Distance Learning: Implementation in Langkat Elementary School during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Salim, Zulaika, Nanda Miranda, Askur Amin

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia
e-mail: salim.uinsu@ac.id, zulaikaanwar3188@gmail.com, nandamirandanm21@gmail.com, askuramin069@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. This study aims to explore the implementation of distance learning in elementary schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study uses case studies. Informant consists of Zahara Integrated Islamic Elementary School Teacher and state elementary school teacher 0505769 Sei Lepan Langkat Subdistrict, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Research instruments were prepared related to the implementation of distance learning in both schools. In-depth interviews are conducted to dig up information and check the truth. The results revealed the lack of parents in facilitating online learning. The learning implementation is done offline outside the school environment consisting of four study groups, and each study group maximum of 5 students. However, teachers face problems during the learning process, namely: time management and administration such as learning schedules and learning implementation plan sheets, weekly attendance, and monthly attendance that must submit monthly to the education office. This research recommendation is for the number of students in the study group to be increased to 10 students with attention to health protocols and available resources.

Keywords: *Distance learning, social distancing, Covid-19 pandemic.*

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic is becoming a global problem, where countries around the world have to deal with the situation because it threatens the survival of mankind. To date, Covid-19 has affected 372,757 people globally, with a mortality rate of 4.35 percent. In Indonesia, the first case of Covid-19 was reported on March 2, 2020. According to government data, as of March 23, 2020, the number of positive cases has increased significantly to 686 patients (Ulhaq &Soraya, 2020). In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government has been working on several schemes related to relations with neighboring countries. In anticipation of the spread of Covid-19, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia stated another policy in striping people from other countries into the country. It is explained that the government is working to address the writings of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the development of the spread of Covid-19. This is in accordance with the direction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia on the handling of Covid-19, including the implementation of social distancing (Samudro &Madjid, 2020).

In response to this problem, social distancing should be addressed as one of the preventive measures to prevent the transmission of Covid-19. Also, social distancing is an effort to reduce the community's burden of health services. Trade centers, such as malls and grocery markets that are usually crowded with people, are suddenly deserted. The tourism sector has declined as the government shut down tourist attractions and entertainment. Work and study are also done at home online (Syafrida & Hartati, 2020). In the field of education, the Republic of Indonesia's government, through the ministry of education, makes regulations related to distance learning so that the learning process continues, as usual; the difference is that students learn online. Online learning (learning from home) is listed in the Ministry of Education and Culture Circular No. 4 of 2020, on the Implementation of Education Policy in the Emergency Period of The Spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19), strengthened by Circular Letter of Secretary-General No. 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Implementation of Learning From Home during the Covid-19 emergency (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

Furthermore, the Head of The Education Office of Langkat District submitted Circular Letter No. 421.2/0007.Sekr/2021 concerning notification of learning in the even semester of the 2020/2021 school year. Thus, they must conduct teaching and learning activities online. According to Kurniasari *et al.* (2020), learning from home is an effort to access lesson materials and teaching resources by students. Besides, Prasetyaningtyas (2020) said that learning from home is a learning process conducted by students and teachers in their homes. Septantiningtyas *et al.* (2021) report that learning using the Google Meet app has a powerful influence on students' interest in education. Online learning using the Google Meet app can be done anywhere, making students' learning time flexible. The purpose of learning from home is to optimize students' right to obtain knowledge and educational services during Covid-19, besides preventing the spread and transmission of the Covid-19 virus (Tohar, 2020).

Oktavian *et al.* (2020) stated that online learning would be effective if it applies Laurillard's (1993) essential components that cover discourses, adaptive, interactive, and reflective aspects. Education is considered successful when the object studied is a real object in the surrounding environment, so one must realize the importance of learning by visualization of things in the surrounding environment to clarify understanding, increase interest quickly, and actual learners' actual involvement (Tan & Waugh, 2013). Khusniyah and Hakim (2019) reported their research that web blog-assisted online learning had a positive influence on improving students' reading ability. Several other studies have also reported online learning's effectiveness during the Covid-19 pandemic (Mustakim, 2020; Ahmad *et al.*, 2020; Sibuea *et al.*, 2020; Dewantara & Nurgiansah, 2021). But on the other hand, Online learning is also experiencing obstacles such as weak mastery of information technology, limited access to the supervision of learners, inactivity to follow wisdom, limitations of supporting facilities and internet access, limited parental time in accompanying their children during online learning (Asmuni, 2020), internet connection, online media often errors and limitations of internet quota, lack of focus (Widodo & Nursaptini, 2020), and causing saturation and sleep disturbances (Pawicara & Conilie, 2020).

Although, in general, many problems in online learning, Indonesia continues to strive to increase innovation in the field of Education, especially in teaching and learning. Creating a learning environment is essential to create a Conducive self-learning environment (Hasbullah, 2018). The 4.0 era should direct the implementation of learning and Education to an environment that can develop students' freedom to process their learning activities by providing flexible access support over the internet (Drouin et al., 2013). The ICT mastery is an essential part of the implementation of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Supardi et al. (2021) provide recommendations to improve students' basic ICT skills, as it is proven to be beneficial for students' social media utilization, especially in learning.

Learning from home has also been implemented in Langkat since January 4, 2021, in the even semester. Home learning is focused on life skills education, activities, and assignments that

vary between students, according to their interests and conditions, including considering access gaps and home learning facilities. Therefore, this research aims to explore the implementation of distance learning in elementary schools during the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHOD

This study uses the case study method with a qualitative approach. This research presents a phenomenon that occurs by explaining the implementation of learning from home. Two respondents came from elementary school teachers in Kecapatan Sei Lapan Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. Structured interviews are submitted to respondents to explore information on implementing learning from home during Covid-19 in their schools. Some questions related to the implementation of online learning are prepared and researched by sixth-grade teachers of Zahara Integrated Islamic Elementary School and 050769 State Elementary School in Sei Lepan Subdistrict, Langkat District, North Sumatra Province. Data analysis is done in qualitative research. The data is then analyzed and narrated in the form of text.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

This study showed that the implementation of learning in Zahara Integrated Islamic Elementary School and Public Elementary School 050769 Sei Lepan Subdistrict Langkat North Sumatra Province is conducted online, the methods used by teachers online and offline, there are problems in the application of learning from home. There are advantages and disadvantages of the application of learning from home.

Discussions

Zahara Integrated Islamic Primary School is founded in 2012, has seven teachers and two educational staff, and 139 students. While the State Elementary School 050769 was established in 1974, it has seven people, two academic staff, and 181 students. Both schools are located in Sei Bilah Subdistrict Sei Lepan Langkat District, North Sumatra Province. Based on the policies applied by both schools, they implemented home learning for their students during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is under the Circular letter of Secretary-General No. 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Learning from Home during the emergency period of Covid 19 (Kemendikbud, 2020).

Based on the results of interviews from SM respondents, that the implementation of learning from home is carried out during Covid-19 is still ongoing to this day, teachers at the elementary education unit level in Langkat district also do the same in learning because they work together in preventing the spread of Covid-19. The implementation is carried out every Monday to Friday. Meanwhile, on Saturday, students come to the school to hand over their Teacher's assignments. Besides, ZM respondents stated that all teacher councils in Langkat District, especially in Public Elementary School 050769, conducted home learning to avoid the transmission of Covid-19. Besides, to maintain the health of the people around their environment. The implementation of home learning at the school is conducted from Monday to Saturday. There are similarities in both, namely the time of enactment of learning from home for students, even though one school uses Saturday to gather tasks given by the Teacher.

According to SM respondents, the method used by teachers in the learning process from home is that in its implementation, the Teachers use two ways, namely online and offline. The performance of home learning at Zahara Integrated Islamic Elementary School uses offline learning methods where students are grouped into four study groups consisting of five to six students. The implementation of learning from home is done offline outside the school area, and this is because the facilities owned by the parents of the students do not support the learning

process. Meanwhile, ZM respondents stated that it is not easy to carry out learning from home online because parents cannot provide the necessary learning facilities. Therefore, the school conducts learning from home offline, namely face-to-face at the parents' house, and the students consist of four study groups, each a learning group composed of five students.

SM respondents stated that many obstacles in carrying out learning from home offline are that the study group can only number a maximum of five people. It is according to a circular from the Head of the Education Office of Langkat Regency. The first obstacle faced is the allocation of time for teachers. For one study group, the time allocation was two hours (one hour equals thirty minutes). There are four study groups in the fourth grade of Zahara Integrated Islamic Primary School, and learning starts from 08.00-09.10 West Indonesia Time (First Study Group), 09.20-10.30 (Second Study Group), 13.00-14.10 (Third Learning Group), and 14.20-5.30 (Fourth Learning Group). Especially at 11.00-11.30, sixth-grade students must follow online learning at home by participating in learning programs from television stations (TVRI) every Monday to Friday online. Also, another obstacle that teachers in online learning must do is the need for teachers to prepare administrative documents during teaching from homes, such as the current student list, teacher absence, learning implementation sheet, and assignment report from TVRI television station where the paper must be reported monthly to the Langkat sub-district office.

Meanwhile, ZM respondents also said that the obstacle faced during the implementation of Learning from Home is time allocation to teachers. According to the circular letter delivered by the Head of Langkat District Office on January 4, 2020, point 7, "The implementation of offline learning by teachers is carried out outside the environment of the education unit with a maximum of five people." The number of sixth-graders of Public Elementary School 050769 this year as many as twenty people, if divided into five groups, then there are four study groups, and it can take time from morning to afternoon. Besides, there are obstacles faced by teachers, namely place and administration.

SM respondents stated the advantages of the implementation of Learning from Home offline are that teachers and students interact with each other, finding various learning atmospheres that become new experiences, more freedom in delivering teaching materials. While the downside is that the study group should only consist of five people, this makes the teacher longer outside than gathering with family. ZM respondents also stated that the advantage of implementing learning from home conducted offline is that teachers and students are easier to interact with, making it easier to deliver materials. Students are easier to understand the materials provided. Teachers and learners experience many unique learning experiences. At the same time, the disadvantage is in the division of time and administration.

SM respondents stated that the hope in the future regarding the implementation of learning from home during Covid-19 is that parents should be better prepared in facing problems or obstacles that occur in the future, more trying to make the most of the necessary facilities. Besides, the number of study groups consists not only of five people but ten people maximum. Meanwhile, ZM respondents stated that hopefully, there would be no more Covid-19 or other outbreaks so that the teaching and learning process can become normal again. Regarding the implementation of learning from home conducted offline, the participants are not a maximum of five people, but a maximum of 10 people. It is so that teachers have time with their families at home, and the time is not spent teaching learners only.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of learning from home in two ways are online and offline. It is generally done learning from home offline for the elementary school level, which is carried out outside the school environment. The implementation of learning is conducted on Monday to

Saturday at 08.00-15.30 WIB, and students are required to follow the educational program that is aired through TVRI television channels every day at 11.00-11.30 WIB. The problem faced by teachers during the implementation of learning from home lies in time management and administration. During the performance of learning from home, teachers and students discover new experiences and interact well with each other.

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