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Perspectives on Barriers to E-Learning: Insight from Indonesian Parents

M. Khoirul Fahmi¹⁾, Pirman Ginting²⁾, Mandra Saragih³⁾, Muliana⁴⁾, Yenni Hasnah⁵⁾
^{1,2,3,4,5}Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah
Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

E-mail: ¹fahmim.khoirul12@gmail.com, ^{2*}pirmanginting@umsu.ac.id

³mandrasaragih@umsu.ac.id, ⁴mulianapiliang05@gmail.com, ⁵yennihasnah@umsu.ac.id

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Abstract

The phenomenon of online learning has grown at a rapid pace over the years. Despite its benefits, online learning also comes with certain drawbacks, such as a shortage of access to reliable network connectivity, digital literacy, and socializing. The current study aims to explore the perceptions of parents regarding the challenges of distance learning faced by their children in Indonesia. Questionnaires via google forms and interviews were used to diagnose the parents' responses to handicaps that existed during distance learning. The participants comprised 30 parents whose children joined online schooling. The findings revealed that parents experienced various kinds of obstacles in their efforts to help their children learn remotely such as (1) personal barriers (2) technical barriers (3) logistical barriers, and (4) financial barriers. The trend toward online learning is projected to continue and grow in the coming years with more dialogical, synchronic, pluralist, open, and accessible to various groups.

Keywords: *online learning, e-learning barriers, parent's perspective*

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) around the world are forcing educators to switch to online teaching mode overnight. Many academic institutions that were previously reluctant to change their traditional pedagogical approach have no choice but to switch entirely to online teaching and learning. this is caused (Dhawan, 2020). WHO declares the coronavirus to be a pandemic after the discovery of similar cases outside China, which is the center of the virus (WHO, 2020). This leads to school closures as the first strategy implemented to prevent the increase in cases of the spread of Covid-19 (Buonsenso



& Roland, 2021). The evidence of the effectiveness of school closures and other social distancing measures is obtained almost entirely from research conducted on these measures during influenza outbreaks, and in those outbreaks, school students were shown to be contributing to the spread of the virus (Brooks, 2020). Compared with the cumulative infection rate, school closures have been shown to lead to a significant reduction in the peak infection rate and, according to model studies, if the virus transmission rate is low (Nafisah, 2018). Due to this, the learning process switches to online mode at all levels of education (Sohaya, 2020).

Online learning uses many supporting applications as an alternative to face-to-face (Dhawan, 2020). This is also supported by Mailizar (2020) who stated that E-learning was chosen as a tool to support the learning process during the COVID-19 epidemic. In a study conducted on Hebron University students (Zboun & Farrah, 2021) most of the students agreed on the following advantages of online classes: (1) Easy to reach and access. (2) Save time, effort and money. (3) Easy to review. In Indonesia, online learning is also beneficial. These advantages include facilitating teaching schedules without having to go to school. improve students' technological abilities. accessible at home so as to reduce the spread of the coronavirus during a pandemic (Alchamdani, 2020).

However, in addition to providing benefits in helping to learn, E-learning also experiences challenges during its implementation. These challenges can be weaknesses of the online education system such as connectivity problems, technical difficulties, and less social interaction (Vishnu & Selvaraj, 2021). Furthermore, the crucial problem faced in online learning is internet access, where the majority of students cannot afford adequate internet packages, and others find it difficult to access an internet connection because they live mostly in rural areas. It is known that students do not get along with if online learning is applied in Vocational Higher Education in Aceh (Erliana, et.al., 2021).

As one of the countries affected by Covid-19, the Indonesian governments suspend the classroom without stopping learning by performing online learning



(Azhari & Fajri, 2021). Online learning, in fact, creates several difficulties and problems (Efriana, 2021). From teachers' perspectives, they experience challenges of online teaching in the three dominant aspects including personal, technical, and pedagogical (Junsay, Madrigal, 2021). This is also an effective approach in the level of parents' perspectives (Irvin, 2010). Parents are the most important contributors and collaborators in the life and future of children. (Sharma & Kiran, 2021). However, in this case, parents are required to have not only good parenting skills but also a decent level of education to supervise their children while remaining at home (Abuhammad, 2020).

Parents had negative views about the values and benefits of online learning and preferred traditional learning in early childhood settings. They have suffered from the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes them more resilient to online learning at home, which is problematic and challenging for families (Dong, 2020). Based on this case, it is important to know the barriers for parents of students during the online learning process used during the COVID-19 outbreak.

METHODS

The subject for this study was parents of students from Indonesian Schools. The number of participants is 30 parents who have been selected by using convenience sampling. Participants are people who live in the area where the researcher lives and who are easily contacted via WhatsApp (Edgar & Manz, 2017). Selected samples were asked to describe their perceptions or ideas about barriers to e-learning during the covid-19 period.

The data were collected through semi-structured interview techniques. Interviews were conducted in person and by telephone conversation (Bernard, 2006). Because the pandemic has banned face-to-face meetings, researchers chose to interview attendees using an asynchronous communication method like Google Forms. First, the researcher was creating a focus group to easily distribute and collect data from participants. A Google Forms link was then provided in the group



chat. Parents can click on the link and write the response directly into Google Forms. Parents can then notify the researcher if they have completed the answer. So that. The researcher can verify the answer through Google Form.

This research was carried out using qualitative methods through interviews. Interviews are theorized as the most appropriate method because they are often used as sources of truth, facts, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and / or feelings of the interview (Moleong, 2012) Interviews was organized to investigate parental perceptions of barriers, attitudes, or positive effects of online learning. After selecting the sample, the study was first collecting the participants in an online chat group on WhatsApp. Then a link to the Google form was shared and participants were able to fill out their own Google form. The answer given by each participant can only be seen by the researcher. This shows that the answers given are purely from the parents themselves and are not affected by the answers of other participants in any way. In addition, the theory of Miles Huberman analysis techniques was used to analyze the data to respond to the formulation of questions in this research.

The researcher used thematic analysis by Braund and Clarke Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative analysis that is often used for both primary research and systematic reviews. Although widely used, its use for the latter purpose is often poorly defined with consequent effects on the quality of the resultant analysis. There are 3 stages in analyzing the data. Firstly, prepare the data to be analyzed by grouping to identify the barrier codes and parents' attitudes toward online learning. The second stage sorts the data based on the similarity of themes. The third stage, using all statements of obstacles, and parents' attitudes towards online learning were made based on data analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This study used qualitative research by surveying a number of parents whose children have online learning. The barriers in this study were divided into



four barriers, which were Personal Barriers (PB), Technical barriers (TB), Logistical barriers (LB), and Financial Barriers (FB). In this study, each perception of parents was categorized according to which category most suited them. In this study, the number of samples used was 30 people and the data was collected through interviews distributed to the parents. The interview results of each learning obstacle were explained in the following tables:

Table 4.1

Distribution of Interview Results

No	Barriers	Subtheme	Frequency	%
1	Personal Barries (PB)	Lack of training and support	4	13.3%
		Lack of technical expertise	2	6.6%
		Lack of qualifications	3	10%
		Inadequate communication	3	10%
2	Technical barriers (TB)	Insufficient investment and maintenance	0	0%
		Poor connectivity	3	10%
3	Logistical barriers (LB)	Difficulties in using distance learning and lack of student preparation	1	3.3%
		Dissatisfaction with distance learning modality	10	33.%
		Inability of distance learning to meet students' needs	-	0%
4	Financial Barriers (FB)	Inability to buy technology	1	3.3%
		Inability to pay for internet services	3	10%
Total			30	100%

Table 4.2 Interview List

Interview List	
Name :	
age :	
1. Personal Barriers	
Lack of Training and Support (Lack of Training and Support)	



a. Are you experiencing problems in operating the software to help your children learn online?

b. Did you get assistance in operating the software to help your children learn online?

Lack of Expertise in Technical Operations (Lack of technical expertise)

c. Do you have adequate knowledge in operating software to help your children learn online?

Insufficient Communication (Inadequate Communication)

d. Do you understand the material provided by the teachers during online tutoring?

Lack of Qualification (Qualification)

e. Do you have the ability to teach students during online learning?

2. Technical Barriers (Technical Barriers)

Insufficient investment and maintenance (Insufficient investment and maintenance).

a. Do your children have adequate tools in carrying out online learning?

Bad Connection (Bad Connectivity)

b. Do you often experience network problems when online learning takes place?

3. Logistical Barriers (Logistics Barriers)

Preparation (Difficulty in using distance learning and lack of student preparation).

a. Do you have difficulty in using distance learning?

b. Have your children properly prepared their needs during online learning?

Dissatisfaction with distance learning modalities (Dissatisfaction with distance learning modalities)

c. Are you dissatisfied with the distance learning modality?

Disability of distance learning to meet student's needs (Disability of distance learning to meet student's needs).

d. Are you experiencing problems in meeting the needs of students in this distance learning?

4. Financial Barriers

Inability to buy technology (Inability to buy technology)

a. Do you have the ability to buy adequate tools to support online learning?

Inability to pay for internet services (Inability to pay for internet services)



- b. *Is buying an internet package in the implementation of online learning a burden on your finances?*

From the table above, it can be seen the division of barriers that become problems by each parent during this online learning. Each obstacle and answer choice from respondents were explained below.

1. Personal Barriers (PB)

Personal barriers are barriers that are basically contained within the parents themselves. They are usually characterized by the inability of parents to do something, which is based on age, unwillingness to learn, or stuttering towards technology. Answers from parents regarding these personal barrier problems (PB) are lack of training and support as expressed by several parents below.

Yes, I'm sure as a layman it's hard for me to use this equipment

(Respondent No.1)

For people who are not familiar with the technology like me, this is difficult (Respondent No. 12)

From the several answer choices above, it can be seen that many parents think that using electronic devices is quite difficult so they experience problems in operating them. Students are village people or old people who have never been familiar with technology at all. Apart from lack of training and support, lack of technical expertise is also a problem from the parent's point of view when learning online. It is due to the inability of parents to operate the devices that were used in their children's online learning, such as the answer mentioned by respondent No 17,

"Yes, I do not know because people my age are terrible at technology "

The answer represents that parents do not understand stereotypes about technology so it becomes a barrier for them to help their children learn online, moreover online learning activities are only being promoted during the pandemic to prevent the spread of an increasingly widespread epidemic. In this case, the parents cannot be blamed for this. They feel unfamiliar with technology that they



do not understand and it certainly takes time to understand the devices used for distance learning. Inadequate communication is also part of the personal barriers that parents face when their children do online learning. From the interview results, it turns out that inadequate communication is the most common personal barrier experienced by parents because parents do not know whether the students understand the material given by the teachers. The interviews reflect the arguments as follows,

I am not sure yet because sometimes the kids understand, and sometimes they don't (Respondent No.16)

I don't know, because the one who was accompanying me when I was studying was my mother (Respondent No.18)

From the interview result, this is considered natural because when online learning takes place a transfer of knowledge is not like face-to-face learning, so sometimes students do not understand the material given by their teacher. Ismail (2016) states that learning difficulties are a condition in which the learning process is marked by certain obstacles to achieving learning outcomes. From these definitions, learning difficulties are an obstacle or difficult situations in the learning process. Some parents have problems stating that they have problems with personal barriers. Based on the table, it can be seen that there are 4 themes about personal barriers which are Lack of training and support with 4 people (13.3%), Lack of technical expertise with 2 people (6.6%) then Lack of qualifications with 3 people (10%) and Inadequate communication as many as 3 people (10%). Based on the results above, the parents seemed to have many personal barriers that they felt affected the standard and quality of their children's distance learning experience. It was clear that the parent's lack of training in how to handle distance learning techniques and materials along with the absence of trained personnel who could assist them were key concerns. Moreover, not all parents were able to handle the technology required for distance learning, which prevented them from enabling its efficient use at home. Finally, the parents raised this issue of their own qualifications. Parents with lower levels of education felt that they were not able to



assist their children in studying specific subjects and in handling the necessary technology.

2. Technical barriers (TB)

During the learning process, there must be times when an individual, especially a student, experiences problems in the acceptance process. These obstacles are caused both from outside and from within which hinder the achieving goal. Barriers are things that contribute to difficulties in the learning process. One of these forms of barriers is technical barriers (TB). Technical barriers (TB) are technical problems experienced by parents when doing online learning, such as insufficient investment and maintenance and also Poor Connectivity. When researchers ask about whether the children have adequate equipment in carrying out online learning, almost all respondents answered that they have adequate tools for the implementation of online learning, meaning that parents do not experience problems in providing adequate devices to do online learning. This is not a problem because online learning does not have to use a PC or laptop but it can also utilize a Smartphone which mostly is already owned by students. Another technical problem is a problematic network. In this study, some respondents thought that the network was unstable but this could still be overcome by changing the card or restarting the Smartphone. Of all the respondents interviewed, there was only one person who had quite a problem with the network, which was Respondent No. 10

"Sometimes it's difficult because the signal made it difficult to log in, or connect"

From his explanation, it can be seen that the network problems faced are more difficult to solve. Log in to the application or often disconnected when doing online learning can cause stagnation of scientific knowledge, and even a decrease in one's knowledge where this bottleneck can occur due to information jumps. As for Technical barriers (TB), there are two themes that are often experienced by parents, which are insufficient investment and maintenance and Poor connectivity. In this study, insufficient investment and maintenance did not find in these barriers (0%) yet there were 3 problems found regarding Poor connectivity. Parents who



experience these barriers are 3 people (10%). The latter issue was experienced a lot during the period of the COVID-19 outbreak covered by the study. Many of the parents' posts discussed the frequency with which their children were disconnected from the internet and could not proceed with their assignments, classes, or exams. One post concentrated on the quality of the internet speed, which was not suitable for distance learning lessons that used a lot of video content. This point led to an extensive discussion thread, and overall, parents showed a negative attitude toward this barrier during the COVID-19 outbreak.

3. Logistical barriers (LB)

Barriers from both internal and external factors to learning are everything that hinders the implementation of the learning process. According to Ahmadi and Supriyono (2013), logistical impediments take the shape of challenges in arranging online learning, including troublesome use with distance learning and a lack of student preparedness. Most respondents felt that these restrictions were the primary concerns with online learning because of a shift in habits from face-to-face schooling to remote learning. This led parents to have to change their habits in preparing their children before starting learning. How the barriers arose during the learning process can be also noticed from the interview excerpts as follows.

I do not know because when my children study online, I'm working
(Respondent No.3)

When learning online it is difficult to manage the children at home
(Respondent No.22)

I do not also know because it is not uncommon for her mother to accompany her when she is studying (Respondent No.27)

It is difficult to begin the online learning because the signal is problematic
(Respondent No.25)

From the interview, the logistical barriers resulted from an assortment of factors. One of the issues is the discrepancy between parents' working hours and their children's school schedules, which restricts parents to stand by their children. Another concern dealt with the hurdles of managing the pupils while



conducting the learning process at home. This issue might be exacerbated by parents' and children's not being ready for virtual learning, which was previously carried out in person. What's more, internet network error emerges as a substantial hindrance while engaging in online learning, disrupting the efficient flow of instruction.

Referring to the respondents' answers about virtual learning, almost all respondents were dissatisfied with such a mode of learning.

Yes, I'm not satisfied either, moreover, it seems like everything is charged to the parents (Respondent No.6)

Actually, I'm not satisfied with online learning, it seems that everything is delegated to parents, but yes, we follow the rules, right? (Respondent No.15)

Yes, of course, I'm not satisfied because it adds to our work as parents. (Respondent No.24)

Those who are dissatisfied with distance learning modalities are parents who feel that everything is being burdened by them. Things that were not previously the responsibility of parents become their responsibility so parents think that online learning only adds to their work.

From some of the obstacles above, it can be seen that there is reluctance from parents to interfere in online learning because it was increasing their workload and the ignorance of some respondents about preparation for online learning because when children study online the respondents are working. For the problem of logistical barriers (LB), the themes that become barriers for parents in online learning are difficulties in using distance learning, lack of student preparation, dissatisfaction with distance learning modality, and Inability of distance learning to meet students' needs. The barrier that most complained about by parents is dissatisfaction with the distance learning modality with 10 participants (33.3%). Meanwhile, for difficulties in using distance learning and lack of student preparation, only 1 participant (3.3%) has problems with this barrier. Many of the posts made by parents indicated that the introduction of distance learning was not



fair and that their children were not prepared to use distance learning as the main medium of education. In a study, some said that their children lacked computer proficiency and the prerequisite skills to achieve good results through distance teaching (Irvin et al., 2010). Some parents were dissatisfied with distance learning and felt that this kind of learning should not be a substitute for face-to-face education even though there are benefits of distance learning, such as saving time and effort for school students.

4. Financial Barriers (FB)

Financial Barriers are obstacles regarding the financial ability of parents in preparing for online learning. Several issues concerning the Financial Barriers faced by parents are the inability to buy technology and the inability to pay for internet services. However, from the results of interviews that the author conducted, very few parents complained about their inability to provide technology and tools for online learning. Most of the interviewees said that would not be able to buy new devices, but still, students could use their parents' devices or use their Smartphones so parents are not necessary to buy new devices. In addition to problems in providing new devices, the inability to pay for internet services is also an obstacle to online learning. As it is known that doing distance learning needs a lot of quotas to stream online, some parents complain that they have to incur additional costs in buying internet packages to help to learn. From the results of interviews that the author conducted, what became a complaint of parents was that even though students received a study quota from the government, sometimes various problems occurred so that parents still had to pay extra to buy internet packages, as stated below,

Actually yes, because the school data quota given is sometimes problematic, so children have to use a personal quota (Respondent No.20)
Well, at the very least, you have to increase the wifi bandwidth so that the speed is stable (Respondent No.23)



Actually, yes, because the school internet data quota given is sometimes problematic, so you have to use a personal quota, so sometimes personal money comes out too (Respondent No.30)

Based on the statements above, parents prefer to use a personal quota for distance learning which causes additional costs even though there is a learning quota given by the government. This is due to frequent problems such as poor connectivity while using the learning quota. The problem with Financial Barriers (FB) deals with the inability to pay for internet services with 3 participants (10%), for Inability to buy technology is found 1 person (3.3%) experiencing this barrier. Most of the problems related to these financial barriers are that the internet quota given to students often cannot be used so parents have to buy another quota which certainly was burden parents' finances. While for the provision of adequate technology, most parents do not face these barriers because their children can still use their smartphones and their parents' devices.

Discussion

During the pandemic, educational institutions in Indonesia are forced to be prepared to provide e-learning services. Therefore, there are still many learning models that follow the model of providing online documentation and exercises for its implementation. As a result, the two-way interaction remains minimalist. The benefits educators and students experience when implementing study from home with the e-learning model are flexibility in implementation, reduced possibility of spread of Covid19 on campus and school environment, strengthens students' courage to express ideas, and opinions and ask questions for free, while providing a new learning model experience. The willingness and motivation of educators to improve their knowledge and skills in e-learning contribute to the quality of education (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020).

This study aimed to describe and clarify the perceptions of parents about the barriers to distance learning during the coronavirus crisis. It is important to understand these perceptions to enable the government and decision-makers to



develop solutions to address the barriers that affect parents. From the analysis, it was clear that many barriers were encountered by parents from personal and financial barriers to technical and logistical issues. As regards personal barriers (PB), This study found that personal barriers constituted the most apparent type of barrier. These barriers included a lack of training and support, a lack of technical expertise, inadequate communication. Indeed, lack of training in the use of distance learning was one of the most often reported barriers. Other studies have also recognized the presence of similar of these barriers in post-secondary agricultural learning (Mbukusa et al., 2017). This finding is also consistent with Irvin et al., (2010), who identified the lack of trained professionals to be a common barrier in distance learning in the United State. Also, many parents in this study mentioned parents should have an understanding of technology (Bukhkalo et al., 2018).

The secret of successful distance learning is dependable technology to ensure the online delivery of distance learning classes using engaging distance learning techniques (Bukhkalo et al., 2018). Parents and their school-age children appreciate that technology can improve their experience of distance learning (Menchaca and Bekele, 2008). However, both school students and members of staff in another study identified communication as a barrier to effective distance learning. The only chance for the students to communicate with the distance learning instructor is during the allocated learning time. Facilitators of distance learning have realized that communicating via e-mail can frustrate students because they cannot receive timely assistance or responses via this mode of communication (Ouma et al., 2013).

Students who participated reported that a lack of personnel to help them became a barrier to their distance learning. Some students and parents have reported a lack of the required technical expertise; which has also been identified as a barrier in post-secondary environments according to Renes and Strange (2011). This study also found that technical barriers (TB) (insufficient investment and maintenance and insufficient connectivity) also impeded distance learning, which is also in line with past research (Astri, 2017. Mousavi et al., 2011), who found that inability to



maintain new technology by the school provider prevented students from benefiting from distance learning efficiently or impeded them from benefiting from distance learning. Furthermore, in this study, some posts revealed that there were associations between logistical barriers (LB) and distance learning as well. These barriers included difficulties in using distance learning and lack of student preparation, dissatisfaction with the distance learning modality, and the inability of distance learning to meet students' needs (Lloyd et al., 2012).

The logistical barriers were the only barriers that were found to have an association with completing a course. Nevertheless, the lack of home technology was related to the minimal utilization of and benefits derived from distance learning. Furthermore, our analysis revealed an apparent pattern in the issues raised across the various barriers, especially the logistical barriers (i.e., it is difficult to implement distance learning), and personal barriers (i.e., lack of training to facilitate distance learning), which was associated with the subject course, the format of delivery, preparation of the student, satisfaction with distance learning, and the extent to which distance learning met the needs of the school student. Lastly, this study found that financing (FB) distance learning is another barrier faced by parents because buying technology for distance learning lessons and the cost of doing the lessons via the internet can result in financial challenges. This is in line with a previous study that showed that parents using distance learning classes, those not utilizing distance learning, and those who used distance learning in the past all identified funding as a barrier to distance learning (Hannum et al., 2008). Parents lack computers, access to the internet, and the absence of technology experts (Barter, 2008; Irvin et al., 2010; Wasiams et al., 2010). Furthermore, the need to buy web cameras for video conferencing adds another burden to the cost of distance learning for remote parents (Hager, 2011). Other posts on the barriers to participating in distance learning also revealed concerns about money and accessing equipment and technology. The costs related to owning a computer, accessing the internet, and other equipment may be seen as a barrier, particularly if the family has insufficient income to cover such expenses (Adams and Hannum, 2008; Roberts



and Hannum, 2018). Nevertheless, the perception of the advantages of distance learning also included funding and accessing technology and instrument. Monetary help may be used in buying equipment for technology and support distance learning. Access to suitable technology is a key issue because, according to Owens et al. (2009), the absence of technology makes it difficult for remote students to complete distance learning classes.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the advantages of electronic learning, there are still a number of issues that need to be resolved, such as restricted access to high-speed internet and technology, a lack of technical assistance, and a lack of preparation for online teaching techniques. From the parental perspective, they face various types of barriers in striving to help their children with electronic learning including personal, technical, logical, and financial factors. Parents often struggle to set up devices, access online resources, or resolve technical issues that arise during the lessons due to their unfamiliarity with the technology needed for online learning. Parental hurdles in handling e-learning are also accentuated by limited access to technology. This is due to the fact that not all families have the financial means to purchase the equipment and gadgets required for online learning. Besides, a lack of time is a major factor in e-learning failure. Finding the time to assist their child's online learning can be daunting for working parents. The amount of parental involvement needed for online learning, particularly for younger children, may not be feasible for many families.

To remove the limits, some modifications are needed, such as creating a designated study space, setting a fixed schedule, and building more intensive communication with peers and teachers. Since e-learning ultimately becomes the learning of the future, it should be designed to be more dialogical, synchronic, pluralist, open, and accessible to many people in the future. Thus, providing a well-prepared facility to conduct efficient electronic learning modes becomes crucial as virtual learning continues to be a viable learning option in the future.



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