage of 64.2%.

b. Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning in English: Blended Learning

The students' responses were on the upper-middle scale as indicated by the mean score: item 11 ($M = 4.59$), item 9 ($M = 4.57$), item 10 ($M = 4.57$), item 12 ($M = 4.46$), 17 ($M = 4.46$), item 15 ($M = 4.43$), item 16 ($M = 4.39$), item 18 ($M = 4.32$), item 14 ($M = 4.27$), and item 13 ($M = 4.21$).

These data show that students provide the benefits of offline learning in English blended learning, such as: (11) face-to-face learning improves communication better; (9) face-to-face learning improves learning interactions better; (10) face-to-face learning improves subject understanding better; and (12) face-to-face learning is more effective because it uses movement and mime. (17) face-to-face learning provides more detailed content explanation; (15) face-to-face learning provides better explanation for missing lessons; (16) face-to-face learning provides more profound answers to questions; (18) face-to-face learning retains subject information better; (14) face-to-face learning provides a better discussion environment; and (13) face-to-face learning is more effective because it uses printed worksheets.



Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning in English Blended Learning

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| VAR00002 | 10 | 4.21 | 4.59 | 4.4286 | .13067 |
| Valid N | 10 | | | | |

The highest percentage of benefits of online learning in English blended learning was from item number 11, where students had a very positive response; 91.8% agreed that face-to-face learning improves communication. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage, 84.2% of students, agreed that it provided a better explanation for missing lessons (item 13). In addition, the researcher got the middle percentage from item number 17: 89.2% of students have a positive response; they agree that face-to-face learning provides more detailed content explanation.

In conclusion, the benefits of online learning categories showed that senior high school 1 Harau students had the positive perception that was provided by the mean score of the students, which was $M = 4.43$ with a percentage of 88.6%.

c. Language Assessment in English: Blended Learning

The students fell into the upper-middle scale as indicated by the mean score: item 19 ($M = 4.29$), item 20 ($M = 3.93$), item 21 ($M = 3.55$) and item 22 ($M = 3.16$).

In the language assessment categories, students agreed that face-to-face guidance in assignments is more helpful, face-to-face quizzes and exams are more effective, and instructions in English online exams are better. In addition, students prefer neutral online exercise criteria that are clearer and more understandable.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Language Assessment in English Blended Learning

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|---|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| VAR00003 | 4 | 3.16 | 4.29 | 3.7322 | .48423 |
| Valid N | 4 | | | | |

The highest percentage of benefits of online learning in English blended learning was from item number 19, where students had a very positive response of 85.8% that face-to-face guidance in assignments is more helpful. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage, 63.2% of students, agreed that online exercise criteria are clearer and more understandable (item 22). In addition, the researcher got the middle percentage from item number 21: 71% of students have a positive response; they agree that instructions in English online exams are better.

In conclusion, the benefits of online learning categories showed that senior high school 1 Harau students had the positive perception that was provided by the mean score of the students, which was $M = 3.73$ with a percentage of 74.6%.



Table 6. Students' Perception on English Blended Learning

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Perception results | 22 | 2.73 | 4.59 | 3.8580 | .65652 |

The result of the descriptive analysis shows that the overall mean score of senior high school 1 Harau students' perception of English blended learning among the participants is $M = 3.86$ with a percentage of 77.2%. This result reveals that the participants have a positive perception of English blended learning during the new normal era of COVID-19.

Discussion

This part presents the discussion of the research findings. There is a research question proposed in this research. The question is: What are the students' perceptions of English learning through blended learning during the new normal era of the COVID-19 pandemic? Concerning the research question, the result of the descriptive analysis shows that the overall mean score of senior high school students' perceptions of blended learning is 77.2%, with a median score of 3.86 (SD =.656). This result reveals that the students have a positive perception of blended learning in English. In addition, the mean scores of the three aspects of perception of blended learning English among the students differ. The mean score of benefits of online learning in English blended learning is 3.21 (SD =.462), the mean score of benefits of face-to-face learning in English blended learning is 4.43 (SD =.131), and the mean score of language assessment in English blended learning is 3.73 (SD =.484).

According to the mean score data presented above, it is shown that each aspect of perception has contributed to the student's perception of English blended learning during the learning activity in the new normal era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The benefits of combining online and face-to-face learning, as well as the learning assessment in every aspect, get great responses from students as a whole. It can be said that using English blended learning during the new normal era helps students understand lessons.

This result is similar to the findings of the study by Istiqomah (2021). The finding from the 35 students is that students have a positive perception toward the implementation of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the benefits of the implementation of blended learning. It is also in line with the theories of Husamah (2014) and Stein & Graham (2020), who stated that blended learning is a combination of the best benefits of face-to-face learning in the classroom and the best benefits of online learning.

The next research finding that is in line with this research is a study by Octavia and Darajat (2021). The tenth-grade students' high expectations and hope for the implementation of blended learning. The students' perceptions about the implementation of the blended learning method in ELT were positive. According to the study's findings, the blended learning model is expected to benefit from the return of normal conditions following the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of online and face-to-face learning as well as the assessment that was conducted. This is known as the "new normal," which is defined as the restoration of normal conditions after the pandemic affected all regions of the world. In



particular, if the conditions are very normal and stable, then from a planning to implementation point of view, it will be more supportive of the English learning process. This clearly demonstrates that the blended learning model succeeds in attracting students' attention to learning even in unstable conditions.

CONCLUSION

The students' perceptions toward blended learning in English are positive. This was provided by the percentage of 77.2%, and the mean score of the students was $M = 3.86$. The percentage score means that the three categories of blended learning are positive in English blended learning. The percentage score of each category is: the benefits of online learning were 64.2% ($M = 3.21$), the benefits of face-to-face learning were 88.6% ($M = 4.43$), and the language assessment was 74.6% ($M = 3.73$). That is indicated by their belief that blended learning is beneficial, their feeling toward blended learning as enjoyable and easy to use the media, and their willingness to take some actions related to blended learning for future learning. In conclusion, the majority of students at Senior High School 1 Harau revealed positive perceptions of English blended learning during the new normal era.

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