

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background

Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic has altered the system of teaching and learning process dramatically. This situation has caused the shift from the implementation of traditional learning method to the new learning method that enables students and teacher conduct teaching and learning process from home. During this situation, teaching learning process that is used to be done in the classroom, now it is undertaken remotely or virtually over the internet. This new learning method is called as online learning.

According to Benson (2002), online learning is the utilization of the Internet and other web-based technologies in order to provide learning experiences for students. It is a technological innovation that has a very big contribution to the changes in the learning process, in which the learning process is no longer just listening to the material explanation from the teacher yet it uses internet to enable students access various learning material and interact with their teachers and other students.

Besides, Smaldino, Rusell, Heinich, & Molenda (2005), defines online learning as an effort to connect students with learning resources that are separated physically yet they are still able to communicate, interact, or collaborate synchronously and asynchronously. This definition points out that online learning can be done without requiring student physical attendance in the classroom because all is done over internet. By applying online learning, student can learn and interact with peers or teacher without being worried about distance or time

Besides of its benefits on student learning method, online learning also gives the students possibilities to practice English four language skills. For this reason, some English teachers have adopted online learning to be implemented in English teaching and learning. According to Bull and

Ma (2001) the use of technology in online learning provides unlimited learning sources for language learners. It offers various forms of learning material such as audio, video, article, picture, etc. The audio component of the online course will enable students to listen to native English speakers reading short dialogues which provide opportunities for them to improve their pronunciation and practice their listening skill. They can progress with the course by reading general articles, which will give them the possibility to practice their reading skills, enrich vocabularies, and make them aware of the use of English grammar.

Despite these advantages, online learning requires student engagement as important factor that determines its success and quality (Dixson, 2015). As stated by Jaggars & Xu (2016), students' grades in online courses are positively correlated with the quality of students' interaction within the course parameters. It is related to the theory of involvement by Astin (1984) which proposes that students who are involved in various aspects of the college experience such as academic and social aspects, they tend to learn more. In addition, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) and Marks (2000) also supported that students who are engaged more in the learning process tend to achieve better grade and performance on standardized tests.

Considering the importance of student engagement, the teachers need to know the level of student engagement in their classes. For this reason, measuring the level of student engagement is considered necessary to be done by teachers. By evaluating the level of student engagement, teachers can more effectively plan learning activities that will encourage students' active participation in their learning and coursework (Jennings & Angelo, 2006; Mandernach et al., 2011 in Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). In other words, measuring student engagement may help teacher create interesting and encouraging learning activity which is able to attract student engagement. So, the students can improve their achievement and avoid learning failure in passing the grade. In addition, Finn (1989) stated

that measuring engagement helps teacher to identify at-risk students since for many students disengagement ends up with dropping out of school

There are some important characteristics of engaged students in online learning that can be considered to be indicators for measuring student engagement. Golladay, Prybutok, & Huff (1998) stated that engaged and successful students in online learning are characterized by having psychological motivation to learn, learning actively, and using their prior knowledge properly. Besides, managing their learning schedule, utilizing technology effectively, having great communication skills and being cooperative and self-directed in learning are also considered as indicators of engaged students in online learning.

Furthermore, Lee, Song, Hong (2019) explained that student engagement can be measured by considering 6 factors that contribute to the student engagement in online learning. The first factor is psychological motivation. Student engagement in online learning is affected by students' thoughts or feelings, such as interest, expectations, and motivation that is related to online learning. Students will engage in online learning when they find it motivating, interesting and useful. Besides, it is also affected by their satisfaction toward learning which will build up learning expectation.

Collaborative learning also gives contribution to the student engagement. Student will keep engaged in online learning when they work together with other students such as studying lesson content together with other students, working on assignment and solving learning difficulty cooperatively, and asking for help to other students. Therefore, the process of understanding knowledge and solving problem collaboratively with their peers is important part of student engagement in online learning.

Another factor that contributes to student engagement in online learning is cognitive problem solving. Student will be engaged in online learning when they can derive new interpretation and deeply analyze thought, experience and knowledge from what they have learned in online

learning. Beside, student will keep engaged when they are able to judge the value of information and apply the knowledge to the real life problem or situation.

Besides, Interaction with instructor is also factor affecting student engagement. Interaction with instructor includes communicating privately with instructor to ask for extra help and discussing content of the lesson frequently with instructor. By this continuous interaction with instructor, students can feel high level of teaching presence. As stated by Jung & Lee (2018), students who feel the sense of teaching presence as in the actual learning field with the professor, they tend to have higher level of engagement in e-learning environment is. Therefore, having continuous interaction with teacher or instructor is necessary to keep the students engaged in online learning.

Besides of interaction with instructor, community support is the next factor that may encourage students to be engaged in online learning. Student engagement is affected by their sense of belonging to the class community, feeling of being connected with peers and their interaction with other students who are enrolled in the same class. This factor is important for student engagement because as stated by Finn (1989), students tend to skip classes easily, or leave the class early, and even end up with dropping out of school if they did not feel the connection or belonging with other learners. Thus, community support brings encouragement for students to continuously engage in online learning.

The last factor is learning management. As online learning necessitates students to study independently, student' self-directed learning management becomes important factor for student engagement. It refers to the students' activities in an independent learning environment such as studying independently after online class, eliminating distractions in online learning environment, managing learning using the online system, and managing the online learning schedule. Those self-directed learning activities can keep students engaged in online learning.

Studies on investigating student engagement during this pandemic have been done by several researches. Ubu (2020) has done mixed method study to investigate student engagement towards the use of online discussion in EFL context and students' limitation and supporting factors in the implementation of online discussion. Oraif & Elyas (2021) has also done a study on investigating the level of EFL students' engagement in English classes and their feelings towards receiving instruction in English classes in an online environment. However, there has been no investigation that covered about difficulties that hinder student engagement in online learning. Thus this study tries to explore deep understanding about the level of student engagement and difficulties hindering students when engaged in online learning

Based on preliminary interview, it was found that English teacher in SMKN 1 Tejakula provided English learning activity that encouraged students' collaborative learning. Besides, English task for students was relevant to their' interest, and real life experiences which created students curiosity and enhanced students engagement in learning. Online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula also supported students' autonomy in learning by providing students opportunity to decide what to do for their English task. This autonomy gave students chance to demonstrate preference for more difficult work and allowed them to choose the topic of assignment that was connected to their experiences.

However, English teacher did not involve net meeting during the implementation of online English learning. This might result on the feeling of isolated and unwilling to actively participate in online English learning because they could not feel actual teaching presence and interact with their peers and teachers lively. In consideration of these factors that encouraged student engagement in online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula, the researcher is interested to investigate student engagement in SMKN 1 Tejakula especially the level of student engagement and difficulties hindering students when engaged in online English learning. Hence, this study is carried out to investigate the level of student engagement on the

implementation of online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula and students' difficulties when engaged in online English learning.

## **1.2.Problem Identification**

Student engagement is one of some factors that determine the success of online learning because it directly affects to the student achievement. For this reason, measuring student engagement in online learning is necessary to do in order to know the level of student engagement. Measuring student engagement in online learning can help the teacher in planning online learning activity that encourages student's motivation and engagement. It also helps the teacher in identifying at-risk students that are possible to have low academic achievement and end up with dropping out of school.

Some studies about the measurement of student engagement in online learning have been done during this pandemic. They focused on investigating student engagement level, students' limitation and supporting factors in online discussion, and students' feeling when English instruction was conducted in online environment. However, little attention paid on the difficulties that hinder student engagement in online learning. Therefore, this study is intended to explore deep understanding about student engagement in online learning especially in SMKN 1 Tejakula.

Based on preliminary interview, it was found that English teacher in SMKN 1 Tejakula provided English learning activity that encouraged students' collaborative learning and English task that was relevant to their' interest and real life experience. Online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula also supported students' autonomy in learning However, English teacher did not involve net meeting during the implementation of online English which might result on the feeling of isolated and unwilling to actively participate in online English learning since they could not feel actual teaching presence and interact with their peers and teachers lively. In consideration to these reasons, this study is conducted to investigate

student engagement level and difficulties hindering student engagement in online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula.

### **1.3.Limitation of Study**

This study was limited on investigating student engagement during the implementation of online learning in English class. The measurement of student engagement in this study focused on 6 factors namely Psychological motivation, Peer collaboration, Cognitive Problem solving, Interaction with instructors, Community support, and Learning management. The investigation was also limited on the sample of study in which it involved 140 students in SMKN 1 Tejakula.

### **1.4.Research Question**

Based on the background of study, the identification of problem, and limitation of the problem, the research problem can be formulated as follow;

- a. How are the student engagements on the implementation of online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula?
- b. What are the students' difficulties when engaged in online English learning?

### **1.5.Research Purpose**

Based on the research problem, it can be determined that the aim of this study included

- a. Investigating student engagement on the implementation of online English learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula.
- b. Exploring students' difficulties when engaged in online English learning

### **1.6.Research Significance**

- a. **Theoretical Significance**

This study is expected to increase the theoretical knowledge about online learning especially the student engagement during online English learning

**b. Practical Significance**

Practically, for English teacher in SMKN 1 Tejakula, the result of this study is expected to provide information about student engagement in English class which later can be used as reference and consideration to improve the implementation of online learning in SMKN 1 Tejakula especially in English class. Besides, the result of this study is expected to be used as reference for the researcher to conduct similar study.

