

DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC ERA: ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF STATE MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Online learning policies serving as the answer to the world of education during the COVID-19 pandemic period raise some problems to students. They find it difficult to understand learning materials because the teacher's explanation is very limited, so many tasks and teachers cannot supervise the students. As a result, students are quickly getting bored with learning activities at home, they cannot directly meet their classmates; and this condition is getting worse due to the fact that their homes are less supportive to their learning activities. This research is aimed at studying the State Madrasah Tsanawiyah Students' experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic era from March to July 2020. A descriptive qualitative analysis method was employed. The primary data were obtained from the results of observations and open questionnaires sent to 42 the madrasah tsanawiyah students from Sidoarjo, Malang, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Aceh, and Padang Panjang. The secondary data were taken from online news about the distance learning. It was found that the distance learning for madrasah tsanawiyah students was troublesome experiences due to inadequate facility and infrastructures in the internet quota, smart phones, laptops, and also unsupporting home environment and improper the teaching techniques. However, some students were happy with this distance learning because it may give them new experiences, learning with a laptop or a mobile phone is exciting, it may improve the literacy in technology, it is flexible in terms of time, and it is not necessary for them to go to schools. It is recommended that the government improve the quality of the internet services, give more internet assistance quota, and hold training for the teachers on online learning.

Keywords: COVID-19, online learning, learning solution, pandemic, educational technology

INTRODUCTION

The government's policy to apply the online-based distance learning as the solution to the COVID-19 global pandemic period has caused new problems. Students feel depressed and lose their learning spirits because they are burdened with a lot of assignments and are difficult to focus their attention on online learning (Churiyah et al. 2020). Even distance learning has caused fatalities. A mother in Tangerang, Banten province, killed her own daughter who was studying in Grade 1 of Elementary School and

she reasoned that her daughter had difficulty in understanding online lessons (JawaPos.com 2020; Liputan6.com 2020; Tribunnews.com 2020). In this context, there are significantly different atmospheres between the atmosphere at home and those at the school environment (Al Lily et al. 2020; CNN Indonesia, 2020a; Koran Sindo 2020). Meanwhile, the students' parents weighted with the learning system because of their economic conditions which make them unable to buy internet quota and android mobile phones (CNN Indonesia 2020b;

Kalimantan.com 2020; RBO Bengkulu 2020). This condition is complicated by limited facilities and infrastructures required to conduct online learning such as the less stable internet network, the limited internet quota, incompatible gadgets (Al Lily et al. 2020; Özer 2020) and teachers' limited ability in using technology (Churiyah et al. 2020). As a result, learning activities are not fun, and even they are boring, and then the students are psychologically depressed (Novira and Syamsul, 2020; Subhi 2020). The implementation of the online learning policy is less effective and this gives less positive impacts on the students themselves. Madrasah students are part of those who experience online learning, so this research focused on how madrasah's students study in online learning situation in the madrasah tsanawiyah environment.

The existing literatures elaborate the relationship between learning and technology. Preliminary studies of the rejection of technology in education (Aggen 2012; Alhumaid 2019), the function of technology (Wiener 2004) to those of the distance learning serve to find solutions during the COVID-19 global pandemic period (Al Lily et al. 2020; Divayana et al. 2017; Husnul et al. 2020; Kidi et al. 2017; Ningsih & Mulyono 2019). At first, technology is resisted in the learning process since it is considered to substitute teachers' roles and brings about foreign values (Kahma & Matschoss 2017). A recent study has viewed technology as an important factor giving positive effects on the development and advancement in the learning process and this makes education more open (Baek et al. 2008; Ghavifekr & Rosdy 2015). During the COVID-19 global pandemic period, online learning immediately has been considered as a significant choice due to social and physical distancing policies (Nie 2020; Perri 2016; Petrakou 2010) because this learning model utilizes media connected to internet such as mobile phones, PCs, desktops, laptops, or other media (H. Zhang 2017). The literary study showed that technology has been positioned as a decisive objective power serving as a constitutive

element in learning. Subjects' perspectives in adaptation and students' difficulty in facing the technology-based online learning are not well mapped.

The objective of this present study is to show how students as the subjects experience the online-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Besides identifying the type of difficulties encountered by students, the use of technology in learning gives burdens to students and their parents. Moreover, this also bears a new tradition in education which needs some adaptations. In other words, distance learning with the basis of technology does not only advance education but also raise troubles to the students and their parents.

This article is based on the argument that students' learning motivation decreases since they learn communally together with their peers (Sadikin & Hamidah 2020). But now they are forced to study without any classmates. Classmates for students serve as competitors which may evoke spirits and they are not found in online learning. Online learning requires students to learn at home which is monotonous and boring (Al Lily et al. 2020) and is different from offline learning at school with many various activities such as ceremonies, sports, discussions with classmates, outing class, etc. School is a study room structure which is very conducive for students because there is time and room orderliness and high discipline. However, such online learning puts forward flexibility so that students may learn anywhere without any space and time limitations. Home is a place to take a rest, instead of to learn in student's point of view.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Law No. 20 Year 2003 on National Education System stated that learning is an interaction process among students, teachers, and learning sources in a learning environment. Some scholars also give a definition of learning which is in general far from it. Sagala (2009)

stated that learning is a two-way communication between teachers, students, and learning sources in a conducive environment. According to Arifin (2010), learning is an interaction among students, learning sources, and environment. Another definition shows that learning is an interaction process and information sharing between students and teachers and also learning sources in a learning environment (Mutiani Subiyakto, Bambang; Jumriani; Aslamiah; Afrina 2019). Meanwhile, Komalasari (2013) defined that learning is a process of educating students conducted by teachers which is planned, implemented, and evaluated systematically so that the learning objectives may be reached effectively and efficiently. From the aforementioned definitions, it is clear that learning is a direct interaction made consciously, systematically, and well-planned among teachers, students, and learning sources in a conducive learning environment. Learning is aimed at building characters through students' cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor aspects so that they may become human beings who are mature and able to work positively for the society, state, and nation.

In the world of education, distance learning is an alternative in conducting learning process at home due to the COVID-19 global pandemic which requires social-physical distancing. The technology-based education basically is not a new thing in Indonesia, since Universitas Terbuka (a cyber university of Indonesia) has long been applying it. In the Law Number 12 Verse 31 Year 2012 regarding Higher Education, it is stated that distance education is a teaching-learning process from a distance through various media of communication. Logically, technology is considered to bring in "western" values which are less compatible with local cultures in Indonesia (Nuryanto, 2012). The COVID-19 global pandemic has changed and forced human beings to make use of technology in learning without any preparation before. Distance learning has become learning facility for all levels of education from the kindergarten

to doctoral levels (Al Lily et al. 2020).

Theoretically, distance learning is a teaching-learning process which is based on the use of the structured information technology (Bozkurt et al. 2015; Buselic 2012; Griffiths 2016), using the internet network with the accessibility, connectivity, flexibility and ability to bring out various types of learning interactions (Moore et al. 2011). Physical meetings between students and teachers are replaced with virtual meetings in the forms of pictures either in a real time or on a delay basis, videos, textual materials presentations to graphics (Griffiths 2016; Sahlström et al. 2019). The constitutive elements in this learning system are technology, the internet access (network), the internet quota, computers-laptops or gadgets (mobile phone) and the ability to use technology facility (Kebritchi et al. 2017; Luschei & Zubaidah 2012). Mobile phones are preferred since they are easily brought and are affordable than other tools (Rusli et al. 2020). In other words, this online learning requires two basic elements, namely technology facility and infrastructures (Gikas & Grant 2013) and the ability of human beings themselves as the subject of the technology users.

Not all online media are suitable for use as the media in online learning. Teachers should be able to choose and use media which are in line with the characteristics of the teaching-learning process itself (Hsieh & Tsai 2017). For example, in a virtual class, Google Classroom, Edmodo, Schoology services (Alvin S. Sicat 2015; Enriquez 2014; Shampa 2016) and an instant message application such as WhatsApp may be used (So 2016). Online learning even may be conducted through social media like Facebook and Instagram (Kumar & Nanda 2019). The use of the internet technology and multimedia raises new traditions in conveying sciences and it becomes an alternative learning method (D. Zhang et al. 2004) including the attainment of the goals in distance learning (Korucu & Alka 2011).

It has actually been introduced as a medium

in the learning process at the international world especially in higher education (Husnul et al. 2020). Electronic-learning is a learning process by making use of electronic equipment, information technology, and broadcasting communication technology (Hwang et al. 2010). It is in line with Gilbert and Jones (2001) who stated that e-learning is the conveyance of learning materials through electronic media such as the internet, intranet/extranet, satellite broadcast, audio/video tapes, interactive TV, CD-ROM, and computer-based training (Suartama 2015). It is different from Urdan-Wegen's opinion that e-learning is a part of distance learning, and while online learning is a part of e-learning (Urdan & Weggen 2000). Meanwhile, Kear stated that e-learning becomes students' opportunity and chances to learn independently, to reflect themselves, to do something actively and collaboratively (Widyanti & Park 2020).

From the scholars' opinions, it is clear that e-learning is learning activities which are based on the information technology using applications such as computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual learning, and the like. Meanwhile online learning is a part of technology-based learning which makes use of resources namely the internet, intranet, and extranet. This learning system requires teachers' ability in building students' awareness and motivation to learn, encouraging interactions, collaborating among students, establishing learning groups with online environments, and interacting and monitoring their attendance during online learning activities as the feedback in the learning process (Samir Abou El-Seoud et al. 2014).

E-learning is intended to distribute learning materials through electronic media or the internet so that students may access them. The characteristic of e-learning is flexibility (Husnul et al. 2020). It means that students possess a wide space in choosing time and place to learn. They do not have to attend to a place at a certain time. There are three significant elements in this system namely knowledge, understanding, and

readiness of students in joining in e-learning and providing technology facility and infrastructures for example the speed of the internet network, the fee for the internet access.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is based on the analysis of the descriptive-qualitative method. The primary data were obtained from the results of observations and open questionnaires sent to madrasah tsanawiyah students in Sidoarjo, Malang, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Aceh, and Padang Panjang. A total respondents which is 42 students came from six cities with different geographical circumstances. Questionnaire was given through the teacher to be passed on to the students. The secondary data were taken from some online news about the distance learning. The procedure in obtaining data were done by submitting requests to the heads of the madrasahs and the teachers. After the permissions were granted, the survey questions were sent to the teachers and then they distributed the questionnaires to the students.

The data were collected by sending open ended questionnaires via online platform to randomly selected students in the first week of October. The students then sent the answers in the third week of October, 2020. The questions were focused on their concrete experiences in joining in the distance learning from March to July, 2020. Three questions were asked to them: (1) what is your opinion about the online learning?; (2) what is the obstacle (if any) you experienced during the distance learning?; and (3) what is your opinion about the online learning conducted by your teachers?

Morover, the data were obtained from the results of the learning observations via zoom meeting by authors, articles, and online news fulfilling the criteria of the research focus dealing with the obstacles in the online learning process during the pandemic era, the obstacles the students experienced, and cases emerging in

the distance learning. As a result, the learning difficulties covered in this study included personal, infrastructural, and structural ones. The data obtained from the mapping of the online news were confirmed to the groups of the madrasah tsanawiyah students. In the online news, it was stated that students were not relatively used to adopting technology in the learning process. They were interested in the technology but their literacy level was still limited (Abdul Latip 2020; Kompasiana 2020).

The data were analyzed through stages of data description and interpretation. Description means showing their pattern or tendency concerning with the typology of students' difficulty in online learning. The interpretation was made by giving attention to the individual, social, and institutional contexts that become the basis for the conclusion drawing. This present research is an effort to describe the situation of the education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the use of technology in the learning process which has been thorough to give solution during this pandemic era turns out causing a problem to the students as the learning subjects. This happens because of the unpreparedness of online learning infrastructure such as internet network, signal, quota, smartphone/laptop, and limited technological mastery both teachers and students.

On the basis of the students' expressions, it turns out that the difficulty in the online learning was also experienced by students either from the Metropolitan city Jakarta, Banda Aceh, Padang Panjang, Yogyakarta, Malang or Sidoarjo. The main issue is that distance learning is ineffective because the teachers' presence is felt to be greatly different. Teachers' presence in online learning cannot be maximum in explaining learning materials to the students, and the teachers cannot supervise the students' learning activities

and the teachers tend to give a lot of assignments. This situation lowers students' motivation and spirits and it gets worse by their homes' conditions which are uncomfortable, less conducive to learn, and due to the fact that they cannot meet their friends directly. As a result, students quickly feel getting bored, lazy, saturated even stressed, and the essence of learning as pleasing activities is eroded at all (see table 2).

At present, based on the information from printed media, online news, and research results and also from the results of survey made to the madrasah tsanawiyah students, they felt to have great obstacles in the distance learning. The main obstacle may be mapped in three aspects: facility-infrastructures, learning environment, and students. The facility-infrastructures aspect covers unstable internet, limited quota, and unavailable learning media. On the basis of the students' experiences, during the learning process, the internet network was cut off, the quota run out, even some students borrowed handphones from their parents. As a result, they should wait for their parents to come home. These made students difficult in accessing learning materials so that their tasks could not be done on time.

The followings are the students' answers:

"The WIFI network is slow (R1 MTsN Malang city), the obstacle is the network (R2 MTsN Sidoarjo), the obstacles are signal and limited internet quota (R4 MTsN Malang city), WIFI (R14 MTsN Jakarta), the network is sometimes slow, there is no subsidy for internet quota to students (R13 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), the quota is less, it is run out (R14 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), it spends a lot of quota, I buy internet quota 3 times a month (R16 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), the hindrances are the internet quota and the signal, I should go out out by myself since the signal is not good, as a result I miss the lessons (R17 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), the hindrances are the network when it is raining, the electricity for the internet is off (R22 MTsN Pandang Panjang), I am less focused on studying since the internet is often in trouble, the learning platform is less efficient (R23 MTsN Pandang Panjang), the internet quota is limited, the signal and the network are hard to obtain (R26 MTsN Banda Aceh), the media either the gadgets or the Internet quota are limited (R27 MTsN Banda Aceh), there are some notifications

from applications (R28 MTsN Banda Aceh), the internet is not smooth, the cost for the internet quota is burdens, the facility such as the laptops and the mobile phones should be improved (R31 MTsN Banda Aceh), the internet is slow (R14 MTsN Sleman), the hindrance is the Internet network (R.26 MTsN Banda Aceh)”.

The next obstacle is the home environment which did not support their learning activities, so that they could not concentrate on their learning activities. This is caused by the fact that their home situation is different from that of their school one. The school environment has been conditioned to learn in a comfortable, orderly, organized and supervised atmosphere by teachers. The opposite situation happens while students at home because the atmosphere of learning is less conducive since it is crowded and there is no supervision of teachers. Even some students stated that their parents asked them to do some chores when the learning activities took place.

The students’ difficulty was also caused by the teacher factor. Online learning is a new thing for teachers since they were not used to using technology in learning. They merely used limited and monotonous applications, such as Google Classroom, or WhatsApp. Sometimes, they sent materials using simple learning materials without any further explanation. As a result, the students could not understand the learning materials well. In other words, the constitutive elements in this learning systems are technology, internet access, internet quota, computer-laptop or gadgets (smart-phone) and also the ability to use technology infrastructures (Kebritchi et al. 2017; Luschei & Zubaidah 2012) and human abilities as the subject of the technology users (Gikas & Grant 2013). Another aspect which should also be given attention to make the online learning interesting for the students is that teachers should also be able to choose and use it in line with the characteristics of the teaching-learning process as shown by the previous research results, for example, a virtual class may use Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Schoology and instant message application such

as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram (Alvin S. Sicat 2015; Enriquez 2014; Hsieh & Tsai 2017; Iftakhar Shampa 2016; Kumar & Nanda 2019; So 2016).

Another finding is that it turns out that not all students thought that online learning as something burdens. Some students saw that online learning is a pleasure experience. They may get new experiences in using technology applications, are flexible in time arrangement since they should not go to school and they may be more creative in looking for information and learning materials. Students expressed in the students’ answers as follows:

“It is fun, flexible in time, improve insights and ability. The conveyance of the assignments through the video application gives me insights and motivation to be creative, happy and enjoyable, positively, either students or teachers become creative (R1 MTsN Kota Malang). We can arrange our time, get insights of the technology we use, and we may be familiar with new applications (R6 MTs Negeri Jakarta). It is easy since the lessons are not only from the textbooks but also from internet (R8 MTsN Jakarta), it is pleasing, and relaxing, and it improves media literacy ability (R9 MTsN Jakarta). It is amazing because we can learn using cellular phones/laptops (R11 MTsN Jakarta), it is a new thing (R13 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), it is proper to use (R15 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta), we can arrange time, it is flexible, it may improve insights and ability in using various applications in the learning process, the clouds application may be used to learn (R29 MTsN Banda Aceh), and the students should not wait for the teachers to come (R16 MTsN Sleman, Yogyakarta)”.

These answers may be understood if we view them from the context of the world of the students’ themselves. They are the ‘Z’ generation, born from the “womb” of the digital world. It means that they are greatly familiar with the world of technology, they are a generation with technology proficiency. The use of technology in this online learning makes them happier although the situation is still not normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This opportunity should be caught and developed so that the distance learning becomes a proper

solution to assure the sustainability of the high quality education process.

Their positive experiences in this distance learning affirmed the nature of the online learning itself: e-learning becomes opportunities and chances for them to learn autonomously, to reflect themselves, to become active and collaborative (Widyanti and Park 2020). These experiences strengthened previous research results stating that the characteristics of e-learning were among others interactivity, autonomy, accessibility, flexibility, and enrichment (Husnul et al. 2020). It means that students possess a wide space to choose time and place to learn.

The madrasah tsanawiyah students' experiences are presented in detail in Table 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Distance Learning as Exciting and Interesting New Experiences

No.	Question (1) How is your opinion about online learning? (interesting experiences)	Respondents
1	It is pleasing, flexible for time management, it may improve insights and ability, and assignments that should use video applications may add my insights and motivate me to be creative, happy and enjoyable. The positive side of this learning is that either students or teachers become creative.	R1 MTsN Malang city
2	We can manage time, improve insights about technology we use, and we can know new applications.	R6 MTs Negeri Jakarta
3	It is easy, the lesson is not merely from books. We can look for it in the internet.	R8 MTsN Jakarta
4	It is quite interesting, a little bit relax, it may improve media literacy skills.	R9 MTsN Jakarta

5	It is exciting, because we learn using mobile phones/laptops.	R11 MTsN Jakarta
6	It is a new thing.	R13 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
7	It is suitable to do.	R15 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
8	It is flexible in time, it improves insights and abilities in using various applications in the learning process, it uses cloud application to learn.	R29 MTsN Banda Aceh
9	It is not necessary for the students to wait for teachers who are sometimes late.	R16 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta

Based on the answers given by the Madrasah students, the majority of students admit that the distance learning system is very burdensome, troublesome, even highly stressful. The reasons they express are as follows table 2.

Table 2. Distance Learning as Incriminating, Distressing, and Stressing Experiences

No.	Question (2) How is your opinion about online learning? (not interesting experiences)	Respondents
1	We cannot socialize with others directly, we cannot enjoy school facility.	R2 MTsN Malang city
2	We feel less comfortable and get bored when we study alone, we don't understand materials because we receive them in the form of power-points or summaries.	R3 MTsN Sidoarjo
3	In the negative side, students cannot socialize with others due to limited time.	R4 MTsN Malang city
4	It is ineffective because teachers cannot explain materials maximumly.	R5 MTsN Sidoarjo
5	I am a little bit confused and feel strange.	R6 MTs Negeri Jakarta

6	I get stressed easily because there are many assignments given by the teachers, my eyes are tired because I often stare the gadgets or laptops directly.	R7 MTs Negeri Jakarta	17	It is less satisfactory.	R20 MTsN Padang Panjang
7	Home is not a comfortable place to study effectively.	R8 MTsN Jakarta	18	We do not much understand in online learning because no explanation is given by the teachers.	R21 MTsN Padang Panjang
8	This should be.	R10 MTsN Jakarta	19	It is less effective and difficult.	R22 MTsN Padang Panjang
9	I feel sad because I cannot meet my teachers and friends directly.	R11 MTsN Jakarta	20	It is less effective because the learning materials are not explained.	R23 MTsN Padang Panjang
10	It is very boring, I cannot meet my friends, I may understand lessons better if distance learning is not applied.	R12 MTsN Jakarta	21	I don't much understand, it is not explained directly.	R24 MTsN Padang Panjang
11	It is not too effective, they have not prepared it well.	R13 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	22	The E-Learning application and the learning media are not effective yet.	R26 MTsN Banda Aceh
12	Difficult lessons may be understood by some students, if they don't understand, face to face learning activities should be done.	R14 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	23	It is not so effective.	R27 MTsN Banda Aceh
13	It needs a shorter time.	R16 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	24	It is less effective because we cannot absorb the lessons fully as usual.	R28 MTsN Banda Aceh
14	It is less effective, the assignments are too excessive, and the learning spirits also decrease.	R17 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	25	We communicate with some people without meeting them directly.	R29 MTsN Banda Aceh
15	Negatively, many students are stressed, many students die, it is ineffective because teachers and students do not meet face to face, we need to talk to our friends, we need to laugh with friends, we need family time although it may be done virtually, and it may bring the mood back, and time is spent just for studying.	R18 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	26	It is good to prevent the COVID-19 transmission.	R30 MTsN Banda Aceh
16	It is less effective because it lacks of teachers' supervision.	R19 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta	27	It is incriminating, there are too many assignments given by the teachers, knowledge obtained is not much.	R31 MTsN Banda Aceh
			28	It is the best way to prevent the COVID-19, it is less effective, and the discipline decreases during the online learning.	R32 MTsN Banda Aceh

In general, distance learning has many obstacles. Based on the students' answers, the obstacles were caused by some aspects such as the network, the internet quota, time management, learning materials and methods. They are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Learning Obstacles

No.	Question (3) What obstacles did you experience in distance learning?	Respondents
1	The WIFI network is slow	R1 MTsN Malang city
2	It is the network	R3 MTsN Sidoarjo
3	They are signal and limited data; Time limitation	R4 MTsN Malang city
4	The materials are less understood and the assignments are given before they are explained	R5 MTsN Sidoarjo
5	The obstacles are less stable Internet and the iinternet condition; The assignment submission limit is too short, every day I get assignments which i have to do and submit at the same day, I am dizzy if I have to finish an assignment, but then there is another assignment which should be collected at the same hour; I don't like online learning activities	R6 MTsN Jakarta
6	The obstacle is the assignment submission limit	R7 MTsN Jakarta
7	It is the wifi.	R10 MTsN Jakarta
8	It is rather complicated because face to face interactions (via zoom) are always made; understanding of the materials are not maximum without direct guidance from teachers, explanations through the power-points	R10 MTsN Jakarta
		or videos are minimum, even addition to playing mobile phones occurs, instead of learning through them
9	The network is slow, and there is no subsidy for the iinternet quota for the students; The assignments are many but the time is limited; Not all teachers give materials/ explanations and merely gives assignments; Students' spirit decreases, this causes indiscipline	R13 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
10	The obstacles are less quota, and the quota runs out	R14 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
11	The lesson presented is unclear	R15 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
12	It spends a lot of internet quota, buying the iinternet quota can be 3 times a month	R16 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
13	The obstacles are the qquota & signal, I like to go out by myself because the signal is not good, and this makes me miss the lessons.	R17 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
14	The obstacles are network, the quota, mobile phones, and applications; They are too many, technologically backward	R18 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta
15	It is hard to understand the lessons	R20 MTsN Padang Panjang
16	I don't get enough rest due to overwhelming assignments, I need more friends and supports to become more excited, and the students' mental condition is deficient	R19 MTsN Sleman Yogyakarta

17	The subjects are not explained	R21 MTsN Padang Panjang
18	It is the network constraints when it rains; I do not understand the materials, chances to ask questions are limited	R22 MTsN Padang Panjang
19	I am less focused on studying because the network is often in trouble, the learning platform is less efficient; Materials are difficult to be independently understood	R23 MTsN Padang Panjang
20	The obstacle is that the internet is not good.	R24 MTsN Padang Panjang
21	Communication between the teacher and the students is not smooth	R25 MTsN Padang Panjang
22	The internet quota, signal, and bad network.	R26 MTsN Banda Aceh
23	Limited media either the gadgets or the internet quota; The number of assignments is high enough; It is difficult to understand the materials completely; I could not interact or communicate with teachers directly	R27 MTsN Banda Aceh
24	Notifications from applications	R28 MTsN Banda Aceh
25	It's complicated	R29 MTsN Banda Aceh
26	It is difficult to understand the lessons	R30 MTsN Banda Aceh
27	The internet network is not good, the cost of the internet quota is burdensome, the lack of supporting devices such as laptop and mobile phones.	R31 MTsN Banda Aceh

28	It needs a long time to do assignments. The memory in my mobile phone is full, containing learning modules, exercises, assignment submission, discussions with friends, and also invitations; I get additional works, namely making and sending photos, video, downloading materials and uploading assignments that have been done	R29 MTsN Banda Aceh
29	The network is slow; Many students should be in front of gadgets in a long time; Some materials are hard to understand; This learning method affects students' learning techniques, and the health of our eyes.	R32 MTsN Banda Aceh
30	The network is slow	R3 MTsN 1 Sidoarjo
31	Constrained quota and mobile phones	R14 MTsN 5 Sleman
32	The obstacle is the Internet network	R.26 MTsN 1 Banda Aceh

Based on the answers given by the madrasah students, the majority of students admit that the distance learning system is very burdensome, troublesome, and even highly stressful. The reasons they express are as follows: "We cannot make socialization directly, cannot enjoy the school facilities", "it is less comfortable, I feel bored when learning alone, I do not understand because I am just given the Power Points or summaries". The negative sides of the online learning are that students have less socialization with their friends, time limitation, it is ineffective because the teachers cannot explain materials maximumly.

Moreover, viewed from the negative side, it causes many students to be stressed and even to die (JawaPos.com 2020). It is ineffective where

the teachers and the student cannot meet directly. "We need talk to one another, we need to laugh together, and we need a family time". Although it can be merely conducted virtually, it even can return the mood, time is just spent to study, and it is less effective due to less supervision by the teachers. I do not much understand when I learn via online learning there is no explanation from the teachers.

Based on the students' expressions above, it turns out that students from the Metropolitan city Jakarta or Banda Aceh, Padang Panjang, Yogyakarta, Malang, and Sidoarjo had difficulties in the online learning. The main issue is that distance learning is ineffective, because the teachers' presence is greatly different. This differentiates between online and offline learning. Teachers' presence in online learning cannot be maximum in explaining learning materials to the students, and the teachers cannot supervise the students' learning activities and the teachers tend to give a lot of assignments. This situation lowers students' motivation and spirits and it is worsened by the homes' conditions which are uncomfortable, and less conducive to learn, and the students cannot directly meet their friends. As a result, students quickly feel bored, lazy, saturated even stressed, and the essence of learning as pleasing activities is eroded at all.

However, amid this difficult situation due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, some students feel other experiences. It means that the implementation of online learning gives new exciting experiences. It is expressed from students' answers as follows: "It is interesting, it gives flexible time, and adds insights and abilities. The assignment using the application for making video improves my insights and motivation to be creative, happy and enjoyable". Other similar answers are as being presented by table 1.

From the results of literature studies on online learning, online news, and the comparison the authors make with the results of this present research, it is known that

the foundational problem in implementing the policy lies on two factors namely the teachers' human resources and the key facility-infrastructures in online learning. Students' perception and understanding are not been related to distance learning at all in this global pandemic emergency period. The indication is that there are some differences in attitudes and ways among teachers in implementing their learning process. In fact, some teachers try to keep students' mentality in this pandemic period, where anything is abnormal, there is anxiety because of the COVID-19, and the students should stay at home, opportunities to enjoy a good time playing together with their peers are taken away by the circumstance. The teachers who really understand this situation try to overburden their students by not giving them too many assignments which are burdensome to them. The essence of learning may still be exciting. But on the basis of these online news and research results, the majority of teachers even ignored these difficult situations, it is impressed that they still compelled all learning materials to be taught to the students by giving too many lessons. Moreover, students also complained the teaching methods the teachers adopted are less interesting, monotonous, and limited in their explanations so that they are hard to understand. It means that their digital literacy intelligence should be given serious attention. As a result, students felt greatly stressed which may reduce their motivation to study hard and may cause them not to prefer online-based distance learning.

At present, based on the information of printed media, online media, research results, and also from the evidence from this survey results, the majority of students feel a lot of hindrances in distance learning. The obstacles are caused by some factors such as the network, the quota, the time management, the learning materials-methods, and the environment. The main obstacle is on the infrastructure since the internet network has not been adequate and smooth, and it greatly consumes the quota due to

limited economic ability. The next obstacles the students experience deal with time management. The third obstacle deals with the teachers in terms of learning materials and methods.

The next problem lies at limited the internet network, the economic ability to buy the quota, the mobile phones, the PCs, and the laptops. In this case, the government should also think about and improve the quality of information technology services so that the network will not easily go down, and the signal loses with the hope that the learning process may run well. In addition, the government needs to provide internet quota so that all students can actively participate in online learning. Madrasah students in six areas complained that the teachers' voices discontinued, they may suddenly be thrown out from their digital classrooms. Another matter which may hinder distance learning is the environmental condition. A home for a student may not be accepted as an ideal place to learn. The atmosphere without getting together with classmates may decrease the students' spirits to learn. The parents sometimes also give other jobs to their children and this makes them feel disturbed. But, it should be realized that in terms of spirits among Indonesian children, although in this emergency condition, they may still be able to see new things as an entrance for the advancement of themselves and the improvement of their competences. They are able to see that distance learning may make teachers and students more productive, literate in technology, and improve their digital and social media literacy intelligence. This certainly is in line with the students' present world as the digital generation. In the future, the government needs to maintain the implementation of online and offline education. It should be recognized that since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government and the teachers seem to have stuttered to face it since they do are ready at all to implement this online-based education. As a result, education is merely the matter of taking notes, discussion, lecturing, and submitting assignments and homework

through online system. It is not in line with the standard in distance learning (Al Lily et al. 2020). This experience should be used as a wise life journey. The authors suggest that it is time to apply a blended learning system as an educational method in Indonesia. It is aimed at the teachers and students' competences may be continuously maintained and developed in their digital intelligence in accordance with the era of the industrial evolution 4.0.

In essence, a good learning process will give direct impacts on students' high learning motivation and curiosity (Wahyuningsih 2020). Therefore, online learning may be fascinating if it is designed with interesting learning techniques and resources and this may train and develop creativity (Syaharuddin 2020). Moreover, teachers will be able to make innovations in this internet-based learning use (Susanto 2020), various and contextual (Armiyanti et al. 2020) media and learning sources. In other words, teachers should make sure that online learning provides procedural contents with clear and intelligible instructions. The focus is on developing students' creativity and independence. A teacher gives an example of a job so that it is easily understood.

The essence of online learning is a system facilitating students to do wider and varied learning activities. It means that through the facilities provided by the system, students may learn without being limited by distance, space and time in more various ways. For instance, besides written forms, these may also in the forms of video and audio. This learning model delineates efforts to give the learning access to teachers and students who are hindered by geographical distance so that in the learning process, it requires an interactive communication system which relates the two to various resources needed. Distance learning is adopted to improve students' motivation to lead to collaborative learning, to reduce learning limitations offered by schools, and enable students to attain an unforgettable learning experience (Tsai et al. 2016). A distance learning process offers a

possibility to promote learning which may cross national borders, through free access to an education website for various subjects (Fuicu et al. 2017). In Indonesian context, distance learning is an advance and a new tradition (D. Zhang et al. 2004) in using technology in various educational units, whereas at first distance learning was introduced as a medium in the process in the international world, especially in higher education (Husnul et al. 2020).

CONCLUSION

Madrasah students' experiences in online learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic periods is apparently not uniform. Some students feel distance learning is not new because they are used to using technology. On the other hand, some students stated that distance learning was burden because they found some obstacles. These problems come from the limitations of online learning facilities, teacher skills in using information technology and a less supportive home environment. From the perspective of students as digital natives, this can be an opportunity to develop themselves in online learning. In other words, the use of technology in the world of learning in this present era has become a necessity.

The authors recommend that the teachers get trained on digital technology-based learning design and the students need supervision while using technology. Moreover, the virtual infrastructure in Indonesia has not been enough to support the implementation of distance learning. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers and schools to understand the essence of distance learning better. Students have low learning independence so that they are less able to manage distance learning activities and teachers tend to stutter technology, and the parents have less understanding about the characteristics of teaching-learning activities done at home. Students' status as a part of the Z generation which is also known as digital native generation should also not give significant problems in the

implementation of online learning under the coverage of distance learning.

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