The Problems of Using Online-Based Individual Learning Programs During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Face-to-face learning system during a special pandemic for students with special needs. Therefore, individual distance learning activities (DARING) are one of the solutions carried out by inclusive schools so that children with special needs can continue to receive learning and can maintain their health under the supervision of parents at home. The purpose of this study is to describe how the problems faced by teachers and parents in learning with special needs children. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive phenomenological approach. Data collection techniques with Observation, Interview, and Documentation. Data validation uses source triangulation and technical triangulation. As for the data analysis using the theory of Miller and Huberman The results showed that the learning problems of children with special needs during the pandemic were very complex, the researchers divided them into several factors, the first factor being the teacher: teachers are not ready to design individual children with special needs learning programs based on innovative ones, teachers are still difficult to allocate time to accompany children with special needs and other normal children. The second is from parents: parents find it difficult to accompany children to study at home because parents cannot create a good learning environment for children so that children are often in trance and cannot be conditioned. The third is environmental factors: the learning environment at home is not very conducive, there are many distractions, so it is difficult for children to concentrate. This obstacle will have an impact on the sustainability of the quality of learning with special needs children so that related parties will try to do better in providing services.

Key words: children with special needs, individual learning program, online learning.

Introduction

Inclusive education is an educational service system that requires children with special needs to study in nearby schools in the usual class with friends of their age. This shows that public schools can accept all children regardless of their background. The purpose of inclusive education is to teach students to be able to appreciate and respect other people, can realize that they are part of the wider community, can appreciate different perspectives, and can accept tasks in society and their social environment (Pradipta, 2017). There are several educations for children with special needs, namely, segregation, integration and inclusion. Segression is a form of school for children with special needs
that is separate from the general education system. Integration or what is often referred to as mainstreaming is an education system that provides opportunities for students with special needs to attend education in public schools together with children in general. In this system, children with special needs are not given special treatment, but must follow the system that applies in the school. While inclusion is education that places children with special needs in public schools by studying together with normal children and providing appropriate treatment for children with special needs (Stubbs, 2002).

Children with special needs are children who in education require specific services, different from children in general. These children with special needs experience barriers to learning and development. Therefore they need educational services that are in accordance with the learning needs of each child. Children with special needs (Pradipta, 2019).

Teachers as professional educators have a goal to improve the quality of national education and have the ability to realize national education goals. One of the competencies that must be possessed by teachers as stated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers is pedagogic competence. Pedagogic competence is the ability of teachers to manage student learning. Pedagogic competence is a distinctive competence that will distinguish a teacher from other professions and will determine the level of success of the process and learning outcomes of students. Thus the teacher has the responsibility in designing learning programs that are in accordance with the competencies that have been set (Agus, 2013).

To regulate the implementation of learning during the Covid–19 pandemic, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid–19) point 2, the first provision that learning from home is carried out through learning online/remotely to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. With the hope that online learning can be used as a substitute for teaching and learning activities in schools.

Distance learning is the best alternative that can be done so that learning can continue even though students are at home. Online learning is learning that is carried out using the internet as a place to distribute knowledge (Syarifudin, 2020). In accordance with the opinion (Risalah et al., 2020) that technological development is a difficult part of education. Especially during the current Covid–19 pandemic, social media and applications on smartphones are important for online learning. This is because almost all learning and assignments are shared and collected through social media or applications that have been determined by the teacher. However, apart from being a bridge of knowledge during the Covid–19 pandemic between teachers and students, Technological advances also require the participation of parents, namely the provision of smartphones for online learning (Risalah et al., 2020). In accordance with the opinion (Handayani et al., 2020) that there are several things that become obstacles, among others, the limitations of teacher interaction in explaining the material so that many students do not understand, and the unpreparedness of parents in guiding their children to study so that if left unchecked it will disrupt the child’s development.

Child development takes place continuously and continuously through several phases of growth. The success of reaching a stage of development will greatly determine the success of the next stage of development. In the process of child development, children will find various kinds of problems and disorders that result in non–optimal development. Children who have problems or obstacles that are temporary (temporary) can be handled through the guidance process, but for children who have problems that are permanent and have serious risks, special treatment or intervention is needed. This group of children is then known as children with special needs. The pattern of parental assistance is also guided to be more in proportion, as research (Studies, 2020) stated that of the total eight respondents, the pattern of learning assistance carried out in the form of assistance carried out was different according to the style of the parents. In essence, they continue to make patterns by directing, assisting, and guiding as well as evaluating children’s learning.

The implementation of online learning during the Covid–19 pandemic presents its own problems for teachers, parents and especially for children with special needs. Children with special needs find it difficult to carry out online learning. This is based on the explanation of the special assistant teacher (GPK) who stated that children with special needs experienced a decline in their cognitive, social, behavioral and emotional development because learning was carried out online during the pandemic era. Parents who become children’s learning companions during the pandemic do not have a good understanding and experience in teaching children. So that the school requires parents of children to create strategies in assisting children with special needs as stated in the following opinion: Learning strategies that can be implemented at home include: First, humanize relationships by building positive relationships between teachers, students and parents. Second, understanding the concept with the teacher guides learning through explaining the goals and learning process to parents. Third, build sustainability by reflecting with parents (Hamidaturrohmah & Mulyani, 2020) During the current Covid–19 pandemic, learning is very dependent on utilizing the existing internet network. In line with the opinion (Ismant, 2016) that in the online learning process the internet network is used as something that must exist in the online learning process.

Online learning is learning that is carried out in a network where the teacher and those being taught do not meet face–to–face directly (Pohan, 2020). To conduct online learning well, the principles that must be met must
be in accordance with the Circular Letter (SE) of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020 including the implementation of meaningful learning, namely by providing experience in an interactive learning process. In addition, students are not burdened with the tasks that are given excessively by the teacher. This is in accordance with the opinion (Munawar & Pusari, 2013) regarding the principles that must be met in the implementation of online learning, namely: First, the learning system must be simple so that it is easy to learn. Second, the learning system must be made personal or personal so that users of one system with another system do not depend on each other. Third, the system must be made fast in finding material or providing answers from the results of the system design being developed.

The online learning has several advantages, namely the flexibility of time and place to study, for example, learning can be done in the room, living room and so on and the time is adjusted for example morning, afternoon, evening or night. Can overcome problems regarding distance, for example, students do not have to go to school first to study. There are no restrictions and can cover a wide area (Putria et al., 2020). Students at elementary school age are the age they still like to play (Sudarsana & Dkk, 2020). Children are still not able to distinguish what is good or not for themselves and at this stage of student development is a period where someone still needs guidance and direction from parents. This makes them actually comfortable to learn from home or so-called online learning which can give a positive picture of their own parents, this really happens when parents really understand the child's character and become patient parents in guiding their children to study at home. (Nurul, 2019). Online learning also still requires the role of parents of students, considering the age of elementary school children who still need direction and guidance as well as supervision in learning (Putria et al., 2020).

The term children with special needs is intended for children who experience limitations or extraordinariness, whether physical, social, emotional or mental–intellectual, which has a significant effect on the process of growth and development compared to other children of the same age. (Destiny of God, 2013) states that children with special needs are children who are different from the average normal child in several ways includes mental characteristics, sensory abilities, communication skills, social behavior or physical characteristics. Heward explained that children with special needs are children with special characteristics that are different from children in general without always showing mental, emotional or physical disabilities. Based on this term, children with special needs are unique children and have their own characteristics that distinguish them from children in general. Children with special needs include children with disabilities (handicapped children) in the process of growth and development (Baihaqi, MIF & Sugiarmin, 2006).

Some of the studies above are supporting studies for researchers. This research is more focused on the problems that arise in learning with special needs children in inclusive schools online during the pandemic. The importance of this research because it has a specific purpose to describe and formulate the problems of implementing online learning for children with special needs during the covid pandemic.

Methods

This research will use the type of qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research based on facts that look real without any form of calculation and data is obtained by describing the process and meaning by utilizing the researcher as a key instrument (Sugiarto, 2015) so that the presence of researchers in research will determine success. By using a phenomenological approach, which describes a life experience for several people about a concept or phenomenon and how to understand an event, symptom or object by experiencing it in a conscious way (Creswell, 1998). Informants in the study were classroom teachers, special assistant teachers, children with special needs and parents the research subjects were children with special needs in schools at 20 Mataram City. Data collection techniques used are interview data collection techniques, documentation and observation. The data validity test in this qualitative research includes source triangulation and technique triangulation. Data analysis technique is a systematic collection process to facilitate researchers in getting conclusions. Qualitative data analysis is inductive, namely analysis based on the data obtained. The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles and Huberman model, namely: data reduction, data display and data verification.

Results & Discussion

SDN 20 Mataram is one of the inclusive schools that implements distance learning, teaching and learning activities during the covid pandemic. At SDN 20 Mataram using online learning with WhatsApp groups. teachers teach children with special needs and other normal children to use the WhatsApp application. There are so many challenges that teachers face, such as children who do not have the desire to learn and the lack of concentration of children with special needs when doing online learning. Children with special needs are very difficult to focus their minds while at school, especially in conditions like this which require students to stare at the laptop or cellphone screen which causes them to lose concentration.
Based on the data collection method carried out, the problems of online learning for children with special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic have several factors which are formulated as follows: teachers are not ready to design innovative online-based ABK individual learning programs, teachers are still difficult to allocate time to accompany children ABK and other normal children. This was felt by GPK, one of the teachers at the SDN 20 inclusive school in the city of Mataram with the initials YD who said:

Online learning for me and my students is very difficult, especially in my class there are 3 children with special needs with different disabilities. If learning is carried out virtually through the zoom application, the children find it difficult to focus, so I have difficulty doing classroom conditioning. What I did was ask parents to accompany their children during the zoom, but not all parents can do that because of their busy schedules. And we and our loyal class teacher 2 times a week make home visits.

Parental Factor. There are still parents who do not master technology and the busyness of each parent in taking care of the house, taking care of other children, and the problem of parents who are busy working. This is what one parent stated: Because I am not a teacher and only a high school graduate and do not have good teaching experience and understanding, moreover I still have to take care of other jobs such as kitchen matters to cook, clean the house and prepare other children's lessons. I hope this situation recovers soon and the children return to school. Environmental factor. Online learning is considered monotonous so that students feel bored, because of the lack of real interaction between students and their peers. The assumption that home is not the right place to study and parents are not teachers for those who do not have the right teaching strategies, and mastery of the material is weak and does not have the right pedagogic scientific background, so that completeness of learning at home is still minimal. This is how the parents of one of the crew members felt:

In this condition, my child's ability is getting smaller, even that is also felt by others who have children with special needs. At school, children can study with their peers and every week they will attend therapy clinic services according to the disorder they are experiencing. Due to the pandemic period, this clinical service could not operate so our child did not get the service.

Based on the problem factors described above, it can be synthesized that the problem of education for children with special needs during this pandemic is very complex. Each component has different levels of difficulty. The complexity of this problem can be formulated into several important points as follows:

The unpreparedness of class teachers and special assistant teachers in accommodating the needs of ABK because of the implementation of online learning, especially in managing classes, conditioning the learning of children with special needs, and establishing good communication with ABK, cessation of clinical and therapeutic services for ABK which are usually carried out in schools, cessation of Children's learning activities at school also stop children's social relationships with peers and keep children's interactions away from the school environment. This has an impact on children's social and emotional development, the inability of parents to replace the role of special assistant teachers (GPK) in providing children's experiences in learning due to busy factors, lack of scientific understanding of children with special needs and others, learning environment and a boring learning atmosphere for students. Communication between teachers/schools and the family is not going well, students assume that the place of learning is in the school and the teacher is the one who teaches, it is difficult to understand the children with special needs that learning activities must be done at home with limited media, limited understanding of parents about strategies to guide children with special needs while studying.

Some of the points above are problems experienced by children with special needs during online learning due to the pandemic era. These problems must of course be noted by the school and the family to improve the quality so that learning for children with special needs goes well. Online Learning as stated by (Handayani et al., 2020) that the implementation of online learning (online) is reaping several problems, including many parents of elementary school students who do not understand and understand using technology, time must be divided by necessity to earn a living. This is also in line with (Mutaqinah & Hidayatullah, 2020) which states that the obstacles faced by teachers are limited quota/network, difficulty controlling students while for parents internet access and limited gadget facilities and difficulties in managing the time and process of accompanying children to learn. Especially for children with special needs who have obstacles in learning. In the process of implementing the learning process, ABK must be supported by an optimal system (Minsih et al., 2020)

Based on research (Amell, 2020) online learning is less effective because of the lack of facilities and infrastructure and the unpreparedness of technology education. The same thing was stated by Hamdani and Priatna (2020) who concluded that the level of learning effectiveness of the 8 indicators studied was around 66.97%. This is in line with research which states that: Learning for children with special needs during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in inclusive schools, namely; (1) teachers and parents are considered less capable in distance learning, (2) Parents are not biased accessing the internet, (3) Children are lazy to do distance learning (Dewi et al., 2020) These three findings are in line with some of the findings found in this study, namely: shortcomings from the school and family as well as intrinsic factors from within the child. However, in this study (Dewi et al., 2020) it was not explained in detail and comprehensively apart from three points. As mentioned above, the research found eight
elements of online learning problems. Based on the problems discussed above, some of the best learning strategies for children with special needs during online learning are needed. This is considered urgent because this problem has been going on for two semesters. Studies on online learning strategies for children with special needs have been carried out by several researchers including: 1) Individualized teaching strategies, namely teaching tailored to individual characters; 2) Cooperative learning; 3) Behavior modification strategies; 4) Innovation of learning media and learning strategies. 5. Build good communication harmony with related people (Hamidaturrohmah & Mulyani, 2020).

The same thing is also in accordance with the results of research (Handayani et al., 2020) that online learning can be carried out well if there is cooperation between teachers, students and parents in studying at home, full guidance for children, and the readiness of parents to spend their time which is a the only option in the midst of the global Covid–19 pandemic even though it is not effective for elementary school age children. This research will contribute to the advancement of inclusive education for children with special needs during the pandemic. Although this research has limitations related to the time of data collection, due to the academic atmosphere of social distancing so it is not optimal.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are three factors that become problematic learning for children with special needs in inclusive schools during the covid pandemic and are formulated as follows: the first factor is the factor of the teacher: the teacher is not ready to design individual learning programs with special needs based on innovative ones, teachers are still difficult to divide the time to accompany children with special needs and other normal children. The second is from parents: parents find it difficult to accompany children to study at home because parents cannot create a good learning environment for children so that children are often in trance and cannot be conditioned. The third is environmental factors: the learning environment at home is not very conducive, there are many distractions, so it is difficult for children to concentrate.

References