

Inclusive learning during covid-19 in elementary schools in Indonesia

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred in Indonesia in early March 2020 which was then followed by learning from home policy. The purpose of this study is to gather information through a survey about the implementation of online learning conducted by teachers who provide inclusive education service at the elementary schools. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The data collected by using a survey technique and a descriptive analysis in several provinces in Indonesia. The results show that teachers' knowledge of COVID-19 needs improvement and a few teachers still believe that COVID-19 is a conspiracy. The learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has made teachers make changes in the teaching and learning process, but not all teachers use television programs as a medium of learning. The ability of teachers to use ICT (Information and Communication Technology) helps them in providing educational services and the majority have no difficulty using learning applications. Although at the beginning of the pandemic, it was difficult to adapt to learning, until this article is written the teachers have been adapting their teaching approaches. It is also found that teachers have a good relationship with parents and teachers fully aware that the success of distance learning lay in the involvement of parents.

Keywords: Covid-19, inclusion, inclusive education, pandemic

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Introduction

Inclusive education is an effective strategy to promote universal education because it can create schools that are responsive to the various actual needs of children and society (Sunardi & Sunaryo, 2011). Inclusive education is a reflection of education that represents real life in our community. Inclusion is a philosophy in which each member of the school includes the community, school principals, teachers, school administration officers, students, and parents realize their shared responsibility in educating all students so they develop optimally according to their potential (Budiyanto, 2009).

Furthermore, inclusion also encourages the absence of a child or young person who is excluded from general education due to differences in learning acceptance, language, culture, race, class, differences in religion and behaviour (O'Hanlon, 2003). The United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that inclusive education will be held if regular schools are transformed into inclusive schools. Inclusive schools are schools that are responsive to the educational needs of students and ensure the quality of services provided are following the needs even though it is conducted during difficult times such as natural and non-natural disasters.

In December 2019, a group of pneumonia with unknown etymology emerged in Wuhan City, China's Hubei Province. Since the discovery of the coronavirus in the province of Wuhan, China (Sun et al., 2020) not many suspects that the education process in 2020 should think about a new direction in its implementation. On January 30 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as a public

health emergency for international concern. The official name given to the coronavirus disease is COVID-19. The coronavirus disease or COVID-19 outbreak has entered Indonesia after two suspected COVID-19 patients were identified in March 2020. According to Indonesian Law No. 24/2007 concerning Disaster Management, states that there are three types of disasters, namely natural, non-natural and social disasters. The COVID-19 outbreak is categorized as a non-natural disaster because it is a series of non-natural events in the form of epidemics and disease outbreaks. One of the biggest impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak is the disruption to the provision of face-to-face learning services that are switched to distance learning or online to stop the spread of this virus in schools because social isolation is one way to stop its spread.

On March 24 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Circular Number 4 of 2020 concerning the implementation of education policies in the emergency period of the spread of COVID-19. Based on the COVID-19 policy, traditional and routine learning that emphasizes teacher-student interactions in class and outside of class shifts to distance learning. Looking at point one of the circulars emphasizes the concerns predicted by Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) which state that the COVID-19 pandemic will cause major (and possibly uneven) disruption in student learning; interference in internal judgments; and the cancellation of public judgments for their qualification or replacement with inferior alternatives. Given that learning in an inclusive education setting must deal with participants. Investigations on how the implementation of inclusive education in a pandemic period is necessary to be further investigated to ensure the education security experienced by students and ensure the quality of education services provided. Responding to the conditions of learning that are mostly carried out at home, schools and parents are required to be teachers as well for students during the pandemic or while distance learning is implemented to reduce exclusion for students in getting their education services.

According to the Global Education Monitoring Report 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has added a new layer of exclusion concerning the accessibility of distance learning opportunities, which also affects new population categories (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020). The pre-existing layers of exclusion include gender discrimination, isolation, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, detention, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes that impede students' right to be educated together with their peers. or to receive an education of the same quality. The pandemic also increases the risk of marginalized students dropping out of education and leaving school early (Ranscombe, 2020). According to UNESCO as of 25 May 2020, 188 countries have suspended schools and more than 90% of registered students (1.5 billion young people) worldwide are now without education (Lestari & Gunawan, 2020).

In the condition of the COVID-19 pandemic, students with disabilities have a higher risk of exclusion compared to students in general. This is where the implementation of inclusive education is necessary because to advance the practice of inclusive education, children must be given equality and access to education at all school levels [9]. Meanwhile, accessibility is one of the important issues in the delivery of education.

The problem with the virus is not a problem that occurs once in a lifetime and ends. History records that the influenza virus pandemic has occurred since several centuries ago and that this problem has never died (de Rosaro & Saepudin, 2018). Until this research reported, no certainty had yet been found regarding the time when the COVID-19 pandemic would end. The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak affects access and education services not only in Indonesia but throughout the world. The issue of implementing inclusive education before the pandemic period is also related to accessibility. Based on the explanation above, it is important to review the implementation of inclusive education amid unprecedented conditions because inclusive education is marked by authentic results and accountability mechanisms that can facilitate a person to achieve prosperity and face global challenges. crucial together with other people (Bakhshi, Taff, Trani, & Kaplan, 2020). Fulfilling the right to education for every citizen is given even during the COVID-19 disaster.

Inclusive education is a strategy to promote effective universal education because it can create schools that are responsive to the various actual needs of children and society and are education that ensures access and quality (Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014). Inclusive education is an educational approach that prioritizes students' rights, but how can guaranteeing the right to education occur when this pandemic increases the exclusion of students, especially those who come and are in marginalized groups. What changes in educational arrangements should we consider in the future so that all children still have equal access to education and quality education.

Therefore, in this study, researchers wanted to observe and analyse the implementation of learning in an inclusive education setting during the COVID-19 pandemic by involving teachers. The implementation of learning referred to in this context is the process, method, or action in implementing inclusive education.

Method

This research was conducted through a qualitative descriptive approach by involving elementary school teachers who provide inclusive education spread across several provinces in Indonesia, including West Sumatera, West Java, Yogyakarta and South Kalimantan, which provide inclusive education. This technique is used to collect information from several people about a particular topic or issue (Gunawan, 2013). The data was collected online by filling out questionnaires that were closed-ended and open-ended questions related to; subject demographics, social characteristics, COVID-19, and learning conditions amid a pandemic. The number of respondents in this study was 80 teachers who had different scientific backgrounds. This research was conducted from August to October 2020.

Results and Discussion

Results

Respondent's Demographic Data

In this study, demographic data from teachers were collected including age, gender, and education level as shown in Figures 1a and 1b.

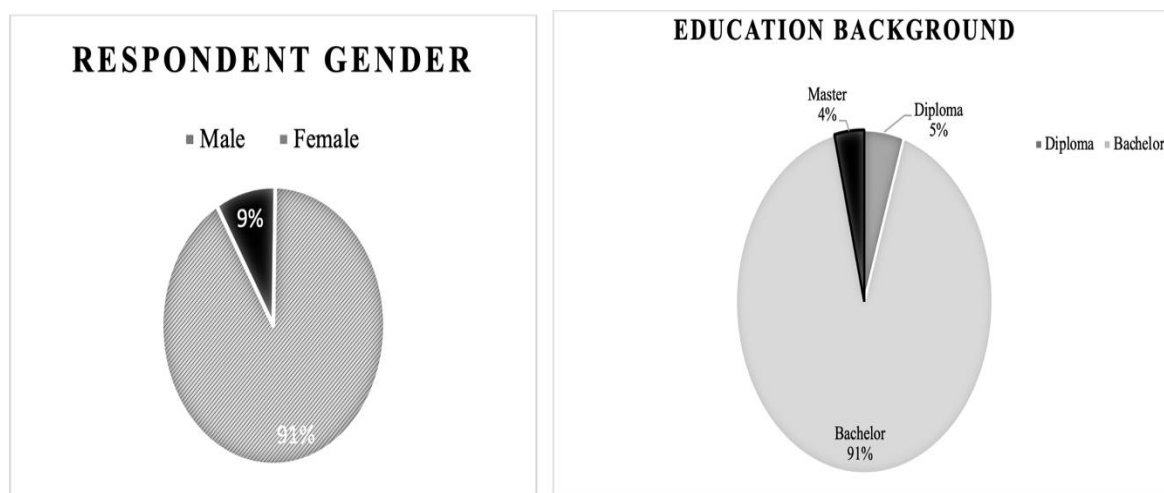


Figure 1a <Respondent Gender>

1b <Respondent's Educational Qualifications>

Based on the data collected, it was found that 91% of the respondents were women and 9% were men. Furthermore, 91% also have a bachelor's qualification, 5% diploma and only 4% have a bachelor's qualification.

Teacher's knowledge about COVID-19 Furthermore, teachers' knowledge about COVID-19 was also collected. This knowledge includes knowledge about COVID-19, teachers' attitudes and responses to COVID-19, the effects of COVID-19 on themselves. The data collected shows that 70% of teachers think that COVID-19 is transmitted through the air, 29% state that COVID-19 is not transmitted through the air and 1% say they do not know (Figure 2). All respondents agreed that it is not normal to not wear a mask when leaving the house during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the opinion of whether COVID-19 is a conspiracy and propaganda by certain people, 91% answered no, 5% answered maybe, 3% answered maybe, and 1% said yes.

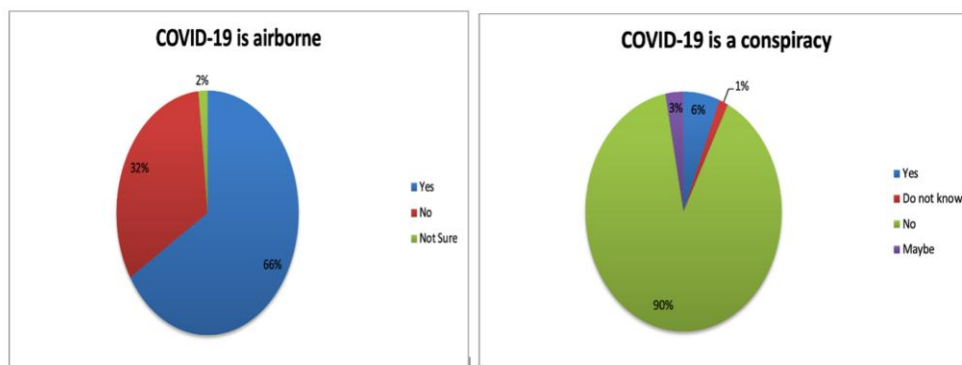


Figure 2 <Teacher Knowledge about Covid-19>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, learning in all schools conducted through distance learning. During COVID-19, teachers asked students to watch programs on national television and do the assignments given through the program.

Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is found that teachers needed more time to prepare learning materials. Although the government provides teaching material assistance through television programs, the majority of teachers ask do not to use the learning program at the national TV program as learning material because the teachers choose to prepare the material themselves, provide learning in videos and send messages via the WhatsApp application. In some areas, they also encounter network problems so they cannot watch the national TV channel. However, some teachers conduct it only at the beginning and have stopped over time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many teachers give assignments via WhatsApp and/or Google Classroom. Apart from using WhatsApp and Google Classroom, teachers also use other applications and media such as Mentimeter, YouTube, Educational Comics, WPS, Online Video Converter, and Zoom. Teachers do not find any difficulties in preparing teaching materials related to their ability to use the applications used. Only 45% of teachers have difficulty using learning applications.

According to the respondents, students in their schools enjoy distance learning and the majority of teachers provide assignment collection flexibility to their students. In communicating with parents, the majority of respondents have no difficulty in communicating with the parents of students. 39% of respondents help parents to use learning applications that are used at the beginning of learning, and 3% do so when parents need them. 99% of parents will contact the teacher when students/parents experience problems, and 95% parents of students are active parents and all respondents agree that the success of distance learning is determined by parental involvement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also found that 96% of respondents changed their way of teaching when students have difficulty following lessons.

Discussion

From the research data obtained, the majority of teachers who teach at the elementary school education are women (91%). The same data shows that female teachers outnumber male teachers are also found by the Centre for Data and Statistics on Education and Culture. The number of elementary school teachers in the 2018/2019 academic year was 1.4 million with girls 1.01 million (68.95%) larger than male teachers at 454.7 thousand (31.05 %). Meanwhile, the majority of teachers with the highest education qualification with a bachelor degree of 1,285.8 million (87.79%), the remaining 178.8 thousand (12.21 %) are teachers who are not yet fit to teach ([Indonesia Centre for Data and Statistics on Education and Culture, 2017](#)).

On December 29 2019, doctors at a hospital in the city of Wuhan, China, noticed a cluster of unusual pneumonia cases (with the first case identified at that time on December 12, 2019) that have strong links to markets selling fish and poultry to society ([Tosepu et al., 2020](#)). Common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection include symptoms of acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In severe cases, COVID-19 can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death ([Cui, Li, & Shi, 2019](#)).

Furthermore, teachers' knowledge about COVID-19 still needs to be improved. Until this article is written, further research on COVID-19 is still ongoing since the virus is first discovered in the province of Wuhan, China. Information regarding COVID-19 is also constantly changing. COVID-19 is difficult to diagnose, and a delay between the onset of symptoms and an accurate diagnosis is often observed (Rong, Yang, Chu, & Fan, 2020). While the current evidence of airborne transmission of COVID-19 is incomplete, several hospital-based studies have conducted aerial sampling for SARS-COV-2 (Morawska et al., 2020).

Furthermore, some teachers still think that COVID-19 is a conspiracy. This is in line with findings that COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs are associated with a more cynical view of government responses and linked to broader conspiracy theory beliefs, with first-order correlations showing some link to lower levels of educational attainment (Georgiou, Delfabbro, & Balzan, 2020). Therefore, controlling this pandemic is difficult if the basic science that determines the response is misunderstood (Wilson, Corbett, & Tovey, 2020).

The Ministry of Education and Culture is working with Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) to broadcast educational content nationally based on education levels adjusted to the curriculum. From this study, it is found that the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has made teachers make changes in the teaching and learning process, but not all teachers use television programs as a learning medium. The use of educational television as an educational medium for students can greatly assist the delivery of learning material so that students get alternative learning media so that learning activities from home are not carried out monotonously (Gunawan, 2020).

Elementary school teachers who handle all subjects (except religion and physical education) must use Information Communication Technology (ICT), be more creative in innovating ICT, because the characteristics of each subject are different (Aka, 2017). The teachers who are respondents in this study indicated that their ability to use ICTs help them in providing educational services and the majority have no difficulty in using learning applications.

Furthermore, in distance learning parents and teachers establish good communication. Parents can immediately ask the teacher if parents find difficulties. Teachers also believe that parents have a very big role in the success of distance learning because parents act as teachers and parents for students at home.

However, the limitation for this study must be considered as the focus of this research is only carried out in a few provinces with teachers living in locations with different demographics, technology services, educational backgrounds, and geographic locations. So, further research needs to be done. However, this study finds that the implementation of education during the COVID-19 pandemic in inclusive schools is running and teachers make learning adjustments based on the conditions they are experiencing, including utilizing communication information technology as well as establishing relationships with parents so that students could participate in distance learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from this study, it is found that learning during the COVID-19 pandemic takes place in primary schools that provide inclusive education service. Teachers' knowledge about COVID-19 still needs to be improved and some teachers still think that COVID-19 is a conspiracy. From this study, it is found that the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has made teachers make changes in the teaching and learning process, but not all teachers used television programs as a learning medium. The ability of teachers to use ICT helps them in providing educational services and the majority have no difficulty using learning applications. Even though at the beginning of the pandemic it is difficult to adapt to learning, but until this article is written the teachers have adapted their learning. It is also found that teachers have good relations with parents and teachers realize that the success of distance learning lay in the involvement of parents.

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