CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia and almost the rest of the world have been fighting over Covid-19 pandemic for over 2 years since early 2020. Almost all of sectors in life being affected by the global pandemic including education. For over 2 years, education sector have been affected by global pandemic Covid-19, and online learning has become the main method of instruction during the pandemic. Schleicher (2020, p.4) states that "The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on higher education as universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures". Online education, which refers to both the teacher and the learner, has been defined as any class that provides at least part of its curriculum via the internet without instructors and students being connected at the same time (Berge and Collins, 1995).

Online learning is effective in assisting the government in minimizing the spread of Covid-19, because it prevents students from leaving their homes. Yulia (2020) said that the main point is that lecturers should use a variety of strategies to improve the quality of online learning so that teaching and learning activities will run smoothly. There was a communication gap between the instructor and the students in all of these media modes, as all communication was mostly one-way from the instructor to the student in a static non-interactive style. During covid-19

pandemic, universities students learn through online learning by using variety of application facilitated by their faculties. Google classroom, Zoom Meetings, WhatsApp Group, and asynchronous discussion board are medium used by faculties to support the learning activities.

Learning Management System is widely used in online learning to support learning activities. A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application that enables the creation, delivery, and management of educational content and resources in an online environment. Bradley (2021) stated that through online classroom environments, Learning Management System (LMS) promotes the learning process. Furthermore, he stated that a typical LMS fosters an inclusive learning environment for academic advancement by incorporating frameworks that enable online collaborative-groupings, professional training, discussions, and communication among other LMS users. Students can access course materials, communicate with instructors and peers, and submit assignments through the LMS.

Learning through internet and not having the teaching and learning processes in real time in the classroom can be challenges. It is hard to maintain and develop relationship between lecturer and students. Sometimes, it is also hard to tell whether both lecturers and students 'presence' in the online learning. According to Samuel (2016) Presence in the online environment, refers to the illusion of being in a real classroom, in real time, with a real person managing the learning experience. It is important for the lecturers to engage the students in online learning in order to ensure that the learning process runs effectively.

According to Curelaru, Curelaru, and Cristea (2022), online learning is an alternative to face-to-face classes that necessitates special considerations, such as increased involvement on the part of both lecturers and students, a higher social online presence, and a number of personal characteristics. A common criticism of distance learning is that there are not enough social interactions or social presence during classes. Participants in distance learning courses may have few opportunities to communicate with instructors or other students, which might make them feel lonely or dissociate and reduce their drive to learn and finish their courses (Annetta, Folta and Klesath, 2010; Kim, Song and Luo, 2016).

A sense of community that is based on developing positive relationships inside the group may result from social presence. According to Kreijns, Weidlich, and Xu (2022) Social presence is associated with the degree to which computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools and electronic platforms for Online Group Learning can transfer the same face-to-face interpersonal communication, group learning, and group dynamics when learning and working together in an online setting. Hilli and Åkerfeldt (2020) stated that participants may feel more at ease in the digital learning environment thanks to social presence because their personalities and identities are accepted.

In regular LMS, the discussions take place in the form of written communication (text-based) and there is no face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, Marino (2012) stated that discussion boards are frequently used interchangeably. Asynchronous communication does not necessitate both the teacher and the students being online at the same time. There is a wealth of research on social

presence in the online face-to-face classroom and how they affect student happiness and learning; however, there is less empirical data on how lecturers and students have similar behaviors to the discussion board. Previous study done by Marino in 2012 investigated how college teachers' immediacy behaviors have been adapted to the online, web-based classroom, specifically in the asynchronous discussion board.

The writer decides to do a case study research to see the lecturer and students' perceptions of learning through LMS. This study chose a graduate course offered at a one public university in Jambi as the case to discover students' and lecturer's unseen online interaction behaviors mainly through written communication and experiences in order to obtain insights into how they view social presence in online learning through LMS and how they adapted to global pandemic situation Covid-19 in the online learning through LMS.

1.2 Research Question

The problem of the study is:

How do lecturer and students view social presence in online learning through LMS?

1.3 Objective of the study:

Based on the above problem, the objective of the study is:

To investigate how the lecturer and students view social presence in online learning through LMS.

1.4 Limitation of the Research

In this research, the researcher focuses on the lecturer and graduate students of Master of English Education experience in online learning of a course using LMS during the Covid-19 pandemic at one University in Jambi. The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of both the lecturer and students of social presence in online learning through LMS.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research is expected to give a meaningful contribution to the discipline of education. Hopefully this research can be useful as a source of reference for relevant research on online learning through Learning Management System, and this research is useful to give insight about social presence in online learning. The researcher also hopes that this research can be useful for lecturers to give some input and reflection about their experience in distance or online teaching.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

1. Perception

Perception is how we view and interpret information. Lamatokan (2018) states perception is the opinion of people about something they think is true, and it refers to a sense or view of a certain object.

2. Social Presence

Social presence was initially described as the perception that another person is "real" and "there" (Short, Williams, and Christie, 1976). Social presence

is the illusion of being together with other people as if the communication is not mediated at all by communication media.

3. Online Learning

Online learning means that students can access classes and course materials at any time, as long as they have Internet connectivity. Patel (2021) stated that online education allows for teaching and learning to take place anywhere and at any time.

4. Learning Management System (LMS)

A learning management system, or LMS for short, is a software program or web-based technology used to organize, carry out, and evaluate a particular learning activity. According to Riad and El-Ghareeb (2009), a learning management system (LMS) is a collection of software that is comprehensively integrated into the many features used to deliver and manage courses.