STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISCORD AS A LEARNING TOOL IN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Firstly introduced in 2015, Discord has been widely used as a social media platform amongst worldwide gamers to effectively assist them to communicate with each other. As a learning management system (LMS), it offers more advantageous yet economical full features. Referring from previous studies, this research found the main general lack: most of the studies focused only on elementary schools and universities. As a result, this research will reveal Discord as a learning media focusing on the 11th grade Islamic senior high school students to capture students' perspective toward the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord. This study uses a mixed research methodology. In addition, cross-sectional survey design is used to gather data at a point of time. It is applied as cross-sectional survey design can be used to examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices. This study picked a total of 31 (thirty one) samples to be involved. For quantitative, questionnaire guidance is used to measure the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord in general. For qualitative, interview guidance is used to assist in interviewing several samples to dig deeper on students' perspectives toward Discord. From the analysis, Discord is proven containing perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) based on the questionnaire and interview results. However, this research has several lacks regarding the research process and content. Therefore, for further research, this research suggests using statistical data showing actual improvement in English mastery as well as students' perspectives toward Discord as a learning media.

Keywords: learning media, Discord, technology acceptance model, perceptions

ABSTRAK

Pertama kali diperkenalkan pada tahun 2015, Discord telah banyak digunakan sebagai platform media sosial di antara para gamer di seluruh dunia untuk membantu mereka berkomunikasi secara efektif satu sama lain. Sebagai *learning management system* (LMS), ia menawarkan fitur lengkap yang lebih menguntungkan namun ekonomis. Merujuk dari penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya, penelitian ini menemukan kekurangan: sebagian besar penelitian hanya terfokus pada sekolah dasar dan universitas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini akan mengungkap Discord sebagai media pembelajaran yang berfokus pada siswa kelas XI SMA Islam untuk menangkap perspektif siswa terhadap persepsi kegunaan (*perceived usefulness* (PU)) dan persepsi kemudahan penggunaan (*perceived ease of use* (PEOU)) pada Discord. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian campuran. Selain itu, desain survei *cross-sectional* digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data pada suatu

titik waktu. Ini diterapkan karena desain survei *cross-sectional* dapat digunakan untuk memeriksa sikap, keyakinan, pendapat, atau praktik saat ini. Penelitian ini mengambil total 31 (tiga puluh satu) sampel untuk dilibatkan. Untuk kuantitatif, pedoman kuesioner digunakan untuk mengukur persepsi kegunaan (*perceived usefulness* (PU)) dan persepsi kemudahan penggunaan (*perceived ease of use* (PEOU)) pada Discord secara umum. Untuk kualitatif, pedoman wawancara digunakan untuk membantu mewawancarai beberapa sampel untuk menggali lebih dalam perspektif siswa terhadap Discord. Dari analisis, Discord terbukti memenuhi persepsi kegunaan (*perceived usefulness* (PU)) dan persepsi kemudahan penggunaan (*perceived ease of use* (PEOU)) berdasarkan hasil kuisioner dan wawancara. Namun, penelitian ini memiliki beberapa kekurangan terkait dengan proses dan konten penelitian. Oleh karena itu, untuk penelitian selanjutnya, penelitian ini menyarankan untuk menggunakan data statistik yang menunjukkan peningkatan aktual dalam penguasaan bahasa Inggris serta perspektif siswa terhadap Discord sebagai media pembelajaran.

Kata-Kata Kunci: media pembelajaran, Discord, model penerimaan teknologi, persepsi

INTRODUCTION

Firstly introduced in 2015, Discord has been widely used as a social media platform amongst worldwide gamers to effectively assist them to communicate with each other. As a multi-functional social media, Discord may also be utilized out of gaming activities, especially for educational purposes. As a learning management system (LMS), it offers more advantageous yet economical full features: creating custom everlasting virtual classroom servers where people can set up either text or voice channels, compared to other teleconference apps e.g. Zoom where people are to pay to get full access or Google Meet where people are to manually create meetings while they have to create Google Classrooms separated from it to upload files for materials or assignment purposes. This is in line with the theory of technology acceptance model (TAM) as originally stated by Davis (1986) that an individual's information systems acceptance is determined by two major variables: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU).

Following the theory, several studies have been found involving Discord as a learning media either in language or non-language matter. In language topics, Ramadhan and Albaekani (2021) presented Discord usage towards students' speaking skill by its effectiveness, practicability, and app lightness by its size and voice chat feature. In additon, the research focused only on students' perspective in a senior high school. Wulanjani (2018) described Discord usage towards students' listening skill by its possibility in changing students' attitude e.g. being more active, interactive, motivated, and creative. Furthermore, the research samples were focused on university students. Odinokaya et al. (2021) showed statistical result of Discord usage towards EFL students' vocabulary comprehension as detailed in the next chapter. The study proved the practical use of Discord towards EFL students' vocabulary skill improvement, along with their perspective towards the app. Nonetheless, this study samples were university students where the English level is different compared to senior high school students.

In non-language topics, Dayana et al. (2021) shown comparison between Discord, Zoom, and Google Meet as shown in the next chapter. This study shown that

Discord has the lowest system requirement compared to other media mentioned. In addition, Discord's system supports cross-device connection, allowing both the teacher and students to interact from either laptops or smartphones (Kruglyk et al., 2020). Furthermore, Kruglyk et al. (2020) proved the effectiveness of utilizing Discord by assisting students' work and facilitating material perception and assimilation process specifically in emergencies e.g. Covid-19 pandemic. The research shown that Discord has the most features compared to other media mentioned. This means Discord is proven as the most effective media that can be used for teaching and learning. In addition, Kruglyk et al. (2020) discovered Discord a completely free platform with no premium subscriptions required to enable full features of it. This is supported by Gorbatuc and Dudka (2019) where such advantages are very important for users regarding to a country's economical growth.

Supported by Wahyuningsih and Baidi (2021), Discord is proven effective to be used as a virtual learning media in an elementary school by assisting emergency remote learning during Covid-19 pandemic. However, the research focused on students' perspective toward Discord in an elementary school.

Ardiansyah et al. (2021) have proven that students felt satisfied using Discord as a learning media. Students were provided with useful features, simple UI, interactions as well as experiencing interactive teaching and learning process. Nonetheless, all the samples were university students where their learning level is higher compared to school students.

In addition, Arifianto and Izzudin (2021) have shown students' acceptance toward the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord as a learning media. It was concluded that Discord is an interesting, easy and simple-to-use media without requiring large mobile data. However, their in-depth anaysis also shown students' rejection using Discord is mostly caused on external factors e.g. Internet connection, supported devices, and students' learning motivation during the pandemic. Moreover, the research samples were focused on university students.

Referring from the studies above, this research found the main general lack: most of the studies focused only on elementary schools and universities. Furthermore, there are still few research focusing on Islamic senior high school students. As a result, this research will reveal Discord as a learning media focusing on the 11th grade Islamic senior high school students to capture students' perspective toward the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Miarso (2009) described learning media as anything that is usable to convey a message to stimulate students' feelings, thoughts, willingness, and attention as well as encouraging the learning process. In addition, Musfiqon (2012) also defined it as a tool in a form of either physical or non-physical used by teachers in conducting materials and making it more effective and efficient for students. Referring to Smaldino et al. (2014), there are six basic types of media used in teaching and learning process: text, audio, visuals, video, manipulatives (objects), and people. In addition, Smaldino et al. (2014) also stated that teachers may use collaborative learning tools e.g. classroom blogs, wikis, social networking resources, and learning management systems to help 21st century students learn through various learning levels appropriate to their goals

and expected outcomes. Referring to previous theories, Discord can be considered as one of a learning management system as its system includes five out of six basic types of media: text, audio, visuals, video, and people.

Discord is one of a social media used by worldwide gamers to help communicate between them while playing online games. After creating Discord account, users can create or join specific servers or "groups" so they can choose what subjects they want to be involved. In general, its features is basically the same as other social media. What makes it advantageous is that Discord covers all the features of other social media such as messaging (WhatsApp, Telegram), teleconference (Google Meet, Zoom), and custom servers (Google Classroom, Edmodo). In addition, all of the features are free for use and the cellular data consumption is reasonable, especially its voice channel feature where other social media users are often struggle with it. Furthermore, Discord can also be used out of the gaming activities, especially for educational purposes. Jannah and Hentasmaka (2021) described several advantages of Discord design features: ease of app use, ease of joining classes, limitless usage, full-featured app functions, well-kept classroom history, reread previously-stored materials and discussions, ease of file-sharing, redownload older files, and low-cost quota usage.

Referring to Discord, all of its features previously detailed are in line with the theory of technology acceptance model (TAM) introduced by Davis (1986). In general, Davis described a conceptual framework detailing the motivational processes between system characteristics and user behavior. Furthermore, Davis (1986) stated that an individual's information systems acceptance is determined by two major variables: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU).

METHOD

This study uses a mixed research methodology, one of a research procedure by collecting, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in one study or series to interpret one or more research problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Furthermore, a convergent parallel design is used to support the research as it is one of mixed method design where researchers gather both quantitative and qualitative data and analyze them separately before each of the results are compared and interpreted to find the conclusion (Creswell, 2013).

In this research, Discord as a learning media is observed by focusing on its involvement in 11th grade Islamic senior high school students' English mastery, meaning a quantitative treatment is needed to experiment with all the variables related. On the other hand, students' perspective toward the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord, meaning a qualitative treatment is needed to report all the findings related. Additionally, a convergent parallel design is applied because both quantitative and qualitative data collection models support each other by patching weaknesses between them e.g. quantitative scores within one instrument from many samples furnish all the fragility of qualitative surveys from a few, and vice versa (Creswell, 2013).

Furthermore, this study is using the cross-sectional survey design introduced by Creswell (2013) where the researcher gathers data at a point of time. It is applied as cross-sectional survey design can be used to examine current attitudes, beliefs,

opinions, or practices. Attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are ways of how people think about issues, where practices are their actual behaviors (Creswell, 2013). Referring to the theory, this research measures opinions and practices of students' perception toward the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Referring to Davis (1989), perceived usefulness (PU) refers to which an individual assumes the use of a system will help in increasing his/her work efficiency. For quantitative analysis, 10 (ten) questions were written in the questionnaire to reveal students' perspectives toward the perceived usefulness (PU) of Discord as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Perceived Usefulness of Discord

Aspects	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Discord helps me to interact with the teacher in real time.	6,45%	0%	9,68%	74,19%	9,68%
Discord helps me to interact with my classmates in real time.	6,45%	6,45%	19,35%	54,84%	12,9%
Discord helps me learn English speaking skills.	3,23%	6,45%	22,58%	64,52%	3,23%
Discord helps me learn English listening skills.	3,23%	3,23%	16,13%	74,19%	3,23%
Discord helps me learn English reading skills.	3,23%	3,23%	16,13%	70,97%	6,45%
Discord helps me learn English writing skills.	0%	6,45%	41,94%	51,61%	0%
Discord helps me learn English grammar.	0%	3,23%	32,26%	61,29%	3,23%
Discord helps me learn English vocabulary.	0%	3,23%	25,81%	64,52%	6,45%
Discord helps me learn English pronunciation.	0%	3,23%	35,48%	58,06%	3,23%
I am able to say that Discord helps me master English.	0%	3,23%	48,39%	45,16%	3,23%
Average	2,26%	3,87%	26,78%	61,94%	5,16%

The average result regarding the perceived usefulness of Discord shows that 61,94% of the participants (±19 students) agree, followed by 26,78% of the participants (±8 students) who choose to be neutral, 5,16% of the participants (±2 students) who strongly agree, 3,87% of the participants (±1 students) who disagree, and 2,26% of the participants (±1 students) who strongly disagree.

From the result, more than half of the participants agree that Discord helps them master English. The questionnaire analysis proved that most of the students were assisted in learning English using Discord as the media. However, most of the students chose to be neutral. This happened as Discord was something new for

them, so they had to adapt to a new environment before going further in learning English. This will be further strengthened by interview results.

For qualitative analysis, several interviews has been conducted and analyzed using open-coded transcription. The result shows all the interviewees find Discord helpful in learning English writing skills. This is represented by Interviewee 1 (I1) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Interviewee 1's Perspective of Discord's Perceived Usefulness

IR : Okay. Do you think that Discord help you learn English during online learning?
I1 : Yes, I found Discord very helpful for me.
IR : To what extend Discord very helpful for you in learning English?
I1 : I found it very helpful in learning English writing skills as the teacher was focusing in teaching how to write an invitation letter.

From Table 2, it can be seen that Interviewee 1 (I1) found Discord helpful in learning English writing skills. This is supported by Interviewee 4 (I4) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Interviewee 4's Perspective of Discord's Perceived Usefulness

IR : Any reason why Discord really helpful for you?
I4 : I was able to gain knowledge clearly from the teacher using the face-to-face online meeting feature.

From Table 3, it can be seen that that Interviewee 4 (I4) stated that Discord's online meeting feature helps students learn English writing skills. Using face-to-face online meeting feature, they were able to gain knowledge clearly from the teacher. Previously mentioned in questionnaire result, most of the students chose to be neutral. This happened as Discord was something new for them, so they had to adapt to a new environment before going further in learning English. This is represented by Interviewee 1 (I1) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Interviewee 1's Difficulties using Discord

IR : Okay. Did you find any difficulties in using Discord in learning English during online learning?
I1 : No, I didn't. As I said, I only experienced such difficulties the first time I used Discord.
IR : So, you indeed had not experienced other difficulties using Discord?
I1 : Yes. As the time went on, I started to properly understand how to use Discord features.

From Table 4, it can be seen that Interviewee 1 (I1) stated that students experienced difficulties using Discord for the first time. This happened because they indeed had to adapt to a new media before they can master English further.

As a result, both questionnaire and interview results strengthened each other and showed that Discord is proven helpful for students in assisting them in mastering English. It is supported by the factors such as face-to-face online meeting feature that assists them in learning English. Nonetheless, most of the students

chose to be neutral. This happened because they had to adapt to a new environment before going further in learning English.

2. **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)**

Referring to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use (PEOU) refers to which an individual assumes the system will need less effort from users to operate, making them feel it is easy to use. For quantitative analysis, 10 (ten) questions were written in the questionnaire to reveal students' perspectives toward the perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Perceived Ease of Use of Discord

Aspects	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Discord enables me to chat with my classmates in real time.	0%	6,45%	19,35%	67,74%	6,45%
Discord enables me to have a face-to-face online meeting with lots of students.	3,23%	0%	19,35%	64,52%	12,9%
Discord enables me to send various kind of documents e.g. Word and PDF.	0%	0%	29,03%	64,52%	6,45%
Discord enables me to send audio files.	6,45%	0%	32,26%	58,06%	3,23%
Discord enables me to send pictures e.g. photo.	0%	0%	25,81%	67,74%	6,45%
Discord enables me to send video files.	0%	3,23%	45,16%	51,61%	0%
I find the Discord account registration easy to do.	0%	6,45%	35,48%	51,61%	6,45%
I find the Discord's user interface interesting to use e.g. the layout, the interface color.	0%	0%	38,71%	48,39%	12,9%
I find the Internet quota usage on Discord is not wasteful.	3,23%	3,23%	41,94%	41,94%	9,68%
I am able to say that Discord is easy to use.	0%	3,23%	41,94%	38,71%	16,13%
Average	1,29%	2,26%	32,9%	55,48%	8,06%

The average result regarding the perceived ease of use of Discord shows that 55,48% of the participants (±17 students) agree, followed by 32,9% of the participants (±10 students) who choose to be neutral, 8,06% of the participants (±2 students) who strongly agree, 2,26% of the participants (±1 students) who disagree, and 1,29% of the participants (±1 students) who strongly disagree.

From the result, more than half of the participants agree that Discord is easy to use. It is proven that most of the students were using Discord with ease in learning English.

For qualitative analysis, several interviews has been conducted and analyzed using open-coded transcription. The result shows all the interviewees find Discord easy to use in learning English. This is represented by Interviewee 2 (I2) as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Interviewee 2's Perspective of Discord's Perceived Ease of Use

IR : Okay. How do you feel using Discord during online learning?
I2 : I found Discord easy to use.
IR : Why did you find Discord easy to use?
I2 : Because the online meeting feature was run well and not laggy.

From Table 6, it can be seen that Discord's online meeting feature run well and not laggy, making students easier to follow the online learning. In addition, Interviewee 3 (I3) found that Discord is fun and interesting as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Interviewee 3's Perspective of Discord's Perceived Ease of Use

IR : Okay. How do you feel using Discord during online learning?
I3 : It was fun and interesting.
IR : Why did you find Discord fun and interesting?
I3 : Because using Discord was a new experience for me.

From Table 7, it can be seen that Interviewee 3 (I3) stated that Discord was fun and interesting to use as it gave students new experience. This means that Discord's user interface is interesting for them which makes them enjoy using it. Interviewee 4 (I4) added that Discord has more features compared to other media as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Interviewee 4's Perspective of Discord's Perceived Ease of Use

IR : Okay. Would you prefer using Discord in learning English compared to other media e.g. Google Meet and Zoom?
I4 : Yes, I would recommend others to use Discord.
IR : Why would you recommend Discord to others?
I4 : Discord had more features compared to other media.

From Table 8, it can be seen that Interviewee 4 (I4) found that Discord has more features compared to other media. This means that Discord provides students with all the features that meets students' need in learning English. However, Interviewee 2 (I3) struggled at the login page as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Interviewee 2's Difficulties using Discord

IR : Okay. Did you find any difficulties in using Discord in learning English during online learning?
I2 : Yes. I was struggling at the login page. the first time I used Discord.
IR : Why did you struggle at Discord's login page?
I2 : It was new for me using Discord, so I was a bit confused.

From Table 9, it can be seen that Interviewee 2 (I2) stated that it was quite struggling at the login page because using Discord for the first time is a bit confusing. Interviewee 3 (I3) added that sometimes the notification did not show the way it should be. This is shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Interviewee 3's Difficulties using Discord

IR : Okay. Did you find any difficulties in using Discord in learning English during online learning?
I3 : Yes. I once experienced difficulties such as not getting notifications from Discord.

From Table 10, it can be seen that Interviewee 3 (I3) experienced that sometimes there are no incoming notifications from Discord. This might happen because of a system error so users have to restart Discord to make it work properly.

As a result, both questionnaire and interview results strengthened each other and showed that Discord is proven easy to use by students in assisting them in mastering English. It is supported by the factors such as students gain a new

experience by using Discord, the online meeting feature that runs well and not laggy, and Discord has more features compared to other media that assists them in learning English. Similar to the perceived usefulness of Discord, most of the students chose to be neutral as they had to adapt to a new environment before going further in learning English. In addition, some students experience difficulties such as struggling with the login page and not receiving notifications from the media. This happened because of a sudden system failure that might happen unexpectedly, so users have to restart the media to refresh all the features to make it work properly.

CONCLUSION

Discord is proven containing perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) based on the analyzed questionnaire and interview results. Regarding the perceived usefulness (PU), the results showed that Discord is helpful for Islamic senior high school students in learning English. Supported by questionnaire and interview results, Discord is proven improving their English macro skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, Discord is also proven improving their English micro skills: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Nonetheless, a main difficulty has also been found that students were a bit confused the first time using Discord. This happened as students did not getting proper instruction from the teacher. Therefore, teachers are to give simple and clear on how to use Discord before proceeding to teach English.

On the other hand, regarding the perceived ease of use (PEOU), the result showed that Discord is easy to use by Islamic senior high school students for learning English. Supported by questionnaire and interview results, Discord is proven advantageous with all of its features: messaging, face-to-face online meetings, various file type sharing, ease of account registration, interesting user interface, and low-cost Internet quota usage. However, students experienced difficulties such as struggling at the login page. This might happen as students did not get proper tutorial on how to login to Discord. On the other hand, students also experienced other difficulties such as not getting notifications the way it should be. This might happen because of a system error which requires user to restart Discord to make it work properly. Therefore, Discord developer should make notes regarding the error to put it in future maintenance.

Nonetheless, several students experienced difficulties as they had to adapt to a new environment before going further in learning English. For example, some students were struggling with the login page and not receiving notifications from the media. This happened because of a sudden system failure that might happen unexpectedly, so they have to restart the media to refresh all the features to make it work properly.

For practical users, Discord is a great choice for learning media as it is new, fun, and interesting. Therefore, they may start exploring all Discord features to get familiar with the media. Discord allows users to create custom servers suitable for their needs, assisted with limitless features provided by the developer.

For the application company, they may focus on developing Discord for a proper learning media similar to Google Classroom and such. In addition, several difficulties mentioned in the findings may be considered for maintenance.

For further research, this research suggests using statistical data showing actual improvement in English mastery as well as students' perspectives toward Discord as a learning media.

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