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Faculty Members' Perceptions Towards E-Learning

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate faculty members' perceptions towards e-learning and to identify the most critical factor for using e-learning in the English and Indonesian language Departments at Halu Oleo University. A descriptive quantitative approach was used in this research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. For this purpose, 40 lecturers were selected as the main focus of the study. Data was collected using a close-ended questionnaire with 25 items and analyzed using the SPSS 16.0 version. The results showed that faculty members' perceptions towards e-learning were positive, with almost all lecturers tending to give positive responses in both aspects of perception towards the use of e-learning in teaching. E-learning was seen to help lecturers in all aspects of their teaching practice, improve student achievement in learning, and was also easy for them to use and apply in their teaching practice. Moreover, the dominant aspect of using e-learning in teaching practice was the Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) aspect. An important factor to be considered based on participants' responses regarding e-learning is the limitations of the internet or quotas for teachers or lecturers themselves. However, the results show that e-learning is not limited by time, distance, or place. If faculty members do not have a good internet connection or their internet quota is insufficient, the learning process may not be carried out properly.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past 15 years, technology has had a significant impact on education, including the rapid expansion of e-learning. E-learning technology is a complex system that can be analyzed from various perspectives and theoretical frameworks. According to Conole's (2007) study, e-learning research has raised concerns across four primary themes: pedagogical, technical, organizational, and socio-cultural factors. One of the key benefits of e-learning technology is its potential to offer diverse and interactive learning opportunities, using multimedia communication and a variety of technological resources. In addition, it can enrich the student-professor relationship through alternative media such as e-mail, chat, and forums. By using these alternative media, the teaching-learning experience can be enhanced, providing a better understanding and retention of content.

E-learning can be considered a substantial benefit for both students and faculty and institutions. It provides opportunities for faculty to develop as researchers and lifelong students and is a source of income for institutions. Enrollment rates can experience exponential growth because of its character. E-learning materials can be accessed through various channels, such as the Internet, CD-ROM, or audio-video web presentations. As a result, E-Learning has the potential to enhance students' collaborative learning skills and empower them with the necessary tools. Additionally, E-Learning serves as a valuable teaching and learning medium for faculty members.

Although technology is developing rapidly, it's impossible to ensure that all teachers or faculty members keep up with technological developments, particularly in the field of TEFL. Some people think e-learning is a good way to learn, while others disagree. The importance of critical thinking in education has been noted by scholars such as Kompridis (2000), who argues that the ability to comprehend, validate facts, use reasoning, and adjust practices based on new information is crucial to human intelligence. This capability is closely linked with typical human pursuits such as philosophy, science, language, mathematics, and art and is generally considered a unique skill that humans possess.

There is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of e-learning as compared to traditional methods of instruction. According to a report by the Babson Survey Group and the Sloan Consortium in 2011, which surveyed academic officers including deans and provosts, over half of the officers believed that online instruction is comparable to traditional classroom instruction (51%), while 14% considered it to be somewhat superior. Moreover, 63% of the officers surveyed thought that student satisfaction was equal in both online and face-to-face courses. However, further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of e-learning in terms of student learning outcomes, characteristics, and instructional design strategies, as noted by Richardson and Swan (2003). A study by Rifandy (2017) found that a majority of students in the English Department of Halu Oleo University responded positively to e-learning as a way of learning English, despite some uncertainty about the sense of control. In short, the majority of the students accept the employment of e-learning.

Universities abroad often provide excellent facilities, including computers, laptops, Wi-Fi, and professional teachers, which lead to significant improvements in student

performance. However, in some universities, the facilities are limited, and classes are large, with 50 to 60 students. This can result in lower perceptions, motivation, attitudes, and behaviors towards e-learning. The lack of computer labs and poor internet connectivity make it challenging for both students and teachers to use technology effectively. Furthermore, not all teachers are familiar with using technology tools for teaching, and few know how to use software or online applications like Nicenet. Poor internet connectivity can also cause students to feel frustrated when they can't upload assignments on time. To improve the application of e-learning, the curriculum design in the faculty needs more attention.

Having a positive perception towards E-learning and internet use can help increase students' attitudes and achievement. It can also impact teachers' ability to utilize this technology in the teaching and learning process. While some research has focused on students' perceptions of E-learning, it's also important to investigate faculty members' perceptions as users of E-learning. Therefore, this study aims to explore faculty members' perceptions and reasons for using E-learning in the English Language Education Department at Halu Oleo University. The results of this study can serve as a reference for future teaching and learning processes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Robbins (2003) described perception as a process when a person organizes and interprets sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. Perception occurs when someone views an object and then interprets stimuli from objects through their sensory. In this case, perception becomes the major factor in determining the result of the learning and teaching process in the classroom.

According to Irwanto (2002) there are two kinds of perception, namely positive perception, negative perception. The main theory underpinning E-Learning perception is technology acceptance model theory promoted by Davis. TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) theory from Davis (1989) is widely used nowadays to measure the user acceptance for using computers in a short period. Davis develops and validates three specific variables, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which are assumed as determinants in user acceptance toward computer. This study used TAM theory to categorize each item in questionnaire into these three constructs.

The first construct is called PEOU (Perceived Ease of Use), which is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be effortless. In this definition, the term "ease" refers to a user's ability to use a system without any difficulty or effort. On the other hand, "perceived usefulness" (PU) is defined as a user's belief that using a particular system can improve their performance, which aligns with the definition of "useful," meaning capable of being used advantageously. When a user perceives a system to be highly useful, they believe that there is a positive correlation between its use and their performance. Therefore, according to the theory, a high level of perceived usefulness can lead to a positive relationship between system use and performance.

The third construct in the questionnaire is UA (User Acceptance), which measures

the user's behavior, whether they are likely to use the system or not. The present research uses TAM to address why users accept or reject information technology and how user acceptance is influenced by system characteristics (Davis, 1993). The UA construct is expected to help future researchers conduct further studies and consider the correlation between computer usage behavior and performance.

In recent years, the use of computer and Internet technology in teaching and learning has transformed the delivery of instruction to students, leading to a shift in students' perceptions of the usefulness of online education for improving their English language skills. The Internet has played a crucial role in teaching and learning second or foreign languages, as noted by Yang and Chen (2007). By incorporating computers and the Internet into language classes, learners gain access to a wealth of English language resources that can improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through real-world situations. The widespread use of computers and the Internet in educational settings has motivated language teachers to adopt this technology to facilitate language teaching and learning processes.

The perception and motivation of teachers and students regarding the integration of the Internet in language classes are critical factors that affect the use of educational technology in classrooms. Teachers' and students' attitudes toward technology can either facilitate or hinder their ability to use it effectively in their educational settings, providing them with comfort or hindrances (Kim, 2002). Among various technological aids, computers and Internet technology are the most effective tools for teaching and learning languages. By integrating and utilizing computers and the Internet in a learning environment, students can acquire a foreign language more efficiently.

E-Learning provides enhanced opportunities to engage in internally driven, constructive, reflective, personally meaningful, authentic, collaborative, and adaptable learning activities. Nicol (2008) defines E-Learning as a pedagogical approach that is strengthened by digital technology. It refers to a planned teaching and learning experience that utilizes various technologies, mainly computer-based or Internet-based, to reach learners. This approach is sometimes referred to as distance learning.

Many universities have adopted E-Learning as a means of changing the way teaching and learning takes place. Information and communication technologies are used in a blended approach to teaching and learning, with asynchronous online communication tools, like email or discussion forums, playing a critical role. E-Learning is not only about delivering a lesson online, and building E-Learning activities involves more than just putting text materials on the internet. Instead, a learner-centered approach should be prioritized when creating E-Learning activities.

Therefore, this study focuses on investigating students' perception and factors affecting the use of web-based learning. One of the critical factors that generally influence the use of web-based learning in classes is students' perception. Having a positive perception of web-based learning or internet use helps increase students' attitudes and achievements. Moreover, it encourages teachers to use this technology in the teaching and learning process, improving the overall learning experience. Therefore, developing a positive perception and understanding the student factors is crucial.

3. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design. According to Isaac and Michael, descriptive research is the kind of research that systematically describes situations and facts of a given population factually and accurately (Isaac and Michael, cited in Seham, 2017). By using this design, the study investigated the faculty members' perceptions of E-Learning in the English Language Department and Indonesian Language Department of Halu Oleo University.

The participants of this study were faculty members from the English Language and Indonesian Language Departments at Halu Oleo University. There were 40 professional faculty members involved in the study, selected using purposive sampling techniques based on their prior experience with technology, particularly in employing e-learning to assist them in teaching. To collect data on faculty members' perceptions of e-learning, researchers prepared an instrument in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert scale, and consisted of 25 reliable and valid statements adapted from Sadhegi et al. (2014). The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate faculty members' perceptions of e-learning.

The researcher distributed and collected data using Google Forms, which were shared with faculty members in the English Language and Indonesian Language Departments at Halu Oleo University. The questionnaires were aimed at investigating faculty members' perceptions of the use of e-learning. It is important to note that the questionnaire was filled out by the faculty members themselves. To analyze the data, the researcher utilized SPSS version 16, an appropriate software for calculating results from the closed-ended questionnaire and collecting statistical data from the respondents. The statistical data was based on the number of participants who responded to each item in the questionnaire. Based on these statistical results, the researcher drew conclusions.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

a) Perceived Usefulness (PU)'s Aspect

In this section, the researcher presents the Perceived Usefulness aspect of faculty members' perceptions of using e-learning in the English Education and Indonesian Education Departments at Halu Oleo University. This aspect is defined as a measure of the benefits that lecturers experience when using e-learning. The following chart summarizes the results of the Perceived Usefulness aspect of faculty members' perceptions of e-learning.
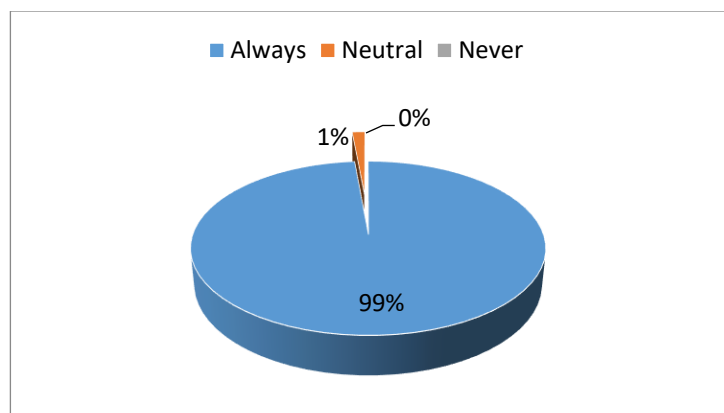
Figure 1. The lectuers' Perception in the PU aspect

The pie chart categorizes faculty members' responses to 14 items on the questionnaire as positive, neutral, or negative. With regard to faculty members' perceptions of using e-learning in the English Education and Indonesian Education Departments at Halu Oleo University, approximately 99% of participants responded positively, 1% responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively.

b) Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)'s Aspect
In this section, the researcher presents the Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) aspect of faculty members' perceptions of using e-learning in the English Education and Indonesian Education Departments at Halu Oleo University. Furthermore, the following chart summarizes the results of faculty members' perceptions of using e-learning.
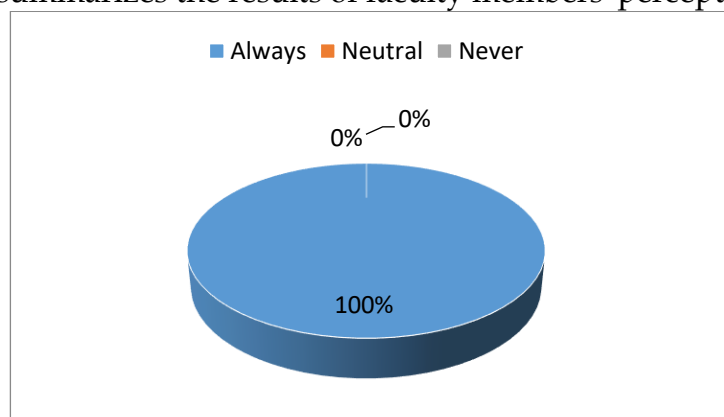

Figure 2. The Lectuers' Perception in the PEOU aspect

The pie chart categorizes faculty members' responses to 14 items on the questionnaire as positive, neutral, or negative. In terms of faculty members' perceptions of using e-learning in the English and Indonesian Education Departments at Halu Oleo University, 100% of the respondents responded positively, and 0% responded neutrally or negatively to the perception of using e-learning.

4.2 Discussion
The aim of this study was to investigate faculty members' perceptions of e-learning and identify critical factors influencing its use in the English Education Department and Indonesian Education Department at Halu Oleo University. The results indicated that the participating lecturers held positive perceptions of e-learning. Nearly all of them responded positively to the study's two aspects of e-learning's use in teaching.

The study found that lecturers perceived e-learning as useful in their teaching, believing that it could improve student achievement, provide accurate information, and offer flexibility in completing coursework. Additionally, e-learning could help students understand course materials, access learning resources, and stay up-to-date with the latest teaching materials. These findings align with Brandabur's (2011) research and

Sadeghi et al.'s (2014) positive perceptions of technology in teaching. Selecting appropriate e-learning tools can create a productive and satisfying learning environment for students in a university. Yanti et al. (2017) also reported positive perceptions of e-learning's usefulness in teaching, suggesting that it can benefit both students and teachers in their learning and teaching experiences.

The study found that faculty members agreed that e-learning was easy to use in teaching. They reported that e-learning enabled them to find and download teaching materials, interact with students and colleagues, and send files easily. Similar findings were reported in studies by Yanti et al. (2017) and Cheok et al. (2017), who found that e-learning was a user-friendly system that allowed teachers to easily search for and incorporate educational materials from the internet into their courses. Overall, faculty members in this study perceived e-learning as a convenient and accessible tool for teaching and learning.

According to the findings of this study, the positive perception of e-learning in terms of Perceived Usefulness (PU) was 99%, while the Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) was 100%. Thus, it can be concluded that the dominant aspect of using e-learning in teaching is its ease of use. However, some participants expressed concern about limitations on internet access or quotas for teachers. While e-learning is not restricted by time, distance, or place, a poor internet connection or limited quota could affect the learning process. A study by Mulyadi (2018) found that limited time and facilities, as well as poor internet connection, posed challenges for EFL students and teachers during the pedagogical process. Additionally, Abbsi et al. (2020) suggested that despite the availability of e-teaching, students still tend to prefer face-to-face instruction. Therefore, it is crucial for educational institutions and faculty members to enhance the quality of e-teaching to ensure effective learning, especially during lockdown situations.

In spite of any drawbacks, online education has several advantages. It is an effective way of acquiring technological skills that are essential in today's world for both teachers and learners. It allows teachers to conduct classes from anywhere, even from remote areas, as long as they have an internet connection. However, teachers must plan and actively integrate online classes into their teaching schedules. Online learning requires clear deadlines and a timetable, similar to physical attendance, and regular announcements, and discussions must be conducted to answer student queries. This ensures that students receive adequate guidance and support, and the involvement of instructors and campuses is carried over to the online environment.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study and theoretical propositions from the literature, the researcher concludes that faculty members have a positive perception towards e-learning. Almost all the lecturers who participated in this study gave positive responses regarding the use of e-learning in teaching. E-learning is seen to help lecturers in all aspects of their teaching practice, improve students' learning outcomes, and is easy for them to use and apply in the teaching process. Moreover, the dominant aspect of using e-learning in the teaching practice is the Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) aspect. However,

an important factor to consider is the limitations of the internet or quotas for teachers or lecturers themselves. While e-learning is not limited by time, distance, or place, a poor internet connection or insufficient internet quota can hinder the learning process. After conducting this study, the researcher recommends that the university provide good internet connection (Wi-Fi) to facilitate the use of e-learning. This will make the learning process more effective. The researcher also suggests that future studies should investigate students' perceptions of using e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the effectiveness of e-learning in teaching practices.

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