STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION TOWARD SPADA UPGRIS AS DIGITAL PLATFORM IN LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstrak
This research is trying to figure out the students’ perceptions and difficulties arise in the application of SPADA (Sistem Pembelajaran Daring) UPGRIS. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. There are 150 Indonesian students of the third semester in Universitas PGRI Semarang as the sample of the study. Those samples come from five different majors; namely English education department, Indonesian language education department, management department, engineering department and law department of Universitas PGRI Semarang (UPGRIS). It is based on the fact that the third-semester students had joined SPADA UPGRIS platform as it was required by the lecturers.

The finding shows that most students have positive feelings and perceptions of the application of SPADA UPGRIS. They consider SPADA UPGRIS as a new experience in learning which gains their capability in technology competence. On the other hand, some difficulties were faced by the students such as personal internet connection, less communication with friends, material file size provided, and inability in using a computer.

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INTRODUCTION

The digitalization arises along the growth of the era of disruption and the industrial revolution era 4.0 has brought effects of its changing (Syakdiyah et al., 2019). In education, the change is happening in the education system. Demartini & Benussi (2017) mention that the four educational paradigms are found during decades called an emerging paradigm. This emerging paradigm emphasizes the learning by doing concept. In this case, the students are given the opportunities to learn by themselves. Besides, they will discover discover what they have learned based on experimentation in the context of daily life (Almeida and Simoes, 2019).

It is a fact that the use of digital technologies has become a central topic in many teaching and learning processes which remain a policy agenda in these past few years (Rodrigues, 2017). The use of technology in educational setting is expected to give an opportunity and efficiency in education. Meanwhile, the disfussion of technology has been spreaded since there is a fast growth in information communication technology (ICT) in education (Yunus et al., 2009). Besides, Ndongfack, (2015) explained that ICT is becoming a solution where qualified education can be a reality for all remote and untouchable areas. It is because ICT brings a unique capacity to gain all those areas. It means that technology is becoming a need for the development of education today. As a consequence, educators are facing challenges in adapting their teaching styles to accommodate a new generation of recent learners (Hashim, 2018). Thus, teachers at school then have to improve their methods or techniques of teaching and learning process by integrating the technology in the classroom. Digital technologies integration in teachers’ teaching practice is expected to improve their productivity in teaching, improve the teaching quality, and improve the communication as well as the connection to students in the teaching and learning process (Ransom et al., 2007).

Nowadays, technology has provided many ways of teaching and learning. All information needed in the classroom of teaching and learning process is now easily accessible from anywhere by all groups of students. Education has reached every aspect in the world and ICT has blended in human life as an integral part (Livingstone, 2012). ICT has become inseparable to human being since it is always found in human’s daily life. Meanwhile, the teaching and learning process is connected to technology use in many aspects. Shyamlee and Phil (2012) defines that gives many opportunities and challenges to make an interesting and productive teaching in its application. The quality of teaching becomes improved when technology is inserted as one of the supporting points. Scherer et al (2019) states that the need for digital technologies for both teachers and students’ learning activities is emphasized by the real fact that citizens in this era require digital competence more than before. People are expected to live in a modern era that cannot be separated into the use of digital technology. Furthermore, the use of technology is considered as low cost of learning for students and even for the institution so the students are able to acces many educational resources (Santos, A., and Punie, 2016).

Digital resources also give positive benefits not only for teachers or educators but also to give an unlimited experience of learning for learners. When the educators, teachers, and administrators are willing to accept the digital resources positive roles, it is expected to give more benefits to raise the students’ learning motivation as well as their learning engagement. Thus, the quality of education will be improved (Zhao.Y, 2005). Moreover, students who are entering universities have a higher expectation of learning experiences and needs which is different from students in the past era. The students need technology/ICT-based learning experiences which in line with what they are going to face in the future. (Bughin et al, 2018) suggest that ensuring people’s good training of technology use is as crucial as the skills of interdisciplinary must be given. It is an important thing that helps them to create and develop their reflective thinking skills. For the further life, the greatest challenge for humans is to use and integrate the emerging technologies in their lives to seek an inovative solution of life problems (Islam, 2018). Thus, students are willing to meet the integration of digital technologies in their education even in a simple and sophisticated way. They are sure that its integration will empower them with high motivation in learning, increase their confidence, promote the active and collaborative way in learning, give them various types of learning sources, and create themselves as self-regulated learners (Valk et al, 2010); (Gasaymeh and Qablan, 2013); (Gasaymeh and Aldalalah, 2013); (Pellas and Kazanidis, 2014); (Tarus, et al 2015).

Some researchers also have done some research on examining the use of technology and
ICT in educational setting. The first was done by (Kim et al., 2013) who investigated the mobile devices in teaching and learning in the university. It was reported that university students gave good perceptions of the mobile devices which were applied to help in overcoming the difficulties in the learning activities. The students mentioned that the integration of mobile devices in learning could improve access to educational sources such as an e-book, online journal, and educational blog. Another was done by Hamid et al., (2015) finding that social networking might improve students’ interactions and communications with others, such as their teachers and their educational content. Abedalaziz et al., (2013) also found that there were highly positive perceptions and attitudes on the use of computers and the internet on Malaysian university students’ learning experiences. They mentioned that computers and the internet had supported their learning well. In 2017, Baturay et al., (2017) investigated the influencing factors why technology was well accepted by students. The findings showed that a significant result and good relationship between students’ competence, knowledge, and technology application.

In the educational field, technological developments have permitted the disclosure of distance learning and enriched teachings techniques innovation both in the class and out of the class (Almeida and Simoes, 2019). Universitas PGRI Semarang is one of the educational institution which applies this distance learning by using a digital platform of information called as SPADA (Sistem Pembelajaran Daring) UPGRIS. It is an innovative digital platform where the teachers are possibly having an online class with their students. Both teachers and students are facilitated by the system that allows them to create a communicative teaching and learning class without a distant limit. SPADA UPGRIS allows the students to choose the course they need to join by login using the students’ username provided by Universitas PGRI Semarang. In SPADA UPGRIS, teachers and students might have a video conference in the time they have agreed. To add, teachers are also able to control their students’ participation in an online class.

The use of SPADA UPGRIS is based on the condition that students in University are called adult learners where they need more innovative a creative tutoring process. The lecturers need to be creative in creating different teaching and learning processes by considering the various characteristics of the adults and young learners (Prastikawati, 2019). Teaching for adult learners need a media which then in line with their era. The concept of traditional learning between teachers and students must be reduced relating to the changes of the era called as a digital era. (Bullard, 2003) mentions that it is important to rescue the curriculum needs with the traditional approach domination. The curriculum should be introduced to a fast growing educational system. The use SPADA UPGRIS as information communication technology (ICT) can be regarded as the support of educational system in this digital era.

In the implementation of SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform in teaching and learning in Universitas PGRI Semarang, teachers or lecturers are in a team teaching that they can collaborate effectively to provide an innovative teaching style. This team teaching is expected to link students’ learning activity to the real life which can create students’ critical thinking. As (Santos, A., and Punie, 2016) stated that students’ critical thinking will be increased when using ICT in learning. To add, it also helps in building cooperative activities between teachers and students. SPADA UPGRIS is called as unlimited learning that does not limit the interaction by the time and place.

Information communication technology is frequently linked as how the use of computer devices and the internet are well used to create the productivity of learning activities in educational field (Ogott and Odera, 2012). Nowadays, ICT is presently being applied in educational setting to serve students the efficient learnings and assess the educators to fulfil administrative tasks efficiently (Selwyn, 2012). The role of technology such as ICT happens in a higher education reformation. It takes part in developing the universities, faculty members, and students to have a direct benefits on technology use (Gasaymeh and Qablan, 2013). In SPADA UPGRIS, university is given access to monitor the classroom activities done by the teachers and to evaluate the online and offline learning activities. Moreover, the use of SPADA UPGRIS as a digital platform in the teaching learning process will attract the students’ interest and enhance the public profile.

The use of SPADA UPGRIS as ICT-based learning makes the students more relax and active in discussing various tasks. It fulfills what has been stated by (Shyamlee and Phil, 2012) that ICT assists learners to be relaxed in learning.
many topics and tasks assigned by the teachers. In addition, the learners will be more active in learning activities for they use technology rather than being directed by the technology in learning.

In SPADA UPGRIS course, students need to login first in a certain subject they are going to join in. They also need to follow their lecturer’s instruction mention in SPADA UPGRIS whether the students need to finish a certain topic or might open all topics. Lecturers usually will provide some quizzes relating to the material that must be done online by the students in SPADA UPGRIS. Moreover, the lecturers will give feedback to the result of students’ quizzes. It means that using SPADA UPGRIS gives more opportunities for both lecturers and students to improve their competence. Lecturers need to gain more competence in information communication technology (ICT) to provide innovative online learning which is linked to the real context of life for students (Agyei and Voogt, 2012). Meanwhile, the students need to improve their learning strategy to enlarge their learning result because SPADA UPGRIS asks them to be more creative and active as learners. This condition brings an opportunity for both lecturers and students to improve their competence while they are doing the teaching and learning process in the class or not.

In this case, this research is trying to examine the students’ perception of SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform provided by Universitas PGRI Semarang as online learning. SPADA UPGRIS has been applied teaching and learning process in Universitas PGRI Semarang recently as it is in line with the industrial era 4.0. Therefore, it is also important to examine the application of SPADA UPGRIS according to students’ perceptions. In addition, this research is also trying to find out the obstacles of the application of SPADA UPGRIS based on the students’ perception.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This is a descriptive qualitative research which took part in Universitas PGRI Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. There were 150 students of the third semester becoming the respondents of this research. They were from different majors such as English education, Indonesian Language education, management, engineering, and law. They were also classified into working students and non-working students. The third semester is the semester where most lecturers applied SPADA UPGRIS as online teaching and learning in the classroom. Here is the description of the respondents:

| Classification  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Major           |           |            |
| English Education | 22        | 14.6       |
| Indonesian Language education | 25        | 16.6       |
| Management      | 45        | 30         |
| Engineering     | 35        | 23.3       |
| Law             | 23        | 21.3       |

The data was collected through closed-questionnaires. A semi-structured interview followed after the closed-questionnaires completion was done with the respondents. The closed-questionnaire was in a Likert-scale form which then analyzed in percentage. The points on Likert-scale were (a) strongly disagree-SD, (b) disagree-DS, (c) undecided-U, (d) agree-A, and (d) strongly agree-SA. Meanwhile, a semi-structured interview was given to support the data from a closed-questionnaire. The closed-questionnaire was analyzed in percentage and described in a certain diagram. Then, the close-questionnaire data was presented in the percentage in Microsoft Excel. Meanwhile, the data of a semi-structured interview was presented descriptively to support the data of closed-questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Application of SPADA UPGRIS as Digital Platform in Teaching and Learning: The Students’ Perception

The first data of this study is trying to describe the students’ perception on the application of SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform used in teaching and learning process in Universitas PGRI Semarang, Central Java-Indonesia. To get the data about the students’ perception, the writers used closed-questionnaire. It then was filled out by the respondents. The finding shows that most students show positive perception on the application of SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform in teaching and learning. Graphic 1 shows the result of questionnaires relating to students’ perceptions.
The data on graphic 1 shows us that the students’ perception on the application of SPADA UPGRIS in Universitas PGRI Semarang is good. It is proved by the descriptive statistic data on every number of questionnaires given provide high result on the point of agree and strongly agree. Some details of the findings are described below.

SPADA UPGRIS is an interesting application for learning. According to the result of Q1, it is found that 60% of students agree that the application of SPADA UPGRIS is an interesting idea in teaching and learning process. It is then supported by 34.66% of students who strongly agree on it. There are only few students (3.33% disagree and 2% undecided) who have the different idea on the application of SPADA UPGRIS as an interesting idea. This result is in line with a study done by Ogott & Odera (2012). They mentioned that the use of technology application in learning process created more productivity for students and improved the students’ curiosity on what they would learn. When the students have more curiosity on what they are going to do, it unconsciously boost the students’ motivation and interest in their learning process (Syakdiyah et al., 2019). The result of Q1 is also in line with the result of Q2 relating to students’ interest for being involved in SPADA UPGRIS as their learning process. The findings of Q2 shows that 87.33% (agree) and 7.33% (strongly agree) of students like to be involved in SPADA UPGRIS. Meanwhile, there are only 2% of students do not enjoy learning using SPADA UPGRIS.

SPADA UPGRIS is better than conventional media in giving new experience of learning. The other data of students’ positive feeling on SPADA UPGRIS is that 92.66% of students prefer using SPADA UPGRIS rather than conventional teaching and learning process (Q3). To add, in Q4 83.33% of students mention that they agree SPADA UPGRIS give a new experience on their learning activity. Those good findings on every question in questionnaire have proved that students have positive feeling on SPADA UPGRIS. This data is also supported by the data of semi-structured interviewed which reveal the similar opinion as follows:

What do you feel when joining a course that uses SPADA UPGRIS?

R3 : I like it so much, it is fun that I can share more knowledge with friends even it is not in the classroom.

R13 : Nice, I like SPADA UPGRIS because it helps us as students for being independent in learning. It is not boring learning activity.

R18 : I am happy if I join a class that using SPADA UPGRIS. We can have a conference with the lecturer even we are not in the same place. The materials given by my lecturer in SPADA UPGRIS are complete.

SPADA UPGRIS is also improving students learning productivity. The application of SPADA UPGRIS is also considered helpful for students to improve their productivity in learning. It is as what students in digital era expects in teaching and learning process. This good condition leads the students to have a better learning strategy as it is mentioned in Q7. The finding shows that 90.66% of students agree and 4.66% strongly agree on it. There are only 3.33% who disagree and 1.33% who strongly disagree. Then, the students also believe that SPADA UPGRIS is able to create an innovative teaching and learning process. Moreover, it supports them to improve their digital competence in this industrial revolution era 4.0. Their digital competence must be improved well as well as their learning result so that they are able to balance between ICT skills development and learning advancement (Hashim, 2018). Here are their responses:

In your opinion, which one is better between teaching and learning using SPADA UPGRIS or
conventional teaching and learning such as in classroom-teaching and learning?

R21 : Off course I prefer SPADA UPGRRIS than the class as I joined before. I mean conventional ya. I am more productive in using technology. SPADA UPGRIS is helpful for me.

R31 : SPADA UPGRIS is an innovative one for me, so I choose SPADA UPGRIS.

R52 : SPADA UPGRIS. To be honest, I am not good in using technology, but as working students it helps me a lot since I don’t need to have regular face-to-face class. It helps me to have my own learning strategy.

SPADA UPGRIS improve the students learning strategy and technology use. As it is found that in Q5 and Q7, the students mostly agree that they are making improvement in their strategy of learning and how they explore technology use. According to Q5 result, that 64.66% of students agree that their technology competence need to be improved since teaching and learning process requires SPADA UPGRIS. Another positive result is 29.33% strongly agree. Meanwhile, 4% of students disagree, 1.33% are strongly disagree, and 0.66% are undecided. In supporting this fact, the result of Q7 mentions that almost 90.66% of students agree that this application help them to improve their learning strategy. Only low percentages of students do not agree with this. Regard to this result, In SPADA UPGRIS, the students are given a chance to build their own learning strategy. The learning strategy chosen by the students may affect the learning autonomy so that they are expected to be independent learners who are able to use ICT in fulfilling their learning (Gasaymeh & Qablan, 2013).

SPADA UPGRIS leads the students to have learning preparation. To add, students also provide a fact that in the application of SPADA UPGRIS as a new digital platform in teaching and learning, it takes more learning preparation for students. As it is mentioned in Q8, 80.66% students say that they need more preparation using SPADA UPGRIS. Only 14% of students say that they disagree if they need more preparation in using SPADA UPGRIS. The fact that students need more preparation when they use SPADA UPGRIS in their learning process is stated. They are required to organize their learning schedule consistency to have a maximal learning result (Santos, A., & Punie, 2016). They must set the learning goals that push them more in learning. In this concept, their learning goals will direct them to explore more information on what they are going to learn (Ogott & Odera, 2012). Here are their responses in semi-structured interview that support the result of closed-questionnaires.

Do you need more preparation before using SPADA UPGRIS? please tell us about it.

R11 : Yes, I do. The connection of internet must be good. If it is not good, it difficult. So actually it needs more money to buy personal high connection.

R62 : Sure, I actually not good in using technology so I need personal preparation like increase my internet connection, improve myself in using computer too.

R119 : Ya, I need to make sure that my laptop is in good connection. Sometimes, need to find a good place to connect to wifi to support it.

R120 : ya, off course I need some preparation. As soon as I know there is a course that using SPADA UPGRIS, I directly prepare my computer ability. I am not good on it, lack of computer competence.

SPADA UPGRIS increases the students’ motivation in learning. According to Q6, there are 77.33% of students agree, 16.66% strongly disagree, 4% of students disagree and 2% of students strongly disagree that they have raised their motivation when they use SPADA UPGRIS in learning. Another fact is the result of Q9 which mentions that 70% students agree that they are able to solve learning problem by using SPADA UPGRIS. Moreover, Q10 reveals the other positive attitude of students. It mentions that 92% students are not afraid and hesitate when SPADA UPGRIS is applied more. This then supports the previous results. As stated by Pellas & Kazanidis, (2014), the better motivation creates the better learning. The motivation boosts the students’ learning enthusiasm that may result in a greatest learning achievement.

Those results found in findings above have shown how SPADA UPGRIS lead the students to have a better learning and improve themselves better in digital technology competency. Moreover, the students feel that SPADA UPGRIS is an interesting part of teaching and learning process which gives them a new challenge and experience. These all facts
support the data that the students’ perception on SPADA UPGRIS is positive.

2. Students’ Difficulties in Using SPADA UPGRIS in their Learning Process

Another purpose of this study is trying to reveal the students’ difficulties in using SPADA UPGRIS in their learning activity. The data of students’ difficulties was collected at the end of the semester. It was expected that the course was over, so the students were able to draw some conclusions on the SPADA UPGRIS course they had joined for at least one semester. The graphic 1 below tells about their difficulties collected from the questionnaire.

Graphic 2 Students’ Difficulties in Using SPADA UPGRIS

Graphic 2 above has shown that there are five difficulties faced by the students in using SPADA UPGRIS in their learning process. They are personal internet connection (41%), less direct communication with friends (22.66%), material file size (14%), inability in using computer (12%) and less feedback (10%). Those problems arose since the first time the students used SPADA UPGRIS. In its application, the lecture used to complete some student activities which displayed in certain topic or meeting. This guided the students in what topic or meeting they would use SPADA UPGRIS. Moreover, the lecturer gave some materials relating to the topic/meeting in a file which then uploaded in SPADA UPGRIS. Those materials vary in form such as pdf files, internet link, video, animation, pictures, online book, etc. To support the teaching and learning process, the lecturer used to make a video conference in a certain time which had been discussed before with the students.

3. Discussion

The result of this research has shown that students in Universitas PGRI Semarang have positive perception and belief on the application of SPADA UPGRIS as their digital platform in learning. According to the close-questionnaires given, the descriptive data on figure 1 have explained that the students mostly agree that SPADA UPGRIS is good. There are some positive perceptions gained by the students toward the application of SPADA UPGRIS as the digital platform in their learning. They consider SPADA UPGRIS as an interesting media of learning. This positive thinking might be able to lead them to have a positive attitude in learning. Further, SPADA UPGRIS also creates a better learning process than conventional learning that the students used to face. This leads the students to have a new experience of learning which support them to improve their learning productivity. Those mean that the positive thinking of students have brought a new atmosphere for students’ learning. The insertion of technology in learning also reduce the students stress level in learning (Almeida & Simoes, 2019). The students also should be enchanted by an update and enjoyable environment of learning that support a better learning achievement (Kim et al., 2013). In this case, the students are not facing one way of learning, but they are provided more access in gaining their maximum achievement. Moreover, their technology competence is increased since they have to access more kinds of materials and assessments in SPADA UPGRIS. In digital era, learners are expecting a learning process that leads them to a creativity improvement (Livingstone, 2012). They need to explore their life skills to compete in the future. As stated by Abedalaziz et al., (2013), future students must acquire all levels of skills that are supposed to help them in the future competition. As a consequence, this future demand brings them to be creative and productive in their learning process.

The last positive perception is that the students raise their learning motivation when using SPADA UPGRIS. It becomes so crucial for motivation has become learning stimuli for the better learning goals. This result is supported by Pellas & Kazanidis (2014). They stated that motivation had been regarded as an influential factor affecting the students’ learning achievement. The better motivation coming from the students gained the better result of learning.
In relation to this application of SPADA UPGRIS, some students also face some difficulties. These difficulties have been revealed through semi-structured interviews. Some students mention that they should prepare their high internet connection to support downloading process and video conference. The internet availability is a crucial aspect for the continuity of an internet-based learning (Ndongfack, 2015). This kind of learning process are difficult to realize when it has no internet connectivity. In this case, a teacher considers well on every student living area, so the upcoming barriers are prevented too (Bugbin et al, 2018). whether she or he is in a remoteness area or not. They had another fact that the materials file size uploaded by the lecturer was in large size, so they need more connection. To add, the video conference held by the lecturer also faced the similar problem. The students felt difficult to have a clear video conference with their lecturer if their connection is low. In this case, they need more money to have a high internet connection since SPADA UPGRIS may be used when they were not in college.

Their direct communication with their friends was also limited since SPADA UPGRIS allowed them to do the task in their own homes. For certain case, students need a direct communication with their friends to share their knowledge and thinking. The direct communication made them easy to discuss what their idea was. In fact, they were limited since they did not meet each other. Regarding to this point, Prastikawati (2019) mentioned that communication between students-students and teachers-students was needed in developing the online or blended course to reach the learning objectives. It supports the fact from this study that students need communication among the learning participants.

The others difficulties mentioned by the students were about their personal computer competence which was low and less feedback from the lecturer. 15.33% of students said that they were lack capability of computer uses. They were usually working students with no computer background. According to the personal data, they were working as senior teachers, shop assistants, private driver, and waitress. Their working status was actually helped by the application of SPADA UPGRIS. On the other hand, their lack of computer uses made another difficulty for them. This created another fact that they also need to improve their computer competence. For them, it leads to a complex difficulty.

Feedback from lecturer was becoming an expectation from students which was low realization. Feedback is another crucial aspect in students’ learning that provides what students’ strengths and weaknesses (Scherer et al., 2019). Even though SPADA UPGRIS provides a column relating to lecturer’s feedback, there were only some lecturers who gave details feedback to what students work. Meanwhile, the students were willing to have a clear feedback from the lecturers. In its application, they had low feedback from the lecturers when using SPADA UPGRIS in teaching and learning process. For university, all those students’ difficulties must be well-solved for the better teaching and learning process when using SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform in Universitas PGRI Semarang in the future.

CONCLUSION
Relating to the data findings and discussion above, some conclusions are drawn. Students in Universitas PGRI Semarang have positive feelings on SPADA UPGRIS as digital platform of information communication and technology applied in Universitas PGRI Semarang. The students consider that the application of SPADA UPGRIS in a course as a new experience in teaching and learning process. In addition, students are motivated to improve their learning strategy to support their maximum result on learning. To add, some difficulties were faced by the students in using SPADA UPGRIS such as personal internet connection, less communication with friends, material file size provided, and inability in using computer. Those difficulties must be well-solved by University to provide a better learning.

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