

# "It Took Time to Adapt, but It Was Effective": Google Classroom Acceptance of EFL Students in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Google Classroom has been extensively used as a learning management system to facilitate teaching and learning processes. Despite its extensive use globally, there was a lack of research on its acceptance as perceived by secondary school students in Indonesia, particularly during emergency online learning. This study addressed this gap by examining the acceptance of Google Classroom from the perspective of Indonesian secondary school students. The study involved 307 secondary students who participated by completing online questionnaires, and two students were interviewed to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the use of Google Classroom in English classes. The quantitative findings revealed that secondary students generally held high acceptance of Google Classroom as a tool for online EFL learning (M=4.05). Among the four constructs measured, three—perceived ease of use (M=3.91), perceived usefulness (M=4.27), and behavioral intention (M=4.14)—indicated high levels of acceptance, whereas actual system use was rated as moderately acceptable (M=3.65). The interview data supported these quantitative results. The study concluded that Google Classroom is well-accepted as a platform for facilitating online EFL learning among secondary school students. The findings contributed valuable evidence regarding the positive acceptance of Google Classroom for EFL learning.

## 1 Introduction

The traditional approaches to teaching and learning have transitioned to distance or online models, particularly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Web-based or online learning has become a critical alternative to school closures, ensuring the continuity of educational processes. Mahalakshmi and Radha underscored this shift towards online learning as necessitated by the pandemic [1]. Similarly, Silalahi and Hutauruk concurred that online learning served as a viable solution during a pandemic, as it enables the teaching and learning process to proceed without the physical presence of students and teachers in a single classroom [2]. Murphy noted that adopting emergency e-Learning has emerged as a

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global trend within the education sector in response to the pandemic [3]. This trend has also been observed in Indonesia, where educators and students engage in online learning facilitated by technological tools [4].

Studies have shown the positive sides of online learning. Means et al. defined online learning as "learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet" (5, p. 9). Online learning gives benefits for building students' responsibility towards their learning. Gilbert et al. discovered that through online learning, learners can learn material and build soft skills such as responsibility and independence [6]. Furthermore, online teaching and learning have flexibility in place and time as the students and teachers can be in different rooms as long as they have a device and internet connection to access online learning.

The implementation of online learning, however, is not without challenges. The availability of a reliable internet connection is a critical requirement and often presents significant obstacles. Silalahi and Hutaaruk contended that without sufficient internet network support, online learning could not yield optimal outcomes for students [2]. Common issues encountered during online learning included limited internet access for lecturers and students and general unfamiliarity with online learning platforms [7]. In the context of the preliminary research of this study, teachers reported that some students faced difficulties due to insufficient internet connectivity, limited data, and a lack of smartphone ownership. As a result, students often failed to complete or submit assignments on time, and in cases where students did not have personal smartphones, they had to share their parents' devices for online learning. Consequently, some teachers were unable to conduct synchronous online classes consistently.

The selection of an appropriate online learning platform requires careful consideration. Schools must take into account several factors related to the practicality and convenience for both students and teachers. These considerations are crucial as they directly impact students' engagement and motivation in online learning, thereby influencing the overall effectiveness of the learning experience and the students' academic outcomes. Therefore, understanding students' perspectives is essential in identifying the most suitable application for online learning. The effectiveness of these platforms can be gauged by assessing students' levels of technology acceptance. Thus, the present study's objective was to examine the degree of technology acceptance among Senior High School and Junior High School students regarding using Google Classroom as an online learning platform.

## **2 Literature review**

Google Classroom, a free online learning platform launched by Google in 2014, offers a user-friendly interface and valuable tools for enhancing the educational experience. It facilitates the delivery of educational content to learners [8]. Although Google Classroom is a familiar application in Indonesia, its adoption in schools has been limited. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in its usage among Senior High Schools and Junior High Schools in Indonesia. Educators can create a dynamic and interactive learning environment through Google Classroom by uploading instructional materials, assignments, quizzes, feedback, announcements, and more. The platform's integration with other Google applications, such as Gmail, YouTube, Google Forms, and Google Drive, provides diverse and interactive online learning experiences. According to Iftakhar, Google Classroom is designed to help teachers manage students' assignments in a paperless environment using tools like Google Docs, Drive, and other apps [9]. Additionally, Watson noted that Google Classroom allows students to complete assignments, respond to questions, and access various resources [10].

The integration of Google Classroom has shifted the teaching and learning process from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches [11]. Al-Maroof and Al-Emran further emphasized that using Google Classroom enhanced self-directed learning, promoting student autonomy, responsibility, and active engagement in their studies [12]. The online learning environment provided by Google Classroom differs significantly from traditional classroom settings, necessitating an adjustment period for students and teachers as they adapt to independent learning and comprehension of the material.

Despite the Google Classroom benefits, the features in Google Classroom are counted as a need for more intensive communication between the users. Azhar and Iqbal found this application unsuitable for teachers, considering the need for interface view features [13]. Unlike synchronous applications, where students and teachers could interact in real-time, implementing Google Classroom presented challenges in maintaining student engagement. The study found that students' inactivity could have helped the teaching and learning process despite the teacher's efforts to design interactive learning experiences within the platform. Although Google Classroom included a discussion feature, students were not actively participating in discussions. Consequently, this research aimed to investigate students' technology acceptance of the Google Classroom platform.

Previous studies have explored the acceptance of Google Classroom technology. For instance, Khairani et al. conducted a study involving 205 undergraduate students from three different departments to assess their acceptance of Google Classroom [14]. The study revealed that students' acceptance levels were generally high, with behavioral intention being the most prominent factor among the four examined. Similarly, Al-Maroof and Al-Emran conducted a quantitative survey with 305 undergraduate students in Oman, examining the factors influencing their technology acceptance of Google Classroom [12]. The results indicated that the platform's perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly influenced students' behavioral intentions and actual use of Google Classroom.

This study shares similarities with the earlier research regarding the topic and theoretical framework, as all studies employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine students' acceptance of Google Classroom. However, this study differs in its specific focus and research context. While previous studies primarily examined technology acceptance among university students, this study investigated the acceptance levels of Senior High School and Junior High School students. Given the widespread adoption of Google Classroom in secondary schools in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to explore how these students perceived the platform. Despite the significance of this issue, there needed to be more research on secondary school students' acceptance of Google Classroom.

In light of these considerations, this study aimed to investigate the level of technology acceptance among Senior High School and Junior High School students concerning the use of Google Classroom as an online learning platform. Utilizing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, initially proposed by Davis [15], this study aimed to assess whether students exhibit high, moderate, or low levels of technology acceptance towards the Google Classroom application.

### **3 Methods**

### **3.1 Design**

This study intended to examine Secondary School students' Google Classroom acceptance level. A survey design was used since it examined the "trends, attitudes, or opinions" of a sample in one population (16, p.12). Therefore, the authors decided to distribute a questionnaire to the target respondents. This research combined a quantitative and qualitative approach to answer the research question. A quantitative approach aimed to get the students' acceptance of using Google Classroom in the form of numbers (based on mean scores). Then, the researchers employed a qualitative approach by interviewing participants to explore the students' acceptance. Mixed methods research helps the researcher deeply and accurately understand the phenomena under study [McKim in Almeida, 17]. This design was deemed suitable for determining the level of Google Classroom acceptance and obtaining comprehensive findings on students' perspectives on the application's use.

### **3.2 Participants**

The research was conducted at two secondary schools situated in a region in Indonesia, which was relatively challenging in terms of infrastructure and access to high-speed internet. These infrastructural constraints potentially impacted the acceptance of emergency remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic facilitated by Google Classroom, providing a relevant context for the study. The study involved all active students from the two schools, aged between 12 and 18 years, who were selected due to their recent use of Google Classroom and their participation in online learning facilitated by the platform during the pandemic. A total of 307 students completed an online questionnaire, which provided the quantitative data for the study. Furthermore, two students, one from each school, were purposefully selected for qualitative interviews based on their high acceptance levels as identified through the quantitative analysis. The rationale for selecting the two participants with a high level of acceptance for interviews was based on their alignment with the quantitative results. Consequently, the insights gained from these interviews were anticipated to deepen the understanding of the quantitative results. To maintain participant confidentiality, pseudonyms "Shania" and "Bobby" were used in reporting the findings.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The researcher used a questionnaire adapted from Khairani et al.'s study [14] to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed online. There were 18 items divided into four constructs following the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Behavioral Intention, and Actual System Use. From users' perspectives, these constructs determine the technology acceptance level specifically for Google Classroom. After analyzing the data quantitatively, the researchers contacted two selected participants to be interviewed. The semi-structured interview was implemented in this study. Before the interview, the researchers prepared general questions based on the four constructs. The two interviewees were asked to share their experiences and perspectives of using the Google Classroom application as a learning platform by telephone. It was audio-recorded and lasted for around 20 minutes for each interviewee.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were then analyzed using descriptive statistics. Each construct's mean scores and standard deviations were calculated and interpreted based on self-designed interpretation ranges. The interpretation range was developed based on the interval obtained from the following formula:

$$Interval = \frac{\text{the highest response rate} - \text{the lowest response rate}}{3} = \frac{5-1}{3} = 1.33 \quad (1)$$

Given the interval, the acceptance level will be interpreted into a high level of acceptance (mean score of 3.68 to 5.00), a moderate level of acceptance (mean score of 2.34 to 3.67), and a low level of acceptance (mean score of 1.00 to 2.33).

Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interview were transcribed and coded separately from each interviewee. After that, the researcher coded the general information into some major themes based on the constructs from the interview data. Finally, the vital information from the interview was triangulated with the quantitative result.

## 4 Results and discussions

This section reports the findings from quantitative analysis and in-depth interview results on students' Google Classroom acceptance levels based on the four constructs. It also presents students' perspectives and experiences using Google Classroom as an online learning platform. In general, the questionnaire and interview results substantiate each other.

**Table 1.** Student's acceptance level based on the four constructs.

Descriptive Statistics				Category
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Perceived Ease of Use	307	3.9074	.48727	High
Perceived Usefulness	307	4.2704	.43056	High
Behavioral Intention	307	4.1379	.67222	High
Actual System Use	307	3.6450	.77396	Moderate
Valid N (listwise)	307			

Table 1 presents the mean scores across four constructs: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, behavioral intention, and actual system use. The overall mean score was 4.05, indicating a high level of technological acceptance. It suggests that students positively accepted the use of Google Classroom, as evidenced by the statistically high acceptance levels. These findings are consistent with previous studies [11], [14], [18], which also reported high levels of technology acceptance for Google Classroom among students. Specifically, students acknowledged the platform's strong functionality, accessibility, technical reliability, and mobility [18].

Among the four constructs, three—perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention—demonstrated high levels of technology acceptance. The construct of Perceived Ease of Use received a mean score of 3.91 (M=3.91; SD=0.49), falling within the high acceptance category. It reflects the students' favorable perception of Google Classroom, particularly its user-friendliness, even for those new to the platform. Interviews with Shania and Bobby corroborated these findings, as both students agreed that Google Classroom was easy to use and reported no significant issues while navigating the application.

*The application is relatively easy to understand. Such as, the feature of sending the task is clear, and the teacher's instruction about the task is also easy to understand. (Interview – Bobby)*

Bobby mentioned that initially, his teacher gave a basic tutorial about the application. It helps the students to know the application. He also said that the teaching material, assignments, and teacher instruction in Google Classroom were crystal clear. However, Shania expressed that her teacher did not give any tutorial on using Google Classroom. Thus, she learned it by herself and used the application by asking her classmates.

*From my experience, there are no difficulties using the application. First, in the beginning, it did take time to adapt, and there was no tutorial from the teacher. The teacher only instructed us to download the application. So, we (the students) tell each other how to do this. The teacher did not give him a dime; instead, I studied it with my friends. (Interview – Shania)*

Moreover, Shania also mentioned that after two semesters of online learning, her school developed a Learning Management System (LMS). Comparing the LMS, Google Classroom was reported to be way easier.

*The new LMS website is complex, especially for some old teachers. Finally, the old teachers chose to use Google Classroom again. Then the other teachers also follow it, using Google Classroom again. Sometimes, only two subjects use the school website, and others use Google Classroom. (Interview – Shania)*

The second construct, Perceived Usefulness, obtained a mean score of 4.27 ( $M=4.27$ ;  $SD=0.43$ ). It was categorized as a high level of acceptance, and from the four constructs, Perceived Usefulness obtained the highest means score. It indicated that students considered Google Classroom a practical application for their online learning because of the learning efficiencies, learning productivity, enable to work the tasks quickly, saving time, not having to distinguish valuable features, and tend to apply for an academic course. This high level indicated that the students believed Google Classroom gives benefits as an online learning platform. The features in Google Classroom help the online teaching and learning process.

The interview also supported the quantitative result. In Shania and Bobby's schools, the online learning process using Google Classroom was carried out by the teacher uploading the material and assignments given to students in Google Classroom. They also mentioned that the teacher provided materials using Google Classroom using other Google applications such as YouTube and Google Forms. In addition, Shania's teacher also combined online learning with Google Meet and WhatsApp. Meanwhile, Bobby's teacher only combined it with WhatsApp. At Google Classroom, the students also made attendance, sent assignments, and discussed through the comment column. Shania explained that,

*That is very often (discuss through the comments section). The students could ask and discuss in the comment column. Later, there will be teachers' or other students' answers there. They leave some comments like that. (Interview – Shania)*

Shania and Bobby had a similar idea that the application was efficient and valuable, especially for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Google Classroom brings benefits. It helps to learn independently and gives flexibility in time and place to learn. (Interview – Bobby)*

Shania believed that the most helpful feature of Google Classroom was that it could send assignments online paperless. She also agreed that the application was efficient and catered for her learning style. She liked to repeat the material taught with the material in the Google Classroom making it easier for her to access.

*Yes, it is efficient. The thing is, if I study, I cannot immediately absorb what the teacher explains. I need to repeat to learn the material. So, if there is material (in Google Classroom), I can read it myself, and it is*

*easier for me to absorb. So, I can read it repeatedly and then search later if needed. (Interview – Shania)*

The high levels of perceived usefulness and ease of use observed in this study were consistent with findings from previous research [19]–[21]. These results further corroborated prior studies [12], [22]–[24], which emphasized the interrelated nature of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Syed Ahmad et al. noted that high levels of these factors could contribute significantly to the successful implementation of Google Classroom as an online learning application [24].

The construct of behavioral intention received a mean score of 4.14 (M=4.14; SD=0.67), categorized as high. According to Makumbe and Mutsikiwa, perceived ease of use was crucial in shaping students' behavioral intentions [25]. When users found an application easy to navigate, it greatly enhanced their intention to use it consistently. Additionally, Ansong-Gyimah demonstrated a significant correlation between students' perceptions and intentions to use Google Classroom, with both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness being key influencing factors [26]. The significant impact of perceived usefulness on behavioral intention likely contributed to the observed high levels of behavioral intention and the other related constructs in this study.

The findings suggested that students were highly receptive to Google Classroom as an online learning platform, viewing it as preferable and valuable for their educational needs. Shania's statement supported it.

*This application is suitable and is recommended for online learning because it is easy to use and understand, especially for beginners. Even though learning has been done offline at my school, Google Classroom is still used. Students can access the material, send assignments, and discuss in the Google Classroom. (Interview – Shania)*

She also believed that "all people can probably use Google Classroom." Bobby also had a similar opinion on the efficiency of the application. Bobby believed the application was recommended for online learning and could also be used offline since according to his experience using Google Classroom, it was pretty motivating to learn. However, Bobby's school did not use Google Classroom anymore.

Different from the other three constructs, which fell into a high level of acceptance, the fourth construct, Actual System of Use, showed 3.65 of the mean score (M=3.65; SD=0.77), and it was classified as a moderate level of acceptance. Corresponding to the findings of Khairani et al., students accepted Google Classroom at a higher level of technology acceptance. At the same time, the Actual System of Use construct had the lowest mean value compared to the other constructs [14]. The similarity between the findings of the Actual System Use of the present study and that of Khairani et al. indicated that the students did not use Google Classroom frequently daily. However, this result contradicted Purwandani and Syamsiah's finding, which found that actual system use was ranked higher than attitude toward using, behavioral intention, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use [21]. Purwandani and Syamsiah stated that it could occur if students were required to access Google Classroom during lectures. A possible explanation for the discrepancy in the findings can be given. Since Google Classroom was a relatively new application for Senior High School and Junior High School students in Indonesian education, not to mention the context of the present study was at schools in an infrastructurally challenged area of Indonesia, the moderate level of actual system use on the result was reasonable. As reported by some teachers during the preliminary study, the students might need help using the platform due to technical problems, such as poor internet connection and lack of supporting facilities.

Consequently, it restricted their use of Google Classroom in actual daily use. In addition, this study's participants were classified as new Google Classroom users. Thus,

they may need to be fully engaged with the platform. Kumar and Bervell supported this idea by stating that a habit is one of the essential determinants of the Actual System of Use [27]. Since the study participants were relatively new users of Google Classroom, they may have yet to develop their habits of using Google Classroom to facilitate their learning.

Based on Shania's experiences, Shania stated that she often used the application, but she only used it for the sake of learning as her school used Google Classroom until the present. It was different from Bobby.

*If I could choose between offline or online learning, I would choose offline learning. The internet network sometimes constrains online learning. Sometimes, I am also lazy because it feels like no one is watching, and there is no time limit (task submission). Some of my friends don't have smartphones and use those of their parents. That could obstruct them. (Interview – Bobby).*

From Bobby's experience, he only used Google Classroom when online teaching and learning were conducted. Primarily, not all teachers used this application. There were only six subjects that used Google Classroom. Some other teachers chose to use WhatsApp. Bobby's school no longer used the application after the in-class face-to-face (offline) teaching was conducted. Bobby also preferred offline learning compared to online learning. These findings suggested that Shania's consistent use of Google Classroom contradicted Bobby's more limited engagement, reflecting the overall finding that the actual use of Google Classroom among students fell to a moderate level. This discrepancy highlighted that while some students utilized the platform regularly, its adoption and effectiveness remained inconsistent, influenced by varying teacher preferences and the transition back to offline learning.

## **5 Conclusions and recommendations**

Google Classroom has gained widespread adoption as a learning management system, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study revealed that Google Classroom was well-received as an effective tool for facilitating online learning, especially among secondary school students in Indonesia. The students perceived Google Classroom as easy to use, beneficial, and suitable for repeated use, indicating a positive acceptance of the platform. Notably, most students reported using Google Classroom for the first time or infrequently before this study. It is understandable, given that the teaching and learning process predominantly relied on face-to-face interactions before the pandemic. However, the pandemic necessitated a shift to online learning, with Google Classroom emerging as a vital tool in this transition. The findings of this study suggested that Google Classroom is a promising learning management system that students have well accepted. When students positively embrace such platforms to support their learning, there is potential for an enhancement in the quality of their educational experience. In light of these findings, it is recommended that Google Classroom be considered by other schools or educational institutions as a viable option for supporting learning, particularly in situations where face-to-face interaction is limited.

The study showed that although overall secondary school students living in a developing part of Indonesia highly accepted the use of Google Classroom as a tool to facilitate online learning, the study showed that the actual use was still moderate. As reported by the participants, personal preferences, technical issues, lack of accountability, and accessibility challenges led to their reluctance to use Google Classroom. Given this matter, some implications can be taken for future integration of Google Classroom in secondary education. Teachers and school administrators should take into account students' access to



facilities they need for learning when they decide to utilize Google Classroom to support their online learning. They may also collaborate with parents, so they know how teaching and learning in their children's schools is conducted. By doing so, it is expected that parents can provide support for their children's at-home education. Another finding also showed that one school terminated the use of Google Classroom after the in-class face-to-face learning had reapplied after the schools had been reopened. It implied that teachers, school members, and students may consider Google Classroom a temporary tool during the school closure. At the same time, Google Classroom can sustainably be used to support learning in the future. It indicates that socialization for teachers, school administrators, and students should be increased to improve their understanding of the advantages of Google Classroom and other digital platforms to facilitate online or hybrid learning.

The study was conducted in a specific area of Indonesia and to a specific level of education; thus, it may only represent the acceptance of some students in Indonesia. Despite the limitations, the study contributes to enriching the body of literature on online emergency learning with the facilitation of Google Classroom. It also has shed light on how secondary school students in Indonesia used and accepted Google Classroom. To provide richer literature and practices of Google Classroom in English language education, it is noteworthy for future studies to investigate the acceptance and use of Google Classroom in post-pandemic English language education. In addition, future studies on Google Classroom use and acceptance may involve a wider population, which may include a more considerable number of participants or a more varied group of participants, such as teachers or parents, to obtain different perspectives on the use of Google Classroom.

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