

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Research Background**

Higher education students learn in various settings, including formal forms which could be attending classes and following the curriculum and informal forms such as virtual learning through the internet, seminar, workshop, etc. After class time students tend to seek more from outside sources to fulfill their learning goals. They could attend seminars, workshops, web conferences, watch online videos, read blogs, have mutual discussions in the coffee shop, etc., that act as an informal way of learning. This blend activity occurred to obtain and understand deeply or simply to get the framework of the knowledge.

Blended learning activity is then implemented by schools and educational institutions by combining face-to-face and virtual learning to support the learning process in achieving academic goals. Blended learning then received positive responses from students for its convenience, flexibility, immediate access, high engagement, and independency (Pardede, 2019), improving ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills, and promoting peer-learning (Aji et al., 2020). As a result, blended learning encourages students to learn by themselves and from their peers. As stated by Aji (2020) students are revealed to be motivated when they face some learning problems, whether they search for more sources on the internet or ask peers for help.

Peer Learning has been commonly applied by the students in support of their learning process. Various forms of the approach are used to work between students to adjust to their educational purposes. Peer Learning has been applied by students in various learning environments to some extent. In its appliance, Peer Learning with its flexibility can be done through in-person meetings which is virtually with the help of the internet, which is known as

blended learning. Peer learning in practice could be a conversation before the beginning of the class, study group for the group presentation, etc. Some studies revealed that Peer Learning shows positive impacts in blended learning, that is, undergraduate students increase their performance (Lim et al., 2020), and also, the combination of peer learning strategy and blended learning can improve learning objectives and group work ability (Sari, 2014).

In institutional practice, modern classrooms are slowly adopting a new approach with the use of technology (i.e., blended learning) to conduct their educational practices to the upcoming generation. A study done by Sakina et al. (2020) shows that teachers who employ blended learning are given the flexibility to use a number of instructional delivery modes by integrating a variety of technology into their teaching-learning activities. Sakina et al. (2020) Sakina et al. (2020) shows that teachers who employ blended learning are given the flexibility to use a number of instructional delivery modes by integrating a variety of technology into their teaching-learning activities. The study revealed that students had favorable perceptions of blended learning and believed it to be an efficient method of instruction. The major problem identified, however, was that teachers needed more time to absorb new information and adjust to this novel circumstance, where they were required to use technology in their educational system. Other than that, the reliability of their internet connection also plays a significant role in their own difficulties.

On the other hand, Aznam et al. (2021) have reviewed the implementation of blended learning and peer learning strategy in Indonesia in 2020. Their study concluded that blended learning with peer learning strategy was an effective teaching strategy for promoting student performance in higher education institutions at the time. These two variables were also successful in helping students achieve greater levels of satisfaction and confidence in learning. Moreover, the study indicated that Indonesian students, who used blended learning and peer learning strategy were more self-assured and demonstrated higher learning achievement. Hence, it is about

time that Indonesian educational institutions adopt peer learning strategy and blended learning into their practice at an institutional level.

The researcher conducted an online interview involving a small number of students in IKIP PGRI Pontianak, specifically students in their third-year majoring in English Education, through WhatsApp regarding Peer Learning. They admitted that they have been using Peer Learning in offline classes and online classes as well. They said Peer Learning has been used for some subjects and has helped them learn. The teachers facilitated the peer learning for the students in the learning session. Students often do group discussion through in-person and online classes. The media chosen for the online discussion is WhatsApp group. Therefore, students contact and build conversation of topics and tasks given by the teacher through the chosen media. Then, they present the results through in-person meeting. The teachers guide the discussion session and provide feedbacks and suggestions to the students. These representative students acknowledge that peer learning procedure is into the group discussions that held virtually and in-person meeting.

These findings of the previous studies led to the researcher's current understanding of how the students perceive and their awareness of the appliance of the Peer Learning Strategy to their learning. Few studies have shown Peer Learning contributes positive benefits, such as improved learning in a comfortable environment from peers, and improved understanding of the core subject by realizing the implication of the concept of self-reflection, and feedback (Khalid et al., 2020); while learning as peers have become on an equal level when students share ideas, opinions, and knowledge and gained perspective to one another (Zwedberg et al., 2021). It is also found that they perceive that their learning is improved and peer learning promotes independence that is later linked to a sense of safety when learning faces challenges (Stenberg & Carlson, 2015). Regardless of these findings, these

previous studies only focus on the impacts of the Peer Learning strategy on students' learning in a general context.

Furthermore, the researcher intrigues to describe what perception the students have towards their appliance of Peer Learning Strategy in a more specific learning context, which is Blended Learning. Since blended learning, with its model, takes learning into teacher-led learning and digital learning (self-guided as assigned) at the same time, this research may lead to fascinating findings of how the students' perception and their awareness of using peer learning strategy to perform and achieve learning objectives in learning, particularly in a blended learning context. Their perception of peer learning strategy assessed towards the role and the activity when they conduct peer learning. This result may give more views and beneficial outcomes to students, higher education management, and educators for educational purposes. In addition to that, this research used a quantitative approach to collect, analyze, and report the data once it is approved and conducted later on.

### **B. Research Question**

This descriptive study aims to analyze students' perception of Peer Learning Strategy in the context of Blended Learning by the students in Higher Education and addressed the following research questions based on the previously identified focused problem which is "What is students' perception of Peer Learning Strategy applied in Blended Learning Community?"

### **C. Research Purpose**

Based on the research questions, this proposed research will explore students' perception of Peer Learning Strategy applied in the Blended Learning Community in Higher Education.

### **D. Research Significances**

The research hopes that it is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the relevant topic as follows:

## **1. Theoretical Significances**

It is hoped that by completing this research, scientific data would be available for future research into how students perceive and interpret Peer Learning in the context of Blended Learning.

## **2. Practical Significances**

It is expected that this research provides benefit all parties involved, including college students (from the English Education Study Program at IKIP PGRI Pontianak), higher education management, and future research on the similar subject.

### **a. Higher Education Students**

Students at higher education levels are responsible for their learning to successfully improve their learning efficiency and outcomes. This study aids in the development of a safer learning environment and improves learning experiences.

### **b. Higher Education's Management**

This result of this study is expected to provide insights into the appliance of Peer Learning by higher education students and may suggest that higher education management consider Peer Learning Strategy programs to enhance students learning that benefit their learning outcomes as well as their skills development.

### **c. Future Relevant Research**

There is little research found on the students' perception of Peer Learning and the appliance of Peer Learning Strategy in the Blended Learning context, so the researcher hopes that this research can help contribute to further research on whether to improve or as a support in the relevant field.