

ABSTRACT

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Key words: *in-class discussion, online discussion, students' perception.*

The use of technology in education is a great demand. In addition, the development of technology makes an online discussion possible. The discussion activity is the common learning activity used by teachers in their classes. There are many studies which have identified in online discussions. However, only a few of research conducted in compared between the discussions in the classroom and online. Therefore, this study focused on students' perception towards in-class and online discussions.

The researcher used qualitative research design to provide in-depth understanding and get rich information about the students' perception towards in-class and online discussion with the aimed at giving theoretical contribution on the use of online discussion, also provided useful information for the teacher to choose appropriate type of discussion for their student. The researcher collected the data by distributing an open-ended questionnaire which was followed by an interview. 41 students from English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Jombang students who in-class and online discussion were involved as the subjects.

The results showed that the results showed that both of online and in-class learning environment used to hold a discussion has some advantages and disadvantages. The use of an LMS to do an online discussion has some convenience in terms of exploring the features to support the learning activity, easy to use and can save the time, and improving the students confident in expressing their opinion through writing. In contrast, the use of an LMS has disadvantages in terms of receiving feedback, the unnecessary comments from the students' and some of the students cheating before posted their answer in the comment section. For in-class discussion the advantages that the most students felt are in-class discussion helped them to improve their speaking ability, they also received enough feedback from their friend and lecturer

during the discussion, the material and its content in the in-class discussion were clear and structured. In contrast, the disadvantages are the students the students who eager to talk would dominated the class, The course content and its material can turn towards another topic and entirely away from point of discussion, However, most of the students' prefer to discuss in the classroom rather than online discussion

Today, teachers and students are living in the digital learning environment. Online learning continues to grow rapidly. Issa, Hussain, & Al-Bahadili (2014) stated that the current advancements digital world should give the reminder to the most educators to consider and develop the new models of teaching-learning activity. The advancements are the computer, internet, social media, mobile computing, and the spread of them. The progress of information technology can be adopted in accelerating the process of sharing knowledge that will support the goal of education to educate the nation's life.

The explanation above is due to the development of technology. For the current learning activity, technology is a primary need to enhance the learning and attainment of learning purpose. In other words, technology is the one of media in learning. Each of learning media has its own advantages, therefore teachers are expected to choose the media in accordance with the needs and objectives of learning (Jas, Rosha, & Za, 2012).

A. Data Analysis Technique

Ary et al.(2010) stated that data analysis is a process to researcher systematically search and arrange the data in order to increase their understanding of the data and to enable to the present what they learned to others. The data analysis of this study can be described in the following steps:

1. Identifying the data based on the research problem; the first research problem is how do the students perceive in-class discussion; the second is how do the students perceive online discussion? ; by identifying the researcher identify the students' appropriate

response on the questionnaire that consist of four questions about online discussion and four questions about in-class discussion.

2. Classifying the students' positive and negative perception by giving a (+) symbol for positive perception and (-) symbol for negative perception toward in class and online discussion in questionnaire and interview;
3. Describing the result of questionnaire and interview related to the study;
4. Drawing conclusions based on the result of the analysis;

A. Findings

In this stage, the researcher presents the result of data analysis to answer both of the statement of the problems. The first statement of the problem is how do the students perceive in-class discussion?; and the second statement of the problem is how do the students perceive online discussion? The researcher used two instruments to investigate the students' perception; the first instrument is an open-ended questionnaire which was followed by an interview. The followings are the detailed explanation of the findings.

The researcher then interviewed three participants to gained in-depth information towards their perception towards discussion in both of in-class and online learning environment. The three participants were selected because their answers were detail and represent the answer of other participants.

Even though the internet plays a large role in students' everyday life including in teaching and learning activities. It is one of effective way to develop a new and modern learning environment by using an LMS (Learning Management System) the students could actively involved in a group discussion outside the classroom. However, the researcher found out that students still prefer to share their ideas and knowledge about the course content in class environment instead of online learning environment.

1. Students' Perception toward In-Class Discussion

In this section, the researcher explained about both negative and positive perception of the students towards in-class discussion. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The detail results of the questionnaire and interview are presented in this following sub-chapter.

a. Results of the questionnaire

Answering the first research question, the data analysis on the participants' answers in the questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire has eight questions and four of them were asking about students' perception towards in-class discussion. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to forty-one participants, after distributed the questionnaire, the researcher eliminated seven participants answer because they did not give appropriate response to the questionnaire.

They were various answers to the questionnaire. The researcher then classified the answers into four classification based on the most dominant answers. These four dominant answers represent other answers of participants. The researcher classified the answers until no new code appear. After reaching the saturation, the researcher drawing the conclusion based on the result of the analysis. The result of the questionnaire and interview are presented in the following sub-chapter. The summary of participants' answers can be seen below:

The first question from the questionnaire aimed at checking about the major reasons why the students preferred in-class discussion, therefore the researcher asked "*Apa yang kamu sukai dari diskusi secara langsung di kelas? Jelaskan!*". The researcher found four most repetitive answer from

students. From thirty-four participants 32.35% of them which are eleven students answered “*Dapat secara langsung bertatap muka dengan lawan bicara sehingga memudahkan kita untuk berpendapat*”. This is a pros to an in-class discussion. The second answers were “*Meningkatkan kecakapan dalam berbicara*”. 14.70% of the participants agreed that in-class discussion would actually helped them to improve their speaking ability. Then 35.29% participants, in total of thirty-four, twelve of them answered “*Feedback yang didapatkan dari teman ataupun dosen cepat*”. Which means it’s easier for them to interact and communicate with each other in a classroom environment. The last 17.54% in total of thirty-four students, six of them answered that “*Materi yang di diskusikan jelas*”. The course content that they discussed usually explained by the lecturer before they begun the discussion.

The second question aimed at investigating students’ cons to an in-class discussion. The question was “*Apa yang tidak kamu sukai dari diskusi secara langsung di kelas? Jelaskan!*”. In total of thirty-four participants 29.41% answered “*kelas menjadi ramai*”. In this case, even though classroom discussion create an opportunity for the students to build their knowledge, unconducive learning environment can decreased the effectiveness of the learning activity. Then 17.64% students answered “*pembahasan menjadi meluas*”. The topic discussion can turn towards another topic that clearly different and entirely away from point of discussion. Other cons that the researcher found out that is that the students felt like there were too many argumentative statement that got no conclusion during the discussion session because they were fighting with each other to make their argument win as we can see that 26.47% students answered “*Terjadi adu argumen/perdebatan yang membuat siswa bertengkar*”. And the 26.47% participants answered “*Siswa aktif mendominasi sesi diskusi*”. This implied that some of the students may feel shy or reluctant to take part while others may try to dominate.

The third question pointed out the positive effect that the students received in face-to-face discussion. The question was *“Apa keunggulan diskusi secara langsung menurut kalian?”*. 38.23% students answered *“Menjadi lebih berani menyampaikan pendapat”*. This is obviously a pros to an in-class discussion, they acquired that in-class discussion helped them to gain more confident to express their opinion or thought because during discussion, everybody is required to express his ideas and opinions in a clear and concise manner. This provides ample [opportunities](#) to the students for training in self-expression. Then 32.35% students answered *“Membuat mahasiswa menjadi lebih aktif”*. Discussion is one of the best methods of learning to make the students actively involved in the learning activity, it also helps the students to improve their speaking skill. In group, the students will have opportunity to use English among themselves and practice each other with their friends. Practicing speaking with their friends will increase their confidence in saying some words without any worry whether they say some words incorrect or not. Besides that, learning in group will improve their vocabularies. Nearly 29.41% students agreed that their interaction between one and another and how they worked as a team made them felt close with their friends as stated *“Interaksi antar siswa di kelas membuat kompak”*.

Unfortunately, when every individual wanted to be heard they tend to raise their voices, this condition is clearly a cons to an in-class discussion because the class environment could be chaos. Most of the students felt the cons of having an in-class discussion were the fact that introverted students barely involved in the session, it supported by 35.29% students that answered *“Mahasiswa yang pasif kurang terlibat dalam proses diskusi”*.

b. Results of the interview

To gain more in-depth understanding the researcher conducted an interview and chose three out of thirty-four participants to be interviewed. There are fourteen questions in the interview guideline, the interview was not only to investigate students' perception but also to know students' preference towards both learning environments. One of the most prominent reasons why face-to-face learning is so important is social interaction and the impacts learning has on it. Students' social abilities will continue to develop. Based on the results, most of the students enjoyed their in-class discussion because they can see their partner in group discussion directly; therefore, in-class discussion maximized the learner's ability to interact with each other and helps students express their feelings and ideas much better because of the body language that they used. In-class discussion helped them to understand the material that they discussed better because they can easily ask their friend or lecturer if they had any difficulties during the discussion. Exchanging thoughts and opinions in classroom discussion is also easier as participant's number 2 mentioned:

“Kalau diskusi secara langsung kita bisa lebih paham materinya tentang apa yang kita bahas waktu itu. Terus kalau ada pertanyaan juga bisa langsung dijawab.”

The interaction in face-to-face discussion where the students and the lecturer are involved also helped the students to learn more because the feedback from the lecturer had a big impact for them. Learners value feedback because it helps them develop, facilitates self-reflection and motivates them to learn more and improve. As participant's number 1 stated:

“Oiya mbak karena kalau secara langsung ketemu nih, ketika ada hal yang kurang jelas kita bisa langsung tanya, review materi diakhir pembelajaran juga sangat membantu dalam memahami materi.”

From the statement above, it pointed that their lecturer may fast and quick to give a feedback in discussion at class. They were easy to obtain an advice from the lecturer because the students can contact the lecturer directly in classroom.

One of the benefits that the students strongly agree is that the in-class discussion helped them to be more confident to talk in a crowded place, since the students obligated to use English as the language to communicate during the class they can also learn to improve their speaking ability. Not only improving their speaking ability, Face-to-face discussion also build each other off and there is a meaningful exchange between students that promote deeper understanding because they learned to accept each other opinion and thought. In-class discussion can lead each student to feel like their contributions are valued resulting in increased student motivation as participant's number 3 stated:

“Bermanfaat mbak karena saya bisa melatih kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara, selain itu juga kita belajar menghargai pendapat orang lain.”

Although in-class discussion has some benefits it also has some weakness too, the students think that there are some major issues that can be obstructing the discussion process in the class. Most of the students agreed that the discussion can easily turned into debating session and this debating session triggered one and another to shout and made the learning environment uncondusive in other words, it can cause conflict within the class if opposing opinions are given., Another reason why they dislike in-class discussion is the fact that classmates who are eager to talk dominated the class discussion and other students are able to relax in the back of the class and participate less often in the class discussion, this case might made them less responsible and made them assumed that they can avoid studying as participant's number 1 mentioned:

“Biasanya sih yang aktif mendominasi, jadi yang pemalu cenderung diam dan kadang kelas jadi lebih gaduh mbak.”

Centrality of the students' idea is also very important to enhance the discussion process in the class. Classroom discussions naturally open avenues for discussion between lecturer and students but also between students and other students. While these discussions are the focus of the class, they can turn toward areas you do not intend and even move entirely away from the point of the discussion and losing the students' focus on the subject matter.

Another cons is that students who are weak in [note-taking skills](#) will have trouble understanding what they should remember from group discussions. This is even more so than in lectures in many cases because not only the teacher but fellow students are talking about the lesson.

2. Students' Perception towards Online Discussion

In this section the researcher explained about both negative and positive perception of the students towards online discussion. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire has eight questions and four of them were asking about students' perception towards online discussion. The result of the questionnaire and interview are presented in the following sub-chapter. The summary of participants' answers can be seen below:

a. Results of the Questionnaire

The first question were aimed at checking about the major reasons why the students liked online discussion, the researcher also found four mostdominant answer from students. From the questionnaire we can see that students agreed an online discussion can save their time, this

supported with 32.35% participants who answered that an online discussion is actually "*Hemat waktu*". The second answers were "*Fleksibel*". 14.70% of the respondents agreed that online discussion is flexible because they can do it anywhere and anytime. Then 35.29% participants answered "*Waktu berpikir lebih banyak*". Apparently the students agreed that by doing an online discussion they can prepare their self-better better commented or join the session, the act of writing also forced students to take time and contribute more developed ideas. In contrast with in-class discussion that made an introverts or the silent students to not participate actively in the discussion, an online discussion facilitated them to be more active, it supported with 17.64% answered that "*Mahasiswa yang pemalu dapat lebih mudah menyampaikan pendapat*".

The second question aimed at investigating students' cons to an online discussion. 29.41% respondents answered "*Boros kuota internet*". Then 17.64% students answered that "*Butuh waktu untuk mendapatkan feedback*". Sometimes they didn't even get a feedback from the lecturer during an online discussion or they need to wait until next meeting to get the feedback. Since an online discussion tied to the internet, the students need a strong connection to be actively involved in the discussion, but apparently not all the lives in an area that has a strong and stable connection therefore 26.47% students answered "*Koneksi internet yang kurang stabil/lemot membuat diskusi terhambat*". Other cons for an online discussion were the material that they discussed during the session were not really clear, as 26.47% answered "*Materi kurang jelas*".

The third question pointed out the positive effect that the students received in online discussion. 29.41% students answered that "*Materi diskusi bisa sewaktu-waktu dibuka untuk dipelajari kembali*". It implied that whenever the students feels like they need to refresh their memory that related to the discussion material they could easily log-in to the LMS application and re-read the

content course, it's really convenient compared to a paper or printed content course that they usually lose. Then 41.17% students answered that "*Bisa dilakukan dimana saja dan kapan saja*". This implies that one of the biggest pros to an online discussion is that it really time convenient. Nearly 29.41% students agreed *Simpel dan mudah diakses*".

The last question intended to understand the students' thought about the deficiencies of their online discussion, 20.58% answered that "*Banyak terjadi kecurangan seperti langsung mengkopi jawaban dari google*". Since the lack of supervision in an online discussion, Most of the students felt like it easier for their friend to cheat on their answer. The second answered that got 44.11% stated that "*Tidak mendapatkan feedback cepat dari dosen*". Feedback has significant effect on the students learning, it encourages them to think critically about their work and to reflect on what they need to do to improve, that's why the lack of feedback in an online discussion is a cons for the students. Then, 35.29% students answered "*Beberapa mahasiswa meninggalkan komentar yang tidak terkait dengan pembelajaran*". Redundant comment is not something new in an online discussion. The fact that so many students didn't share any idea or thought about the content course in the comment section and students' tendency to leave unnecessary comments is a cons to an online discussion.

b. Results of the interview

In this part, to gain in-depth understanding in students' perception towards online discussion, the researcher will also explain some of the participants answer in interview to support the questionnaire. The used of an LMS (Learning Management System) as a tool to enhance students learning has some benefits such us reducing the use of a paper because students can store all of the materials in one location, by using an LMS lecturer could easily combine text, images and video, which cannot on paper. Through the use of more engaging material the

students will keep their focus and learn more. Another great facility from an LMS is that the students has unlimited access to the information they need. Even those who are on the go can login to the platform via their smartphones or laptops, so that they don't have to wait until their next online training session to develop skills and perfect work-related tasks. Even though the use of an LMS didn't require the students to go in class and see their friend face-to-face, LMS also integrated students' social learning experience because it provided a comment section so that students' can easily exchange their knowledge, opinion or thought.

In online discussion, the students received many of convenience because it facilitated students to share what they thought based on the course content without anxiety, students answered that it helped them to express their opinion better because they feel a lot of pressure to talk in a public place, Online discussions also increased the involvement of introverted students who are reluctant to speak out in class, they may actually perform better in online discussions because they are allowed more time needed to reflect on comments than is allowed in face-to-face communications as respondent 1 stated;

“Manfaatnya ya, kalau misal anak yang pasif lebih mudah untuk memberikan pendapat, karena mungkin kalau dikelas kan malu, jadi kalau online lebih leluasa menyampaikannya.”

The features of the LMS support the students' need. It helps the students to improve their writing skill because they had plenty of time before posting the answer online. On the other hand, an LMS application as a tool to learn is simple to use. Many of the students agreed that online discussion was not time-consuming. Based on the results, showed that each student can access the LMS application easily on their mobile phone. The convenience of using the app as a media can be done anytime and anywhere, as participants 2 stated;

“Bagus sih kalau diskusi online, karena diskusi online lebih flexible waktunya, bisa diakses kapanpun.” (See Appendix 4)

In addition, based on the results the students noticed that using an LMS as a tool to discuss the material can be timesaving. It happens because the students did not need a long time to done the project. Not only can save the time, this method made the students can save the used of paper too. So, it made the students think that using LMS is effective to use.

Some of the LMS application allowed the students to send an audio record to engage the learning process. This online discussion using an LMS becomes a new experience and makes them felt the different atmosphere. Since they work in a group to finished the record or also another discussion task it also helped them to feel more engaged with their friend, by listening to the result of the recording they can also improve their listening ability.

The effectiveness of using an LMS application as a media to hold a class discussion is also helped the students to feel more confident because online discussion is a textual medium of communication that will allow the students to re-read, or even to revise their opinions before they post it on the platform. Beside those advantages, the students can keep the entire courses context in the app and whenever they feel like they needed them they can always go back and read the material.

Although, the use of an LMS application as a tool to held an online discussion provides some convenience in terms of simple and effective. It is not made the students agreed that it fully help and have the significant for them. As mentioned earlier, most of the students used the mobile phone to access the LMS application, One of the obstacles of the students when they did this method is not all of the students' lives in the strong signal area or Wi-Fi area, They also felt that using an LMS consume their internet data. In this regards, participants 1 stated:

“Biasanya sih koneksi internet dan kuota yang jadi permasalahan utama.”

Another negative perception is the fact that online discussion can easily go off-track. Another cons of online discussion is that the students' needs to patiently wait for a feedback from the lecturer, they tend to worry about their opinion or thought without doing nothing about it. Based on the questionnaire and the interview the students not received much feedback and revision in the online discussion. Feedback is something that every student can benefit from, by giving them any kind of feedback can improve a student's confidence, self-awareness and enthusiasm for learning, participants 2 also mentioned;

"hmm kalau soal feedback sih saya cenderung lebih memilih yang diberikan secara langsung karena kalau online kan harus nunggu dulu mbak, kadang juga feedback diberikan waktu ketemu di kelas next meeting."

Based on the statement above the students felt like a feedback can actually help them to develop more, by receiving any formative evaluation can motivate them to perform better and increase their performance in class.

B. Discussion

The discussion conveys the research finding with the related theories and previous research. The present findings are consistent with previous research. The two main results were revealed: The students' perception towards in-class and online discussion. Then, it added by the students' preferences between both of them.

1. The Students' Perception towards In-class Discussion

The students felt to their material for discussion had the clarity and well structured. However, particular students may have obstacle to discuss the material that have received, such as felt misunderstanding, anxiety or the less conducive of situation. It is matched with O'Connor et al (2017), there are various reason why some of students were not contribute, such as distraction,

low self-efficiency, disengagement, or anxiety. It means that they have interest, but not contribute verbally or speak up. The interactivity is the one of social learning that should be assessment too (Kent et al., 2016a). The interaction of in-class discussion included the interaction between students and lecturer. They were easy to make a communication with the lecturer in classroom. It considered that discussion is a process of learning, therefore, it easy for them to obtain a advice from the teacher. Price et al (2007) emphasized, the students preferred in meeting in the classroom with the teacher, in order to increasing a good interpersonal relation between students and teacher. Then, it is for keeping the learning motivation.

Also, the interpersonal relation is for students and their peers. The result on the interaction between students and their classmates has the same idea with the result of teacher and students interaction. The students interested in contact with the peers in the classroom. They have not difficult to share their thought, opinion or idea in discussion. These findings were in line with the research by Paechter & Maier (2010) , the in-class discussion is the situation that have a high degree of cognitive process, where the knowledge and ideas are exchanged and developed. It was related to Asterhan & Eisenmann (2009), the students interacted more with their peers in the classroom. It caused they could express themselves more.

The acquirements are students understood the knowledge related to the course material and obtained the speaking skill in discussion. Considering that the participants are English department students, so they should use English to communicate. It revealed that in-class discussion affected well the students' competence. More of students have participated in discussion in the classroom. The participations are included asking question, answering the lecturer's or students' question and commenting each other thought. It was similar with Guiller et al(2008) research; they found the biggest participants and less difficulties in being participants

in class. The less difficulties provided by agreements students that participated in discussion offers the possibility to increase their knowledge.

2. The Students' Perception towards Online Discussion

The finding confirmed the students' material used in online discussion, it had a clarity and well structure. It supported by Paechter & Maier (2010), the clarity and the coherent structure of materials which is included the one of advantages in e-learning. It is also a feature of student satisfaction in e-learning. Naveh et al (2012) found in their research, the students felt a satisfaction in course materials, which is pedagogical information, easy to access, clear and easy to find. The finding stated, the respondents were disappointed with the technological error in access the LMS or application. It has occurred in Naveh et al (2012) research which also affected in students' satisfaction. For the interaction between students and lecturer, the neutral answers have dominated this aspect. Armstrong (1987) defined the means of neutral answer which the "neutral" as representative a middle answer between agreements and disagreements. Then, it included assumptions that need to be observed. Even though the students have chosen to stated neutral in their interaction with the lecture in online, Paechter & Maier (2010) explained that the students interested to interact with the tutor in online communication in order to get fast feedback about the assignment.

Furthermore, the result indicated the students' interaction with their classmate, the students not really enjoy the online discussion. Through Kirovska-simjanoska(2016) study, the biggest reason was the direct feedback and answer students gained in online discussion, which was slightly difference in the classroom. It cause of no one cannot hesitation the context of social interaction as in the classroom as well. In addition, it was opposed by the complicated use of LMS to deliver the knowledge. Thus, it affected the feedback or answers that were gained by the students. In

accordant with the finding, the students preferred to do discussion in the classroom than online discussion. In line with Raymond et al (2016), the researcher found that the students will enhance the learning if the peer online learning group was blended by traditional or face-to-face also. Then, added by Kirovska-simjanoska (2016) that we cannot prove it easily to online learning is very effective as in-class learning. Thus, the digital learning depends a great deal on students' need, initiative and motivation.

A. Conclusion

The research showed that in-class and online discussion has advantages and disadvantages. In details, there are positive and negative perceptions of the students. In the positive perception explained the advantages of both learning environment. The students agreed that an LMS as a tool to held an online discussion is easy and simple. They do not need time-consume and can be done in anytime and anywhere. The students also felt some benefits, especially for the introverts one. In contrast with online discussion, in face-to-face discussion students felt like the feedback that they got during the session from the lecturer and their friend is more than enough. The chance to spoke in a bigger environment also helps them to improve their speaking ability. The materials that they received in face-to-face discussion were also clear and structured.

However, the students also felt like there are some disadvantages in both learning environment, they agreed that the used of an LMS not fully has convenience for the students. In practically of using an LMS it need an internet data to support. In this case not all of the students live in the strong signal area. The students also felt like the lack of the feedback affect their chance to enhance the learning activity. For in-class discussion most of the students answered that the pressure of talking in public is also decreased their performance in-class, the students

who tend to be the silent one in class usually felt like they got no chance to talk since the other students who felt eager to talk always dominated the session. However, this research found out that most of the students still preferred in-class discussion rather than an online discussion.

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