

# Teachers' perception toward the impact of platform used in online learning communication in the eastern Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims at revealing teachers' perception toward the online platforms such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp used during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research applies qualitative descriptive method and involves English teachers in Bitung, a port and growing city in North Sulawesi in Eastern Indonesian, as the research respondents. The data are obtained from semi-structured interview. The data are then analyzed in the frame of Miles and Huberman triangulation. The findings of the research show that the teachers tend to use Google Classroom and WhatsApp as their means of managing the learning practices and communication during the pandemic. As online platforms. These are regarded to be effective for teachers to keep in touch with the students and conduct online teaching including sending videos, making a group chat, and having video conference. In addition to having advantage and disadvantages, these online platforms are considered being appropriate to assist the students to conduct their learning from home. Yet, some aspects such as the availability of internet infrastructure and networks seem to be potential hindrances ahead.

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## 1. Introduction

Covid-19 cases have increased significantly since July 2020 which is marked by an increasing number of people who have tested positive [1]. Furthermore, in July 2020, Indonesia indicated total 104,432 cases, and is regarded as the highest incidence in Southeast Asia, being beyond those of the Philippines and Singapore. Government announced that the death toll may be much higher than what was reported. It is due to the possibility of unconfirmed death during the treatment. For prevention of the large and fast scale of the virus, the large-scale social restrictions is imposed by local governments under the recommendation of the national taskforce for Covid-19. This policy covers a number of measures such as the closure of public places, restrictions on public transportation, and restrictions on travel to and from restricted areas and includes school closures. This act is necessary to ease the pressure on Indonesia's economic growth due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to anticipate a decline in commodity prices"[2].

Further, the emergence of the corona virus has caused many changes in various important sectors such as the economy, transportation, tourism and trade as well as the education system. For educational purpose, Ministry of Education and Culture proclaim that the enactment of the learning

of activity has to strongly considered the health protocol and guarantee the most appropriate mode of learning within the pandemic time. ."[1]. Therefore, the government encourages students and teachers to do learning from home. In fact, the government has ordered 14 days off for schools and campuses in Indonesia; However, it is impossible to delay the learning process. Then teaching and learning activities must be carried out at home, but the process must still be controlled by teachers or lecturers as well as parents [3]. In other words, Covid -19 brings changes to education system especially at Indonesia.

The Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Nadiem Anwar Makarim, has issued Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) Emergency [4], which states "the teaching and learning process must be carried out by teachers and students from home". Thus, educational activities in all of schools and universities in Indonesia are performed by method of learning from home. This instruction implies that all of teachers and students are highly recommended study from home without neglecting the achievement of the learning objectives and outcome. The home-based learning policy has immediately been replaced. This applies to all of stages of education institutions [1].

In enacting the online teaching and learning activities, teachers as the arranger and presenter utilize various online platforms to help students understand the material. In distance learning, the use of technology which is supported by the internet network is unavoidable because technology facilitates students and lecturers to conduct the distance learning even though they are in a different place [5]. In other words, online learning is one of the ways employed by teachers in order to help student learning from home. In line with the situation, learners have to learn through digital platform or using internet media in the new normal era of Covid – 19 pandemics. Teachers are also required to be creative in order to select appropriate material for learners and compatible with technology.

North Sulawesi, as a part of the Indonesian archipelago, has also implemented online teaching and learning process following the instruction of Ministry of Education and Culture in order to prevent the spreading link of Covid – 19. The research focuses on Bitung, a fast growing city, one of the port cities in North Sulawesi, Eastern Indonesia, since all teachers in Bitung have implemented daily virtual teaching in the midst of new norm era, meaning that they have applied home-based learning or daring system to ensure that teaching and learning processes can run smoothly. This sort of distance Learning is built to continue to meet the standards of the educational process by utilizing the development of Information Technology in computers or gadgets that may connect the learning activity of teachers and students [6].

In running online teaching and learning process, the teachers at Bitung use two popular digital platforms to help their students learn the material. The teachers use WhatsApp application through which the students and teachers can chat and Google Classroom as a medium to conduct virtual classes. Google Classroom is a free web service constructed by Google for schools that is designed to create, distribute and grade assignments in a simple way. The main goal of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students [1]. Because of its simple use, Google Classroom has become one of the popular digital platforms that can support distance learning and teaching. Unlike Google Classroom, WhatsApp is the most used app. WhatsApp seems to be more popular than the Moodle platform among young people because it has better features [7]. Another said that WA offers real-time texting or communication combined with easy sharing of information (e.g., contact lists) media content (e.g., audio, video, files, image and location data) [8]. In short, WhatsApp becomes one of the most widely used digital platform on this new normal era because it enables the users to send either group or personal messages and to share information.

It is undeniable that the pandemic poses another challenge that both teachers and students must encounter. Due to the use of technology in learning process, they frequently experience difficulty to operate and use the digital platforms. Some arguments suggest that methods are laid out in a right way or in a bad way. The benefits of online learning are facing unfair participation because some teachers doubt the use of online media as a means of learning. Teachers of old generation commonly do not have adequate skills to use online media in the learning process. The use of technology in this era makes teachers to adapt to platforms and media as the means of learning. The use of e-learning has penetrated Smart Phones which ultimately become a form of flexible learning media because it is integrated with the internet and all relevant applications. [9]. Teachers, like senior and junior argued that the digital platform methodology through the following digital platform media is not

really effective in accordance with some situational backgrounds such as network and the availability of gadgets. The students face many problems during the virtual classroom such as the lack of motivation and the inadequate internet quota. In addition, some students do not have either phone or laptop, and they must share the gadgets with their siblings and parents [10]. Due to the previous explanation and the implementation of online teaching and learning processes in Bitung, the researcher is eager to find out the perception of English teachers at Junior High School in Bitung concerning with the use of digital platforms as the media to enable teachers to communicate with their students during the online classroom. Therefore, the study addresses teachers' perception toward the impact of platforms used in teaching English.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. The Role of Teachers in the Current Online Learning Communication**

Covid-19 brings massive changes in every aspect of life including education, leading Indonesia shifts its educational setting into the implementation of online teaching and learning process. The application of the social distancing policy certainly imposes a learning process from home. A drastic alteration from learning face-to-face to online or virtual class. It requires all of the influencing factors to collaboratively work [11]. To support the previous opinion by highlighting that in the education sector, this phenomenon certainly has a strong impact on how the learning process should be conducted [12]. Hence, the quick solution is by utilizing online learning as what has been suggested by the Indonesian Education authority. In other words, this situation leads teachers and students to transform the way of teaching and learning process from physical to virtual.

In a virtual class rooms, teachers and learners are linked by their communication tools or devices or gadgets such as computers, laptops or smartphones. These devices are useful to make some presentations and some interactions. Another opinion stated that, elaborated that teaching and learning process that have to be done virtually is a new thing on some teachers and lectures [13]. However, it is not easy for teachers to conduct teaching in a virtual classroom context since only a few teachers and lectures are capable of carrying out the courses or lessons through an online learning system. In this case, the teachers and learners must be well prepared to consider with this current learning system. Virtual classroom that has never been implemented before becomes a new struggle for teachers as the facilitator for students to learn [14]. Teachers have duties and responsibilities that are not easily transferable. The present circumstance has demanded teachers to change from a face-to-face learning mode to an online system. It is a relatively new experience that has never been applied before [15]. As virtual class is new thing for teachers, is to find a proper platform for teacher themselves and their students to help virtual class run successfully and needs an extra effort from teachers and learners to achieve learning objective. Teachers have responsibilities to conduct virtual classroom and comforted students in the learning from home process. This argument supports the notion from [11]. Hence, a teacher, as an essential factor in achieving the learning output and outcome especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, by using the platforms, must be able to create and manage learning conditions that are useful and conducive.

### **2.2. The Use of Google Classroom and WhatsApp for Online Learning**

Face to face teaching that turns into virtual teaching brings impact for both teachers and learners. It affects teachers, learners, and material as the key components in the classroom [16]. Communication through social media is not a new thing actually as state that social media communication dominates the contemporary society [17]. People needs social media to keep in touch one another [18]. The statement before reinforces another statement from [19]. At present, the use of technology in learning is not new, such as the use of computers as learning media. Through computer connected to internet or mobile phones, learners may access and run the online platforms. There are some platforms that both teachers and learners can use to help the learning and teaching process, such as sending information via WhatsApp and video call through Zoom Virtual classes that aim at assisting students and teachers to share material are now being provided by one of the popular applications called Google Classroom. Google Classroom is a Google product that connects with Gmail, Drive, Hangout, Youtube and calendar. Google Classroom provides many features that allow teachers to carry out teaching and learning activities more easily [20]. Google Classroom is a free web service developed by Google for schools that aims to create, distribute and grade assignments in a simple way. The main goal of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of

sharing files between teachers and students [1]. Google Classroom is one of the platforms created by Google. Using Google Classroom, learners and teachers may discuss assignments, and teachers may monitor learners' progress. In addition, teachers may easily distribute learning materials and assignments to learners; post some teaching materials, assign assignments to students, and upload learners' grades so that they can immediately see their own grades [1]. In short, the use of Google Classroom is really helpful for both learners and teachers.

Google Classroom is not the only platform teachers and learners use in virtual learning. They also use WhatsApp as an instrument to carry out the online learning during the pandemic. Based upon observations, it seems that WhatsApp occupies the most popular application that people have used to communicate virtually [13] despite of various instant messaging applications that can operate on mobile devices, it seems that the WhatsApp application operating in mobile-based applications. WhatsApp remains currently a popular chat room for private and group. Due to this trait, WhatsApp is used to support the teaching and learning process in virtual classes in the new normal era of the Covid-19 pandemic. WhatsApp advocates the teachers and learners to share assignment, teaching material and learning video much easier.

Concerning with the use of digital platform, there are three previous studies which also explore similar topic. The first research is Asmara's research entitled Teaching English in a Virtual Classroom Using WhatsApp during Covid-19 Pandemic. It puts an emphasis on exploring the use of WhatsApp as the platform to help learners and teachers to study and aims at finding out the challenges that teachers and students face at the learning process while using WhatsApp. This study reveals that students and teachers have to face three challenges consisting of students' attendance list checking, students' English language skill, and internet connection [13]. The second study related to Google Classroom was carried out by Almini Susetyo Harjanto and Sri Sumarni entitled Teachers' Experiences on the Use of Google Classroom. In this paper, both researchers seek for teachers' perception on the use of Google Classroom as a tool used by the teachers to facilitate teaching process. The finding of the research shows that the teachers perceive that Google Classroom is very helpful for them to conduct their virtual classroom and for managing students' tasks, organizing classroom and accommodating students' interaction [21].

The third study focusing on the topic of Covid-19 pandemic is Mike Okmawati's research entitled The Use of Google Classroom During Pandemic. This study reveals the review on the use of Google Classroom during the pandemic and presents the finding that Google Classroom is mostly used by teachers for managing virtual classroom [1]. Those previous studies discuss the perception of teachers and on the use of Google Classroom and WhatsApp and the challenges that teachers and students face while using those application. This current study is carried out under the theme of platform used at the new normal era of Covid -19 pandemic or teaching and learning process. In addition, this study also reveals other aspects comprising of the teachers' perception of the use of platform, the most widely-used platform, and the advantages of using the platform.

### 3. Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research design. It is selected for particularly relevant in which information is obtained directly from those subjects experiencing the phenomenon under the investigation amidst certain limited time and resources [13]. In line with this argument, Rahman [22] elaborated that the qualitative descriptive method is a method of studying an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought to make a systematic, factual and accurate description of the facts, properties, and relationships between the investigated phenomena.

For data collection, the researchers prepared five questions which were given to the respondents in the semi-structured interview by using WhatsApp chat. As driving questions, they were formulated to reveal teachers' perception on the effort to communicate with learners, platforms used and its reasons to apply, the applied features of the platforms and the advantage and disadvantage of the applied platforms. The respondents were English teachers of four different schools in Bitung who confirmed that they used Google Classroom and WhatsApp application as the digital platforms to communicate and manage virtual class at the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The respondents consisted of three teachers of SMP 12 Bitung with the initial G.B, L.A, and F.S. For a privacy reason, the respondents were addressed by using alphabet initials, for example, teacher GB is addressed as teacher A; teacher LA is addressed as teacher E; and teacher FS is addressed as teacher

G. The other research subject is a teacher of SMP 2 Bitung with the initial JP who was addressed as teacher B. Two teachers from SMP 7 Bitung also participated in the research. One teacher was with the initial FK who was called as teacher C, and the other one was with the initial MM who was considered being as teacher F. The last, the teacher from SMP 5 with the initial FN also became the participant as teacher D.

The interview process was conducted in the third week of January 2021 as the second semester of Junior High School in Bitung began. During the process, the researcher gave the same questions to each participant mainly focusing on how they arrange virtual class and the platforms they use in the learning process. The interview was conducted virtually using WhatsApp chat, so the participants' responses could be easily recorded.

In terms of analyzing the data, the researcher applied the technique of Miles and Huberman proposing three stages of sequence namely data reduction, data display, drawing conclusion [23]. The results of the analysis were then presented descriptively. The data reduced by unitizing and categorizing the replies toward the interview. The researchers interpreted the categorized responses of the teachers; and then, formulated the findings to present.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Having applied the proposition of Miles and Huberman on analyzing the data from the interview with the teachers who relied their learning communication in the times of the pandemic upon Google Classroom and WhatsApp as the main platforms come to the following revelations;

### 4.1. Implementing Platforms in the Field

The Physicals distancing as one of the ways that government applies to cut off the spreading link of Corona Virus becomes the main reason on the shift from physical learning to virtual learning. Teachers in Junior High School also have to think out of the box in order to help students keep learning even from home. In other words, teachers have to find a proper way to help students learning. The Covid-19 pandemic causes virtual classroom as the best option for the teachers to arrange teaching and learning process; thus, the government encourages students in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school to join the online learning which is believed to help students learn from home. The changes of instructional models from a traditional classroom teaching approach to an online classroom teaching also influence the quality of teaching and learning as well as the quality of interactions itself [24]. Further, [1] points out that there are many digital platforms aiming at teaching-learning processes such as Rumah Belajar, Kahoot, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp application. The respondents admitted that they preferred Google Classroom to manage the enactment of the online learning, and communicate their instructions and scheduling through WhatsApp group messages for the reason of practicality and easiness as well as familiarity. The challenge of finding the proper way to deal with students amidst the covid-19 pandemic has led teachers to try distinct applications or platforms for the learning activities. They seem to realize that the current used platform might not be the best platforms yet it might be the most proper ones for the present student circumstances. The availability of gadgets, networks, internet quota, and use practicality for both teachers and students apparently define the preference to the platforms. The students spread in different and distant locations, and the instruction to keep psychical distancing also drive teachers to seek for acceptable and flexible platforms to bridge to the communication for learning practices.

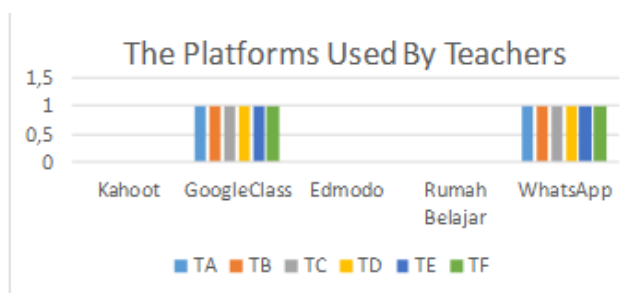


Fig. 1. The Graphic of Platforms Used by Teachers in The east Indonesia



One of the participants confirms that.

*“Penerapan social distancing sebagai factor utama tatanan new normal dalam dunia pendidikan menciptakan tantangan tersendiri bagi guru tentunya”. (Teacher A, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)*

*(The implementation of social distancing as the main feature in new normal era in the education system poses new challenges for teachers)*

The statement above proves that teachers face challenges in teaching the students during the new normal era of Covid-19 pandemic. A teacher acts as a facilitator and is strongly obliged the solution to answer the challenges due to the fact that Covid-19 pandemic hinders both students and teachers to learn in offline classes just they usually did before the outbreak. The teachers are compelled to provide beneficial solution for both teachers and learners, so they can adapt and use these methods in the learning process. Concerning to this matter, one of the interviewees explains that:

*“Karena itu, guru berperan untuk mencari solusi agar bagaimana proses belajar mengajar di era new normal bisa tetap dilangsungkan tanpa mengabaikan peran guru sebagai pengajar”. (Teacher B, SMP 2, 19/1/2021)*

*(Therefore, teachers play a vital role to provide any solution to ensure that teaching learning process conducted during the new normal does not diminish the role of teachers)*

The statement above emphasizes that teachers have the main role to teach students in any circumstances. Teaching students in the physical classes is a common situation; however, now teachers must be accustomed at teaching in a virtual class, an unusual circumstance that both teachers and students have to face. As a result, teachers must choose suitable method to teach, facilitate students with learning material, and help the students gain knowledge. In doing so, teachers might choose to use digital platform as the best method to help their students learn. This notion is expressed in the following answer:

*“Bisa dikatakan, dibutuhkan media untuk memfasilitasi para guru agar tetap bisa menunaikan tugasnya sebagai pengajar”. (Teacher C, SMP 7, 19/1/2021)*

*(It could be assumed that teachers need media which facilitate them to perform their main responsibilities as the educator)*

The answer underlines the unavoidable use of media to facilitate the teachers to teach their students in order to accomplish learning goals and to show their responsibility as learning facilitator. It has been widely known that internet becomes very popular because people are able to gain any information they need. Internet serves as a medium through which people can learn new things, gain knowledge, and connect people living at a different place. Thus, internet has a significant role in virtual learning in addition to other media such as computer, television, and gadget. Nowadays, gadget is a widely-used tool for all students from different level of education, ranging from elementary to tertiary level. By using gadget, the students can access various platforms such as WhatsApp application, Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, and Google Classroom. One respondent supports the notion by stating that:

*“Media yang mendukung untuk pembelajaran new normal antara lain seperti computer, internet, dan gadget. Gadget yang sering digunakan seperti Hand Phone android atau IOS yang bisa mengakses platform seperti WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, dan Google Classroom”. (Teacher D, SMP 5, 19/1/2021)*

*(Learning activities in the new normal era are possible with the support of various media for example computer, internet, and gadget. The most commonly-used gadget is an android or IOS smartphone by which the students access platforms such as WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, and Google Classroom)*

Based on the answer above, it is obvious that teachers need media such as computer, internet, and gadget to help them connect with students in the learning process on this new normal era. Gadgets are popular among the young generation because most of them use gadget because it is easy to operate. Both android and iOS smartphones offer entertaining and helpful features. By using gadget, people can access platforms which can help them to perform their duties in many ways during the pandemic such as creating room for group chat or for group meeting. Teachers and learners gain advantages due to the use of platform during the virtual classroom. Various platforms are available

for the teachers to create their virtual classrooms, and these platforms are easy to use and has many features which enable the teachers to transfer the material. These platforms can be utilized to create new atmosphere of virtual learning and help students enjoy the class. The statement below indicates the presented argument:

*“Platform yang digunakan selama masa pandemic dan new normal Covid-19 adalah WhatsApp dan Google Classroom” (Teacher A, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)*

*(WhatsApp and Google Classroom are the most-commonly used platform for teaching learning during new normal era)*

The statement from one of the interviewees above highlights the idea that teachers facilitate and create virtual class as the effort to perform online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the teachers must carefully choose suitable and useful platforms which at turn build fun learning environment for the students and ensure the teachers achieve learning objective successfully. The teachers choose the most widely-used platforms in teaching virtually in the Covid-19 pandemics and brings more advantages.

Teaching through virtual platforms leads teachers to adapt with technology and platforms in order to improve their skills in teaching technology. The inclusion of technology in this era cannot be ignored, even become more pivotal [32]. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced both learners and teachers to study from home, and this is new thing for teachers at Junior High School to conduct virtual classroom. Teachers are challenged to find a proper and easily-used platform to help them to communicate with their students during for the learning process. Teachers must choose the platforms under certain requirements such as benefit, ease in using and adapting, and available features which support virtual learning. Google Classroom is practical in use and facilitates teacher and learners to organize the lesson [34]. While WhatsApp meets the need of learners and teachers for online class during the COVID-19 pandemic [13].

#### **4.2. Selecting Google Classroom and WhatsApp as the Used Platforms**

Platforms which can be used to create virtual classroom in the attempt to continue the learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic are various. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to select the most suitable and easily-used platform in order to facilitate students learning. Each platform has different functions and features, so this section mainly discusses the functions of Google Classroom and WhatsApp in virtual classrooms that have been created by teachers. WhatsApp Messenger is a freeware, cross-platform messaging and voice over service owned by Facebook. It allows users to send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share pictures, documents, user locations, and other media. In short, by downloading the WhatsApp application from the AppStore and Google Play for free, one may enjoy many facilities offered by the application and can do many things through the application [25]. Besides WhatsApp, teachers may also use Google Classroom for virtual classes. Google Classroom is a free web service developed by Google for schools that makes designing assignments easy. It integrates documents, sheets, slides, emails, and calendars into a cohesive platform for managing student and teacher communication [25]. In short, Google Classroom provides users with the easy using for share material and creates assignment. By the help of both Google Classroom and WhatsApp application, teachers can provide material and teach learners through virtual. Easy using and easy understanding features from both platforms lead teachers to use them for virtual classroom. The statement above supports the statement of the respondent as follows:

*“Karena kedua platform Google Classroom dan WhatsApp lebih mudah dimengerti oleh siswa dalam cara penggunaannya begitu juga dengan guru karena sudah sering menggunakan WhatsApp dalam keseharian”. (Teacher A, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)*

*(Because it is quite easy for the students to use the features provided by Google Classroom and WhatsApp. Teachers are also familiar with those platforms because they frequently use WhatsApp in daily life).*

The statement above indicates that teachers choose daily-used applications as the platform to help them connect with their students in virtual classroom because both students and teachers know how to use them. Moreover, the features of both applications are easy to understand. Teaching learning activities conducted using digital platforms is a new experience for both teachers and

learners, so they have to adapt with this ongoing situation and make themselves comfortable with the use of these platforms. WhatsApp application enables the teachers to can create group chat, share the material and explain the material to students who join the group chat. Following statement supports the previously explained idea

*“Proses belajar biasanya dilakukan lewat chatting WhatsApp dengan siswa. Buat group di WhatsApp untuk siswa – siswa, penjelasan dan tugas dikirim lewat group WhatsApp”.*

*(Teacher E, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)*

*(Learning process is done by having WhatsApp chat with the students. Teachers create WhatsApp group for students, and the explanation of the material and assignment are sent to WhatsApp group)*

The statement from the participant indicates that WhatsApp is useful in order that teachers can run teaching and learning process successfully. Teachers need only to create a group for every class, invite students to join the group, explain the material, and distribute the assignment to students in the group. Group chatting becomes a medium for the students to easily connect with teachers and friends at the same time. In online learning, the teachers provide materials in the form of handouts and video and then share them via WhatsApp and Google Classroom. One of the teachers who becomes the respondent explain that:

*“Disimpan semua nomor telepon siswa, dan dibagikan video pelajaran lewat WhatsApp, ada juga siswa diminta join meeting Google Classroom dan penjelasan sekalian tugas di lakukan disitu”.* (Teacher F, SMP 7, 19/1/2021)

*(Teachers save students' phone number, so we can share the video related to the material discussed via Whatsapp. Students are also asked to join the meeting at Google Classroom, and we will give the explanation and assignment)*

The interviewee's statement above emphasizes that teaching and learning process can happen both physically and virtually as long as teachers as the facilitator show their effort to find proper platform to teach their students. Teachers can record video of them explaining material along with the assignment and send to students through WhatsApp group chat and Google Classroom. Besides recording video of them teaching, teacher can adopt video that is related to the material from any other sources and share it to their students as the reference for students to learn. One of the participants give following explanation:

*“Bisa juga guru ambil contoh materi di Youtube terus tampilkan di Google Classroom”.* (Teacher G, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)

*(Teacher also can take a video related to the material from Youtube, and then display it on the Google Classroom)*

It can be interpreted that it is quite easy for the teachers to create and find any credible sources due to the sophistication of technology nowadays. Teachers do not have to record video themselves to explain the materials. Instead, they can find and download video about the material they are going to explain from other external resources, one of which is Youtube. Teachers need only to be more creative in using the technology to help them teach their students. In the interview, one of the teachers asserted that she took video about the material she was going to explain from YouTube and share or play it through Google Classroom during the online class. It remains helpful that teachers can share information and knowledge to their students virtually through Google Classroom.

The research finding also illustrated that teacher tends to choose two platforms Google Classroom and WhatsApp application in conduction their virtual classes due to the perception that both platforms are competent to help teachers arrange virtual class. This perception results from the idea that the platforms have features which are easily-used and learnt. As a platform, Google Classroom provides three main menu such as stream, classwork, and people which enable and facilitate teachers to set up notification, material and assignment distribution. In addition, another platform, WhatsApp, offers real-time texting or communication combined with easy sharing of information media content such as audio, video, files, image and location data [8]. By using WhatsApp application, teachers can easily share their instructions to learners and anticipate learners' responses.



### 4.3. Defining the Advantages of Google Classroom and WhatsApp

Positioning Every platform has its own features that aim to help and to facilitate users. This section talks about the advantages and disadvantages of using platforms in virtual classroom especially Google Classroom and WhatsApp application. Google Classroom has various facilities that support its users, some of which are user-friendly mobile phones, free of charge, safe and time-saving and very fast in using Google Classroom [6]. Based on [26] Google Classroom's design deliberately simplifies the instructional interface and options used to deliver and track assignments; Communication with entire courses or individuals is also simplified with announcements, emails and push notifications. Google Classroom was created to help users carry out the virtual learning process. Teachers can use it for teaching purposes, such as making important announcements, posting assignments, uploading learning materials, and grading student work [27]. By using Google classroom, teachers can create virtual classes, provide information related to the teaching and learning process, and provide teaching materials in the form of files. As one of the participants explains:

*“Memilih Google Classroom sebagai platform untuk membantu siswa belajar karena ketika guru memberikan tugas kepada siswa, maka siswa dapat melihat tugas tersebut pada satu halaman yang menyediakan laman tugas, selain itu Google Classroom juga bisa meninjau tugas sebelum dikirim oleh siswa kepada guru. Guru juga bisa mengetahui siapa-siapa saja siswa yang sudah mengirimkan tugas”. (Teacher F, SMP 7, 19/1/2021)*

*(Google Classroom is the good option as the platform to help students learn because students can view the assignment which the teachers have posted on Classwork feature. Besides, Google Classroom, has a feature which helps the students review their assignment before being sent to the teachers. Teachers can also monitor how many students who have submitted their assignment).*

The statement above explains that Google Classroom provides many advantages to help teachers run virtual class well. Google Classroom contains many features which are beneficial for both students and teachers. Teachers can easily post assignment, upload learning materials and assess students work and find out the number of students who have submitted the assignment. Concerning WhatsApp application, [25] state that it allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media. Users can operate the application easily because Whatsapp offers modern and easily-operated features which can be explored to support teaching and learning virtually. Every time teachers need to send document, they can share document instantly through WhatsApp. The statement previously explained supports the following information:

*“Guru dapat mengirimkan dokumen bahan ajar, foto dan video pembelajaran kepada siswa melalui group WhatsApp”. (Teacher B, SMP 2, 19/1/2021)*

*(Teachers can send the learning material document, photos, and videos to students through WhatsApp group)*

It is clearly seen from the statement that WhatsApp has features which users can use for various purposes such as sending documents, photo, and even video. When conducting virtual learning via WhatsApp, the teachers obtain many advantages such as sharing information, sending material, and giving assignments to the students. In short, this platform help them keep in touch with the students. Sharing image is one of the features available in WhatsApp by which the students can take a picture of the assignment they want to submit and send it to the teacher.

The statement before is strengthened by the answer of one of the interviewees:

*“Guru memberikan tugas lewat aplikasi WhatsApp dan oleh siswa dikerjakan, hasilnya difoto untuk dikirimkan ke guru lewat group kelas yang sudah dibuat”. (Teacher D, SMP 5, 19/1/2021)*

*(Teachers give students task by using WhatsApp, and students do the task. If the students have finished the assignment, they can take a picture of it and send it to the teacher via WhatsApp group)*

The opinion above reinforces the idea that teachers and students can use all features which WhatsApp offers in running virtual class successfully and accomplish learning objective. Google Classroom and WhatsApp has several benefits for teachers and students because these platforms

have easy-to-use and easily-accessed features leading them to have time effectiveness in their use. One of the interviewees explains that :

*“WhatsApp dan Google Classroom sangat mempermudah dalam proses pembelajaran virtual karena mudah diakses oleh siswa dan guru dalam proses pembelajaran, guru juga bisa melihat daftar hadir siswa lewat Google Classroom”.* (Teacher A, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)

*(WhatsApp dan Google Classroom provide many benefits in the implementation of virtual learning because the students and teachers are able to access them without any difficulty. Teachers can monitor students' attendance record by using Google Classroom).*

The previous explanation implies that both WhatsApp and Google Classroom have their own role in order to help teachers and learners during their virtual class. Google Classroom offers feature that can help teachers to figure out the number of students who attends the class. Further, it is easy for both teachers and learners to access this platform. Similarly, WhatsApp provides an easy access ensuring virtual teaching and learning activity runs successfully. Both Google Classroom and WhatsApp have advantages, so the teachers to use them on virtual class during the new normal era amidst Covid-19 pandemic. By using these platforms, the teachers and learners can accomplish learning objectives and enjoy the teaching and learning process.

The research finding also implies that the teachers perceive that both platforms, Google Classroom and WhatsApp application, are quite helpful to provide students learning material, explain the material, and send the assignment. It confirms that the use of Google Classroom is practically easy and interesting to learners [21]. Easy-learning and interesting features for students as learners becomes the reason for teachers to use Google Classroom to connect with students during the learning process. The Google Classroom implementation as an e-learning platform is categorized as good by learning outcomes and student responses [28]. WhatsApp application becomes one of the most-used platforms in conducting virtual class, so it is assumed as effective. WhatsApp application becomes an appropriate device for teaching learning process because of the collaboration of some aspects like videos, pictures and voice notes, and the availability of teacher and the flexibility of learning time [29]. It is reinforced by the statement of [30] who argues that the teacher chooses learning media using WhatsApp for the learning process. Because of this digital system, teacher considers that by using WhatsApp, students can more easily access it. WhatsApp does not even require a lot of internet package quotas when used during the online learning process. The use of WhatsApp is considered helpful for teachers to conduct virtual class due to the statement that WhatsApp has complete features which can be easily accessed by both teachers and learners. Further, it does not require great amount of internet package to access it. All these benefits lead WhatsApp to be one of the widely-used platforms during Covid-19 pandemic and new normal era.

#### 4.4 Determining the Disadvantages of Google Classroom and WhatsApp

Despite having advantages which have been discussed in the previous section, Google Classroom and WhatsApp also have some disadvantages in terms of its implementation. Both teachers and learners find these obstacles become the disruptive element in the teaching and learning process. When accessing both WhatsApp and Google Classroom, the users rely heavily on internet connection, and the problems stem from this aspect. It is possible that internet connection the teachers and student use is not always good , and it results from the bad connection from the internet provider and the disconnected Wi-Fi access. As a result, it causes some problems in the virtual learning such as the delay on sharing learning materials or assignments to students. The respondent 's answer below presents similar notion.

*“Kendalanya kadang – kadang jaringannya tidak bagus sehingga kegiatan belajar bisa terganggu karena guru terlambat mengirimkan tugas kepada siswa”.* (Teacher C, SMP 7, 19/1/2021)

*(There are some obstacles, one of which is poor internet connection. It disturbs the flow of teaching and learning process since the teachers can not send the assignment on time to students)*

From the statement, it is clear that the quality of internet connection determines the flow of virtual teaching and learning process. Online or virtual class greatly depends on the availability of good internet connection or Wi-Fi, so all the participants can keep connected with the platforms. The teaching and learning process might not run successfully due to another problem besides the problem on the internet connection. Since Google Classroom is directly connected to Google Drive,

all the files being uploaded by the users will be automatically stored in Google Drive. In online learning, the teachers are possible to upload files every day; therefore, Google Drive might not be capable of storing all the files uploaded because it has limited storing capacity. It instills another problem because the files cannot be saved in Google Drive if its capacity is already full. Pertaining to this problem, one of the participants explains that:

*“Lewat Google Classroom, semua file yang dikirimkan langsung otomatis masuk ke Google drive dan kalau Google drivenya full, maka dokumen yang dikirimkan siswa akan sulit masuk”.*  
(Teacher G, SMP 12, 19/1/2021)

*(If we use Google Classroom, all the files that we have received will automatically be saved in Google drive. If Google drive is full, the document sent by students cannot be saved)*

From the statement of the respondent above, it can be concluded that Google Classroom also has a weakness in term of the capacity of saving data. Google Drive has limited storing capacity, so the document can no longer be saved if Google Drive is full. However, the disadvantages of using Google Classroom and WhatsApp do not belittle their advantages since both platforms provide significant role in assisting the teachers to conduct virtual class. Virtual classroom is actually a new struggle for both teachers and students because the teachers must find the appropriate platform for teaching and learning process, adapt themselves to use platform, and learn how to use the features of the platform. Virtual classroom that both teachers and students struggle with nowadays needs the suitable platform which serves as the medium for students and teachers to accomplish learning objective. Platform can be one solution to complete the teaching-learning process while the school still cannot be opened [1]. By using the digital platform, teachers can easily distribute learning material to students in form of PPT, document, file, images, and video. Students can use platform to get learning material and send assignment to teacher.

Finally, this study confirms several notions. First, the platforms used during Covid-19 pandemic and new normal era are various, and the users can choose one of them depending on their need. [31] points out that the availability of various types of LMS application/platforms greatly helps educators in developing and combining the application of learning models. To supports the previous statement as she explains that there are many examples of E-learning or online system learning form based on LMS, and they are Google Classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, Schoology, Ed Link, or video conference online such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts Meet, and Self Platform, etc. [31]. An English teacher must be able to teach English and be able to optimize the teaching-learning process. Second, teachers pick suitable, effective, easily-used, easily-understood, and widely-used platforms to help them communicate with students, and those platforms are Google Classroom and WhatsApp application. Using Google classroom, which implementation was then assessed based on the criteria of the model quality, namely validity, practicality, and effectiveness [29]. Further, Google classroom technology has proven a valuable platform for distance learners in the National Teachers' Institute Calabar study center, in term of their experience, perceptions and engagement in the classroom activities [32]. Both statements before support the idea that Google classroom provides a veritable platform for both teachers and students to utilize digital technological tools for students' engagement in an online environment [33]. In short, the platforms used during the virtual learning in the period of Covid-19 pandemic and new normal era must be selected based on the effectiveness and the veritableness of the platform. It is important to online teachers to know about technology or the ability of technical background to use new technology which can be delivered in teaching online both effectively and efficiently [33]. Third, the teachers and students perceive that the platforms they use in the virtual classroom provide many advantages. Regarding of this matter, [30] explains that the online learning system has the potential to help the lecturers and students in the teaching and learning process. In addition, [32] underline that by implication, digital technology serves as a platform that equips students to organize their learning process. In other words, these platforms are useful to accomplish learning objective and implement the government policy on ensuring educational activities during the physical distancing.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, teachers perceive Google Classroom and WhatsApp application in a positive outlook. They opine that both platforms have good contribution to the students' learning process. Social distancing as the primary reason for doing the virtual class as the effort to cut the spreading link of

Corona virus, and teachers found it difficult to conduct this learning activity at first. However, virtual learning is no longer impossible due to internet facility. The use of digital platforms for learning is very helpful for students in the new normal era of Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers must be able to choose the best platforms in their virtual learning since types of digital platforms are various. In this research, the teachers use two platforms, Google Classroom and WhatsApp application, which are proven effective to run virtual classroom successfully.

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