

# DISTANCE LEARNING: TEACHER'S AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to describe the teacher's and elementary school students' perspective about the strength and weaknesses of distance learning and how school overcome its weaknesses. Descriptive qualitative research was the design of this research. The subject of this research was a class teacher of the third grade and 19 elementary school students. Interview was conducted to get the data. The teacher's perspective told that distance learning contributed positive effects on teaching preparation, class management and parents' role. However, it also had weaknesses; limited facilities, assessing students' personality, limited social interaction, and evaluation. Meanwhile, based on the students' perception, they feel that learning at home make them closer with their parents, fell relax and enjoyable since they could play while learning. However, they felt very bored and want to meet the teacher and their friends. To overcome these weaknesses, the school conduct evaluation gradually so that betterment of teaching learning process can be done. The continuity of distance learning was done based on the government regulation.

**Keywords:** distance learning, perspective.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of activities which are done continuously and bring changes on behaviours. According to Houwer, Holmes, and Moors (2013) learning has been defined functionally as changes in behaviour that result from experience or mechanistically as changes in the organism that result from experience. In addition Schunk (2012: 3) stated that learning is an enduring change in behaviour, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice

or other forms of experience. The criteria of learning include involving change, endures over time, occurring through experience. The word learning often related to teaching; that is teaching learning process—the activities where a teacher transfers knowledge to the students in school.

Nowadays, the appearance of Corona virus disease (Covid 19) has influenced many factors including education. World Health Organization (WHO) stated that corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly

discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problem like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

Meanwhile, to prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, WHO suggested to do the following: wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub, maintain at least 1 metre distance from people who are coughing or sneezing, avoid touching face, cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, stay home if feeling unwell, refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs, practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large group of people.

Realizing the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia, the government prohibited the schools to conduct face to face meeting or traditional class. It had to be shifted into distance learning. Distance learning is teaching learning process where the teacher and students are not involved physically in a classroom, but it is held through virtual meeting with the help of technologies such as computer, laptop, or smart phone. It is delivered by using some platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Youtube, Instagram, WhatssApp, and some other social media.

Kiryakova (2009: 29) stated that the appearance of distance education is connected with the changing conditions in economical, social and technological aspect. Distance education gives an opportunity to everyone to learn throughout his/her entire life. In addition, according to Sadeghi (2019: 80), distance education or distance learning is the kind of education in which students may not always be physically present at a school. The implementation of distance learning brought advantages and disadvantages. Sadeghi (2019: 83) explained the advantages of distance learning, they are (a) studying from anywhere, anytime, (b) Saving significant amount of money, (c) no commuting, (d) flexibility to choose, (e) saving time, (e) earn while learning. Meanwhile, distance learning also has disadvantages, they are (a) high chance of distraction, (b) complicated technology, (c) no social interaction, (d) difficulty staying in contact with instructors, (e) Job markets do not accept online degrees.

The majority of distance education today takes place using the internet, now readily accessible for the vast majority of students whether in their own homes or at facilities such as local libraries. These electronic means are used to distribute the learning material, keep students in touch with teachers and provide access to communication among students. Furthermore, Vlasenko and Bozhok (2014), said that the future of distance education depends primarily on the creative use and development of new technologies. The

technology can be utilized in teaching learning process. Learning technology is software in the form of systematic ways of solving learning problems that are increasingly sophisticated and have a broad place in education (Suparman & Zuhairi, 2004: 345-346).

Distance learning have been implemented in Indonesia education since March 2020, started from early childhood education, kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, until university. In this research, the researcher focused the investigation to the implementation of distance learning in elementary school. The objectives of this research were to describe the teacher's and elementary school students' perspective about the strength and weaknesses of distance learning and how school overcome its weaknesses. This research was important to be conducted since it was known that elementary school students still need more guidance from teacher and interaction among teacher and students was one factor in the success of understanding the material. By knowing the weaknesses, hopefully the school will do betterment to implementing distance learning.

A previous study was conducted by Sadeghi (2019) entitled A shift from Classroom to Distance Learning: Advantages and Limitations. In this study the writer discussed history and theories of distance learning, review literature of distance learning, advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, implication of the study to learners and

teachers, and finally mention suggestions for improving distance learning. This previous study had relevancy with this research, both of them discussed about distance learning. However, this research has difference from that previous study since that previous study is a theoretical review, meanwhile this research was conducted to the teacher and elementary school students.

The distance learning which has been implemented in the elementary school used WhatsApp. The teacher delivers teaching material by sharing it in WhatsApp. Teaching materials are all forms of material used to assist teachers/ instructors in carrying out teaching and learning activities. The material can be in the form of written or unwritten material (Majid, 2006). The continuity of distance learning is conducted based on the government regulation.

On August 2020, it was published the rule of maintaining teaching learning process during Covid-19 pandemic, it is the Joint decision of Education and Culture Minister, Religion Minister, Health Minister, and Domestic Minister of Republic Indonesia. No. 01/KB/2020, No. 516 Year 2020, No. HK.03.01/MENKES/363/2020, No. 440-882 about Learning maintenance guide in 2020/2021 School Year and 2020/2021 Academic Year in corona virus disease 2019 pandemic time. It is stated in the first article that face to face learning in education unit in 2020/2021 school year and 2020/2021 academic year is conducted

gradually in all of Indonesia territory with these provisions: (a) education unit which is located in green and yellow based on the data of National Covid 19 handling task force (<https://covid19.go.id/peta-resiko>) can hold face to face learning in education unit after getting permission from regional government through education office or province, district, or city, and regional, district or city office of the ministry of religion based on their authority and approval of local covid-19 acceleration handling task force unit; (b) education unit which is located in orange and red zone based on the data of National Covid- 19 handling task force is prohibited to conduct face to face teaching learning process in education unit and keep going on learning from home (Ministry of Education and Culture: 2020).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Qualitative method was used to conduct this research. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010: 424) stated that qualitative research studies behaviour as it occurs naturally in a classroom, an entire school, a playground, or in an organization or community. The researcher goes physically to the people, the setting, or the institution to observe behaviour. Virtual presence may be possible with newer technologies. In addition, qualitative inquirer deals with data that are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers and statistics. Data in the form of quotes from document, field notes, and interviews or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, or electronic

communications are used to present the findings of the study. The data collected are the participant experiences and perspectives; the qualitative researcher attempts to arrive at a rich description of the people, objects, events, places, conversation, and so on.

The subject of this research was a class teacher of the third grade and 19 students of the third grade in MIS Simbang Kulon 01. This research was conducted in 2020/2021 school year.

To get the data, the researcher used interview. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010: 438), interview is one of the most widely used and basic methods for obtaining qualitative data. Interviews are used to gather data from people about opinions, beliefs, and feelings about situation in their own words. They are used to help understand the experiences people have and the meaning they make of them rather than test hypotheses. Since today is in Covid-19 pandemic situation, so the interview with the teacher was conducted through WhatsApp. Meanwhile, the interview with the students was documented in a video, the researcher asked a help to the parents to ask some questions and the students answered. After getting the data, next the researcher analyze it by making a transcription and interpretation.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teacher's Perception**

Based on the analysis of the data, it could be interpreted about the teacher's

perception on distance learning. It is viewed from its strength and weaknesses.

## 1. The strength of the distance learning

### a. Teaching preparation

Before handling teaching learning process in the form of distance learning, the teacher had to prepare the materials. Then, the teacher explained the material by documenting in a video. Meanwhile, for the daily practice, the question items were written on a piece of paper, then it was taken a picture. In the middle and in the end of the semester, the teacher prepared the question item which is typed in google form. Therefore, by conducting distance learning, the teacher got positive effect since she had to be creative, well organized and doing better preparation.

### b. Class management

In handling distance learning, the teacher used class WhatsApp Group. She started the class by greeting the students and gave motivation. After that, she checked the attendance. Next, she shared the material in the form of video, picture, or Youtube link which has the content of the material. Finishing the explanation of the material, the students were given practices, they were in the form of writing the answer on a piece of paper, speaking through WhatsApp voice note, or making video. The practice must be done in certain duration then the answer was submitted through WhatsApp. The teacher gave feedback and reminded the students who have not submitted the answer yet. In the

interview, the teacher said that by conducting distance learning, the material could be taught to the students based on the target.

### c. Parents' role

One of the positives thing of distance learning for elementary students was the contribution of parents to handle communication with the teacher. Here the teacher felt closer with the parents since the students were assisted by their parents to communicate in WhatsApp group. When the teacher shared information or announcement in WhatsApp group, the parents gave responses. Every time the parents needed information, so they texted the teacher.

Besides handling communication with the teacher, the parents also have to master the material, so that when they accompanied their children, they could explain it and made their children understand the material. As a result, the parents know directly how their children master the material, it means that they could know their children ability.

## 2. The weaknesses of distance learning

### a. Limited facilities

Since the economic background of the students parents are not same, the possessions of the gadget were different. Some students parents have smartphone with good devices. They also have enough internet quota. Meanwhile, there were some students who have smartphone but they do not have enough

quota. The worst one is that there were some students who do not have smartphone, therefore they asked help from their aunty or uncle to join in class WhatssApp Group. As a result, they were sometimes late in submitting their work.

b. Evaluation

The teacher met difficulties to assess the students' ability, because she could not give the practice directly. Some students were assisted by their parents in doing the test, so that the answer was not purely from students' ideas.

c. Students' Personality

One of the criterion in scoring students competence is observing students attitude. During conducting distance learning, the teacher could not observe students behaviour, therefore the teacher met difficulties in making academic report in the end of the semester.

d. Social interaction

Implementing distance learning means there is no physical meeting among teacher and students. Therefore, the interaction between teacher and the students was limited. The students also cannot interact with their classmates. This condition raised boredom.

**Students' Perception**

The researcher analyzed the data which were got from the interview with the students that were documented in videos.

Table 1. Students' perspective on Strength and Weaknesses of Distance Learning

Students' Code	Strength	Weaknesses
S-1	Enjoyable	Did not meet the teacher and classmates
S-2	-	I have to learn with my mother, I miss my teacher and my friends
S-3	It is not tired	I can not meet my teacher and friends, I miss my teacher and my friends
S-3	It is like holiday	I can not meet my friends
S-4	Enjoyable, I can learn and play	I can not meet my teacher, I can not meet my friends, I can not play and make joke with my friends
S-5	Accompanied by my parents, Enjoyable, Watching learning video	I do not go to school, I can not meet my friends
S-6	I can study with playing and enjoyable	I feel bored, I can not meet my friends

<b>S-7</b>	I can study and play	I can not meet my friends
<b>S-8</b>	I can learn more slowly	I can not meet my teacher and my friends
<b>S-9</b>	I am happy	I can not meet my teacher and my friends
<b>S-10</b>	-	I can not meet my friends, I do not get pocket money
<b>S-11</b>	I can learn with lay on and play	Sometimes it is bored, I miss my friends and my teacher
<b>S-12</b>	I can learn slowly	I can not meet my friends
<b>S-13</b>	I can learn and play	I can not meet my friends
<b>S-14</b>	If I have a test, it can be helped by my parents	I do not get pocket money
<b>S-15</b>	I can learn enjoyably	I can not meet my friends and my teacher
<b>S-16</b>	I can learn slowly and I can learn	I can not meet my friends directly
<b>S-17</b>	I can learn slowly at home	I can not learn with my friends directly
<b>S-18</b>	I can learn slowly	I can not meet my friends and my teacher

<b>S-19</b>	I can learn with lay on my bed	I can not meet my teacher
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Since this data were got from elementary school students, so they gave their perspective in simple way. Here the writer interpreted what the students told about the strength and weaknesses of distance learning.

#### 1. The strength of distance learning

The students stated that they felt happy for having distance learning because they could play while study. They think that distance learning is like having holiday, so that they can do learn by laying on bed. Therefore they can study slowly, and enjoyably. As a result they were not tired. In addition, they enjoyd they materials since the teacher use videos to deliver the material. Moreover, since they study at home, they were accompanied by their parents, this condition made them feel happy. One of the student said that when having a test, it was helped by his parents.

#### 2. The weaknesses of distance learning

All of the students said that they miss their friends, distance learning made them cannot meet their friends. They want to meet their friend and make a joke together. In addition, they want to meet with the teacher directly, they miss their teachers. They stated that distance learning made them felt bored. However, there was also funny statement from the students, two students complained that having distance

learning made them did not get pocket money.

### **How School overcome Students' Boredom**

The teacher and Headmaster always do gradual evaluation of distance learning. Firstly, the school socialize that the teaching learning process keep conducted in the form of distance learning since March 2020 by using WhatssApp. There was pros and cons from the parents, however the school keep going on implementing distance learning. On the new school year of 2020/2021, the school stated that in this school year, distance learning was still implemented until there was next regulation. Next, on August 2020 there was a Joint decision of Education and Culture Minister, Religion Minister, Health Minister, and Domestic Minister of Republic Indonesia. No. 01/KB/2020, No. 516 Tahun 2020, No. HK.03.01/MENKES/363/2020, No. 440-882 about Learning maintenance guide in 2020/2021 School Year and 2020/2021 Academic Year in coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic time.

The next step, the school offered whether the parents want their children have distance learning or traditional class. They were asked to fulfil agreement letter; they might choose two options by stating agree or disagree. After getting the agreement from local government, the trial of face to face meeting or traditional class was held in limited duration, it was only 2 hours a day, every class were divided into 2

shifts, it means that the class was only filled with 50% students. Besides, the teacher and students had to obey health protocol; their body temperature had to be measured before entering school area, they had to wear mask and face shield, they had to wash their hand using hand rub or hand sanitizer. Nowadays, there were no information yet about implementing traditional class fully, the school will not hold full traditional class until there is a regulation from government.

### **CONCLUSION**

This Covid-19 pandemy brought many effect to all aspect of life including education. Since March 2020, school had to implement distance learning. This activity has strength and weaknesses. In this research, it was explained based on the teacher's and students' perspective. To overcome the weaknesses of distance learning, school always do gradual evaluation. Until now, school have not hold full traditional class. The school will hold traditional class until there is regulation from government.

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