

Challenges and Opportunities of Pre-Service Teachers in Teaching Online during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Pre-service teachers must teach online due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. As a result, they lacked competence, particularly in face-to-face teaching. This study aimed to discover the challenges and opportunities pre-service teachers face when the rules for online learning are enforced. This research was based on the qualitative method. Online interviews and focus group discussions with respondents were used to collect data. The respondents to this study were five students in the fifth semester of 2020 in Indonesia. The data analysis technique used Five Phases of Analysis. The results showed that the main obstacle experienced by pre-service teachers on campus was that they could not experience the face-to-face teaching process because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they were practicing online teaching. They said they were worried that when they became teachers, they would have to teach face-to-face even though they did not have enough experience doing so. However, this form of online teaching practice provides a better opportunity for pre-service teachers because they are better prepared for future forms of education where education will be integrated with technology. Pre-service teachers' experiences with online instruction during the COVID-19 showed challenges and possibilities dealt with by pre-service teachers where they can take advantage of several advantages or opportunities made available by the pandemic to help them develop into competent ICT educators. They will also have a leg up when the educational system shifts to a hybrid or fully online format in the future.

Keywords: Pre-service Teachers, Challenge, Opportunity, Teaching during Pandemic, Covid-19

Abstrak

Setiap calon guru harus mengajar secara daring karena pandemik COVID-19 pada tahun 2020. Akibatnya, mereka kurang memiliki kompetensi, terutama dalam pengajaran tatap muka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi calon guru ketika aturan pembelajaran daring diberlakukan. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada metode kualitatif. Wawancara online dan diskusi kelompok terfokus dengan responden digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Responden penelitian ini adalah lima mahasiswa semester lima tahun 2020 di Indonesia. Teknik analisis data menggunakan lima fase analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kendala utama yang dialami calon guru di

kampus adalah tidak bisa melaksanakan proses pengajaran tatap muka karena pandemi COVID-19. Hasilnya, mereka mempraktikkan model pengajaran online. Mereka mengatakan bahwa mereka khawatir ketika mereka menjadi guru, mereka harus mengajar secara tatap muka meskipun mereka tidak memiliki cukup pengalaman untuk melakukannya. Namun, mereka percaya bentuk praktik mengajar online ini memberikan kesempatan yang lebih baik bagi calon guru karena mereka lebih siap untuk bentuk pendidikan masa depan di mana pendidikan akan terintegrasi dengan teknologi. Pengalaman calon guru dengan pengajaran online selama COVID-19 memberikan tantangan dan kemungkinan kepada calon guru dimana mereka dapat memanfaatkan beberapa keuntungan atau peluang yang disediakan oleh pandemi untuk membantu mereka berkembang menjadi pendidik TIK yang kompeten. Mereka juga akan mendapat dukungan ketika sistem pendidikan beralih ke format hybrid atau sepenuhnya online di masa mendatang.

Kata Kunci: Calon Guru, Tantangan, Peluang, Mengajar di Masa Pandemi, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teachers will be exposed to professionally and pedagogically relevant topics to create practical learning tools. They are supposed to be proficient in four areas of teacher competency: pedagogy, personality, social, and professional development (Pernantah et al., 2022; Torres-Cladera et al., 2021). In addition, they will also carry out a field experience program where these pre-service teachers will get hands-on teaching experience in the classroom. Pre-service teachers will be asked to apply their knowledge in learning practice. With trial and error procedures during the practice process, they will find their style and what they will need when they go directly to the field, teaching students at the school where they will serve later.

However, the Indonesian government released Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020, which is still in effect today, on April 4, 2020, addressing the implementation of education in the nation, which is still in effect today (Disas, 2017). The traditional learning technique has been transformed into an online remote learning system to limit the danger of spreading coronavirus among students (Montessori, 1976).

Several procedures are in place to aid the learning process throughout this pandemic (Hasanah & Fadilah, 2021). To begin, the learning process will be conducted entirely online from the comfort of one's home. This offers students a meaningful learning experience even if they cannot meet face to face. Students will only be required to fulfill some curricular requirements to advance in grade or graduate. Furthermore, learning from home may be focused on life skills education in its application, such as teaching how to socialize in a pandemic scenario (Herlina et al., 2021; Saputra et al., 2021).

In addition, the teacher needs to find a niche among the students by catering to their requirements and interests (Asgari et al., 2019). Additionally, schools and teachers are responsible for considering the children's access to learning facilities at home (Lase et al., 2022). Last but not least, the teacher is responsible for giving constructive and pertinent comments to the student on the home learning outcomes

without assigning any numeric scores (Ali Al-Hattami, 2019). This was the situation that education was in during the outbreak in Indonesia.

During this pandemic, changes in the education system significantly impacted pre-service teachers in Indonesia (Maryatin et al., 2020; Wajdi et al., 2020). These pre-service teachers will unavoidably teach online at the schools where they have been allocated to get teaching experience. They will be asked to make a distance learning model different from a face-to-face one (Arwin et al., 2022). They will inevitably teach through virtual media, not in direct classes as in general before the pandemic (Nengsih et al., 2022). Thus, the experience they get during the education process to become a teacher is only the experience of teaching online. This raises the issue of whether a teacher who learns to teach online will effectively teach face-to-face in a classroom environment (Handrianto et al., 2019).

The current conditions make these pre-service teachers lack experience teaching face-to-face classes (Palunga & Marzuki, 2017). They only get an overview of teaching online. Based on this, it can be assumed that they will have difficulty when asked to teach face-to-face because they do not have sufficient experience as long as they participate in the learning process to become teachers either during lectures or also during their education period as teachers (Dobber et al., 2017).

Based on the discussion above, we want to investigate how these pre-service teachers view the educational process during the pandemic. We also want to elaborate more on their views in the future. What if they were asked to teach in schools face-to-face? Therefore, this article will provide an overview of the optimism of pre-service teachers who go through the educational process to become teachers during the pandemic. This article is expected to provide an overview of their readiness to become professional teachers in the future, even though the learning process is different from the learning process before the pandemic.

METHOD

The case study research used in this study was a qualitative method using a qualitative approach (Yin, 2009). This investigation was carried out in June 2020. The participants in this research were pre-service teachers from a university in Indonesia, with five English Pre-Service Teachers participating. This study's data collection methods included online semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The interview was used to investigate the participants' perspectives on the topic. FGD was hired in this study to corroborate and discuss the results in greater detail. Regarding responses to open-ended questions, the interview analysis followed the Five-Phased Cycle (Yin, 2009). The method of analyzing qualitative data is divided into various stages, which are as follows: (1) compiling, (2) disassembling, (3) reassembling, (4) interpreting, and (5) concluding.

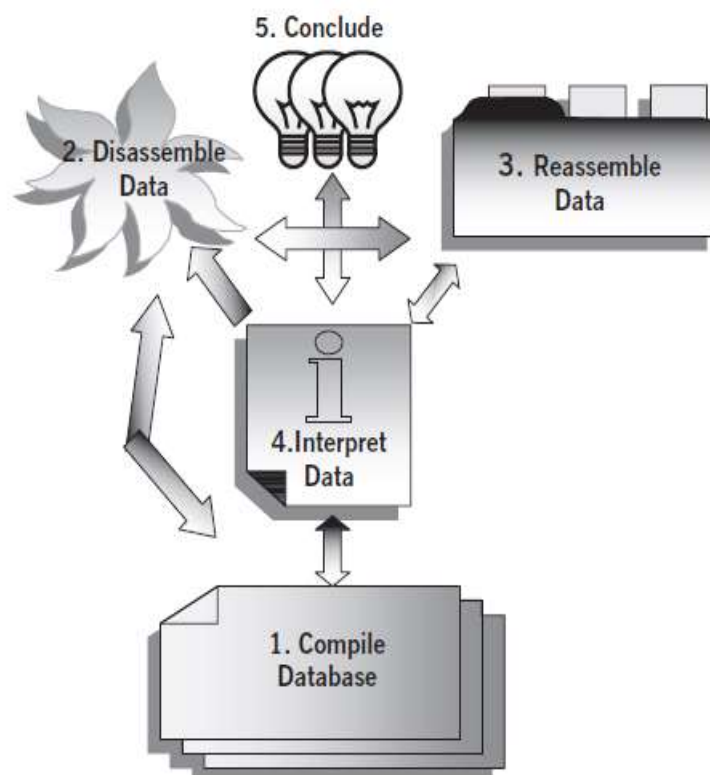


Figure 1
Five Phases of Analysis and their interactions
(source: adopted from Yin, 2009)

The first process shown in Figure 1 was a compilation. We organized the interview notes. According to Yin (2009), the Compiling step involves organizing the data. Additionally, since the respondents spoke Banjarese, the interview findings would be verbatim translated. The second stage included disassembly. Following the compilation step, we assigned labels or codes to the data. Following that came the reassembling step. After labeling or categorizing the data, we merged the labels or codes to produce distinct themes. Following that, we sought common themes among all the labels or codes during the interpretation phase to ascertain the participants' perspectives on online teaching. Finally, in the final step, we concluded from the qualitative data as a whole. This five-phase cycle was employed to increase the trustworthiness of the study results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to discover the challenges and opportunities pre-service teachers face on campus when they have to practice teaching when online learning rules are required to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on the interviews with five pre-service teachers, it is known that they teach online using several applications. They use Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube (Hizriani et al., 2022; Sela et al., 2022). The instructor asks students to examine the learning material through the YouTube application. After the teacher has finished the viewing process, the instructor gives students questions who are responsible for filling out the answers. Upon completion of the questions, students should provide the answers made to their instructor for them to be evaluated by the instructor. The teacher sends the students' questions or assignments, whether in text or video form, using the WhatsApp application. WhatsApp is a free application available on smartphones and tablets. The teacher is teaching; then, students send their answers to be assessed by the teacher. They use a combination of several applications to help the students they teach have a practical and enjoyable learning experience (Putz et al., 2020).

One of them said, *"I used WhatsApp apps to send the materials, and I use zoom apps to explain it to my students"* The respondents can combine some apps in the class. It indicates that they are knowledgeable and skilled in using information, communication, and technological resources (ICT). According to the results, it may be assumed that the respondents have sufficient knowledge and abilities in online training (Khoiri et al., 2021; Latchem, 2018).

However, their opinions were also obtained regarding online learning in the interviews. It aims to find out whether they are comfortable with the online teaching practice process. One respondent stated that online learning could also avoid the disease outbreak. They also remembered to add personal reasons why they still enjoy the online teaching practice process. One respondent said they spend more time with their families by teaching regularly. This will benefit the development of their relationships with their parents and siblings (Drane et al., 2020).

In addition, because the lecturers have to teach online, they also have to be more creative in their teaching, so they also have to make teaching materials. For them, this is a positive thing. One respondent said that when he made a video, he could use it later to teach online or in person (Mohammed et al., 2020). Videos can be shared for the next class, requiring the same material. Therefore, they like it so that later, when they become teachers, they can use the media they have prepared since the teaching practice process. Aside from that, the conversation will be separated into two sections. The first part talks about the problems pre-service teachers face, and the second part talks about what they can do when teaching online.

Online teaching in Indonesia during the pandemic Covid-19

This pandemic has resulted in learning being carried out online to prevent or reduce the possibility of transmission. Online learning is one of the learning methods carried out through the internet (Saputra et al., 2022; Singh & Thurman, 2019). Online learning was developed to expand educational services' reach and increase educational services' availability (Chen et al., 2020). Even though online

learning is not the same as learning in a classroom, it is a way to stop the spread of the current epidemic (Batubara, 2021). It is hoped that all parties will work together, especially teachers, as the frontline of education. Students are expected to keep learning things that will help them in their lives and keep being able to compete with other students around the world.

There have been COVID- 19 outbreaks in the past, but this one may be different since teachers generally educate in a face-to-face classroom, which is not the case here (Lessy et al., 2021; Prasetia et al., 2021). Teachers now have the option of delivering their lessons online or from a remote location. On each given school day, the instructor communicates directly with the students in their class, explains the curriculum in depth from beginning to end, and has the opportunity to personally assess the student's understanding of the material being presented. While the instructor may encourage students to ask questions if they need help understanding something, when students are engaged in online learning, the instructor may have trouble monitoring student learning progress since the instructor is not there. Furthermore, since the content is presented via video, photos, or written summaries rather than direct instruction, students will have difficulty comprehending it, creating a second barrier.

Face-to-Face Teaching

Indonesian education refers to all forms of organized and unstructured learning in Indonesia. A structured educational system in Indonesia is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture, formerly known as the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, which is also known as a system of schools in the nation. The primary education curriculum in Indonesia is nine years long. It includes six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. All Indonesian residents are obliged to complete the program. Elementary, middle, and high school are the three levels of education covered in the curriculum. Indonesia's education system is now governed by Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, passed in 2003. Changes to the curriculum proceeded until the

Driving School Curriculum was eventually accepted by the government in 2021, marking a significant step forward for the industry.

The driving school curriculum will be implemented starting in 2021. This curriculum will improve education in a better direction (Singh & Thurman, 2019; Wainwright, 2011). There, teachers are also expected to apply the principles of 21st-century education in the classroom by increasing students' critical thinking or reasoning (Ramadhani et al., 2021). However, the pandemic conditions still implement this curriculum, unable to be implemented optimally, mainly if learning demands to be carried out face-to-face.

However, face-to-face learning also has challenges. This needs to be considered by the government, schools, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers in the field (Moorhouse, 2020). When online, difficulties are encountered, such as signal problems or students who want to avoid showing their faces to the camera. For face-to-face learning, the difficulties encountered are managing class so that students can chat with their friends when the teacher explains. In addition, another challenge that teachers will face is changing student habits, both in terms of discipline and the way they study, which will be different from their habits when studying online during the pandemic (Gadušová & Hašková, 2021; Maryatin et al., 2020).

The development of Pre-Service Teachers based on Education Theories.

The first theory related to the education system is behaviorism. This theory emphasizes the use of stimulus and response (Budiman, 2017). If students receive a stimulus, then they will give a response. This stimulus can be a compliment or a gift. An example of a reaction may be a student's endeavor to learn something new. This response will become a habit after being given intensively. Students will continue to respond even without a stimulus.

Based on behaviorism theory, a pre-service teacher will not respond to something not his habit. So, when they have to teach directly as part of the online learning process, they will need help. This is due to the formation of a stimulus in

the form of online education so that their response is under the conditions (Hung, 2021; Rohaizat binti Ibrahim et al., 2021). Meanwhile, as discussed in the literature above, face-to-face learning has different challenges from online challenges.

What is discussed in the theory of behaviorism is also supported by constructivism (Kaufman, 2004). In this theory, students need social interaction to build their knowledge. Thus, a pre-service teacher needs to practice teaching face-to-face to gain competition and face-to-face teaching knowledge. In other words, a pre-service teacher cannot master face-to-face teaching skills without practicing face-to-face teaching (Dost, 2021). If they only learn online based on the theory of behaviorism and constructivism, they still need to be proficient in teaching. They may be great at teaching online but have difficulty teaching face-to-face. In the future, education will re-implement the face-to-face system after the pandemic has passed. Whether it is combined online or not, a pre-service teacher is still expected to be able to teach face-to-face.

However, in the cognitivism theory, online education alone does not allow pre-service teachers to teach face-to-face (Hanipudin, 2020; Yadav, 2021). This theory provides an understanding of the practice of pre-service instructors who instruct students online. This theory emphasizes that as long as pre-service teachers understand concepts related to teaching, both online and face-to-face, the teacher can still teach well. Therefore, pre-service teachers can be optimistic about their practice process during their learning period. They will still go through the experience process when they become in-service teachers. Not all in-service teachers can teach well right after completing the training. They still need much experience in teaching to reach the point where they become professional teachers who are competent in their fields (Kaur & Singh, 2019).

Challenges in online teaching from pre-service teachers' perspectives

Based on interviews and focus group discussions, it was discovered that online teaching approaches had several learning shortcomings. The first is that, in

this study, all respondents still felt they were not good enough at teaching because they had never been taught face-to-face.

"...we are aware of the situation, but if possible, we want to teach face-to-face, once or twice at school..."

"...teaching in the classroom directly is very necessary so that later I can get a job so that I am more prepared..."

"... I hope to teach in class to meet students so I can interact directly with them..."

This is a serious issue because they will be required to teach directly after entering the world of work. With no experience, it is like asking someone to swim. However, they swim in an online simulator without a dip in a pool. Theories like behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism support this idea (Budiman, 2017; Kaufman, 2004; Yadav, 2021). Students must go through the procedure as rapidly as possible to gain greater confidence in their talents. Before going into teaching, people who want to become teachers should have taught both online and in-person classes. This will allow students to become effective in both modes of instruction. They are unable to confine themselves to a particular kind of instructional paradigm.

Online learning can be said to have a different form from face-to-face learning. As a result, those pre-service teachers are expected to have the opportunity to teach face-to-face, maybe once or twice, in an actual class (not an artificial class) with a variety of real students in the field. So that the government should provide wiser rules to deal with this; this is significant since pre-service teachers are the next generation of educators. If the government is negligent, there will be potential in the future. Future teachers still need to be scientifically mature in the field. The serious impact of this is like a domino effect where when the teacher is less competent, the students will learn less optimally, so there will be a decrease in the quality of education, especially in the area this research takes place (Fauziyah et al., 2021).

These future instructors also believe that much of what they teach kids is still not completely comprehended by them and their peers. As a result, they are still trying to figure out if they have done an excellent job throughout the teaching practice phase.

Based on the data collected, it was also found that pre-service teachers found it difficult to monitor their students. They said, *"...I find it difficult to monitor student learning progress..."* This shows that online learning is still difficult to control, assess, and evaluate classes.

Then, the respondents stated that they had not interacted optimally as long as they taught online. They said that *"...The lack of interaction between the students and me..."* this was proven by almost all students who were taught to use zoom to turn off their cameras. Most students were reluctant to speak or answer questions, preferring to stay quiet whenever they were requested to do so. Consequently, the teachers usually have to call out the students' names before they will be willing to stand out for themselves directly.

Related to other obstacles they face during online learning, they reveal that online teaching and learning makes them have to use more internet quota. As stated by one respondent, *"...Spends a lot of internet quota..."*. This makes it difficult for those whose economic status is still not well established to carry out this online learning process.

Finally, they face the challenge that not all students they teach have the tools to learn online. The Focus Group Discussion said, *"Not all students have online learning facilities."* This is because the students' economic backgrounds are not the same. Thus, pre-service teachers must have several alternatives or additional plans when teaching students who have difficulty following the learning process.

Opportunity for Pre-Service Teachers Who Teach Online During Pandemic

Based on the research results related to the responses of these pre-service teachers to the teaching practice process that they must do online, provide several exciting opportunity points. First, it should be realized that the unpreparedness of

teachers and students towards online learning is also a problem. Transferring face-to-face learning systems directly to online systems was sudden without proper preparation. While there are several advantages to face-to-face learning, the reality remains that online learning is still an essential component of pre-service teacher preparation. Online learning is still a kind of future learning, even if it is less formal and should be considered (Ellianawati et al., 2021). Students require more supervision and training in connecting with parents and other stakeholders outside of school. These pre-service teachers will be better prepared to deal with the educational revolution in totally online or blended learning if they are allowed to participate in online teaching strategies throughout their studies (Maulida et al., 2022).

In other words, online learning carried out by this teacher candidate has become momentum in the educational revolution. Before the pandemic, all forms of teaching practice were conducted face-to-face, and no one was used online. However, with the pandemic, we have finally become faster in moving to online and blended learning (the form of future education). Pre-service teachers who teach online have more capital than in-service teachers who previously only taught face-to-face (Fovet, 2021).

Furthermore, even though they did not directly experience the teaching practice process, they still learned about classroom management, how to deliver good subject matter, and making interesting learning media (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). These three things will be helpful for them later when they become professional teachers (Handrianto et al., 2021). Because a good teacher must manage students in his class well, he must also convey the material effectively and pleasantly and, of course, provide teaching media that makes students enthusiastic about the material being taught. Therefore, even without face-to-face learning during their practices, they still get the basic knowledge to become good teachers.

CONCLUSION

Online learning is becoming more popular due to the pandemic's impact on many aspects of life. The education aspect also experienced this, one of which was the change in the face-to-face education system to be entirely online. This is being done as part of the government's endeavor to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from becoming more widespread. With the requirement for all schools to teach online, pre-service teachers are forced to follow a system where they practice field teaching with an online system. With minimal online teaching experience, they must provide students with practical, engaging, and memorable lessons. However, this study found various challenges as long as they had to teach online, including signal interference and lack of interaction with students. In addition, the biggest challenge these pre-service teachers face is that they are afraid that they will have to teach face-to-face classes in the future. They should know how to teach directly during their teaching practice, but they are forced to teach online, which has different systems and constraints. However, this online learning provides several positive points or opportunities for pre-service teachers to become more capable ICT teachers. They also have a better chance when future education switches to blended learning or full online mode. Therefore, to maximize existing potential and answer existing challenges with positive results, pre-service teachers, schools, and the government must collaborate to produce a new system that is more supportive in preparing future teacher candidates. Next, we suggest a broader study on this topic that looks at a more comprehensive range of topics to get an excellent generalized result. Finally, it is critical to perform more studies on this pre-service teacher's attitude about becoming an in-service teacher.

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