LEARNING FROM THE PAST: THE USEFULNESS AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

By

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Recently online learning has been developed widely in Indonesia and most of the education institutions implemented online learning during the covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of online learning is to facilitate communication in the delivery of teaching materials in the field of education that is carried out remotely. It is generally intended for non-face-to-face teaching methods. This study was conducted to investigate the usefulness and the challenges encountered by the teachers in implementing online learning. This study made use of qualitative research design with descriptive analysis and to collect the data semi-structured interviews and online classroom observations were conducted to collect valid and reliable data. This study found that there was the usefulness of online learning which benefits students to improve their competence and also there were a number of challenges encountered by the teachers. Therefore, this study implies that teachers should acknowledge the challenges of online learning to create a better online learning activity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected various sectors in Indonesia from the economic sector to other sectors. Tourism, transportation, social life, and also education have been damaged significantly which made people change their way of life to survive in the midst of a pandemic. Limitation of social dan physical contacts created a new momentum of online learning development systems emerging and spreading almost all over Indonesia. The systems of course at the same time raise pros and cons in society. The first anxiety was faced by teachers who found it difficult to teach online effectively [1]. In particular, for early education such as kindergarten and elementary school students, where the role of the teacher is very much needed to complete online assignments. Many teachers considered that learning is not effective because students think that home is a place to play and relax. Moreover, many teachers encountered various hindrances in using education technology appropriately to create a conducive learning atmosphere [2].

Now in the post-pandemic of covid-19 in which it is more than a year of online learning has taken place, but it has not provided a meaningful experience for most students [3]. consequently, limited face-to-face learning was conducted to ensure students obtain sufficient competence and obtain back their learning loss. The learning loss mainly occurs due to many students have been learning well because of various reasons. The reasons for students varied, such as not being at home, not having an application to open the material, forgetting the study schedule, and not joining the group. Those reasons certainly made learning interaction was not ineffective, therefore more effective learning situations should be created by the teachers [4]. Consequently, teachers should always improve to be more professional educators.

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In a broad sense, in the online learning process, it is not all students can attend, actively ask questions and discuss during the meeting with the general reason that they do not have an internet quota, they can only chat with others [5]. Some students tend to make excuses for not attending the learning activities by saying that their mobile phone is damaged or one mobile phone is used simultaneously by other people. Some students cannot attend the learning activities because they had to work to help their parents. There are of course several excuses and problems that occurred from the students. The typical reasons were encountered during online learning which causes a lot of slow down on the achievement of learning competence as indicated by the academic curriculum [6].

As an educator, it is necessary to respond wisely to the conditions and problems of students and parents so that online learning can still accommodate students' needs in attaining learning higher learning competencies [7]. Therefore, more intensive learning activities are needed to continually be developed by the teachers. Moreover, motivation and positive encouragement should be given all the time to ensure students learn actively [8]. Students' engagement in learning also should be nurtured continually to make students develop their creativity and improve their social skills. All students' capacity should be maximized to obtain higher intelligence and be free from bad influences that arise from various types of children's circumstances. In this case, educators have to think about and need to try various approaches, methods, or methods so that the problems encountered during online learning can be minimized [9]. Applying appropriate approaches in learning enables the achievement of higher learning quality.

To encounter the problems, limited face-to-face learning activity was started to be conducted by complying with health protocols. Other actions taken were in the form of individual tutoring of special students, distributing and receiving student assignments face-to-face, varying technology media for online learning, offline learning, and blended learning activities [10]. This limited face-to-face learning was considered to be a solution for the time being because there are still concerns about the infections of Covid-19. Teachers are expected to really use the time effectively to discuss the learning tasks in a very short time and the rest of the explanation and discussions are still conducted through online learning systems [11].

This limited face-to-face was considered more effective for some teachers to help students who have problems with online learning. Based on the identification of the problem, it showed that generally, children have problems in understanding the tasks and materials being studied, learning time without parental guidance, lack of learning motivation of students, not growing independence for learning, use of cell phone media for learning, and lack of online learning facilities [12]. Therefore, in the future of online learning, those problems should be solved so that online learning becomes more effective, especially, if online learning continues to be implemented in the education sector. Without solving the problems, the challenges of online learning may become burdens for the future of online learning. Consequently, solving actions should be undertaken by education stakeholders to ensure that online learning develops students' competencies in learning.

Online learning is learning that uses internet network services with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to generate various types of learning interactions [13]. Online learning basically prioritizes students to be detailed and observant in receiving and controlling information submitted online. Therefore, the implementation of online learning requires devices that can open information anywhere and anytime such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops. More sophisticated technology makes online learning to be more interesting for the students and more active in learning [14]. Besides, online learning makes students more independent in learning. As described above, online learning can be useful for carrying out the learning process without physical contact but there are also several problems faced by both teachers and students.

Several studies have been conducted related to online learning to reveal the effectiveness of online learning implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the problems encountered during the learning process [13], [15], [16]. However, there was only a limited number of studies conducted to investigate what educators could learn from the implementation of online learning so that can be used for learning development in future education systems. Therefore, the present study has mainly investigated the usefulness and the constables encountered by the teachers during the implementation of online learning during the covid-19 pandemic.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with descriptive analysis. The subjects of the study were the teachers who conducted online learning during the covid-19 pandemics. Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with the teachers and online classroom observation. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed situation to make the teachers feel comfortable and willing to provide the real information needed for this study. Moreover, online observations were conducted by joining the class as passive participants. During observations, researchers made a note on the implementation of online learning related to the types of online media used and also problems encountered by the teachers. All data were then put in the right categories, and then data from the interviews were matched with data collected from the observation, this angulation was done to establish

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valid and reliable findings. The findings were established by critically discussing the data both obtained from the interviews and the observation and the findings were presented descriptively to provide clear horizons for the readers concerning the usefulness and challenges of online learning implementation.

3.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
The results of the study were collected through conducting semi-structured interviews and online classroom observations. The results of the study were presented in the form of interviews excerpts and a summary of the online observation. The results and the analysis are presented as the following.

"I carry out online learning through WhatsApp groups because my students have many problems with the internet network' (Teacher A)
"I often use WhatsApp groups more often, but I also use Google classroom for learning activities so that students can reach them anytime" (Teacher B)
"I use WhatsApp group to provide additional explanations but all assignments are given through Google Classroom which is equipped with explanations from YouTube" (Teacher C)
"I use zoom and I also provide additional explanations from YouTube so that my students are more motivated to learn" (Teacher D)
The interview above shows that most teachers use the WhatsApp application, google classroom, and zoom as a medium for carrying out learning. Some of them combine google classroom with WhatsApp and also zoom to make it more effective. WhatsApp is used as a means to communicate with students because almost all students are accustomed to using WhatsApp. Some teachers also use YouTube in their teaching by providing additional explanations to students via YouTube links. The utilization of those applications helps teachers in conducting the learning process but teachers have to be competent in using the application to create positive learning conditions.
Another variable investigated in this study is concerning the usefulness and challenges of online learning. When the teacher was asked about the usefulness and challenges of carrying out learning through an online system, most of them answered that there are advantages and disadvantages.
"There are several advantages to using the online system, for example, we don't need to meet directly with students but many students are also less active in online learning" (Teacher A)
 "Online learning is pretty good at the moment because of the pandemic but many of my students complain that they don't have a mobile phone and also many who can't buy internet quota" (Teacher B)
"I like to teach online because I don't have to leave the house during a pandemic but I find it difficult to explain some materials to my students due to limited interaction with my students" (Teacher C)
"I prefer face-to-face learning but because of the pandemic, I have to try to teach online. It was quite difficult at first but now I'm used to it. My students also like it because they can study anywhere and anytime" (Teacher D)

Table 1. Summary of online classroom observation

Teachers	Application used	Challenges
Teachers A	WhatsApp	Internet connection, lack of technology knowledge, lack of facility, low students' engagement
Teacher B	WhatsApp, Google Classroom	Internet connection, lack of technology knowledge, lack of facility, low students' engagement
Teacher C	WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube	Internet connection, lack of technology knowledge, lack of facility, low students' engagement
Teacher D	Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube	Internet connection, lack of facility, low students' engagement

Furthermore, the observation notes showed that teachers mainly used WhatsApp for communication with their students. many teachers send assignments and also explanations by using WhatsApp. Voice note facilities were also used to provide further explanation. Some teachers also used google classroom and supplemented the explanation by inserting YouTube links. Zoom application was also used by some teachers, however, it was mainly for giving a lecture to make the students comprehend the learning materials and the tasks. It indicates that those for

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learning media such as zoom, WhatsApp, google classroom, and YouTube were utilized by the teachers in online learning activities.

Online learning can be a barrier to the communication and interaction of students with teachers. Problems were often found in the learning system so that it interfered with the smooth learning activities. These problems can affect the students to experience various learning difficulties. Teachers also feel online learning is not effective enough. Some teaching materials cannot be conveyed properly. Teachers also do not have sufficient experience and provision with online learning systems so that teaching methods and media still tend to be repetitive and less innovative. The high cost of the internet is also a problem for many students especially those who are living in a remote area. Moreover, the instability of internet connection also becomes a problem for many students.

The benefits of online learning are that it can shorten learning time and make study costs more economical because students and teachers do not need to travel to school. Online learning facilitates interaction between students and teachers through certain applications such as WhatsApp and zoom. Moreover, students can easily share information with each other and can access learning materials at anytime and anywhere repeatedly. Technology media in online learning is an application that supports the learning process. It is used by teachers and students in learning so that effective learning takes place. There are several information technologies that are used as learning media, namely zoom, google classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

Based on the observation, many teachers used to zoom to deliver the lesson. Zoom is one application that can be used by conducting virtual learning, the zoom application can bring together students and teachers virtually or video so that the learning process can be conveyed properly. Zoom is very good to use because it allows students to see the teacher directly and can communicate with other teachers and students. students can share their opinions, ideas, and thoughts easily through zoom. Moreover, it allows students to do a presentation and discuss their presentation with other students.

Furthermore, based on the observation conducted during online learning, teachers also utilize google classroom as a learning medium. Google Classroom is a classroom application provided by Google to enable to do presentations and discussions between students and teachers. It is a free application from google as long as having a google account. In Google Classroom teachers can more easily share materials and assignments that have been classified or compiled even in Google classroom teachers can give time for collecting assignments so that students are still taught discipline in managing time. Furthermore, it is completed with various features to make the learning process more effective. Google Classroom is quite good for teaching because it allows teachers to upload explanations in the form of videos and can also send YouTube links and other explanation links.

Another application that is mostly used by teachers to communicate is WhatsApp. It is a very popular application today for communication. WhatsApp application is an application that is easy to use and provides various features with encryption that make communication secure. Moreover, WhatsApp is an application that enables students to have a conversation either by sending text, voice or video. WhatsApp is one of the applications that people are most used in communicating over the internet. Therefore, in the education sector especially during online learning, WhatsApp application is one of the most widely used communication applications by teachers in communicating with students in Indonesia.

YouTube is another type of application for uploading videos, YouTube is widely used for sharing videos, where YouTube is now also used in online learning as a learning resource in learning. YouTube is one of the media that supports internet-based or online learning that can visualize good learning techniques and materials through YouTube. The YouTube application allows students to take part in learning more freely because they can listen to the teacher's explanation while also watching the teacher explain. Most teachers in teaching use the explanations of teachers and other experts that are already on YouTube. The teacher sends the link and then proceeds with the class discussion.

Online learning has usefulness that can be taken into account in which have a different impact on each person because they do not have the same conditions [17]. The main advantages of using online learning are independent learning and high interactivity. It can improve learning competence levels and provide more learning experiences for the students because it enables teachers to provide students with text, audio, video, and animation. All of which are used to convey information and also provide convenience in conveying various learning materials. Students can get updated learning materials, and also download the learning materials anywhere and anytime. Moreover, students can also send emails to other students, post comments on discussion forums. Considering these benefits of online learning, it certainly may arouse students' interest in learning providing their motivation and involvement in learning are kept at a higher standard.

So, there are advantages of online learning, namely independent learning, and increasing the learning experience, and enabling students to obtain various learning materials for different sources. However, in addition to usefulness, online learning also has several disadvantages, namely the lack of interaction between teachers and

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students and even between students themselves, students who do not have high learning motivation tend to fail, and lack of technical mastery which makes it difficult for students to follow lessons, poor internet network, and high cost of internet. It can be said that online learning has some usefulness but also it has some weaknesses [3]. Therefore, teachers are required to comprehend the weaknesses of online learning, to be able to conduct effective learning activities.

Many teachers experienced difficulties or obstacles in the online learning process. The first thing that can be an obstacle in learning online systems is related to the willingness in using education technology. Students prefer using the WhatsApp application because students use the application a lot in their daily life communication [18]. Poor internet connection also becomes an obstacle for most students because many of them live in rural places. The third obstacle is related to the use of internet quota which is still very expensive for most students, especially during the economic slowdown due to the covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, barriers to online learning are also because of many distractions and also lack of focus when carrying out the learning process from home.

Low mastery of technology can also be the main obstacle for teachers in carrying out online learning. Many students who encountered the problems of online learning could study through online learning properly. This is due to various factors behind it such as limited internet quota, areas that do not have access to the internet, and poor ability to use online learning media. Therefore, there many obstacles that occurred in online learning systems that teachers should deal with in creating a good learning environment. These learning obstacles if they are not solved of course the online learning becomes fail and the students' learning achievement may get down.

Efforts should be done such as providing good internet access for the students, and also teacher training programs should be developed to provide teachers with sufficient knowledge and skills in using modern educational technology in teaching. Moreover, teachers should be trained to create challenging and motivating learning online learning activities so that students actively engage and involve in all online learning activities.

4. CONCLUSION

Online learning is a type of teaching and learning that allows the delivery of teaching materials to students using the internet, intranet or other computer network media, or a learning process that utilizes information and communication technology systematically by integrating all learning components, including cross-learning interactions. The benefits of online learning are mainly independent learning and students can maximize their knowledge through assessing various online learning materials. Moreover, students can learn anytime, and everywhere. The challenges are mainly related to the internet connection, Internet connection, lack of facility, low students' engagement. This study suggests that teachers should be trained more professionally in conducting online learning therefore, they can make the learning activity more effective in improving students' learning competence

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