UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES IN USING EDMODO AS AN EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK

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Abstract: The integration of technology in education and the need to meet the requirements of the 21st century learning lead educators to use online learning platforms. Edmodo is offered as one of learning platforms that could be used in EFL classroom. This research aims to investigate perception of undergraduate students on the use of Edmodo as an educational social network which has been implemented in the classroom. This study employed mix method design by involving 50 undergraduate students from a university in Bandung, Indonesia. The data were collected through closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. As results, it was found that undergraduate students showed positive response and attitudes towards the use of Edmodo in their learning process. Besides, some obstacles of using Edmodo were also revealed, such as lack of experiences in using technology and how to manage the time allocation. Finally, it is suggested that Edmodo should be implemented in undergraduate EFL classroom.
Keywords: *Edmodo, undergraduate students' perception, educational social network, online learning platform*

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has been integrated into education in Indonesia in the recent years. Nowadays, second and foreign language teachers have the options to use technology in the classroom. Therefore, technology is indicated as one of factors in the 21st century education. As a result, teaching and learning approaches have changed to suit the digital age by adopting technology or incorporating e-learning into classrooms (Cowie & Sakui, 2013). In general, the 21st century world requires individuals who can achieve success in their learning, work and life (Suherdi, 2010).

Moreover, one of ways to integrate technology in education is the use of an educational social network. Social networking is known as a service that enables users to interact with others, share information and make an active continuous virtual community through the creation of system profiles and online groups (Brooke, 2013). Related with educational context, it means that social network could provide students to be more creative and attractive during the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, talking about educational social network, Edmodo is offered as an online tool that can promote individual to join and interact with each other, especially in the learning process (Prasad & Prasad, 2012). Edmodo has been widely used by many top universities as an alternative space wherein

students can adapt easily through daily activities and interactions with peers and faculty. It is supported by Enriquez (2014) who declares Edmodo as one of the top learning tools by five hundred plus professionals from 48 countries around the world.

According to Hourdequin (2014), Edmodo is described as a free online learning management system that offers a secure virtual space for students and teachers to share and discuss texts, images, audio files, and videos. Thus, Edmodo could be accessed through web browser or smartphone application (iOS and Android). The teachers could create communities or classes for specific groups of students on Edmodo. When a teacher creates an Edmodo group, he or she receives a group code that could be used by students. Besides, not only teachers and students but also parents are able to have a code of their own. It is aimed to allow them to check, support, and work together with their children (Batsila, *et al.,* 2014). By this system, parents, students, and teachers could be a good teamwork to support the teaching and learning process inside or outside the classroom.

Furthermore, it is claimed that students who are already Facebook users can use Edmodo without difficulties (Çankaya *et al.,* 2013). By using Edmodo, teachers can create some quizzes and assignments, give feedback, receive complete assignments, assign grades, store and share content, maintain a class calendar, conduct polls and send alters to individual students or to the entire class (Al-Kathiri, 2014).

In that case, Looi & Yusop (2011) provides some benefits of using Edmodo in the teaching and learning process. First, the students could post any comments regarding to the assignments. Second, students are able to get reward badges that could increase their learning motivation. As we know that, by giving such rewards, sometimes students will put their high motivation to the teaching and learning process. Third, Edmodo allows students to get along with their friends through sub-groups. It means that students could discuss anything when they feel confused about the assignments. Fourth, Edmodo could

develop learner autonomous and self-directed learning as students receive instant comments and reviews on their posts which assist them in constructing new knowledge (Al-Khathiri, 2014). Thus, Edmodo could provide students to give feedback to each other. Fifth, Edmodo as an educational social network put contributions in increasing an effective communication and engagement between the students and their teacher at the right time. The effectiveness could be provided by looking to the benefits of using technology, especially educational social network (Looi & Yusop, 2011). Sixth, Edmodo provides authentic materials that relates to real life situations which applicable in daily life. It means that the teacher could choose actual topic relating to the current situation and feelings of students. It is also supported by Laurillard (2005) who states the conventional teaching and learning process through lectures, whole-class teaching and books should be supplemented with technology to serve and give more opportunities for learners to get involved in the process.

Despite the above-mentioned advantages, using Edmodo in education could raise some challenges. First challenge is low internet speed and internet connection problems as highlighted by AlKhathiri (2015) and Enriquez (2014). Second challenge of using Edmodo as an educational social network is the small-sized screen of the phones which makes it difficult for students to view all the course materials on the phone (Al-Khathiri, 2015). Some students may not always access Edmodo from their laptop. It is also supported by Addison (2011) who notes that small-sized screen is one of barriers in implementing Edmodo as an educational social network.

In the context of English as Foreign language, a number of recent studies towards the use of Edmodo as an educational social network has been growing since it relates to 21st century learning process. A big scale study affirmed a considerable number of benefits of using Edmodo in EFL classes (Enriquez, 2014). The findings show that Edmodo is viewed as an effective social media application that can improve students' ability through an

active participation in online discussions and tasks (Enriquez, 2014). While in Indonesian context, Muhfidin (2013) states the use of Edmodo as the supplementary learning tool is effective and applicable for students. Furthermore, Edmodo also could be used in teaching writing in a blended learning setting since it facilitates students' engagement cognitively (Purnawarman *et al.,* 2016).

Reflecting on the previous elaboration, this study aims at undergraduate students' perceptions towards the use of Edmodo as an educational social network in the learning process. Therefore, this paper reaffirms the benefits of Edmodo as an educational social network which relates to the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, this study also aims to find out some problems and challenges from the undergraduate students' perceptions when using Edmodo in their learning process. This would be beneficial to create a suitable language online learning tool that suits learners' needs. To achieve those purposes, the study attempts to address the following questions:

1. What are the undergraduate students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as an educational social network for EFL classes?
2. Do undergraduate students see Edmodo as an effective educational social network for EFL classes?

METHOD
In order to achieve the purpose of the research in exploring undergraduate students' perspections in using Edmodo as a social network, a mixed method approach is selected as the research design by combining qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures with two main reasons. Firstly, Cresswell (2009) states mix method utilizes the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research. The study adopted the concurrent triangulation design which allowed the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to figure out if there is convergence, differences, or some combinations. Secondly, the research will get better understanding when combining both

qualitative and quantitative data (Hamied, 2017). Moreover, the projected research uses triangulation design since it belongs to the types of mixed method design.

The participants of the study were 50 undergraduate students (female = 30 students, male = 20 students) in an Indonesian university majoring English education department in the 6th semester of the academic year 2017. They have been experienced in using Edmodo in their classroom guided by their lecturers.

Furthermore, in collecting data, the study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to identify undergraduate students' perceptions on using Edmodo. To answers the research questions, the questionnaires created in the form of Google Docs that have been sent to all participants. Here, to obtain a quantitative data, a closed-ended survey questionnaire with 11 statements was made based on the existing survey developed by Enriquez (2014) with some modifications made by the researcher in order to address the first and second research questions. The questionnaire was in 5 point-Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Moreover, qualitative data was gained through open-ended questionnaires. It was grouped to see students' experiences, advantages, problems, and suggestions to address the second research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The discussions of the findings are divided into two subsections following the central themes appeared from closed and open-ended questionnaires. The central themes are students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as an educational social network and undergraduate students' perceptions about the effectiveness of Edmodo as an educational social network.

Students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as an educational social network
Regarding the first research question, the findings from the questionnaire relating to students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as an educational social network are presented in the following table.

Table 1. *Undergraduate students' perceptions of using Edmodo as an educational social network*

No	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Edmodo allows me to easily interact/participate with my classmates and lecturer about assignments, group tasks and other course activities.	10%	56.5 %	28.3%	4.3%	-
2	Edmodo procedure is difficult to follow	-	10.9%	17.4%	60.9%	-
3	Assignments, quizzes, and other online tasks given by the lecturer in Edmodo help me improve my learning and comprehension skills	-	47.8%	37%	8.7%	-
4	Online activities and discussions in Edmodo motivate me to learn more about the course	4.3%	39.1%	43.5%	13%	-

The table shows that most participants (SA= 10%, Agree = 56.5%) agree that Edmodo allows them to interact and participate easily with their classmates and teachers through some assignments, group tasks, and other course activities. Here, the participants (Disagree = 60.9%) do not think that the procedures of using Edmodo is difficult to follow since some of the participants were currently using it at their classroom.

Moreover, most half of participants in this study (Agree = 48.7%) agree that assignments, quizzes, and other online tasks given by the lecturer on Edmodo helped them to improve the learning and comprehension skills. Although there are some participants (Neutral = 43.5%) who are neutral and disagree with the statement stating online activities and discussions in Edmodo motivate them to learn more about the course. In line with this, the high gap between agree and neutral or disagree could indicate that participants still give positive response to the implementation of Edmodo in the teaching and learning process.

Table 2. *Undergraduate students' experiences of using Edmodo*

No	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I prefer to ask questions using Edmodo rather than face-to-face	4.3%	15.2%	28.3%	43.5%	8.7%
2	I enjoy the practice quizzes uploaded on Edmodo.	6.5%	43.3%	32.6%	13%	4.3%
3	I am satisfied with Edmodo	6.5%	54.3%	39.1%	-	-
4	Edmodo allows me to easily access reference materials on the course provided by the teacher.	15.2%	43.5%	21.7%	15.2%	4.3%
5	The reference materials (e.g. internet articles, online videos, power point files, etc.) posted by my teacher are useful in understanding the contents/topics of the course better	13%	39.1%	26.1%	17.4%	4.3%
6	Edmodo required more time and effort.	6.5%	26.1%	30.4%	34.8%	2.2%
7	I have trouble using the technologies in this subject.	2.2%	4.3%	19.6%	58.7%	15.2%

Table 2 shows that participants (Agree = 43.3%, Neutral = 32.6%) enjoyed the activity through practice quizzes uploaded by their lecturer in Edmodo. Thus, more than half of participants (Agree = 54.3%) satisfied when they were using Edmodo in their learning process. Furthermore, majority of participants strongly agree (15.2%) and agree (43.5%) that Edmodo allows them to easily access reference materials on the course provided by the lecturer. It is in line with the statement stating Edmodo could provide students with authentic

materials that help them to improve their skills. Moreover, participants agree (39.1%) and strongly agree (13%) that the reference materials (e.g. Internet articles, online videos, power point files, etc.) posted by the lecturer are useful to better understand the contents of the course. Although there are participants (Neutral = 30.4%) who are neutral and disagree (34.8%) with statement number 6 stating Edmodo requires more time and effort.

Undergraduate students' perceptions about the effectiveness of Edmodo as an educational social network

As stated previously, Edmodo has been widely used and offered as one of effective online learning platforms in educational context. Therefore, the participants in this research mostly understand how to operate or access Edmodo. The participants also comprehend its purposes to facilitate teaching and learning process. Thus, the data revealed from the questionnaire is closely related to its purposes to help the interactions of teachers and students outside the classroom. Therefore, it is worth to say that students give a good response towards the effectiveness of using Edmodo as an educational social network.

Relating to Edmodo's potential to make learning more effective, the participants expressed a variety of positive views in the questionnaire. Firstly, Edmodo could facilitate teachers and students' interaction through indirect or virtual class. It is revealed from the open-ended questionnaire data below.

P2 : *It is effective because we can communicate with lecturer and our friends in discussing some material resources and result of assignments.*

P4 : *Yes, it is very effective since we can get some feedback and give some comments directly via Edmodo.*

P17 : *Edmodo can be very effective when lecturer and students interact to each other outside the classroom through e-learning material.*

The finding is in line with the purpose of Edmodo that is offered as an online tool which can promote individual to join and interact with each other and especially in the learning

process (Prasad & Prasad, 2012). It means that the students could interact easily with their friends through Edmodo. Furthermore, the participants thought that virtual class sometimes really helpful and effective because they were not brave enough to deliver their opinion in the real classroom situation. It could be happened since each student has different characteristics when they need to talk or deliver their ideas. Their enthusiast to integrate technology in the classroom also revealed in the data.

P29 : *Edmodo seems like a good choice for students like me now. I like to use Edmodo because it's just like we use Facebook. It's easy to follow and modern.*

Secondly, since Edmodo is offered as an effective learning tool, it also helps students to submit assignment and share any information. In this 21st century learning, students could also easily access some materials from their lecturer, not only from the printed book sources. This finding is revealed in the open-ended questionnaire.

P40 : *I can access some materials on Edmodo since sometimes lecturer doesn't have enough time to explain the material in the classroom.*

P36 : *I don't need to meet the lecturer when submitting assignments. It's all on our hand. Click and send. So easy anyway.*

P24 : *It makes the process of learning easy, especially when we have to submit assignments. We can submit it wherever we want as long as it has internet connection.*

Relevant to the findings, Hourdequin (2014) supported that Edmodo is a free online learning management system that offers a secure virtual space for students and teachers to share and discuss texts, images, audio files, and videos. Furthermore, some participants stated that by using Edmodo, the learning process is very efficient, paperless, and eco-friendly since they do not need to print the assignments. Moreover, the findings from qualitative data indicates positive perceptions of incorporating Edmodo as educational social network into the classroom and some frequently used keywords to express

participants' opinion like "easy", "efficient", "practical", and "accessible". By using Edmodo, a teacher can create and share multimedia resources to support students' learning and provide learning tasks to scaffold students' learning (Wallace, 2014). It is clearly stated that Edmodo can encourage active participations between lecturer and students in online class and students could access some materials easily.

Thirdly, Edmodo is indicated as a good choice online learning platform to promote and develop self-regulated learning and learner autonomous that closely related to 21st century learning education. Thus, the main philosophy of 2013 curriculum in Indonesia encourages students to become independent learners. Students could have like virtual discussion after the learning process in the classroom. It is revealed in the following transcript.

P18 : *Sometimes, the lecturer creates an open discussion about the following assignments. In my opinion, it is very democratic and I like the way my lecturer gives the next assignments based on class discussion on Edmodo.*

P33 : *Edmodo help students to manage the time to complete many online assignments. For example, I can easily upload my files, give feedback, and communicate with my friends also lecturer conveniently.*

P49 : *I can still do the tasks even there is no class that day.*

Based on those findings, Edmodo is contributed and supported self-regulated learning and develop learning autonomy. Autonomous learning classroom is a place where learners and teachers have constructive interaction with each other and learn from each other. The teacher is responsible for helping learners become aware of alternative strategies and learning styles (Camilleri, 1999). In line with this, Lengkanawati (2014) states that in the Indonesian contexts autonomous learning refers to a situation where students use learning strategies to make themselves become autonomous learners. It is relevant to the findings that participants need to manage their time since the lecturer give the allocation time and due date in most of the tasks. Moreover, it is well stated on the

findings that integrating technology into the teaching and learning process will give some benefits. Yunus (2010) supported that teachers need to synchronize themselves with technology and take advantages of the possibilities provided. Furthermore, positive response is also revealed in the findings that participant prefer to use Edmodo rather than *SPOT* (an institutional online program in campus). One of the participant stated that Edmodo is easier and more applicable than *SPOT* in supporting their learning process.

Nevertheless, there were some participants who criticized the use of Edmodo in the classroom. It is revealed in the following transcript.

P18 : *In my opinion, Edmodo is less exploration. Lecturer should explore and use more Edmodo in the learning process.*

P27 : *Sometimes, the lecturer did not give full feedback to all students.*

P8 : *I never use Edmodo before, so it's quite confusing for me at the first time.*

P35 : *I feel nervous when submitting the task with such allocation time since the internet connection still unstable sometimes.*

The data indicates that some of the participants lacked confidence and less experience with the new technologies. Thus, by learning and doing in the same time, the students can easily comprehend how to use Edmodo. Yet, the internet connection still becomes a problem in Indonesian classroom. However, one of the participants stated that there are some *wifi* corners at campus which can be accessed freely anytime. Hence, the students should be able to find and know which location at campus that provides internet access. In reflecting on Edmodo's potential to create an effective learning, the participants expressed a variety positive response. It includes how Edmodo could increase students' motivation and provide better learning process.

Furthermore, although the findings stated that Edmodo was considered as a good educational social network and user-friendly learning tool, some comments from the participants showed that Edmodo should get some improvements in order to make it more

updated. The participants' responses and comments relating to this issue can be seen below.

P18   : *I hope Edmodo can be more mobile friendly*

P6   : *I think, lecturer needs to explain clearly about the procedure of using Edmodo at the beginning of the lesson. So, students will not get confused.*

P44   : *I demand for a personal chat feature so I can easily text my lecturer towards some materials and assignments*

P31   : *It is interesting when students and teacher can communicate through video conference.*

P19   : *Lecturer should improve their ability in using and exploring Edmodo since students expected the lecturer to utilize it appropriately.*

P37   : *Not all lecturer uses Edmodo in the learning process. I think Edmodo should be used in this modern era.*

P50   : *I need more time for the quiz and tasks*

The data indicates that the institution should provide students with training about how to use Edmodo. Thus, the lecturer should guarantee that students understand the system and employ its features easily to accomplish the tasks given. Furthermore, apart from the training, the lecturer should provide clear information towards the time allocation, the due date, and step by step instructions. Thus, the nature goals of advantages of using Edmodo can be achieved in the teaching and learning process.

Based on findings, it can be concluded that the participants showed positive responses towards the use of Edmodo as an educational network in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, it could be used as an effective learning tool in the classroom since it has suitable features. Edmodo provides lecturer and students to have a virtual communication relating to the teaching and learning process. Students can access to all their online classes in one platform, and this helps to promote learning in any location and at any time via computer, tablets, or smartphones (Hammonds *et al.,* 2013).

On the other hands, some technical problem like time allocation and lack of experiences in integrating technology in the teaching and learning process become obstacles in its implementation. Thus, those obstacles could be solved by providing some training from the experts or lecturer in the beginning of the academic year. By this case, students will not get confused when they should access and keep and touch with Edmodo. It is supported by Thongmak (2013) that a teacher should train their students who are not familiar enough with Edmodo in order to reach the learning objectives and outcomes. In addition, from the effectiveness of Edmodo, it offers a blended learning since students could get lots of benefits like interpersonal and teamwork skill development (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Furthermore, technology could satisfy their interest in the teaching and learning process since digital native students can be interested by utilizing technology (Mustafa, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that undergraduate students generally show positive attitude towards the use of Edmodo. It was revealed that undergraduate students get some benefits of using Edmodo such as learners' creativity, learner autonomy, integrating technology, preparation of 21st century learning and developing their own learners' strategies. Therefore, based on those findings, it is suggested that Edmodo needs to be implemented in EFL classroom. Moreover, students may be involved in the training related to the 21st century learning which also integrate technology in the learning process, especially to use Edmodo. For further study, since this present study only focus on undergraduate students' perception, the same topic could be replicated in real teaching practice through direct observations to get real and deep information of using Edmodo as an educational social network.

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