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An Analysis of Students' Voices towards a Regional LMS for ELT in Indonesian Islamic Schools

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Abstract

The current study examined students' perspectives on the use of one of the regional learning management systems (LMS), E-Belajar (hereafter EB), at two Islamic boarding schools in Aceh, Indonesia. Fifty EFL Islamic boarding school students agreed to participate in this study. This study used a mixed method design, combining surveys and interviews. The data from the questionnaire was analysed quantitatively. Meanwhile, thematic analysis was performed on the interview data. The results revealed both good and negative attitudes of EB in ELT. Positive replies indicate that EB improved English comprehension and promoted autonomous learning, assisted students in completing English tasks on time by using the alert feature as a reminder, developed enjoyable and engaging learning activities using videos and online games, and encouraged students' confidence in expressing ideas. However, negative voices highlighted the teacher's failure to advise students on how to use EB properly, resulting in incorrect task submission. Students also preferred in person learning, and students had trouble communicating effectively. Students further

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pointed out that EB did not enhance listening skill, reading skill, speaking skill, writing skill, or grammar understanding significantly; only few students believed that EB helped promote English language skills, indicating that further efforts through EB was required. Students were also unable to access certain EB services, such as e-counselling and e-monitoring. Furthermore, dormitories have limited access to the internet. These circumstances became another drawback for students.

Keywords: *E-Belajar*, Islamic boarding schools, learning management systems, online learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the outbreak, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture directed the school to incorporate online learning into the curriculum in the new normal era (Hima et al., 2021). Relying exclusively on general digital platforms, including WhatsApp, Telegram, and email during the pandemic and new normal era reduces the effectiveness of educational activities, especially as those platforms do not sufficiently support English language instruction (Zezarwati et al., 2022). One of the digital technology businesses in Bandung, West Java, was given the authority by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019 to develop *E-Belajar* (henceforth, EB), an online learning platform in Indonesia. EB is one of the online learning platforms that provides some helpful features needed by schools, including e-registration, students' e-attendance, e-communication, e-counselling, online library, e-chatting and video conferencing, e-monitoring, e-learning, e-payment, e-submission, and online meeting.

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, also known as *pesantren*, is one of the schools that applied EB to support the students' learning during the new normal era. EB has been an official platform for teachers and students to conduct teaching and learning activities, including in English language teaching (henceforth, ELT). Indonesia had 3.47 million of students, or often referred as *santri*, studying at 36,600 Islamic boarding schools or *pesantren* (Masturi & Supar, 2022). This *pesantren*'s curriculum has been authorised by the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, including the curriculum of English language course (van Klienken & Berenschot, 2016). In *pesantren*, English is one of the most important courses as Tahir (2015) also emphasised that *pesantren* promotes and practices international languages, including English, Arabic, and other foreign languages in the students' daily activities.

Technology plays a significant role in meeting the needs of instructors in the new normal era of online learning platforms, particularly when it comes to educational result, progress, and instructional evaluation (Coman et al., 2020; Heggart & Yoo, 2018). Hence, technology unquestionably has a prominent role in transmitting successful learning (Masterson, 2020). Recent studies on the use of learning management systems (henceforth, LMS) to aid language acquisition have also shown promising results. For instance, a study by Bradley (2021) found that LMS can help students improve their creativity and digital skills. It has also been demonstrated that using an LMS improved the efficacy of language acquisition, especially while learning remotely (Asmiyunda & Sanova, 2024). In addition, it was also found that LMS can be developed as an effective learning medium (Sagala, 2021; Wang et al., 2012). Furthermore, another study finding has demonstrated that online LMS can help improve students' reading, writing, and speaking skills (Yunus, 2021).

Several studies about the role of digital technology to assist language learning have also been conducted. For instance, a study by Mpungose (2021) found that instructors at African institutions had positive opinions regarding Google Classroom for learning, especially due to its usefulness and effectiveness. Nevertheless, a disadvantage was also discovered, where Google Classroom was less conversational and interactive between students and instructors (Mpungose, 2021). Furthermore, YouTube was examined by Muslem et al. (2022) as a medium to enhance the online presence of native speakers. According to their research, students preferred utilising YouTube to learn English, and they required assistance from teachers in selecting YouTube

channels that resembled native speakers. Sari and Oktaviani (2021) further mentioned that examining users' feedback while using digital technology in language learning was crucial. Therefore, teachers must solicit students' feedback in order to improve the effectiveness of online learning.

Studies on the use of EB as a local online learning management system assigned by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture are overlooked because the previously mentioned studies mainly focused on more global learning management systems and general outline platforms. Given the paucity of research in Islamic boarding school contexts, it is imperative to contribute to the body of literature in online learning research by examining the perspectives of students attending Islamic boarding schools on a locally developed online learning platform, EB, for English instruction and education.

Furthermore, it is also critical to explore how students perceive EB because their perspectives are crucial to the development of effective online learning. The current study sought to evaluate how EFL students at two Islamic boarding schools perceived using EB as a local LMS. Therefore, the research question for this study is: How do students at two Indonesian Islamic boarding schools perceive *E-Belajar*'s in English language teaching?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia

Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, also known as *pesantren*, have been educating a large number of students or *santri* and increasing their social impact since the 15th century (Hidayah & Arifi, 2017). The Indonesian Ministry of Religion's policies prioritises *pesantren* with three main goals, which are encapsulated into the organisation's motto: upholding tradition, reining in innovation, and welcoming modernity (Masturi & Supar, 2022). In the sociohistorical framework of Indonesia, there are three stages of *pesantren*, according to Qomar (2011). First, originally designed to 'accommodate middle-class Muslims', *pesantren* uses a teaching approach that combines Islamic teaching with international standards. Second, a respectable traditional school constructs new elite institutions in response to the demands of the middle class Muslims. Lastly, by portraying learning the Qur'an as enjoyable, this school concentrates on memorising the Qur'an and primarily targets urban middle-class students of all ages with no religious awareness.

According to Qomar (2011), *pesantren* is initially recognised as Islamic educational institutions dedicated to spreading the religion and providing a place to study Islam. *Pesantren*'s lives are, in fact, unique. *Pesantren* consists of multiple buildings: a dwelling for caretakers or Islamic teachers (Kyai), a mosque, and a hostel for the students (also known as *santri*). *Pesantrens* have endured for generations by adhering to their core ideals. According to Hidayah and Arifi (2017), the mosque in *pesantren* serves as the institution's focal point or the activity's centre. The origins of this Islamic boarding schools must be traced back to Walisongo's influence in Java during the 15th and 16th centuries. This recent Islamic educational institution has been improved, especially in Java for centuries by Maulana Malik Ibrahim in 1399, whose focus was also on the spread of Islam in Java (Masturi & Supar, 2022). The next figure who founded and developed the Islamic boarding school was Raden Rahmat (Sunan Ampel) (Hidayah & Arifi, 2017).

2.2 *E-Belajar* as a Regional Learning Management System

E-Belajar is an online learning platform accessible at the URL <https://e-belajar.id/>. EB is one of the media platforms approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture to be used in Indonesian schools, including in Islamic schools during the pandemic and the new normal era. EB was developed by 'Ebelajar Semesta Raya', a company that focuses on providing educational information, technological experienced, digitalised solutions and procuring goods and services for Indonesian education. This learning management system is connected to the District Education Department and Provincial Education Department systems. EB also has a connecting feature with

parents/guardians of students, the school's online payment feature, chat and video conference feature, school learning management feature, online exam, remedial, and assignment management feature, online registration feature, students' consultation feature/students' online counselling guidance, online library feature, as well as question bank feature.

The EB was developed to facilitate successful learning for students and teachers in the contemporary era, called the 4.0 era. The EB allows students to engage in learning activities virtually and communicate with their teachers at any scheduled moment. E-Belajar has received many awards since 2016, such as the first winner of Education Mobile of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019, the KI HAJAR award from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020, the innovation award of the West Java government in 2022, the Top ten young innovator award in 2023, and Australia Mobile education award in 2024.

2.3 Perceptions in Learning

Kaur et al. (2022) defined perception (also known as voice) as a person's opinion, feeling, response, or stimulus about an occurrence based on the individual experience and related information. Additionally, Nugroho and Atmojo (2020) stated that perception is a quick process of noticing something when receiving information. In addition, to get information on how thing has worked, an active process of perception happened to people in their awareness conditions.

Perception is a stimulus awareness that impacts the senses and influences how a person perceives the stimuli or messages. Perception arises from the brain's function to make sense the phenomena, influenced by needs, emotions, experiences, motivations, and educational backgrounds (Ayu & Pratiwi, 2021; Wijaya, 2024). Perception is also defined as the human act of interpreting environmental impressions through sensory organs. Robbins and Judge (2013) identified three critical elements in the process of perception: the perceiver (the individual who forms the perception), the object (the person or target receiving the perception), and the situation (the context in which the perception occurs). Understanding these elements is essential for evaluating how perceptions are formed and their impact on interactions and outcomes being observed.

Kaur et al. (2022) explained that there are two general perceptions: (1) positive perception which means seeing an event as a likely situation suitable for an individual character. This positive perception might change into a positive response or stimulus that appeared after the verbal perceptions or through expressions; (2) negative perception which refers to a process of viewing an object in which the individual tends to resist because it does not follow a personal character. Certain circumstances may influence the negative perceptions depending on the situation. As with positive perceptions, the reaction in negative perception can also be shown verbally and sometimes against reality.

In line with the above explanation, students' perception is fundamental, particularly to grasp learning and information or to drive a specific reaction during the learning process. Hence, students' perception is defined as the students' impression and points of view in interpreting a specific condition. van Petegem et al. (2007) also emphasised the importance of considering the students' perceptions when assessing learning outcomes. Teachers must understand their students' perspectives in order to effectively adapt their teaching methods and make informed modifications, particularly to enhance the learning experience. Asmara et al. (2023) emphasized that understanding students' perceptions is key to evaluating teacher performance and enhancing instructional strategies for a more effective, student-centered learning environment.

2.4 Previous Studies on Online Learning in ELT

Several previous studies have examined the benefits and weaknesses of using online learning in ELT. Technology is found to be the biggest issue in online learning, followed by teachers' technical incompetence and online teaching style adaptability (Chapelle, 2018). Students also blame their low ranking of achievement due to poor teacher-student communication in online learning (Blanco et al., 2020). Chamorro (2018) investigated differences in English

language learning outcomes of students at El Bosque University in Bogota, Colombia, comparing between online and face-to-face learning. The study found that online courses has the potential to provide remote work, schedule flexibility, and information review. All students' success conditions will also be covered if the courses are high-quality. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and development are the only way to help the institutions survive, develop their online program, and reach additional regions, especially since high-quality foreign language courses are scarce. [Tawafak et al. \(2019\)](#) studied how language teachers and students interpret e-learning pedagogical tools at the university. The findings showed that educators and students believe that e-learning promote intrinsic motivation, help introverted students to interact more effectively, help them learn critical study and time management skill, and help educators perform student-centred instruction.

In Indonesia, [Nartiningrum and Nugroho \(2020\)](#) found that e-learning is more flexible and success-oriented because the students can exchange information with friends and access high-quality and rigorous courses anytime and anywhere. They also found that e-learning platforms, such as Zoom and Google Classroom help teachers teach the lesson online. This finding is echoed by [Nugroho and Atmojo \(2020\)](#) who researched online learning at the university level. Moreover, online learning was also found to help students and teachers gain learning materials quite easily ([Janmaimool & Chontanawat, 2021](#)). Besides, the students' assignments will be available in e-learning on time because the teacher can set the deadline. Therefore, the teachers could manage the students' assignment more easily. Furthermore, [Sari and Oktaviani \(2021\)](#) found that the use of online learning in education may help the students learn. They mentioned that the pyramid of online learning encompasses technological competency, knowledge, socio-affective skill, and topic content. Teachers are expected to have all of those aspects in order to be able to perform online teaching more effectively.

WhatsApp, another online learning platform, is considered impeccable for online language learning because it does not need solid signals or has many restrictions ([Dumford & Miller, 2018](#); [Fata et al., 2024](#); [Masterson, 2020](#); [Soffer & Nachmias, 2018](#)). The only issues on the use of WhatsApp includes the fact that the students had limited to no quotas of the Internet, and some of them live in remote places. However, WhatsApp and other e-learning platforms can still provide assignments, make announcements, and encourage students' interaction.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The current study used a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method was used in the first phase to gather data on the students' perceptions of using *E-Belajar* through a questionnaire. [Fraenkel et al. \(2023\)](#) confirmed that quantitative method can provide reliable, valid, objective, and generalisable findings. Meanwhile, in the second phase, qualitative data was collected through interviews to emphasise the findings from the questionnaire.

3.2 Research Participants

Fifty students, twenty-three males and twenty-seven females, participated in this study. They were chosen through purposive sampling with the following characteristics: enrolled in grades 11–12 senior high school at two Islamic boarding schools or *pesantren*, lived in a dormitory, and used EB for at least one year. Concerning the ethical considerations, all participants in this study were asked to complete the informed consent form to show their willingness to be involved in the study. All participants were neither obligated nor authorised to explain their personal information or personal matters. Furthermore, the confidentiality of participants' survey and interview responses was also strictly maintained.

3.3 Instrument

In the quantitative data, the questionnaire comprising ten questions with a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) was used. Questionnaires were one of the most widely used quantitative instruments that may be administered to a large number of participants. To validate the questionnaire, the items in the questionnaire underwent modification and validation by an expert in the education field before the administration. Subsequently, respondents completed the questionnaire online together with a detailed consent form. Meanwhile, the qualitative data was collected through interviews. The interview framework was adapted from Nassaji (2015). Participants were selected purposively to follow up their questionnaires' results in the interview sessions. This interview was performed online via Zoom with ten open-ended questions about positive and bad aspects of using EB.

3.4 Data Analysis

SPSS IBM Version 22 was used for data analysis in relation to survey results. In the meantime, interview findings were subjected to a thematic analysis of both positive and negative feedbacks of EB usage. Both analysis were then triangulated for the conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents results from ten questionnaire items and interviews on students' perceptions of EB, combining graphs and interview excerpts to highlight key findings. The results showed positive and negative responses to using EB in English language teaching by students in Islamic boarding school. These results are organised by combining both qualitative and quantitative data.

4.1 The Improvement of English Comprehension through EB

Figure 1 depicts the result of the first item questionnaire related to the improvement of English comprehension through EB. The result showed that 40% of the students (20 out of 50) 'strongly agreed' that EB improved their English comprehension. Additionally, 32% of the students (16 out of 50) also 'agreed' with this statement. Conversely, 8% of the students (4 out of 50) 'disagreed', 6% of them (3 out of 50) 'strongly disagreed', and 14% of them (7 out of 50) were 'neutral' towards this statement. This result indicated a significant preference for students to use EB to increase their English comprehension.

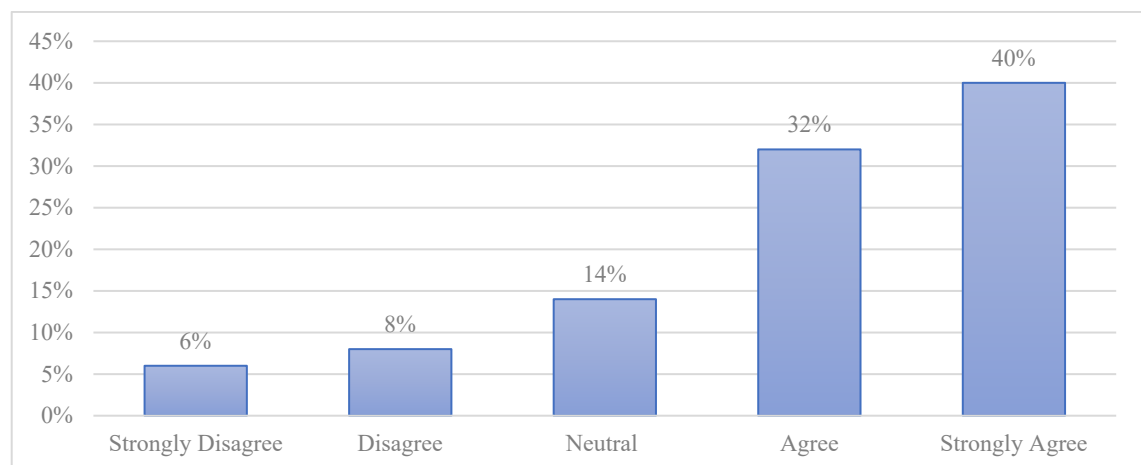


Figure 1. English comprehension improvement through EB.

The interview data also corroborated the result presented in Figure 1. Some students highlighted that EB created an online learning environment that encouraged students to be more active, especially boarding school students who lived in dormitories. Boarding school students had many subjects to learn; therefore, having time to learn online helped them research more. This is as stated by R16 (i.e., Respondent 16).

- (1) Yes, I agree because in my opinion, as far as I have learned English using EB, it helped me a lot in improving my English subject because I am encouraged to find the learning materials online to explore more. (R16)

However, some students provided a contrasting perspective. For example, R4's response indicated that while many students found EB to be more effective overall, some felt differently. Some students got unsatisfying score and feedback from their teachers because they did not quite understand about the given task. This is as mentioned by R4.

- (2) No, I disagree. I think EB does not help me improve my English comprehension. Sometimes I do not understand the task given by the teacher, and when I find out materials online, I still get my task underrated. (R4)

4.2 The Punctuality in Finishing Tasks through EB

The result in Figure 2 reveals that 52% of the students (26 out of 50) 'agreed' that learning English through EB helped them finish the task on time. Additionally, 36% of them (18 out of 50) 'strongly agreed' with this statement. In contrast, 4% of the students (2 out of 50) 'disagreed' with this statement, and 8% of them (4 out of 50) were 'neutral' towards it. This result showed that more students perceived that EB helped them finish the given task on time.

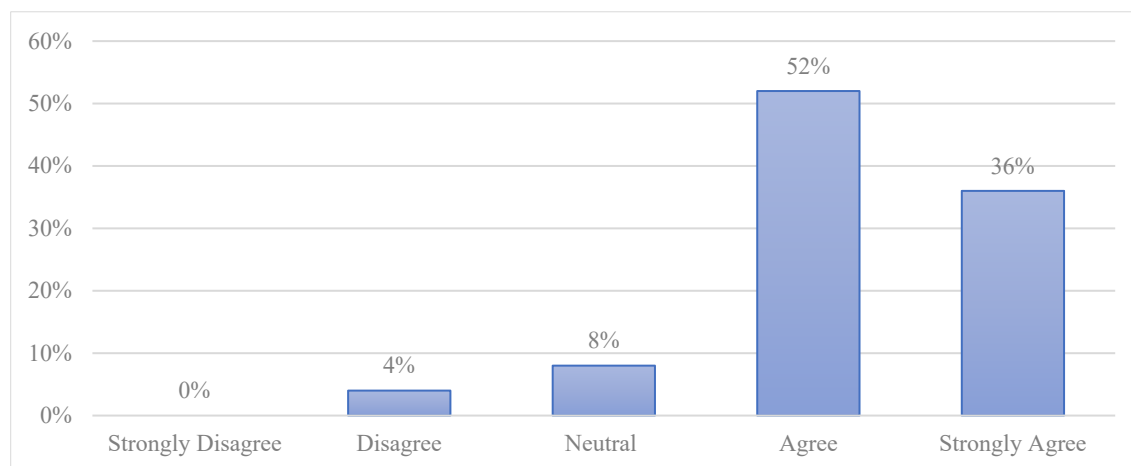


Figure 2. Punctuality in finishing the given task.

EB included alert reminder features that notified students of upcoming task or assignment deadlines. This function was designed to support time management and help students stay on track with their academic responsibilities. Several students acknowledged its usefulness, particularly in managing multiple subjects with varying deadlines. As noted by one respondent, the alerts served as timely prompts that reduced the chances of missing submissions and encouraged better planning.

- (3) I checked the EB message in my account, and there was an alert for every subject deadline; it is helpful. (R6)

On the other hand, two students disagreed with the statement that learning English through EB helped them finish the task on time. R3's answer indicated that even though there was an alarm feature to remind the students' due of task submission, the teacher must train the students to use EB appropriately. This is as stated in Excerpt (4).

- (4) The teacher never informed us that there was a feature to check the deadline, so I missed the due, and the submission was locked; I can't submit my task on EB anymore. (R3)

4.3 The Communication Skills through EB

The result about the third item of the questionnaire displayed in Figure 3 demonstrates that 48% of the students (24 out of 50) 'disagreed' that EB effectively facilitated the communication with the English teacher and their peers. Furthermore, 6% of the students (3 out of 50) 'strongly disagreed' with this assertion. In contrast, 32% (16 out of 50) of them 'agreed', 14% (7 out of 50) 'strongly agreed', and none of them were 'neutral' on this statement. This indicated that EB did not really help the students communicate with their teacher and classmates effectively.

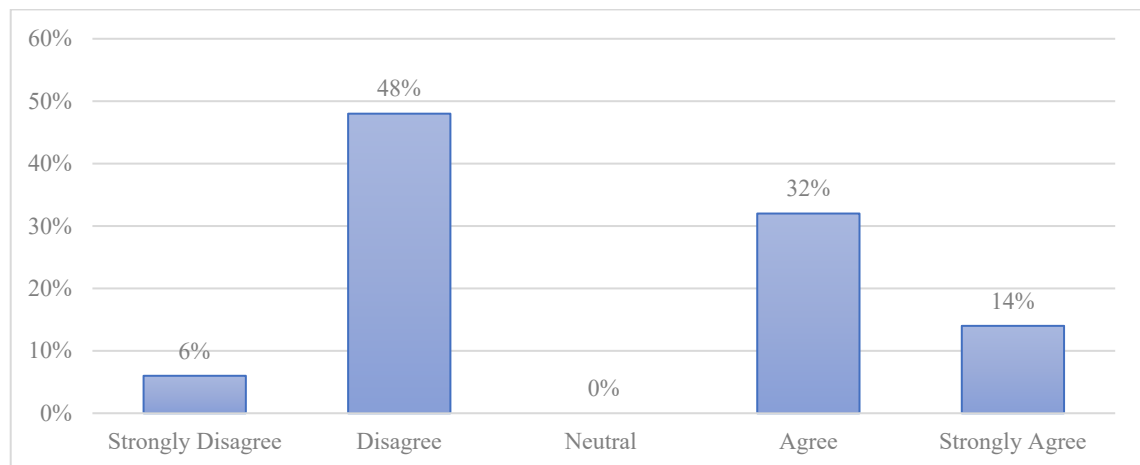


Figure 3. Effective communication with English teacher and classmates through EB.

The interview findings were also similar with the questionnaire result in Figure 3. It highlighted that EB did not sufficiently facilitate the communication between teacher and student, and between students and student. For instance, R8 stated:

- (5) I found that e-learning could be more communicative. I cannot ask the teacher like I did in the classroom. I cannot discuss it with my friends as I did in the classroom; it is sad. (R8)

On the other hand, few students, particularly those who understood how to communicate online, mentioned that they still could ask question to their teacher online. For example, R2 indicated that the students were requested to use 'raise hand' feature in the conference meeting with their teacher. The teacher would also give the opportunity for the student to pose questions online. This is as reported in Excerpt (4).

- (6) I raise hand in conference meeting and teacher gave me opportunity to ask some questions during explanation. (R2)

4.4 The Learning Engagement through EB

The result depicted in Figure 4 shows that 82% of the students (41 out of 50) 'agreed' that EB made learning more engaging because of the availability of videos, songs, and online games. Additionally, 18% them (9 out of 50) 'strongly agreed with this statement. It was also found that none of the students disagreed or were neutral with this statement. This suggested that interesting features available in EB, including videos, songs, and games encouraged the learner engagement in EB (see Figure 4).

The interview data also strengthened the data from the questionnaire on this item. For instance, R6 believed that learning in EB was fun and engaging. This student indicated that the provision of online learning materials, including videos, news and songs uploaded by the teacher

in EB as a digital platform made students more engaged when studying English through EB. This is as stated in Excerpts (7) and (8).

- (7) I choose yes I agree because the teacher uploaded many links of videos, English songs and English games for us to learn. The learning becomes more fun. (R6)
- (8) I strongly agree, why because in English class, the teacher uploaded English songs, movies and videos of BBC news, so it increases my skill in English. (R9)

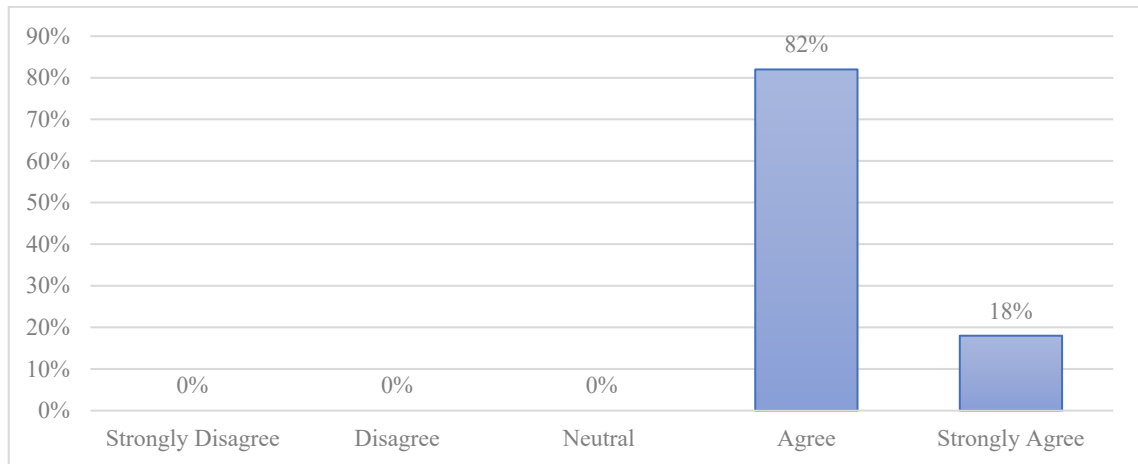


Figure 4. Students' learning engagement in EB.

4.5 The Autonomous Learning through EB

The result illustrated in Figure 5 shows that 80% of the students (40 out of 50) 'agreed' that learning English through EB encouraged them to study autonomously. Additionally, 14% of them (7 out of 50) 'strongly agreed' with this statement. However, only 6% of the students (3 out of 50) 'disagreed' with this statement. These results indicated that most students perceived EB to help promote learner autonomy.

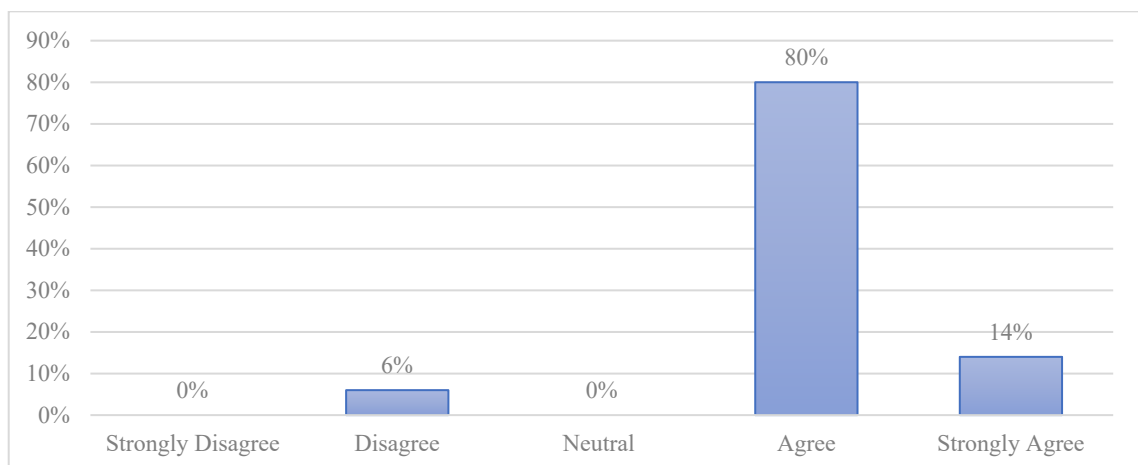


Figure 5. Learner autonomy in EB.

The interview findings revealed that some students believed that EB supported learner autonomy as mentioned by R22. Meanwhile, another student thought that EB did not really facilitate learner autonomy because the students occasionally discussed the tasks and assignments given by the teacher offline in the dormitory (as stated by R31). Their opinions are given in Excerpts (9) and (10).

- (9) I found that EB urged me to study more independently. The teacher has uploaded some tasks and materials for me to finish. (R22)
- (10) Even though I learn English using EB, I sometimes come and discuss the task and materials provided by the teacher with friends at the same dormitory. (R31)

These contrasting views show that while EB supports independent learning for some, others still depend on peer interaction. However, R1 indicated that he/she had also used EB, although in-person peer learning was still necessary. Thus, EB's effectiveness in promoting autonomy varies based on students' learning habits and environments.

4.6 The Students' Confidence in Expressing Ideas through EB

The result depicted in Figure 6 shows that 78% of the students (39 out of 50) 'agreed' that they could express their ideas, opinions and thoughts confidently through EB platform. Additionally, 2% of the students (1 out of 50) 'strongly agreed' with this statement. Conversely, only 20% of them (10 out of 50) 'disagreed' with this statement. None of them 'strongly disagreed' and chose 'neutral' option. This suggested that EB could encourage the students' confidence for delivering their ideas, opinions, and thoughts.

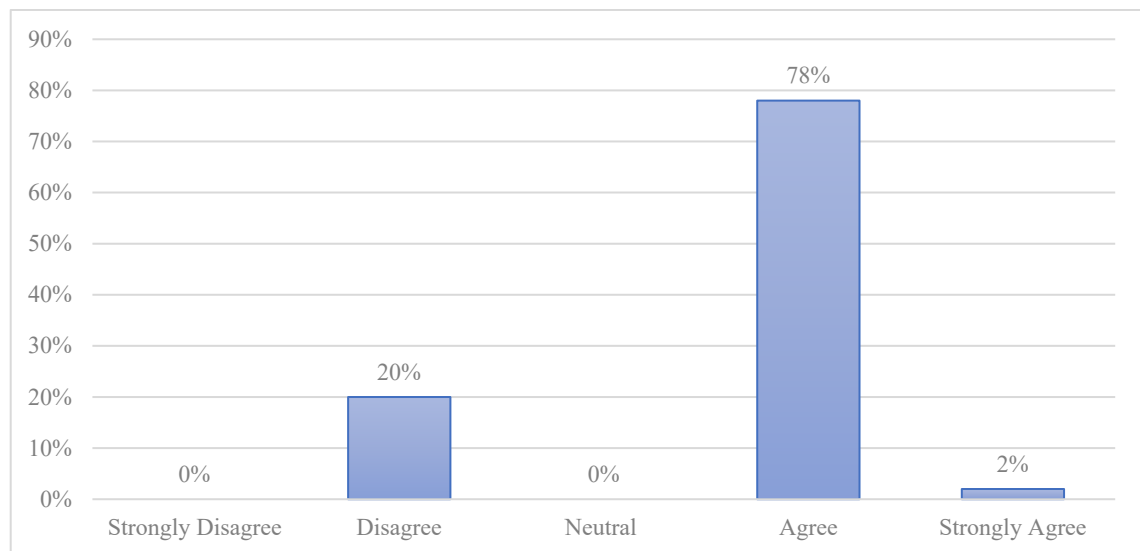


Figure 6. Expressing ideas, opinion, and thoughts confidently through EB.

The interview findings also corroborated the result in Figure 6 about the sixth item of the questionnaire. The students claimed to be able to confidently share their thoughts through EB. This positive perception was stated by R29.

- (11) If the teacher asks our opinion regarding a video uploaded in EB, I agree that I can express my feelings confidently. So, I can write my thoughts after watching the video confidently. (R29)

However, on the hand, another student mentioned that they were given no guidelines to write narrative or opinion text after watching the videos. It was true that watching the video itself was fun, but the task afterwards was considered overwhelming for students. This is as claimed by R17 in Excerpt (12).

- (12) No, I disagree because the teacher asked me to summarise the video I watched in EB, but I am unsure if my writing is good; in fact, my score sometimes is underrated. (R17)

4.7 The Students' Preferences towards Offline and Online Learning Mode

The result showed in Figure 7 illustrates that 82% of the students (41 out of 50) 'agreed' to the seventh statement in the questionnaire, indicating to a preference towards face-to-face English classes. Additionally, another 8% of the students (4 out of 50) even 'strongly agreed' with this statement. Only very small number of them, 10% of the students (5 out of 50), 'disagreed' with this statement. Meanwhile, none of them 'strongly disagreed' nor had 'neutral' opinions. This result suggested that most students preferred face-to-face English class compared to EB platform.

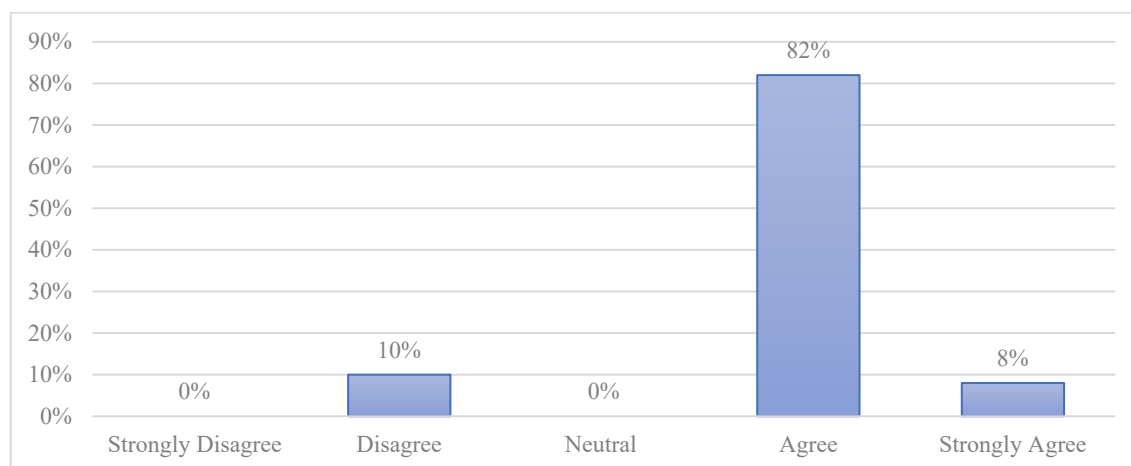


Figure 7. Face-to-face English class preference compare to EB.

The interview findings were also in accordance with the questionnaire result in Figure 7. The students believed that face-to-face class provided the students' more opportunity for direct communication and interaction. This was as stated by R45 in Excerpt (13).

- (13) Yes, I strongly agree that I prefer face-to-face English classes to using EB. In the offline English classroom, I can communicate with the teacher and my friends. (R45)

Even though majority of the students had positive attitudes towards in person class compared to online class using EB platform, a few students stated their reasons of why they preferred EB platform. The reason was related to the ease of online learning and time management. This was as claimed by R10 in Excerpt (14).

- (14) No, I disagree because learning English using EB saved paper is paperless. All submissions are online. Time is punctual; we must arrive on time. Sometimes, in offline class, the teacher or student comes late to school, but it won't happen using EB. (R10)

4.8 The Promotion of English Receptive Skills through EB

Figure 8 shows that 80% of the students (40 out of 50) 'disagreed' that EB promoted listening and reading ability as receptive skills. Additionally, 4% of them (2 out of 50) 'strongly disagreed' with this statement. Conversely, only 16% of the students (8 out of 50) 'disagreed' with this statement. Meanwhile, none of them 'strongly agreed' or chose 'neutral' option. This questionnaire result indicated that almost all of the students agreed that EB could not promote listening and reading skill.

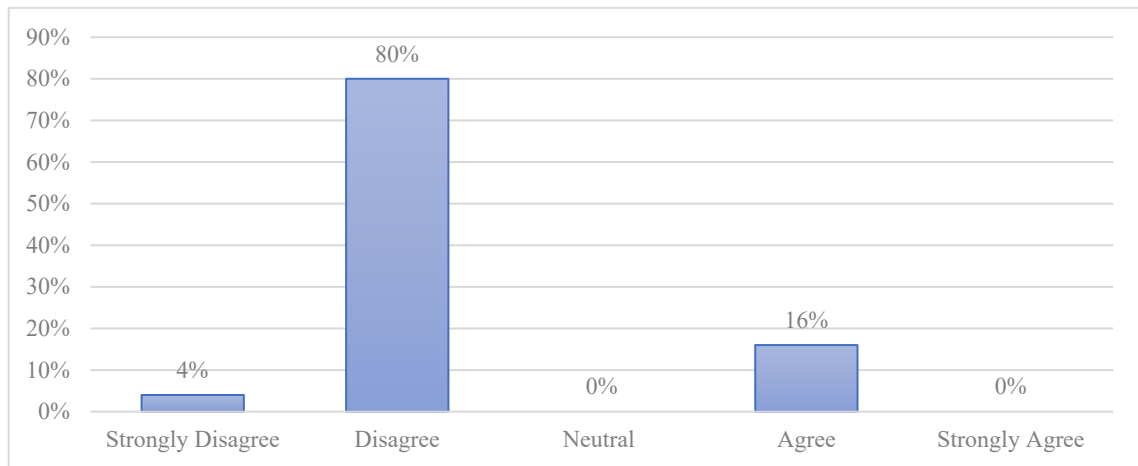


Figure 8. The promotion of listening and reading ability (English receptive skill) through EB.

The interview data also revealed the same results. Most students had negative attitudes regarding receptive skills' (listening and reading ability) promotion through EB. For example, Excerpt (15) was expressed by R9 in the interview.

(15) Yes, I disagree that EB improves listening and reading ability. Listening is okay since the teachers upload many videos, and roving reading requires rarely being instructed to read text online in EB. (R9)

On the contrary, there were eight students having positive attitudes towards EB in promoting listening and reading skill. R6 indicated that improving listening could be done through EB by having some videos in English. Meanwhile, in improving reading, the student could read the teachers' instructions and questions in doing the tasks. This was as stated in Excerpt (16).

(16) I agree that EB promotes my listening and reading skills. I improved my listening skills by watching BBC news videos and reading some of the teacher's questions in EB. (R6)

4.9 The Promotion of English Productive Skills through EB

The result depicted in Figure 9 shows that 70% of the students (35 out of 50) 'disagreed' that EB promoted writing and speaking ability as productive skills. Additionally, 12% of them (6 out of 50) 'strongly disagreed' with this statement. Conversely, only 18% of the students (9 out of 50) 'disagreed' with this statement. None of them 'strongly agreed' and had 'neutral' opinions. This result suggests that most of the students thought that EB also did not facilitate the promotion of productive skill of writing and speaking.

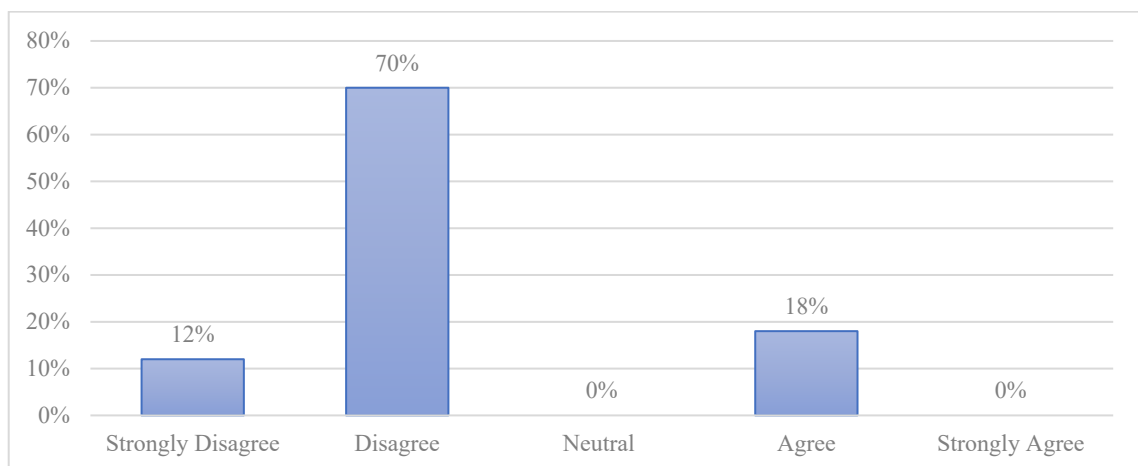


Figure 9. The promotion of speaking and writing ability (English productive skill) through EB.

The interview findings also strengthened the questionnaire result in Figure 9. Most of the students believed that the skills of speaking and writing were not extensively promoted through EB. This is as what was mentioned by R31 in Excerpt (17).

- (17) Yes, I disagree that EB improves writing and speaking. The teacher never taught speaking in EB; the teacher tutored us and gave many instructions on how to write at the dormitory,” so I do not think that speaking activity in EB is given by our teacher. (R31)

On the contrary, a few students had positive attitudes towards the promotion of productive skill. For example, R22 indicated the improvement in speaking through questioning and answering tasks during e-learning in EB. Even though the teacher did not instruct all students on a specific speaking activity, like role-playing, there was limited chances to ask questions during e-learning. This was as stated in Excerpt (18).

- (18) I agree that EB promotes my writing and speaking skills. I improved my writing skills by doing exercises and homework given by the teacher. When I asked the teacher during online learning, I think I have practiced my speaking skills simultaneously, right? (R22)

4.10 The Promotion of English Grammar through EB

The result in Figure 10 showed that 10% of the students (5 out of 50) ‘disagreed’ that EB adequately fostered English grammar. Additionally, majority of the students, 90% (45 out of 50), ‘disagreed’ with this statement. Conversely, none ‘agreed’, ‘strongly agreed’, or had ‘neutral’ opinions. These indicated that all of the students believed that EB did not help improve the students’ English grammar ability.

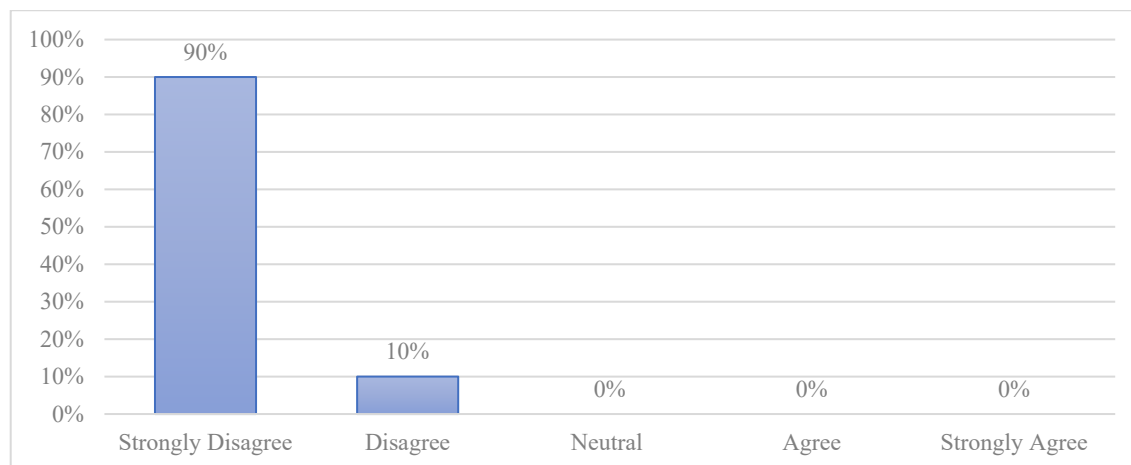


Figure 10. English grammar improvement through EB.

The questionnaire result in Figure 10 was further strengthened by the interview findings. The students had negative attitudes regarding English grammar development through EB. This was as stated by R14 and R38.

- (19) Yes, I disagree that EB fosters English grammar adequately. I cannot remember the teacher handing back our writing task and marking any grammatical errors. For example, the writing task is generally rated well within 80 points. (R14)
- (20) Yes, I disagree that EB fosters English grammar adequately because I never get feedback on grammar in my assignment. If I give comments in the chat discussion box, there is no grammar checking if I made a typo and need correction. (R38)

Both of the students’ responses in Excerpts (19) and (20) indicated that teacher should encourage students to learn grammar more through EB. Additionally, the teacher should provide

feedback on the students' writing tasks in terms of their grammatical errors. Furthermore, the teacher should not rate the students' writing task in general by providing feedback as good or very good, but the teacher should provide the students' scores of 75, 80, or 85.

5. DISCUSSION

Using an online learning management system (LMS) is an alternate solution in the new normal period (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Bensalem, 2018). Positive feedback on the use of EB included how it improved students' English comprehension, helped them complete English tasks on time, encouraged learner engagement through online videos, songs, and games, promoted autonomous learning, and gave students confidence in expressing ideas, opinions, and thoughts. In line with this, Imansyah and Utama (2023) found that LMS could create a positive English atmosphere for students to learn, particularly with the use of media in language learning. Thus, EB, as one of the LMS, could promote English comprehension accordingly. It supported the findings of this current study related to the students' English comprehension development through EB. Therefore, LMS could be considered as one of the viable options in ELT process, both in offline and online learning.

Next, *E-Belajar* was also found to help with punctuality in finishing tasks through the alert feature in EB. This is in line with Costado Dios and Piñero Charlo (2021) who justified that online learning platform, such as Moodle could help learners complete the lessons at their own pace and time (Costado Dios & Piñero Charlo, 2021). This indicated that teachers could encourage students' punctuality in finishing the task through the use of online learning management system (LMS), including EB.

Furthermore, *E-Belajar* was found to increase the students' engagement. Students in senior high school needs to be exposed to photos, music, and other media (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020). EB met these students' needs by providing options for uploading language learning resources, such as movies and games. As a result, English teachers are encouraged to prepare language learning materials such as films and games in EB, so that the students may watch and learn English effectively. Furthermore, encouraging students to participate in English language learning is critical because it results in increased comprehension, memory, and abilities, all of which improve their academic performance and prepare them for future success in a globalised world (Khoshshima & Khosravi, 2021). This assertion is also corroborated by Stoian et al.'s (2022) research findings, which showed that LMS assisted students' participation in language learning in Romania.

This current study's findings also showed that EB promoted autonomous learning. Autonomous learners are able to adjust to the changing circumstances and challenges and continue learning on their own throughout their lifetimes (Hamblin, 2022). It is also echoed by Yuhanna et al. (2020) who claimed that English teachers can teach youngsters how to use the Internet as a source of information by giving them experiences, such as through EB or other resources that could develop independent learning. Students can then share their perspectives with their peers and subject matter specialists autonomously (Axmedova & Kenjayeva, 2021; Yuhanna et al., 2020).

Finally, students also claimed that EB increased their confidence in expressing ideas, opinions, and thoughts. EB had features to update and reply to comments; aiming at providing the opportunity for students to interact with each other at a certain task/assignment. Students are more likely to be motivated and involved in the learning process and perform better academically overall if they have confidence in their skills (Mukhtar et al., 2020).

Negative voices included the teacher's inability to teach students how to use EB properly, which led to the students failing to submit tasks properly as well as the teacher's failure to open up sections of questions and answers on EB features, which resulted in the students underestimating the tasks. Students further pointed out that that EB did not significantly increase listening, reading, speaking, writing, or grammatical understanding; only a few students believed that EB promoted English skills, implying that more work through EB was required. The existence of EB that does not support speaking abilities is dubious because *santri* uses the English

language on a daily basis in the dormitory. This is especially true given the fact that digital technology, like EB, ought to help improve *santri*'s speaking skill in the dormitory. However, this perception is also corroborated by [Maatuk et al. \(2022\)](#) as well as [Albashtawi and Al Bataineh \(2020\)](#) who found that Google Classroom has limited facilities to develop students' speaking skills, as it is designed for writing, reading, and disciplines in learning.

Students should receive a thorough instruction on E-Belajar, particularly on how to use it and what to do with it. Students' proficiency would suffer if English teachers were unable to become proficient in using EB. Many students failed some of the teacher's prescribed tasks because, according to the students, the teacher did not educate them how to turn in their work appropriately. In reality, in this digital age, digital literacy is an essential skill to learn. By using technology like EB into English language learning (henceforth ELL), English teachers are supposed to help students develop the abilities they need to succeed in the digital age.

[Haleem et al. \(2022\)](#) indicated that to create a more individualised and successful ELL environment, English teachers can utilise learning management systems (LMS) to customise lessons to each student's requirements and learning preferences. Many educators need to become more knowledgeable about the technologies and techniques utilised in online instruction delivery. [Harianto et al. \(2021\)](#) stated that many Indonesian teachers need to learn how to use technology-based learning resources. It is crucial to emphasise that using learning platforms by educators will result in better learning outcomes and processes ([Setiawan & Ritonga, 2022](#); [Valverde-Berrococo et al., 2021](#)). English teachers must, therefore, be prepared to use LMS while yet enabling successful learning for their students.

Then, negative comments from students also indicated a preference for face-to-face learning because students were unfamiliar with online EB learning style at the time. Since they were used to doing teaching and learning activities offline, English teachers and students were not comfortable with the EB system yet, in addition to the fact that the LMS used was more prevalent and less participatory. [Axmedova and Kenjayeva \(2021\)](#) endorsed the premise that an online learning system should be a pleasant way to learn English. Without an accommodating learning mode to encourage active communication practices, ELL will be ineffective.

LMS such as EB should also help students to communicate both with teachers and their peers. However students stated that they had trouble communicating through EB because the EB-Chat feature was locked. In the results of the interviews, the students also stated that although E-Belajar offered many functions, some areas, such as e-counselling, e-evaluation, and e-monitoring, were not practical and locked because of the limited school contract with the EB administrator. Therefore, ELL in *pesantren* that employed English practises is challenging ([Tahir, 2015](#)).

6. CONCLUSION

The current study examined the students' voices about using E-Belajar as a regional learning management system in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. Both favourable and negative responses were given by the students. According to the positive feedback, EB helped the students understand English better, assisted them to complete English assignments on time, promoted autonomous learning, boosted learner engagement through online games, songs, and videos, and gave them more confidence to express their ideas, opinions, and thoughts.

Negative opinions, however, included the teacher's failure to demonstrate how to use EB effectively, which caused students to turn in assignments incorrectly, and the teacher's failure to open up questions and answers section on EB features, which caused students to underestimate assignments. Additionally, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and grammatical comprehension were not significantly improved by EB; only a small percentage of students thought that EB promoted English proficiency, necessitating additional EB practice to improve the students' English skills and grammar. This study also found that some features, such as e-counselling, e-evaluation, and e-monitoring, were locked and unavailable to students. Additionally, the limited Internet access in dormitory also posed a drawback for students. These study findings implied

that EB, which was assigned by the ministry, as a regional learning management system designed by Indonesian IT specialist, covered the needs of students, teachers, and schools. However, some arguments of negative perceptions must be considered as positive criticism for future development.

Given that the current study was limited to gathering data from boarding schools in a specific location in Indonesia, future researchers should expand their coverage region. Further research is also strongly encouraged to analyse several regional learning management systems. Furthermore, it is advised to conduct experimental research, correlational studies, or case studies to compare online and offline ELL at Islamic boarding schools.

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