

## CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING PANDEMIC COVID-19 IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

*Tantangan Pembelajaran Daring selama Pandemi Covid-19 di Sekolah  
Menengah Pertama*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Coronavirus has moved people's learning patterns from the classroom to the internet. This article explores the challenges of online learning during the pandemic: hardware and internet connectivity concerns, perspectives of student, teacher and parent, and school system. Interview was used to collect the data. The descriptive analysis was implemented to categorize and classify the claims. It is discovered that certain students do not have a smartphone, that internet data is costly, and that the network is bad based on hardware and internet access. Students' perspectives on online learning include making a lot of tasks, difficult-to-understand content, being unable to access the internet, and not being able to use any phone apps. The viewpoints of the teachers are also listed. They include a lack of IT comprehension, a poor connection, a lack of student answers, and a loss of direct contact. Other experiences shared by parents include the inability to afford internet data, a lack of expertise, and inadequate time to assist their children in online learning, and the parents' complaint about their children's online gaming distraction. The education system, which dictates the lack of IT preparation and the minimal budget for promoting online learning, is the final challenge. The results suggest that teachers, parents, and schools should exert greater control over the development of online learning for students.*

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Online Learning, Pandemic, Perspectives*

### **A. INTRODUCITON**

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has altered how people communicate in learning (Wargadinata, et al 2020). This condition necessitates the use of technology by teachers in the distribution of materials. Learning to become online is made possible by technology. To help the virtual education system, online learning is touted as a dominant channel of

learning (Hoq, 2020; Wargadinata, et al 2020). It is expanding, and new technologies are being built to meet the needs of online learning. This has also been a generally recognized trend in the area of integrated technology in education for many years (Agung et al., 2020; Komalasari, 2020).

Furthermore, technology, which has been regarded as an important tool for

education in this pandemic period, has resulted in a slew of issues in society, including a lack of familiarity with online learning, a lack of comprehension of IT skills, and a lack of meaningful contact between students and teachers (Agung et al., 2020). These issues have the potential to escalate, resulting in a nightmare for online learning. Because of the weak connection, students have had trouble accessing the internet. This technology is primarily necessary to provide an online forum for learning English (Sarica & Cavus, 2009). However, nearly a year into the pandemic period, using online learning remains a major challenge for learning in Indonesia, especially in rural areas (Kaharuddin et al., 2020). Since students seldom use technology, it does not work as it should. (Agung et al., 2020).

Even before the covid-19 outbreak, several studies showed that technology was an effective tool for learning (Leonard & Guha, 2001; Sarica & Cavus, 2009). Then, in this pandemic, technology is established as the primary method for delivering instruction, even though students and teachers are separated. This is a connector that provides students with learning materials and comprehension. According to recent research, technology continues to play a major role in the

advancement of education (Hoq, 2020; Kaharuddin et al., 2020; Wargadinata et al., 2020). By acknowledging the value of technology, it is understood that technology is the only way to continue to offer learning to students. Despite this, human capital and expertise in using technology are other criteria for deciding whether technology works or whether humans are still unable to implement it. In addition, the restriction of internet access must be considered (Adnan & Anwar, 2020).

However, few studies concentrate on the issues associated with the use of technology in certain crucial positions (Sardi et al., 2017). Any problem has the potential to escalate. It causes havoc as it explodes. As a result, the focus of this research is on demonstrating how some students from low-income backgrounds view the use of technology in challenging circumstances. This is to determine whether or not online learning is feasible in this pandemic period (Sardi, 2023). Furthermore, it is to recognize the concerns that emerge as a result of online learning and to illustrate a plan for coping with them. Students and parents are burdened by the use of technology. It introduces a new custom that necessitates adaptability. In other words, the aim of

this research is to find out what's causing the rise in technology use.

This research relates to the use of technology to address the needs of students and teachers in terms of location and ease of use (Ermawati et al., 2021). Teachers and students would be more likely to engage in online learning as a result of this. Even though some low-income students find it difficult to access the internet and have access to technology, it is vital to incorporate the roles of parents in order to improve their children's motivation (Sardi et al., 2022). However, it is inevitable to include usable resources and technologies so that they can engage in the learning process and comprehend what they are learning.

## B. METHOD

A descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. Deep interviews were performed using an online framework to collect data (*WhatsApp*). Three students, six teachers, and three parents from different Junior High schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, were asked a series of questions about the complexities of online learning. The interview was conducted to learn more about the issues they faced when learning English online. The questions focused on concerns concerning online learning in relation to the learning process in this pandemic

covid-9 worldwide outbreak. The data was analyzed by grouping the concerns posed by students, teachers, and parents, conducting explanations to define patterns and data trends, and finally analyzing the statements' objectives.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Difficulties related to hardware and internet connection

The availability of each student's mobile must be taken into account before online learning can take place. Students would be unable to enroll in the online course if they do not have it due to financial constraints. They are unable to take part in class, complete tasks, or comprehend the learning process. A number of students do not have access to smartphones. The teacher can make a home visit to ensure that the students can still access the learning materials.

“The limitation of having no smart phone is a big challenge for online learning. There are some students who have no phone because of the lack of financial supply from the parents. There are students who use their parents phone to learn. And, the parents only have one phone to be used by several people. This makes online learning becomes more complicated.” (Ms. NN)

Furthermore, even if they have a smartphone, they should consider the advantages of getting internet data. Some users are expected to pay a monthly fixed rate, which can be costly for some. Students can find it difficult to access

the internet due to the limitations of purchasing internet data.

“It really affects students’ learning online if they do not have any internet data. They just cannot afford it. This truly makes the online learning ineffective.” (Mr. AB)

Another issue that most Indonesian students are concerned about is their struggle to use the internet. Even if they have access to it, the connection may be spotty at times, disrupting the learning process. Because of their failure to access the internet, they are unable to completely engage in class.

“They do not understand even though they follow the learning through zoom, google meet, but because of the network, some don't even understand what the teacher explains because of intermittent voices, etc.” (Ms. NA)

The challenges on the hardware and internet connection in applying online learning have also been acknowledged by a lecturer at University of Baghdad, Irak, Zena Abdulameer Mohammad in Hasbi (2020). He stated that:

I observed many students faced difficulties in downloading the apps either due to poor connection, power cut or old devices. In addition, some students are from very poor families that they don’t even have enough money to connect with internet.

Furthermore, Nur Kholis, a teacher at Semarang (Hasbi, et al, 2020), identified obstacles in applying the online learning

regarding to the use of the hardware and internet connection.

“Sometimes, it raised another obstacle when all of the activities must be done online. Because of the condition of the internet network that aren’t accessible or did not work properly in some places, it made the students and teacher unable to conduct the virtual class meetings or even giving tasks as scheduled.”

The use of hardware and the internet connection has created problems to education program around the world. This can be solution or even, more dangerous, long time problems that must be coped with. This online learning cannot be compared with the circumstances in face to face learning. This should be supportive tools to the virtual classroom.

### **Difficulties from students’, teachers’ and parents’ perspectives**

#### **a. Students’ perspectives**

This pandemic has a quick fix: digital learning. Students, on the other hand, come across a wide range of problems. One of them is the expectation that they complete several tasks. They have a hard time getting a response from the teachers because these are considered challenging. When they ask a question of their instructor, the teacher may or may not directly respond. They are still hesitant to ask their questions to the teachers. As a result, they'll have to do it themselves. Some students find online learning to be

challenging and believe that there are obstacles to overcome.

“I got many and pile up tasks. But, I feel shy to ask my teachers and my parent could not help me at all. They said they did not know. They forgot it.” (Student RZ)

“Every teacher has their own task to do. I did not know how to do it. (Student MA)

The materials explained on the online platform may be difficult to understand, and the signal may have issues; the sound quality may not be good enough to hear, the loading phase may interrupt learning focus, the signal may be lost, or there may be another problem with the link. Because of the vague description, there is a misunderstanding of the materials given. The more student-centered approach to online learning causes issues for students, especially when it comes to trying to interpret materials independently, which most Indonesian students are unable to do.

“I do not know the materials. I sometimes come late in online classroom. When teacher explains I do not get it because sometimes there is no voice, the picture stops, or I sometimes get out from the zoom because of the network.” (Student SC)

Some students are also discovered to come from low-income families. They cannot afford internet data, which has a negative impact on internet data use. It is suspected that buying it on a monthly basis would be

expensive. Money for everyday life will also be insufficient, and the budget for the purchase of Internet data is a big concern. In order to satisfy the demand for internet data, they would reduce their daily output.

“I complained about the relatively expensive internet quota that forced the family economy to spend more money to buy quotas” (Student MA)

And there are other students who have trouble with their mobile phones. They must understand the program procedures that certain students are unfamiliar with and need to consult their peers. Another problem with their phone is that the phone's storage capacity is insufficient to meet the demand for materials that need to be downloaded, and that any teacher has to pay attention to their materials.

“Just like there are applications that are required that must be prioritized, even though I have not or haven't adapted, haven't been able to apply too much, so yes there are challenges, such as google classroom. However, some teachers use WhatsApp. So, we only used it until now.” (Student ZA)

This statement is also emphasized by a statement from a teacher at a junior high school in Semarang, Wahyu Fajar Setiawan (Hasbi, et al, 2020) commented that:

“...but the problem was, not all the students had this (Google Classroom) application. They could download it, but it needed time to give students know how to use of this application.”

Also, a teacher interviewed her students about their problem in facing online class, they mostly said:

“they were exhausted because they have like 10 online classes and each teacher demand different things and lots of assignments. They started complain about running out of credit, bad internet connection, tight online schedules, too many assignments and the list is endless.”

Applications required are, for example, Google Classroom or e-learning specifically used by Islamic Junior High School teachers. Applications are not well used by students. More clarification and simulations are required to implement them.

#### **b. Teachers' perspectives**

Lack of critical IT literacy is one of the challenges that emerge from the viewpoint of teachers of online learning. If teachers are not well educated in online distribution and methodologies, the success of online learning is not yet clear enough . Due to the exponentially increasing Covid-19 pandemic, this is not parallel to the accelerated understanding of internet distribution and teaching methodologies. Teachers are not well trained for the simulated classroom. Teachers are not well trained for a simulated school.

“Another challenge is the difficulties of using teaching method which is still monotonous. Some teachers including me are still difficult to apply different method. The method

is just the same. Moreover, the teachers who have no IT knowledge, they will be less creative in applying teaching methodology.” (Mr. AW)

Teachers are disturbed by a weak relationship in the classroom. Some students have not come when they are about to lecture, so they have to wait. This is a waste of time waiting for someone to enter. The interaction may be unclear while teaching and the cause may not be clear to other students. This shows that, while the relation and location provide access to the internet, the output of the connection is not always stable.

“Day by day, online learning becomes a difficulty for teachers because the learning time has been reduced, which was 40 minutes for one hour, now only 30 minutes, so for the subjects I teach, only 1 hour is provided, now to use zoom or use google meet to wait for students to enter zoom, we need time It was almost 30 minutes so that no one was left behind, so that at the time of giving the material, the explanation was not enough, so their learning was no longer effective because we only explained a little. Even when explaining, it will not be as smooth as we imagine because whether the network constraints from the teachers themselves or from students are no longer effective when we use zoom and google meet.” (Ms. NN)

Another big concern is the lack of response from students when teachers are ready to lecture. Any teachers may have reminded their students to register for lessons, but



nobody appears to care. For example, she asked students to watch a YouTube video and tell her what they think about it in the WhatsApp community, but no one replied or even wrote any comments. This forces teachers to deliver materials in the same manner at some meetings. These aspects contribute to goods that are poorly finished and misunderstood. Teachers face huge challenges because they are unable to decide what students have experienced as a result of the small response from students.

“Students cannot be managed when using online learning. The student's response is not as usual when studying offline. When they were sent online learning materials or assignments, there was no response. Even it is only one to two people who respond. When given the same assignment, the response was the same, even only one in fifteen students responded to online learning.” (Mr. KA)

Another concern is that the instructor has forgotten the lack of direct contact. The instructor cannot personally correct the learning errors of the pupils. Due to the lack of response from the students, it is a major challenge to consider whether there is no such formal contact or even direct feedback. The instructor allows the students to act independently. Both students continue to work on their own or try to find a way to explain the materials.

“If they were in school, they could focus on doing assignments, they could directly ask the teacher if there was something they didn't understand, so now they have to do it themselves at home without any guidance” (Ms. FW)

From several problems faced by teachers at school, it is also highlighted by Zena, the lecturer at Iraq, she stated that

“What I noticed also is that the interaction in the online classes is little bit less than the class. The reason is that the online classes does not support all the instructions set by the teacher because there are different levels of students.”

Another point of view was released by Rahayu, a lecturer in Banjarmasin (Hasbi, et al, 2020). She found that:

“Was it hard to facilitate online learning? definitely yes! To keep the participants in the course, to maintain good communication with them, to engage them actively in the discussion and let alone to make them submitting the assignment are challenging for sure.”

These issues have arisen with respect to online learning. It is really important to pay attention to overcoming some challenges and to leading the learning process to be effective.

### c. Students' Parents' Perspectives

There are many comments from parents on the presence of online schooling at home. Parents without home internet connections appeared to be more nervous and worried

about studying. They identified that they did not feel comfortable with studying. They are worried about the provision of Internet data that is not inexpensive at all. They need to handle the resources for keeping the phone already attached to the internet to enable online learning for children to study. This is not simple for a low to middle-level family whose wealth is not enough for the family.

“Learning online requires a lot of money, not to mention that we have to buy quotas every month.” (Ms. EW)

The virtual classroom has been leading to obstacles found by people. This is emphasized by Rohqim, a lecturer at Malang. He informed that:

“Everybody had the same issues and challenges. The fear of getting was real and created anxiety and depression which reminded us that the online classes is the only choice to stay safe.”

In addition, some parents claim that their children often question them when they have some difficulty in answering their teachers' assignments. The thing is that parents don't even know the materials at all. This limits them to telling their children about it. They believe like the children's materials are just different from their materials when they were in kindergarten. They become students in their children's class because of this online learning. Often, the lessons given by the children's teachers are sometimes not

understood by the pupils. The parents ought to teach their kids about that. Since parents' context experience is not relevant to materials, they find it's hard to teach them. Any parents did not even know how to read texts and did not attend primary school, and did not have a proper educational history to grasp those materials from their children's teachers.

“I felt dizzy because of teaching to my children because of the assignments and the old method. Teachers have lots of assignments.” (Ms. EW)

Often, often the lessons provided by the children's teachers are not understood by the pupils. Then the parents have to tell their children about it. Since parents' history information is not relevant to materials, they find it hard to teach them. Any parents did not even know how to read texts and did not attend primary school, and did not have a proper educational history to grasp the content from their children's teachers.

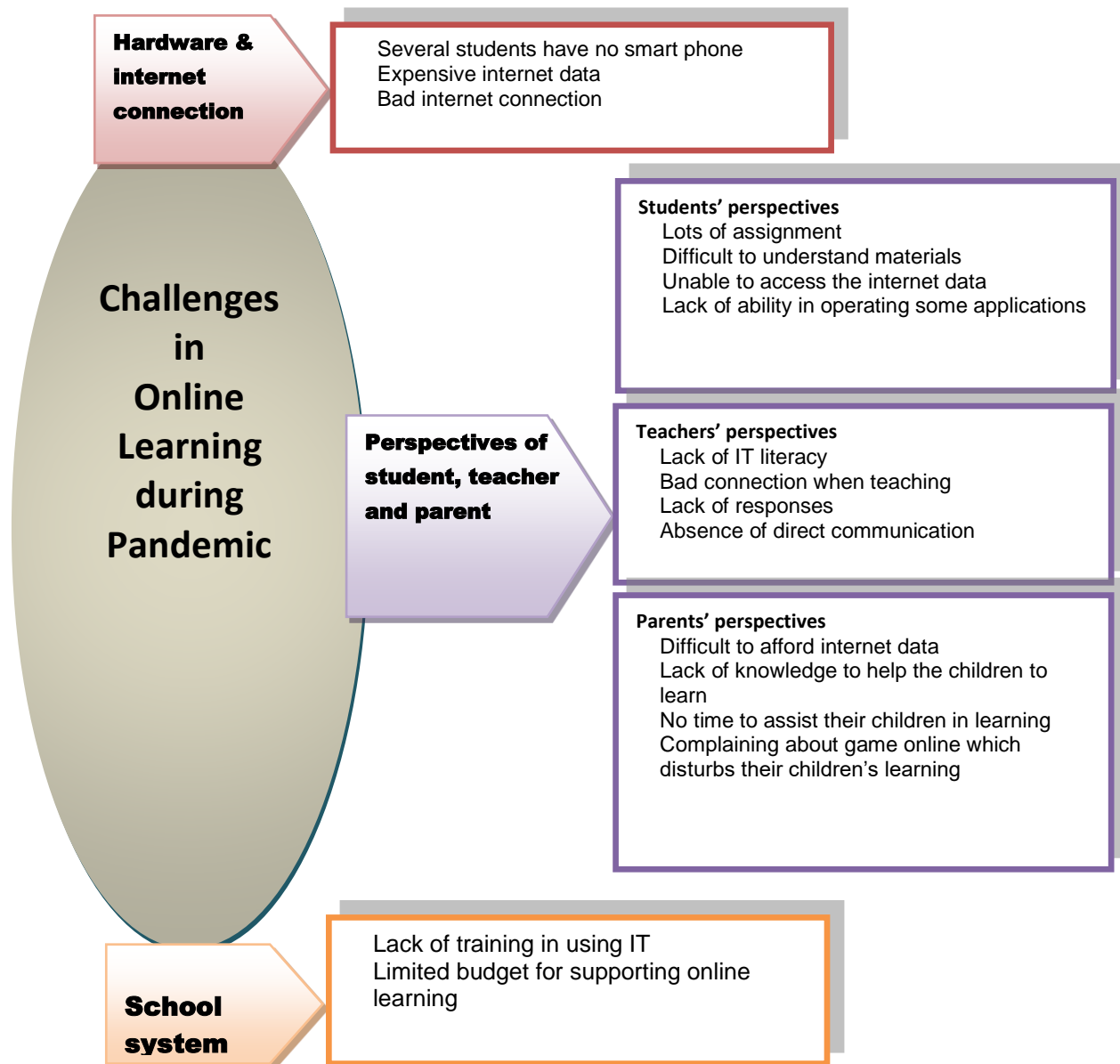
“I can't help my children study, because I also have a lot of homework to do or if I have to go to the market.” (Ms. WR)

Children learning online have been distracted by the application of the online game. Ms. C stresses about the students who waste their time playing sports. They can't fix problems when students have to take part in online study. In reality, they are distracted by a lot of



online gaming applications that take a lot of time.

“I am dizzy seeing my child hold the cellphone. they sometimes do not learn but play online games.” (Ms. CN)



**Figure 1.** A Conceptual Map of Challenges in Online Learning during Pandemic

Finally, many Indonesian parents' online learners have been confronted with these issues. Continuous complications can lead to a major tragedy for students, and for the family itself.

### **Difficulties related to School System**

The school has vital guidelines to ensure that learning runs well. The first thing to remember is the teachers who are in charge of the school system. Some teachers also have a lack of knowledge of technology literacy, so that the school could have offered some instruction to promote technology literacy.

“The school has no budget and less initiative in providing trainings for teachers and students. The school has been suggested to conduct trainings, but there is no budget for it and the teachers are less motivated to learn the technology because they are accustomed to use the old method in teaching, especially for old teachers.”  
 (Mr. AW)

The school did not have adequate technical instruction at the school. It is constrained by the budget for the training that is not offered by the school or also, the school is not yet able to offer enough funding for the training. This produces teachers who do not have enough IT skills and let teachers use the old ways of teaching.

### **D. CONCLUSION**

Online learning is identified as the ideal pandemic approach. Instead of reporting the gains of online learning, study has identified a number of challenges that transform into disasters. The challenges that result from online learning have an effect on pupils, parents, teachers and even the classroom. The report shows three major problems believed to be a turnaround failure. The first problem relates to hardware and internet access. The presence of a smartphone for students is also difficult to own, and access to the Internet is still a negative thing that affects the quality of online learning.

The second is the challenges associated with the experiences of educators, parents and teachers. The students find online learning to be difficult due to the weakness of the teacher's interpretation. It is therefore difficult to consider what is caused by the lack of access to the Internet. They were also unable to afford the internet data and lack of IT literacy that would enable them to run e-learning or some other application. Teachers often notice a number of challenges relating to online learning: lack of technology expertise, poor connections to online

education, lack of input from pupils, and loss of direct input.

Then, from the perspective of parents, they identify that they are not convenient to online learning for several reasons: Internet data is expensive, children often ask about their learning, although some parents don't really understand it, they can't help their children with tasks as they have a lot of activities to do, and they feel frustrated since their children prefer to learn.

The last challenge is the education system. It is hoped that the school would help to improve online learning. The school still has a difficulty making online learning work smoothly. The issues have to do with the teachers who require experience, but the school has not done any exact training. This is exacerbated by a reduction in the budget for the conduct of teaching.

With regard to the problems of online learning, it is important to find an open application to be used in online learning that addresses the needs of students. In addition, an instructor can apply blended learning to ensure that students are able to understand the materials, reduce assignments and increase engagement. It is important for the school to have IT instruction to improve the willingness of the teacher to apply the technology. The

last, the pandemic has been a life-changing experience for all aspects in life and is expected to be a revolution for teaching and learning so that this can be managed well and to reach the goal of the learning.

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