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## USING THE WHATSAPP APPLICATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING: CONCERNING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ACADEMIC FLOW

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### ABSTRACT

Technological improvement has changed our educational systems from face-to-face learning to virtual learning, namely online learning. WhatsApp (WA) is an application that can be a medium to support students' English learning in a more accessible, flexible, and helpful way. The objectives of this study are to know the students' perceptions and academic flow of using the WA application in English learning, to understand the differences in their perceptions and academic flow based on their gender, age, and semester, and to know the correlation between both their perception and academic flow. The data was collected by quantitative research in survey research design. 172 State Islamic College students who studied English courses were selected randomly as the sample of this study. The data were gained through the questionnaire distributed online. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Multivariate Analysis, and Correlation of SPSS. The findings revealed that the students positively perceive using WhatsApp applications in their English learning. Meanwhile, it is also an application that can directly impact their perceptions and academic flow. However, the correlation analysis found that students' perceptions do not have a significant relationship with the academic flow ( $r = .117, p > .05$ ).

**Key Words:** whatsapp application; students' perceptions, academic flow; english learning

### ABSTRAK

Kemajuan teknologi telah mengubah sistem pendidikan kita dari pembelajaran tatap muka ke pembelajaran virtual, yaitu pembelajaran daring. WhatsApp adalah sebuah media yang dapat mendukung pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris siswa lebih mudah diakses, fleksibel, dan bermanfaat. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui persepsi dan kenyamanan akademik mahasiswa dalam penggunaan aplikasi WA pada pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, untuk memahami perbedaan persepsi dan kenyamanan akademik mahasiswa berdasarkan jenis kelamin, umur, dan semester, dan untuk mengetahui korelasi antara persepsi dan kenyamanan akademik mahasiswa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif, dengan desain penelitian survey. 172 mahasiswa yang belajar mata kuliah Bahasa Inggris pada Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri dijadikan sampel penelitian ini secara acak. Data diperoleh melalui kuesioner yang disebarluaskan secara online. Analisis data menggunakan statistik deskriptif, Analisis Multivariat (MANOVA), dan korelasi yang dianalisis dengan SPSS. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris mereka. Sementara itu, WA juga merupakan aplikasi yang secara langsung dapat mempengaruhi persepsi dan kenyamanan akademik mereka. Namun, Hasil analisis korelasi menunjukkan bahwa persepsi mahasiswa tidak memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan kenyamanan akademik ( $r = .117, p > .05$ ).

**Kata Kunci:** Aplikasi WhatsApp, Persepsi Siswa, Kenyamanan Akademik, Belajar Bahasa Inggris

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## INTRODUCTION

Technology development has flooded our daily lives, including our education system. Its effect is constructing teaching and learning activities from traditional methods (face-to-face) to the new trend of revolution methods, online or virtual learning (Ta'amneh, 2017, p. 143). Online learning is one type of distance learning method that is related to technology improvement (Syafri, M., 2022). The effectiveness of distance learning activities should be supported by various media and applications (Mantra et al., 2021). There are many applications that can be implemented in such circumstances, including WhatsApp (WA) (Ratminingsih et al., 2022). The WA is an application combined with mobile and interactive networks. Moreover, it can be a learning tool to make students' learning more accessible, flexible, and helpful in supporting the English teaching-learning process (Jasrial, 2018, p. 155).

Most previous researchers have examined the impact of using the WA application. For instance, WA as an Emergency Remote Learning (ERL) medium has gained a highly positive student perception of English online learning (Wulandari & Mandasari, 2021). Then, Nuraeni and Nurmalia (2020) found that WA can increase

students' learning chances both inside and outside the class and improve students' efforts in implementing Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (Nuraeni & Nurmalia, 2020), Bensalem (2018) said that generally using WA can improve students' vocabulary (Bensalem, 2018), Jasrial (2018) stated that WA usage can help the English teachers and their students in teaching and learning English and increase students' English ability (Jasrial, 2018), and Susanti and Tarmuji (2016) said that WhatsApp utilized through three strategies, they are "brainstorming - group drifting - teachers' feedback, starter - quick writing - peer feedback, and information gathering - elaboration exercises - checklist" can develop students' writing ability (Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016).

However, Hamad (2017) claimed there were some WhatsApp disadvantages, such as the preparation of the material needs extra time and discipline in the group-learning process (i.e., some students did not participate fully in the discussion section, they were not fixed the agreed time) (Hamad, 2017). Similarly, Purba et al. (2022) quoted that Bork-Hüffer et al. (2021) said that WA could not be used as two-way communication in real situations (the students should wait for each other), it cannot be operated time, and it is for

sharing material, but not discussing the material media (Purba et al., 2022).

Some previous research findings revealed that implementing virtual teaching through technology tools had trouble reaching participants (Harrison et al., 2015). The teachers were unwilling to use the technology optimally or were unhappy with integrating it into their classrooms (Lailiyah & Cahyono, 2017, p. 345). Furthermore, Fu (2013) found that they did not operate it well, they lacked some training and workshops, they disliked practice in each teaching meeting, and they did not have an opportunity to develop their professional skills in implementing technology access and apply their experience (Fu, 2013). In the preliminary study result, the researcher found that most students of State Islamic College (STAIN) Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh learn passively during the discussion-learning process in online learning. It occurs due to the low-level preparedness of students in the usage of the WhatsApp application and also the computer-based feedback not given on the student's answer sheet, such as praise, suggestions, questions, error correction, criticism, etc (Syahputra, 2021).

Regarding previous studies above, a few researchers did not focus on investigating students' perceptions and

academic flow, mainly using the WA application in English learning. Therefore, the objectives of this study aim (1) to know the students' perceptions and academic flow of using the WA application in English learning; (2) to determine the differences between students' perceptions and academic flow based on their gender, age, and semester of using WA application in English learning?; (3) is there a relationship between students' perceptions and academic flow of using WA application in English learning?.

### **WhatsApp**

The online learning activity is a distance learning platform where the teachers prepare the materials and assignments and then share and teach them online. Besides, online learning is also called E-learning and Virtual learning in some research topics (Stone, S., & Logan, 2018; Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020). However, some research findings showed differences between students' perceptions and expectations of the circumstance (J. L. Moore, C. Dickson-Deane., 2011). Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture Circular 4 of 2020 declared that distance learning platforms should provide various teaching methods from home to teachers' and students' interests by considering the learning facilities in their homes (Indonesian Minister of

Education and Culture Circular Number 4, 2020). In addition, the online platform does not only facilitate them anywhere and anytime but also encourages their parent to contribute and monitor their children's progress at home (Cakrawati, 2017, p. 23). Accordingly, the teacher should be able to integrate the teaching method implementation, supportive technology usage, and students' learning needs development. The students should also understand how to use technology to learn something meaningful.

There are several popular technology applications that can help to solve students' online learning problems. Those applications have many features, such as making voice calls or video calls, sending and sharing slides presentations, pictures, videos, documents, audio, and website links (Nuryani, Sumarta, & Kamil, 2021, p. 3793). WhatsApp (WA) is one of those types of applications that can be accessed. Around the world, global active users of WA reached 2 (two) billion people in January 2022, whereas Indonesia has 175.4 billion people, or 84% of active users (Cindy, 2022; Permana et al., 2021, p. 87). WA is the most familiar application that is used as social media compared to others, such as Facebook, Skype, Twitter, WeChat, and Line (Fattah, 2015; Jasrial, 2018, p. 152). Moreover, it is a cross-platform app that

connects with internet providers and has some features that can help the users easily communicate with others, including supporting the teaching-learning English (Alshammari, R., Parkes, M, & Adlington, 2017). In addition, integrating teaching instructions with technology offers a positive contribution to education (Suriaman et al., 2022).

Previous studies revealed that WA is also one creative teaching technique to facilitate and attract students' learning needs, interests, and attention in a relaxed and fun way (Mistar & Embi, 2016). Sofyana and Rozaq (2019) found that combining WhatsApp-based online learning is more effective in informatics techniques than in conventional learning (Sofyana & Rozaq, 2019). Also, another research result showed that the teachers' and students' relationship could be fostered by connecting WA during out-of-school hours (Durgungoz & Durgungoz, 2021). Hence, the WhatsApp application is an 'official' interactive online application used by teachers for their college or university aims, such as sending information and managing learning processes. On the other hand, implementing WA in English teaching-learning is an ineffective technique due to expensive data packages, poor internet connection, unsupportive facilities, a lack of technical and pedagogical skills,

inadequate electricity, and an unfavorable environment (Rahman, 2021).

### **Academic Flow**

Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) said that Mihály Csikszentmihályi (a Hungarian psychologist) was the founder of the concept of "flow" father or the pioneer of the study, and he also developed it in his work published between 1975 and 2000. The work result showed that in the individual's experience descriptions, those who feel satisfied practicing their activity where the inherent reward is an important consideration (Nakamura, J., and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

According to Cortini, M., Notarangelo, E., and Cardelicchio (2010), academic flow is impacted by different variables and constructs from academic achievements, career expectations, well-being to performance, and future occupational employment, particularly in the school world (Cortini, M., Notarangelo, E., and Cardelicchio, 2010). Larson (2011) said that academic flow could be used to increase the higher level of students' learning at their school (Larson, 2011). In addition, Carpentier, J., Mageau, G. A., and Vallerand (2012) argued that the intrinsic and self-controlled motivation of individuals influenced by "harmonious passion" can have a well-tendency to feel the flow

experience in their beloved activities (Carpentier, J., Mageau, G. A., and Vallerand, 2012).

### **METHODS**

#### **Research Design**

The research method of this study is the quantitative research method. This research data was done by distributing an online survey questionnaire to the students.

#### **Research Site and Participants**

The research site was collected in the online course online learning in one of the State Islamic Colleges in Meulaboh, west Aceh. Regarding the sample of this research, there are 172 (one hundred and seventy-two) students from different departments in the college who studied English courses in the second and fourth semesters. The samples were selected through a simple random sampling technique. Here are the details provided in the table 1.

Table 1. Research Site and Respondent

| Students' Demographic Data |        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender                     | Male   | 66        | 38.4           |
|                            | Female | 106       | 61.6           |
| Age                        | 19     | 57        | 33.1           |
|                            | 20     | 53        | 30.8           |
|                            | 21     | 62        | 36             |
| Semester                   | Second | 104       | 60.5           |
|                            | Fourth | 68        | 39.5           |

### Data collection and analysis

This study was mainly collected using an online questionnaire as the instrument. It is divided into 2 (two) types. First, the questionnaire for students' perceptions was adopted from Wulandari and Mandasari (2021). It consisted of 24 question items on a five-answers Likert scale (strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (either agree or disagree) (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5)) related to obtaining students' demographic data and their perceptions toward the online-learning process through WA (Wulandari & Mandasari, 2021). Second, the questionnaire for students' academic flow was developed by Heutte and Fenouillet in French (2010) and translated into Arabic version by Chalghaf et al. (2019). It consists of 16 (sixteen) items of four dimensions flow (Flow 4D 16). The dimensions are

cognitive, time, ego, and well-being (Chalghaf et al., 2019; Heutte, J., and Fenouillet, 2010). To make the respondents easily understand each item, the questions were constructed in closed questions form in the Indonesian language. The data analysis procedures used descriptive statistics, Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA), and correlation. Also, the data used IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software in version 26.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### Students' perceptions and academic flow of using WA application in English learning

The descriptive analysis results of Table 2 showed most students' perceptions in the satisfied category. Meanwhile, most students' academic flow is in a higher category. It means that the students have a positive perception (76.7%) of using the WA application in learning. Meanwhile, students also have a higher academic flow (90.7%) in using the WA application in the English learning process.

**Table 2** Frequency and Percentage: Students' Perceptions and Academic Flow of Using Whatsapp Application in English Learning among Respondents

| Variable           | Frequency |        |               | Percentage |        |               |
|--------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|------------|--------|---------------|
|                    | Satisfied | Normal | Not Satisfied | Satisfied  | Normal | Not Satisfied |
| Student Perception | 132       | 40     | 0             | 76.7       | 23.3   | 0             |
| Academic Flow      | 156       | 16     | 0             | 90.7       | 9.3    | 0             |

**The differences between students' perceptions and academic flow based on their gender, age, and semester of using the WA application in English learning**

Table 3 (Mean and Std Dev) and Table 4 (Multivariate) analysis findings revealed that the female students ( $M = 81.7$ ) have a higher perception than males ( $M = 76.5$ ). Similarly, the academic flow of female students ( $M = 64.6$ ) is higher than male students ( $M = 62.5$ ). Hence, there is no significant difference between male and female students regarding perception and academic flow, with a value of  $F(2) = 1.435$ ,  $p > .05$ , and partial eta squared = .018. The age variable shows that students who are 19

years old ( $M = 84.7$ ) have a higher perception than students who are 20 years old ( $M = 80.3$ ) and 21 years old ( $M = 74.5$ ). Otherwise, the academic flow of students who are 20 years old ( $M = 66.4$ ) is higher than students who are 21 years old (63.1) and 19 years old ( $M = 62.2$ ). Thus, the results showed significant differences between students aged 19, 20, and 21 years in terms of perception and academic flow with a value of  $F(4) = 4.267$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and partial eta squared = 0.050. The semester variables show that second-semester students ( $M = 83.3$ ) have a higher perception than fourth-semester students ( $M = 74.2$ ). Instead, the academic flow of fourth-semester students ( $M = 64.2$ ) is higher than that of second-semester students ( $M = 63.6$ ). As a result, there is a significant difference between second-semester and fourth-semester students regarding the perception and academic flow of students with a value of  $F(2) = 4.648$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and partial eta squared = 0.055.

Table 3. Mean dan Std Deviation of Using WA Application Based on Gender, Age, and Semester

| Variables |        | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|-----------|--------|-------|----------------|
| Gender    | Male   | 76.45 | 10.98          |
|           | Female | 81.69 | 11.30          |
| Age       | 19     | 84.67 | 9.71           |
|           | 20     | 80.28 | 12.51          |
|           | 21     | 74.58 | 9.83           |
| Semester  | Second | 83.29 | 10.36          |
|           | Fourth | 74.16 | 10.84          |

Table 4. Multivariate Analysis: Differences in Students' Perception and Academic Flow Using WA Application Based on Gender, Age, and Semester

| Effect   | Pillai's Trace | F Ratio | DF   | Error DF | Sig. of F | Partial Eta Squared |
|----------|----------------|---------|------|----------|-----------|---------------------|
| Gender   | .018           | 1.435   | 2.00 | 160.00   | .241      | .018                |
| Age      | .101           | 4.267   | 4.00 | 322.00   | .002      | .050                |
| Semester | .055           | 4.648   | 2.00 | 160.00   | .011      | .055                |

### The correlation between students' perceptions and academic flow of using WA application in English learning

The correlation analysis result of Table 5 found that students' perceptions do not have a significant relationship with the academic flow ( $r = .117, p > .05$ ). This insignificant relationship indicated that if one of the variables increases, it is not accompanied by an increase in the other variables.

Table 5. Correlation between Students' Perceptions and Academic Flow in Using WA Application

| Variable           | M    | SD   | 1    | 2 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|---|
| Student Perception | 79.7 | 11.4 | -    |   |
| Academic Flow      | 63.8 | 7.9  | .117 | - |

### Discussion

The first objective of this research is to describe the level of students'

perception and academic flow concerning using the WA application in English learning. The findings found that the students' perceptions are in a higher category. It means that the students positively perceive using the WA application in English learning. Certainly, the positive perceptions appropriate the benefits of the WA application in supporting the English learning implementation so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally. Learning by using the WA application enables a collaborative learning process, makes it easier to disseminate information, knowledge, and works, and makes it easier to provide input/comments during the learning process (Barhomi, 2015). It is supported by other research findings that have also found that students had a positive perception toward using WA in the learning process (Baron, 2021; Fauzi & Raya, 2021; Maulida Sari et al., 2021; Wulandari & Mandasari, 2021). Moreover, most of the students' academic flow is also relatively higher when using the WA application in the English learning process. The result shows that the students feel comfortable, motivated, and concerned during the learning process. The higher academic flow can be caused by clear goals, giving feedback directly, balancing between abilities and challenges, and giving rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The



higher academic flow will have a positive impact on students, including improved student engagement in learning, increased student individual academic performance, more enthusiasm when getting assignments, more attention, and more motivation to learn than other individuals who do not get academic flow (Hidayati, N., & Aulia, 2019; Shernoff et al., 2003). Some research findings revealed that flow theory has a very significant impact on students' comfort in learning, especially in online learning activities. The application can be a new convenient media for the teaching-learning process (Abubakar, 2021; Gon & Rawekar, 2017) and positively impact the students' motivation to improve their English language learning (Annamalai, Kabilan & Soundrarajan, 2022). It is a helpful method in English learning (Muslem, Fata, & Nur, 2022).

The second objective of this study is to understand the differences in perceptions and academic flow based on gender, age, and semester related to using the WA application in English learning. The results revealed that The gender variable shows that students' perceptions and academic flow are similar even though females tend to be higher than males. Moreover, the age and semester variables indicate that one variable is dominant, which is 19-year-old and fourth-semester students. This

means that they feel more enjoyment in learning. Similarly, Herry Mulyono et al. (2021) said that the students enjoyed using WhatsApp to support learning and felt connected to the learning, such as students' perceived usefulness, availability of learning support, motivation, and connectedness with their friends (Herry Mulyono et al., 2021).

The third objective of this research is to know the correlation between students' perceptions and academic flow regarding WA application usage in English learning. The finding showed that the students' perceptions concerning using the WA application had no effect on their academic flow. This finding was supported by Nachairit & Srisawasdi (2015), who found that there was no significant relationship between perceived learning, perceived ease of use, and perceived flow (Nachairit, A., & Srisawasdi, 2015).

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Regarding the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that the students had a positive perception of using WhatsApp applications in their English learning. Besides that, it is also an application that can directly impact their perceptions and academic flow. Thus, the student's perceptions and academic flow in

English learning can be enhanced, and they could exhibit more positive perceptions and academic flow toward English learning. Finally, this research needs further research to examine the effectiveness of using WhatsApp in improving students' academic achievement, motivation, and career expectations. In addition, other researchers can also investigate the other variables that can influence students' academic flow and it can improve their learning activities.

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