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Remote Learning Challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Ulfatuz Zahiroh[1*], Meisya Qurrata A'yun[1], Tyasmiarni Citrawati[1]

[1]Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: ulfaputri4@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancements in the 21st century have rendered humans inseparable from technology. This situation demands that the school sector, notably in Indonesia, adjust to the changes that occur, particularly concerning the Covid-19 outbreak. The government shifted education to remote learning. This study discusses the difficulties encountered by teachers and students during remote learning caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It describes how to overcome these challenges, as well as what needs to be prepared to implement remote learning. It also determines which applications may be used to facilitate remote learning. Interviews and observation were used for data collection. From a teacher and six first-grade students at SD Negeri Pakong 2, it was revealed that challenges experienced by teachers and students were in terms of difficulties in improving student learning outcomes, lack of gadgets, unstable internet connections, as well as unaffordable internet quota. Alternative solutions suggested in this study are conducting IT training, home visits, and proposing internet quota to the government. The recommended applications to overcome these problems are WhatsApp and Google Classroom.

INTRODUCTION

The industrial revolution 4.0 is typified by technical developments such as the internet; nevertheless, the industrial revolution has already progressed to 5.0 that incorporates important elements of the twenty-first century, namely a technology-based society (Fauzi & Suryadi, 2020). Humans have become intricately bound to technology as a result of technological advancements. This development requires the education sector, especially in Indonesia, to adapt to the changes. One of the government's problems in supporting technology-based education is covering the demands of every school, such as computers and an internet connection, as well as educating teachers to be IT professionals (Janssen & Van Der Voort, 2016).

A survey conducted by the Internet Service Providers Association Indonesia (APJII) stated that 132.7 million Indonesians have an internet connection, with 24.4 million of the 132.7 million persons aged 10 to 24 years. This demonstrates that technology is widely used by children aged 10 to adults aged 24. This potential may be leveraged to assist education in Indonesia so that it can keep up with technological advancements. This easily accessible information technology may be utilized to obtain information and make it easier for instructors to generate learning materials, teach students, and teach life skills. Examples of technology applications in education include the use of technology-based media to improve student learning outcomes. Technological advancements can also assist instructors in making the learning evaluation process easier. Technological advancements can also be employed for online learning (Jolliffe et al., 2012).

The utilization of technology in learning in Indonesia is still inadequate because instructors are concerned about the negative effects of technology. Teachers are reluctant to use technology in learning. However, everything changed after the surge of the Covid-19 pandemic. Corona Virus Disease-19 (Covid-19) is a lethal virus that is a novel version of the Sars-CoV-2 virus that first surfaced in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. This virus causes respiratory problems (Daniel, 2020). This virus causes a global pandemic. Indonesia recorded its first case in March 2020. The addition of cases occurred from day to day so the Indonesian government made a policy of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) which later changed to the Community Activity Restriction Enforcement (PPKM). Outside the home, PSBB and PPKM impose limits, and crowds are forbidden. This influences all disciplines, including education. The government opted to shift from face-to-face learning in the classroom to remote learning through the use of internet tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, and Google Classroom. This policy is applied in all institutions including elementary schools.

Elementary school students are aged 7-12 years. Based on their cognitive development, elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage. Students still struggle to comprehend abstract objects; therefore, they rely on media to help them visualize them concretely. Today's elementary school students are also members of Generation Z, whose lives are closely linked to technology advancements (Csobanka, 2016; Mohr & Mohr, 2017). This potential can aid in the implementation of remote learning since students can understand online learning procedures more quickly. However, because they are still 7-12 years old, not all elementary school students can utilize web-based technologies (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020). The capacity to use internet technologies to access subject-related information is currently limited.

Many of them continue to utilize internet technologies to play games instead of learning. This remote learning is likewise not done quickly but must be performed while the Covid-19 outbreak is still underway.

Furthermore, the key to learning success is in the hands of the teacher since the teacher is actively involved in educating students. The teacher must guarantee that the learning process runs smoothly so that the distance learning design used by the teacher can meet the learning objectives. The application of remote learning is a challenge for teachers. Teachers must be creative and innovative in their approach to providing learning through online media, which must also be suited to their students' education and needs. Various efforts are implemented to guarantee that learning occurs even when students are not in the same room, at the same time.

Distance or in this case, remote learning is described as a learning system that uses computer-based internet technology (Kuntarto, 2017). Because it may be done anywhere and at any time, online or internet-based distance learning attempts to facilitate and enhance the learning process (Wuryaningsih et al., 2019). Online learning has four characteristics, namely 1) interactive, 2) independent, 3) easily accessible, and 4) can be developed (Bilfaqih & Qomarudin, 2015). Learning that makes use of internet connections must be done interactively so that teachers and students have a reciprocal interaction in the learning process (Syarifudin, 2020). Online learning also requires students to study independently the lesson that has been given in the learning application (Lubis & Dasopang, 2021). Online learning also demands students' ability to access and follow learning at any time and from any location (Chiu & Wang, 2008).

There are burgeoning studies on remote learning in Indonesia. Some of these studies include the effectiveness of distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, opportunities and challenges in implementing distance learning at universities during the Covid-19 pandemic, obstacles encountered during distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and opportunities and challenges faced by professional teachers in teaching and learning. implementing remote learning (Astini, 2020; Indrawati, 2020; Jamilah, 2020; Kuntarto, 2017; Putria et al., 2020). However, no research has been conducted that specifically discusses the issues or difficulties encountered by instructors and students at SD Negeri Pakong 2 during distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Remote learning must be carried out interactively to create a reciprocal and positive relationship between teachers and students (Syarifudin, 2020). Internet or online networks can help teachers improve student learning outcomes during the Covid-19 pandemic (Karabatak &

Turhan, 2017). Remote learning is one of the government's strategies to ensure that the learning process continues even during the Covid-19 outbreak. However, not everything went smoothly throughout the distance learning process since teachers and students encountered issues, not least at SD Negeri Pakong 2.

Based on a preliminary study conducted on students of SD Negeri Pakong 2, teachers and students experienced problems in remote learning. The teacher must play an active role in preparing for learning, they should devise numerous methods for students to learn the subject asynchronously. Students also find it difficult to understand the material given by the teacher. As a result, it is crucial to study the issues that arise in distant learning in elementary schools to develop solutions that may be applied in remote learning.

Based on the problems mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to describe the challenges and difficulties encountered by teachers and students during the distance learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, how to overcome these difficulties, and what needs to be prepared when implementing remote learning. it also describes the applications that may be utilized to enhance distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study contributes to the discovery of problems experienced by teachers and students in remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, this study proposes alternatives to overcoming these problems so that teachers can vary the types of instruction utilized to attain the learning objectives. It can be used as a reference by teachers in preparing for remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHOD

This descriptive qualitative study collected data in the form of words or pictures. The research was carried out for one week, with three days of data collection and four days of data analysis. This study was carried out at the subject's and research informant's house in Seddhur Village, Pakong District, Pakong Regency. Primary data sources were obtained directly from the original data resources. This study involved a teacher and fifth-grade student at SD Negeri Pakong 2. The fifth-grade consists of 11 students with five male students and six female students.

The data in this study were obtained through the interview, observation, and documentation. The interview was carried out with teachers and students. When remote learning occurred, observations were made to determine how the remote learning process was

carried out by the teacher, and what obstacles occurred during the distance learning process. Documentation was done to obtain information about documents or learning media prepared by teachers for remote learning.

The research instruments for data collection were observation guidelines and interview guidelines. Documentation utilized cell phone cameras and stationery. The role of researchers in qualitative research is in terms of planning, implementation, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and result report. Data analysis involved data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. Data collection ended when the researcher has finished getting the information needed. Data reduction was done to summarize, identify themes and patterns, and focus on the important things. The data presentation is done to aggregate all of the information gathered through observations and interviews. Verification is done to get an accurate and precise conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Article 1 of Law Number 20 of 2003 explains that distance learning is a learning process in which students are separated from educators and use learning media through information and communication technology, and other media that rely on internet connections. However, because the internet connection in each location is not as stable, issues develop throughout the remote learning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers and students have three opportunities: their capacity to utilize technology grows, the implementation of the learning process is simpler since it can be done anywhere and at any time, and teachers and students may produce reference material being studied autonomously to increase student learning results (Lubis & Dasopang, 2021). By using various online applications for distance learning, teachers and students will be trained in using learning technology. The learning process was also more flexible because it can be done anytime and anywhere. Learning does not bound to time and place. Teachers and students can also look for additional material independently in the form of e-books and learning videos on YouTube.

In addition to opportunities, there are several challenges that teachers and students face during distance learning, such as teachers' difficulty in improving student learning outcomes, lack of gadgets, poor internet connections, and unaffordable internet quota. SD Negeri Pakong 2 also has these three obstacles. According to teacher interviews, instructors struggle to improve student learning outcomes because they lack the skills to use online apps, cannot

supervise students directly, and cannot regulate students during the learning process. As a result, significant parts of remote learning must be established, such as providing teacher training activities in the use of technology, information, and communication. This is done to facilitate instructors' use of online media and to make learning more exciting and inventive.

Based on interviews with students, not all students have gadgets, either cell phones or laptops. This is due to the financial conditions of the students' parents or guardians, who are from the middle to lower classes. Students are not encouraged to learn online, which influences their understanding of the subject and their learning results. Students cannot receive content adequately as it is done during face-to-face learning, and students are unable to participate in online learning due to a lack of devices. It becomes challenging to increase student learning outcomes. Several student learning outcomes have declined. This leads some teachers to spend their time visiting students' homes, often known as home visits, while still adhering to health guidelines. The lesson was delivered directly by the teacher.

In addition, poor internet connection becomes an obstacle, particularly during heavy rain. Students sometimes cannot hear what the teacher is saying due to poor connection. Poor internet connections also have an impact on learning outcomes in remote learning, as this learning is heavily reliant on the internet. As a result, some teachers have begun to deliver assignment sheets to students' homes. Teachers and students should also search for a location with a stable signal.

Internet quota is also a problem because not all parents came from middle to upper economic status. Remote learning requires a monthly internet quota. It was found that before remote learning, the quota needed is around 10 GB. After the remote learning, it increased to around 20 GB or 30 GB every month. Many parents found it unaffordable. This leads students to lose track of the learning process when their internet quota runs out. The school can apply for internet quota assistance from the government or the Education.

In this study, it was found that the teacher played an active role. It was more teacher-centered. The teacher prepares a learning plan which is adjusted to the remote learning policy. Even though learning was done online, lesson plans are still important to make, especially in terms of selecting effective media used for learning activities such as making learning videos. After that, the teacher evaluates how the video is acceptable to the students.

So far, teachers have used the Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp applications to conduct remote learning. However, the Zoom and Google Meet require users to have a stable connection and much internet quota. It made teachers switch to WhatsApp. The teacher sent a learning

video to the WhatsApp group. Students could download the video. The teacher not only utilizes videos, but also voice notes so that the teacher can be clearer in teaching the content and students may better understand the material by listening to the teacher's explanation. Teachers also use Google Classroom to give school assignments.

Remote learning requires an internet-based interactive model and a Learning Management System (LMS). LMS is designed to make it easier for educators to design distance learning and make it easier for students to access content from anywhere and anytime. Distance learning implementation is anticipated to deliver a meaningful learning experience, cannot be separated from learning activities, and can accomplish the necessary learning goals. Distance learning trains students to be independent in fulfilling tasks assigned by the teacher to produce intellectual and helpful next generations.

Every policy must have both positive and negative sides. Thus, it is anticipated that teachers, students, schools, and parents or guardians of students adjust to the effects of remote learning. This is adjusted to the policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture through Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policy in the Emergency Period of the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Pandemic issued on March 24, 2020. Researchers found several things that need to be done before implementing remote learning such as providing the facilities and infrastructure needed and carrying out training for students, parents, and teachers. The school and government are expected to maximize all facilities and needs in the remote learning process for both instructors and students so that the quality of distance learning adopted can operate smoothly and student learning outcomes may continue to improve. Parents are also encouraged to support students in the learning process so that students may fully participate in learning activities.

CONCLUSION

The covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world of education since teaching and learning activities that were previously face-to-face in class have been transformed to distance remote learning. Remote learning aims at providing meaningful lessons for students. However, this remote learning was not effective, especially at SD Negeri Pakong 2. There are still various challenges to its adoption, including teachers' difficulty in enhancing student learning outcomes, lack of devices, poor internet connection, and unaffordable internet quota. Thus, the government and the school are expected to optimize the facilities and infrastructure

needed for desired results. The school can apply for quota assistance from the government and conduct training for students, teachers, and parents. Parents must always accompany students during the learning process and supervise student learning activities at home for students to fully participate in learning activities. Recommended applications are WhatsApp and Google Classroom. These two applications consume little internet bandwidth and do not require a strong internet connection. These two applications are relatively simple; thus, no extensive training is required.

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