Students' Perception on the Use of WhatsApp in Learning EFL during Covid 19 at Remote Area

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out the students' perception on the use of WhatsApp in learning EFL During covid 19 at remote area (Study at SMPN 11 Selayar Island South Sulawesi). The researchers applied mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research design. The data of this research were collected through questionnaire and interview. The subjects of this study were students of SMPN 11 Selayar. The sample of the questionnaire was 50 students and Interviews of eight students were taken using purposive sampling technique. The results of data analysis showed that (1) positive student perceptions on the use of WhatsApp in learning EFL during Covid-19 at remote area with the classification, 7(14%) students classified Strongly positive, 38 (76%) students classified Positive, 4(8%) students were classified as Medium, 1 (2%) student were classified as Negative and not there are students who were classified as strongly negative. (2) Student explanations in interviews regarding the perception on the use of WhatsApp in learning EFL during Covid-19 at remote area explained that WhatsApp is a good online learning tool because WhatsApp has good features that really support EFL learning in this pandemic era. Even though there is a pandemic, students can still learn EFL through WhatsApp because in WhatsApp students and teachers can still interact and discuss well.

Keywords: *Students' Perception, WhatsApp, EFL.*

1. Introduction

English is a language that used for international communication. Having the ability or a good understanding of English will help us in the future, especially in pursuing a good career. Therefore, almost all schools in Indonesia make English one of the subjects that students must master. English is important in Indonesia because it is used as a language of instruction in both business and education. Learning English in school can help the student if the goal and methods are age-appropriate. If the teacher's instructions are clear, the student would have difficulty understanding English (Morrow, 2011).

The world is rocked by the coronavirus or covid-19 in 2019. Many people in Wuhan and other countries, such as Indonesia, are infected with the virus, which can be potentially lethal in some cases (Siagian, 2020). As a result of the increasing spread of the coronavirus, governments adopted a social distancing policy or introduced physical distancing to minimize covid-19 space. So, all of the activities that initially take place in a class turn into online learning, or we could say distance learning. So, this causes students and teachers

to adapt to this situation because there are several things to adapt to learning distances such as how teachers deliver materials, the platforms they use, and much more. Educators should be able to ensure that teaching-learning activities continue even when students are learning from home. As a solution, educators should design innovative learning media using online media.

WhatsApp is one of the applications commonly used in the online learning process in this pandemic term. So, this study focuses on the use of WhatsApp, which is the most popular social media platform in the education sector. WhatsApp is an application designed to make it easy for the teacher, and students to communicate, which provides simple, safe, message and calling services and is available on various phones around the world. With WhatsApp, users can send text messages, send photos, audio, video, send documents, and make audio and video calls. Students can freely respond, and teachers can respond to their questions and comments, start new issues, or post questions. Through various features in this application, WhatsApp assists students in remaining anxiously engaged in learning activities. In WhatsApp, there are group chat features that allow several people to form a large group. So, WhatsApp can quickly include a large number of students. Students from the same class can easily dialogue on specific topics using this application because it allows for immediate responses and in-group members to join the conversation, resulting in effective communication. Based on the above explanation it could be said that WhatsApp could be more easily used with a full future on the application (Fitri & Tiarina, 2021).

Perception is a set of activities that involves becoming aware of and interpreting information about one's surroundings. It refers to how humans attempt to comprehend the world all around us gather information using our five sense organs. Perception is our experience of information content, which we can compare to previous experiences, as well as how we see or understand something using one of our senses (Anggraini, 2021).

Students' perception in the learning process is very important to be investigated. Perception of students in learning refers to a students' perspective on something that provide or apply when running a learning activity. Teachers can use students' perceptions to correct and evaluate the system, methods, or learning materials we provide or apply to them. In this pandemic term, studying online through WhatsApp is something new or unusual for school students. Consequently, each student's perception of online learning through WhatsApp will be different. These observation results will be determined by a student's perception, whether positive or negative from observations made by students. This Student perception will be used as material for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages and to assess the challenges and strategies of online learning using social media WhatsApp as an online study tool by an English teacher. So, the perception given by students is important because it determines the result of their learning in English.

There are some researchers that have investigate about WhatsApp. Alaby (2020), conducted a study with the titled "WhatsApp social media as a Distance Learning Media for Basic-Cultural Studies (ISBD)". The aim of this research is to know the role of WhatsApp social media in distance learning in addition to communicating and delivering messages in college materials. This study uses qualitative descriptive, interactive data analysis techniques through observation and interviews.

The result of this research is that social media WhatsApp as a learning medium plays a major role in the college process, which serves as an educational tool, an evaluation tool, a means of connecting information, and a consultation service tool. And then According to (Fitri & Tiarina, 2021) with the title "An Analysis of Students' Perception in Using WhatsApp As Media for Learning English During Covid 19 Pandemic at SMAN 1 Kecamatan Guguak". The goal of this study is to know and understand students' perceptions of using the WhatsApp application as a medium for learning English during the covid 19 pandemics in SMAN 1 Kecamatan Guguak. The research is descriptive and employs a quantitative approach. Where data is obtained through questionnaires and supported with interviews. According to the findings of this study, students have a positive perception of WhatsApp's use in English study. The average value of this evidence is 3.72 percent, and the respondent rate in the good category is 92.90 percent. Based on the explanation above, the researchers are interested to research "Students' Perception on The Use of WhatsApp in Learning EFL during Covid 19 at Remote Area.

2. Literature Review

2. 1. Definition of Perception

Perception is the experience of an object, an event, or a relationship obtained through data realignment and message interpretation. This gives meaning to the response stimulus system, which includes attention, hope, motivation, and memory. Wood (2015), Perception is the active process of meaning creation through the selection, organization, and interpretation of people, objects, events, situations, and other phenomena.

According to Walgito (1990), perception is an impression of an object obtained through the process of conversion, organization, and interpretation of the object received by the individual, giving it a meaningful and passive activity inside the individual. This view does not conflict with the previous one but rather explains the process of occurring after the absorption of images obtained through the senses than in the organization, then in the interpretation (interpreted) to mean or mean to the individual, the process of taking it into account is one unit of activity in the individual. On the other side Robbin (2003), describes perception as being acquired by individuals through sensory organs and then analyzed (organized), synthesized, and then evaluated, so that the individual gains meaning. Robbin opinion more typically echoes previous opinions, which include elements of evaluation or assessment of objects of perception.

According to the definition of researchers, Walgito, and Robbin above do not contradict each other. From all three sources, there are similarities: 1. That perception is an impression or picture of an object outside of the individual. 2. That the process of perception is acquired through the senses; and the difference: 1. Walgito explained more fully the process of perception, which is organized, interpreted for meaning. Whereas the process of perception exists as one whole. 2. Robbin is more furnished with one evaluation indicator, after absorption, organizing, and interpreting are then evaluated.

Based on the subject, researchers conclude that: perception is an image or impression response of an object acquired by individuals through sensory function, then organized, in interpretation, and evaluated, thereby shaping the meaning (meaning) of an object, while the object of perception in this study is the use of WhatsApp in learning English during covid 19 at remote area.

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2. 2. Types of Perception

According to Robbin (2003), Perception is divided into two, that's positive and negative perception.

a. Positive perception

A positive perception is when a person evaluates something from a positive perspective, in accordance with expectations for the thing, or in accordance with a predetermined rule. A person's good perceptions are caused by their own contentment with the objects on which their perceptions are based, as well as by their own knowledge and experiences with those objects.

b. Negative perception

Negative perception is when a person has an unfavorable opinion of something or some information, contravening the norm for that thing or the established regulations. Individual dissatisfaction with objects as well as a lack of personal knowledge and experience can serve as sources of perception. All of these elements may contribute to unfavorable opinions.

Therefore, it may be inferred that opinions, both good and negative, will always influence one's actions. The way the person explains all of their knowledge about the viewed thing also determines whether the perception comes out as positive or negative .

2. 3. Process of Perception

Perception, according to Wood (2015), consists of three processes: selecting, organizing, and interpreting, because these processes are ongoing, they blend into one another. They are also interactive, meaning that each of them affects the other two. What we choose to perceive in a given situation, for example, influences how we organize and interpret the situation. Meanwhile, according to Sobur (2003), there are three main components of the process of perception, those are:

a. Selection

Selection is the sensory screening process of external stimulation, intensity, and type that can be many or little.

b. Interpretation

Interpretation is the process of arranging information such that it makes sense to a particular person. Interpretation is affected by such factors as experience, intelligence, motivation, personality, and value systems adopted. The ability to classify information received that is, the transformation of complicated information into simple information is another factor that influences interpretations.

c. Interpretation and perception

Interpretation and perception are then interpreted. into behavior as a reaction. So, perception is the process of selecting, interpreting, and collecting information that comes in.

From the description above, the researchers conclude that perceptive processes consist of physical selection, physiological processes, psychological/interpretation processes, and end with reactions that can be positive or negative.

2. 4. The factors Affecting Perception

According to Toha cited in Nursafitri (2021), two factors affect a person's perception namely:

a. Internal factors: physical condition, feelings, attitudes and personality, attention, prejudice, desire or hope, learning, values and needs, motivation, mental disorders, and interests.

b. External factors include the knowledge and demands of the opposite ward, family

history, information learned, intensity, size, repetitions, new and familiar objects, and information obtained.

These factors cause individual perceptions different from each other and will influence an individual in understanding a stimulus, object, even though it is truly the same. One person's perception or group may differ significantly from that of another person or group. Individual differences, personality differences, attitudes differences, and motivational differences can all be attributed to differences in perception. This perception is formed within an individual, but it is also influenced by experience, the learning process, and knowledge.

2. 5. Definition of WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a smartphone instant messaging app that is proprietary and cross-platform. In addition to text messages, people can send each other images, video files, and audio media messages (Isda & Purwati, 2020). WhatsApp is a mobile phone and web-based instant messaging application that enables to sharing of information via text, images, video files, and audio messages (Church & De Oliveira, 2013). It is a free, simple, easy, and comfortable way of communicating with others. WhatsApp allows users to send messages to one another via their Internet connections.

WhatsApp is one of the social network communication portals that quickly change the way people interact with each other (Susilo, 2014). The WhatsApp application is a highly important platform for mileage (Larasati, 2020). In addition, within the covid-19 pandemic, the WhatsApp application has become one of the teachings and learning media. Teachers will usually provide materials and explanations in video form, voice notes, or files through the WhatsApp class group

created by their homeroom teacher (PowerPoint or MS word). According to Nugraheni (2020), during covid-19, almost all school institutions are preparing to implement online methods.

2. 6. The Importance of Using WhatsApp as a Learning Media in The Era Covid-19

The spread of the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) outbreak is increasingly becoming in Indonesia, of course, we all hope that this outbreak will end soon because this problem not only affects the health sector but also impacts other areas such as the economy, tourism, and others. This outbreak is also very impactful to our education, where the Central and Local Governments are forced to issue policies to close schools. Through the Ministry of Education and Culture, the central government issued Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 on the Implementation of Education in the Emergency Period of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). The circular's two most important policies are the school's offering of Distance Learning to students and the cancellation of the National Examination.

Based on the results of a survey conducted by Wahsun (2020), shows that the trend of using the online learning system platform by teachers is to use the WhatsApp application. The popularity of WhatsApp motivates students on assigned tasks, particularly for daily collaborative and communicative conversations in a super-fast connection (Maulina, David, Basri, & Noni, 2021).

WhatsApp is a smartphone application that provides relaxing and useful online activities to students, thus increasing the demand for Smartphones among children (Han, 2009). Overall, various studies have proven that WhatsApp has been widely used by individuals around the world because of its

accessibility and ease of use in communication purposes, especially its use in teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era.

2. 7. Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language

In terms of English as a foreign language, the government has decided that it should be taught to students who begin in elementary school (as local content) and continue through university. It is expected that students will have sufficient English or knowledge to communicate in English. English must be taught to students so that they can compete in this growing global era. Many requirements, such as getting a job and continuing your education, require proficiency in English.

It can be concluded that English is a communication tool that many uses to express their desires, thoughts, and feelings to be understood by others. Teachers should be able to effectively manage the classroom when teaching English as a foreign language. Brown (2001), defines education as teaching or helping students in learning how to instruct in studying important things, doing things, providing them with language, and causing them to know or understand. That means that teachers must use good teaching strategies to make students feel comfortable and interested in the subject, especially English so that students can concentrate on the learning process. As a result of the foregoing, it is clear that students who learn English should be able to use their English skills for international communication. Because some students believe that English is the most difficult topic, teachers must prepare teaching concepts and create a fun learning atmosphere when teaching, especially in English.

2. 8. Education in Remote Area/ Rural Area

According to Ministry of State for the Development of Remote of the Republic of Indonesia (2016), in aggregate the problems faced by disadvantaged areas are the quality of human resources in remote areas which are relatively lower than the national average due to limited public access to education, health and employment.

According to Napitulupu (2009), provides the limits that education is a deliberate, regular, planned activity to change human behavior in the desired direction. Based on some of these Suggestions it could be concluded that education is a human activity or effort to develop and enhance its potential: intellectual, emotional, and willful, regular, and purposeful aim. Education is also a process in the sense of a need for change in development, both attitude, knowledge, and skills that involve a variety of abilities.

Education is one of the most important means of social life, with our education learning a wide range of information. We can get moral, disciplinary, religious, social, and more. In Indonesia, there are many problems in education, ranging from, illegal collections, and unregulated education facilities. The deployment of the living facilities and facilities of the population and the progress of rural communities is still outmatched and lagged from urban areas, especially at the level of formal education where the means of education and schools in remote areas remain inadequate. On the other hand, many of the rural communities are unable to enjoy education or school because of low-income costs factors. As a result, many school-age children are even adolescents remain illiterate, or drop out of high school or secondary school.

Many problems in the world of Indonesian education are often hindering the quality of Indonesian education. One of them is not surprised by the poor quality of Indonesian education in remote areas. According to Ujianti (2020) the various aspects that contribute to a low educational level in remote areas are;

a. Online Learning is Very Difficult to Implement

Due to government policies for the implementation of learning during covid-19, many schools in remote areas are closed, and teachers are asked to teach online or learn from home. However, the process of online learning is difficult for both teachers and students. Schools, in particular, are still in isolated and rural areas. In remote areas, this is difficult to apply.

b. Limited Communication and Internet Access

The most significant barrier to the implementation of online learning in rural areas is a lack of communication and wireless connections, including phones and Internet access. Because of the hills, the Internet is inaccessible and can only be accessed from certain points. Alternative learning facilities, such as those provided by the ministry of education or the educational television channel, are difficult to come by. Because of their parents' limited financial resources, the students struggled. They are unable to obtain mobile phones, computers, or laptop computers for use as learning tools. They seldom have enough money to buy the Internet. Problems with mobile telecommunication devices, difficult and unstable access to Internet networks due to geographical conditions, and the inability to purchase Internet access through online learning all became less effective.

3. Research Methodology

3. 1. Research Design

In this. study, the researchers applied a design of mixed methods to achieve the research questions that the researchers have formulated. Research designs of mixed methods are procedures for testing, analysis, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in one study or a series of studies in understanding the research problem, Creswell & Clark (2011). In the study, quantitative data are used to see students' perceptions on the use of WhatsApp in learning English whether positive or negative, while qualitative data are used to see how the student's perception on the use of WhatsApp in learning English.

3. 2. Research Site

This research started in 9th April 2022.The data was obtained using questionnaire and interview. The subject of this research were students at SMPN 11 Selayar. Research Instruments: The instrument was questionnaire likert-scale and interview semi-structured.

3. 3. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed the data using the following steps:

a. Questionnaire

1) Classifying all of the collected data based on the statement of the problems; The questionnaire used the Likert Scale that consisted of five-point scales as follows:

Table 1. Perception scoring system

Statement	Score	
	Positive	Negative
Strongly Positive	5	1
Positive	4	2
Moderate	3	3
Negative	2	4
Strongly Negative	1	5

2) Analyzing the percentage by using formula as below:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P   : Percentage

F   : Frequency

N   : Amount of sample

(Gay, 2012)

3) Using the mean score formula below, determine the mean score of the students' perceptions:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\Sigma x}{N}$$

Where:

X : Mean score

ΣX : Total raw score

N : The total number of participants

(Gay, 2012)

4) Making the categories of students' perception based on the range of scale criteria below:

Table 2. Perception Classification

Range of Scale	Students' Perception Positive Items
85-100	Strongly Positive
69-84	Positive
53-68	Moderate
37-52	Negative
20-36	Strongly Negative

(Gay, 2012)

5) Making categories by classifying the frequency of the students who have the same score;

6) Describe the students' perception on the use of WhatsApp in teaching and learning English in remote areas by interpreting the data and making a conclusion.

b. Interview

The data from the interview was analyzed using qualitative analysis Propose by Miles and Huberman (1984) divided into three major steps, they are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

1) Data Collection

The researchers first identified the issue before gathering data through student interviews. All recording data is collected and then the researchers write transcriptions of transcripts of researchers get data. At this stage, the researchers identified students' perceptions on the use of WhatsApp in learning English.

2) Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of choosing, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and altering data, according to Miles and Huberman (1984). The data has been organized and reduced in a useful fashion as a result. The researchers select data obtained during the research process regarding students' perception using WhatsApp in English study, after which the data is classified and selected.

3) Data Display

Data display is the second step based on Miles and Huberman's (1984) model of qualitative data analysis. This step provided organized and compressed information to conclude. At this stage, the format of the data presented in this study is a form of narrative text. The narrative text's purpose is that the researchers explain information previously classified about students' perception using WhatsApp in English study, and then the conclusion is presented in the form of a narrative text. It qualitatively analyzes and describes the data.

4) Conclusion/ Verification

After finishing the data reduction and data display, the last step to analyze the data in this study is concluding. It is to consider what the analyzed data means to draw the conclusion and to answer the problem of the study. In this step, this study drew meaning from the data in a display then concluded the findings of the study based on the problem of the study.

4. Findings

4. 1. Result of the Questionnaire

In this chapter the research serves the finding of the research to answer the research question. The finding is processed based on the data that has been collected. The data was collected by using questionnaire which is processed in quantitative approach. Based on the results of the data collection obtained through the students perception questionnaire that has been processed and analyzed, it can be seen the level of students' perception as shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3. Perception Classification

Range of Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Students' Perception
85-100	7	14.00%	Strongly Positive
69-84	38	76.00%	Positive
53-68	4	8.00%	Moderate
37-52	1	2.00%	Negative
20-36	0	0.00%	Strongly Negative
Total	74	100%	

From the table above, showed that there are 7 (14%) students who get a scale range of 85-100 which indicates that the student is classified as having a Strongly Positive perception, there are 38 (76%) students who get a scale range of 69-84 which indicates that the student is classified as having a Positive perception , there are 4 (8%) students who get a scale range of 53-68 which indicates that the student is classified as having a moderate perception, and there are 1 (2%) students who get a scale range of 37-52 which indicates that the student is classified as having a negative perception. it can be seen that students have different perceptions about toward the use of WhatsApp in learning EFL during covid-19 at SMPN 11 Selayar. So, it can be concluded that

the level of students' perception on the use of WhatsApp at SMPN 11 Selayar is Positive.

4. 2. Result of the Interview

Based on the result of the interview, there are some themes mentioned by respondent related to the student's perception on the use of WhatsApp in learning EFL during covid-19 at remote area. These Themes are described as follows:

a. WhatsApp Has a Good Features
To find out students' perceptions about applications, especially online learning platforms that have good features, is a very important indicator to find out whether their perceptions are positive or negative because the presence of good features can. make. Students. more interested. in learning. Based on the results of the interview, students were interested and agreed to use the WhatsApp feature. This can be seen from the students' responses to question no. 3 that What do you think of the features provided by WhatsApp in learning? It was also related to one of the statements in the questionnaire that "The features provided by WhatsApp in learning English are interesting". Based on the percentage of the statement there were 28 (56.00%) students classified as positive and 7(14.00%) students classified as strongly positive this was revealed from the data obtained in the interview below.

Menurut saya fitur-fitur yang ada pada WhatsApp sangat baik dan membantu dalam pembelajaran. (ASN, Interview, 22 April 2022).
I think the features on the WhatsApp are very good and helpful in learning. (Translation)

Bagus ji kak menurutku fiturnya membantu sekali dalam pembelajaran. (RA, Interview, 22 April 2022)

That's good I think the WhatsApp feature is very helpful in learning. (Translation)

Baik dan bermanfaat. (HK, Interview, 22 April 2022)
Good and useful. (Translation)

b. Reflecting Effective Teaching Method
The teaching method is also an indicator to determine positive or negative perceptions. Based on interviews, students have positive perceptions about the methods used by the teacher. This can be seen from the students' responses to question no. 4, "What do you think about the English material that is presented through WhatsApp? It is also related to one of the statements in the questionnaire that "Teaching style of my English teacher through WhatsApp group is very easy to understand". Based on the questionnaire statement, 58.00% of the students positive and 16.00% of the students strongly positive to the statement. It can be concluded that the way the English teacher teaches through the WhatsApp group is very easy, this is positive and is revealed from the data obtained in the interview below.

Materi yang disampaikan oleh guru menurut saya kak sudah baik saya bisa memahaminya dengan baik. (ASN, Interview, 22 April 2022)
I think the material present by the teacher is good, I can understand it well. (Translation)

Baik ji kak. (RA, Interview, 22 April 2022)
It's good. (Translation)

Bagus karena tidak terlalu susah dan gampangji di pahami. (HK, Interview, 22 April 2022)
Good because it's not difficult and easy to understand. (Translation)

Baik ji kak dan dapat ji dimengerti penyampaian gurunya. (YN, Interview, 22 April 2022)
It's Good and I can understand the teacher delivery. (Translation)

Baik ji kak karena bisa ji di mengerti materi yang disampaikan gurunya. (AF, Interview, 22 April 2022)
Good because we can understand the material presented by the teacher. (Translation)

c. Reflecting Effective Learning Media

In line with the student's exposure in the interview, some students also believe that learning English on WhatsApp can improve their understanding of English and this cannot be separated. from. the advantages. of the WhatsApp application. itself, especially the features and effectiveness found in learning to use WhatsApp so that students feel capable his English improved. It is also related to the percentage of statements in the questionnaire "I believe that WhatsApp is application that is effective to learn English in school". There were 37 (74 %) students have agree and 6 (12 %) students have strongly agree for the statement and it was revealed from the data obtained on interview below.

Meningkat ji kak sedikit, kek lebih baik ki dari yang sebelum2nya. (ASN, Interview, 22 April 2022)
It rises a little bit, but it's better than before. (Translation)

Meningkatji kak kalau serius ki pahami ki. (AF, Interview, 22 April 2022)
It increases if we're serious we can understand. (Translation)

Iya bisa, karena aplikasi WhatsApp mudah dimengerti cara penggunaanya dan penyampaian gurunya baik jadi bisa membantu untuk meningkatkan pemahaman

bahasa inggris saya. (HK, Interview, 22 April 2022)
Yes, because the WhatsApp application is easy to understand how it is used and the delivery of the teacher is good so it can help to improve my understanding of English. (Translation)

5. Discussions

In this section, the discussion reveals the interpretation of findings related to students' perceptions of using WhatsApp groups in English learning. The researchers discovered that students had a positive reaction to or perception of the use of WhatsApp, which was consistent with the findings of quantitative data gathered from questionnaires and supported by qualitative data from interviews when the research questions in the problem formulation were answered. According to Daheri Juliana, Deriwanto, and Amda (2020), the use of WhatsApp in the learning process can have a good effect on how the learning process is put into practice. According to the study's findings, WhatsApp was a very strategic tool for learning English, especially for sending homework. This is in line with Firmansyah (2021), who stated that "students can collect assignments well, feel satisfied with the learning carried out and succeed in obtaining satisfactory or good learning outcomes." In addition, the use of WhatsApp in learning English is very influential on students.

There are several research indicators that can be concluded. However, before researchers discuss several indicators that affect student perceptions, it is necessary to know that everyone has different perceptions of something. As we know, perception is the process of recognizing and interpreting sensory information to provide an overview and understanding of the environment. This is related to the definition of perception theory by

Robbins (2003) which states that perception as being acquired by individuals through sensory organs and then analyzed (organized), synthesized, and then evaluated, so that the individual gains meaning. Robbin opinion more typically echoes previous opinions, which include elements of evaluation or assessment of objects of perception. According to Robbin's (2003) theory of perception types, which claims that there are two types of perceptions: positive and negative perceptions, researchers may demonstrate that everyone has differences. Students appear to have a positive perception, according to the research data, which cannot be isolated from WhatsApp's benefits. Several comments from students said that WhatsApp is an effective online learning tool based on the research's findings. Researchers can conclude that this occurred because WhatsApp provides helpful characteristics for the learning process throughout the pandemic, is a straightforward and lightweight program, and is accessible for the majority of cellphones in this day and age. They (teachers and students) are able to carry out the learning process because the features that allow them to send files, videos, photographs, audio, and notes. This has bearing on L. Tjokro (2009) E-learning includes multimedia tools like graphics, text, animation, sound, and video, which makes it easier to digest and one of its numerous benefits.

However, another sign that pupils have a favorable opinion of WhatsApp is the way teachers approach their lessons. The total replies revealed that the students' English teacher did a good job of teaching them, according to the students' responses. Whether they have good or negative perceptions depends on the advantages and disadvantages. The outcomes so demonstrated that there were still pupils who provided negative feedback or

impressions. WhatsApp as a social media that is not created or designed as a learning tool must have a negative side in the perceptions of its users in the academic field, as those who use it as a learning tool. But it also gives the best because students and teachers in teaching really believe that yes, there are many advantages. This is related to the theory of L. Tjokro (2009:187) which states that the advantages of e-learning are easier to absorb, much more effective in the cost, so much more concise, available in 24 hours a day and L. Gavrilova (2006) states that the weakness of e-learning requires additional equipment such as computers., monitor, keyboard, etc. Even though WhatsApp has provided its features for some students, it still gets a negative response, especially for virtual meetings which should be done in other applications because WhatsApp cannot yet provide them.

The researchers draw the conclusion that there are a number of indications or characteristics that contribute to WhatsApp's success in helping people learn English, based on the discussion's considerations. First, online learning or remote learning can be done using WhatsApp's features. On WhatsApp, students will connect with their friends and teachers so they can share with friends and teachers about a topic. Second, WhatsApp can inadvertently improve their understanding or English skills at school because the material the teacher provides through the WhatsApp group is not difficult and easy to understand even though the students are far away, they think that learning EFL with WhatsApp is still effective because they can discuss in the group about the materials that the teacher give, even though it is only through file, ppt or video, but learning is carried out like in a live class.

6. Conclusions

The students had a positive perception about using WhatsApp while studying EFL in a rural region during COVID-19. It was demonstrated by the pupils' mean rating score, which was 76.62. The results of the questionnaire's percentages, which revealed that 7 (14.0%) of the students were classified as strongly positive, 38 (76.00%) as positive, 4 (8.00%) as moderate, 1 (2.00%) as a negative, and no student was classified as strongly negative, corroborated this claim. It might be inferred that WhatsApp was seen favorably by the students while they were learning EFL in COVID-19. Student's explanation in the interview of perception using the WhatsApp explains that the WhatsApp is a good and easy online study tool during the covid-19 pandemic in isolated areas, because the WhatsApp has good features that really support EFL study in this pandemic. Despite the pandemic, students can still learn English through WhatsApp because in the WhatsApp students and teachers they can still interact and have such good discussions in WhatsApp group even though they can't face to face.

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