Islamic Education Teachers' Adaptation in Digital Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted educational communication, as traditional teaching and learning have been replaced by online digital teaching and learning. Thus, teachers must adapt quickly to new technology to meet the lesson objectives and successfully deliver their lessons. This study explores teachers' adaptation experience throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Data was gathered in Mutiara Bunda Elementary School, an inclusive private school in Bandung with religious education at its core. In-depth interviews and introspection were conducted with four Islamic education teachers across grades. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that teachers went through five overlapping stages: confusion, trial and error, capacity building, adaptation, and efforts to find new solutions. However, different challenges were faced by each teacher according to the grades they taught. Even though teachers had finally adapted and transformed the teaching and learning experience, traditional face-to-face communication was still preferred by 1st to 3rd-grade teachers to deliver the lessons effectively. Lack of the teachers' IT skills to deliver the lessons to develop the students' character, inexperience in online teaching, and the students' low motivation to learn through the digital platform clearly constitute the main obstacle in this religious, educational process.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted educational communication, as online teaching and learning has replaced the traditional face-to-face method. In Indonesia, Study from the Home policy has been implemented since March 2020 (Kemdikbud, 2020b), which has pushed teachers and students to interact digitally offsite. However, home-schooling has never been a mainstream topic in Indonesia's national education (Shofan, 2020). The shift to online learning itself became questionable because it was not well-planned and carefully designed in advance. Thus, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was more suitable to be considered 'emergency remote teaching' (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021).

As the teachers were unprepared for the sudden shift, an early national survey discovered that the lack of facilities, teaching management skills, and the digital device became significant obstacles to implementing the Study from Home policy (Kemdikbud, 2020a). Another follow-up survey five months later highlighted positive changes both teachers and students felt. Nevertheless, online teaching was still considered ineffective (Kemdikbud, 2020c), including in primary schools.

Several studies revealed challenges faced by primary school teachers. Through a semi-structured interview, Rasmitadila et al. (2020) found that primary school teachers in Indonesia faced challenges related to technical issues, ineffective student conditioning, student low

engagement and motivation, and having no prior online teaching experience. Another study identified other challenges related to restricted instructional strategies, lack of e-resources in the Indonesian language, and time-consuming assessments (Putri et al., 2020).

Among primary school subject teachers, religious education teachers might face more challenges in implementing online teaching. Reflected in the name of the subject 'Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti' (Islamic Education and Character), this subject aims not only to develop knowledge but also to develop the character of the students. However, research is still limited to the discussion on the e-learning implementation (Syahfitri et al., 2020; Yusuf et al., 2020), use of media (Jaelani et al., 2020; Muslimah, 2020) and teaching practices (Iswanto et al., 2021). The teachers, who are the main actors, receive a lack of attention. Meanwhile, to be able to conduct the lessons successfully, the teachers are required to adapt quickly so they can meet the lesson objectives. This study aims to capture the religious education teachers' adaptation experience throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Seen from a broader perspective, previous studies have highlighted the patterns of adaptation towards change in various circumstances. These include cultural adaptation (Oberg, 1960) and teachers' adoption of information and communication technology (for example, Lloyd & Yelland, 2003; Mevarech, 1997). Similarly, in these models (Mevarech, 1997; Oberg, 1960), the adaptation experience is represented in a U-curve, indicating that individuals face a negative experience before reaching the state of being adapted. Theoretically, adaptation as a socio-cultural phenomenon may pertain to various socio-cultural phenomena such as entering a new school, a new working place, a new life (as husbands and wives),

and a new religious group.

The nature, process, and phases of adaptation are deemed more difficult when people enter situations characterised by socio-cultural characteristics different from their own, such as when living or studying abroad. When entering new ways of learning, including using online platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the same school teachers and students, without moving anywhere, might also encounter various unprecedented obstacles that they have to adjust themselves to the new learning condition.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic is a new challenge in the learning process, there have been a relatively few studies on educational adaptation on the part of elementary school students and teachers, let alone in Indonesia. The adaptation of teachers in charge of religious education at the elementary level during the Covid-19 pandemic is even scarce, if not inexistent. Based on this justification, this study explores the nature of adaptation encountered by teachers who teach the school subject of "Islamic Education and Character" in the Mutiara Bunda Elementary School in Bandung.

METHOD

A qualitative approach was used in this study to explore and understand the teachers' adaptation process throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This is a sort of phenomenological study which enables a relatively small number of study subjects. As Duke recommends, the study can take three to 10 subjects (Creswell, 2013). Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that three to six interviews are considered acceptable to carry out a phenomenological study aiming to unravel the subjects' experience, understandings and perceptions. Hence, in this study, the researchers interviewed four subjects as elementary school teachers to delineate

their perceptions and experiences in adapting to the new way of teaching, that is, using the digital platform. The reason for choosing these research subjects was mainly because of their willingness to be interviewed for this study.

Interview, as a qualitative approach, was chosen as the method to answer the research questions for various reasons. The data generated from the interview enabled the researchers to gain rich data capturing the research participants' personal experiences. In addition, it also enabled the researchers to understand the context of the challenges they faced since they expressed their views using their own words. Additionally, the in-depth interview offered an opportunity to understand the participants' perspectives, considering that each individual might have different perspectives due to previous experiences that might influence them (Flick, 2014).

The approach involves emerging questions and procedures, collecting data in the participants' setting, analysing data inductively to build general themes, and interpreting the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). More specifically, data was gathered in Mutiara Bunda Elementary School in Bandung, an inclusive private school with religious education at its core. The reason to choose this school is that it represents high-quality private schools favoured by parents due to its high-quality education prioritising religiosity. However, they have to pay relatively expensive school fees. In other words, parents want their children to be well educated not only intellectually but also emotionally and even spiritually.

The purposive sampling technique was employed to 'generate insight and in-depth understanding of the adaptation process, as suggested by Patton (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In-depth interviews and introspection were conducted online in

2021 with four Islamic education teachers across grades: (1) HR, female, 1st and 2nd grade Islamic Education teacher with ten years of experience in teaching; (2) RD, female, 2nd and 3rd grade Islamic Education teacher with three years of experience in teaching; (3) AB, male, 4th and 5th grade Islamic Education teacher with two years of experience in teaching; (4) AZ, male, 6th grade Islamic Education teacher and teaching team coordinator with ten years of experience.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted one-on-one through a video conference platform lasting approximately forty to seventy minutes each. Several open-ended questions were explored, including how the teachers felt when the Covid-19 pandemic just hit, how they navigated through it, and the challenges they encountered. After taking part in the interviews, the participants received compensation for the data credits used.

After the interview recordings were transcribed, thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns across the datasets. The thematic analysis offers flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and involves data exploration based on relationships, commonalities, and differences across datasets (Gibson & Brown, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The term adaptation is often associated with the term acculturation or adjustment. Each term might be similar or different, depending on who defines it. The researchers use the term adaptation as a being analogous to acculturation, which might include several different phases, although the process does not have to occur across cultures. Following Berry (1997), the researchers contend that, basically, adaptation experiences would differ among people. This occurs as an effect of group-level and individual
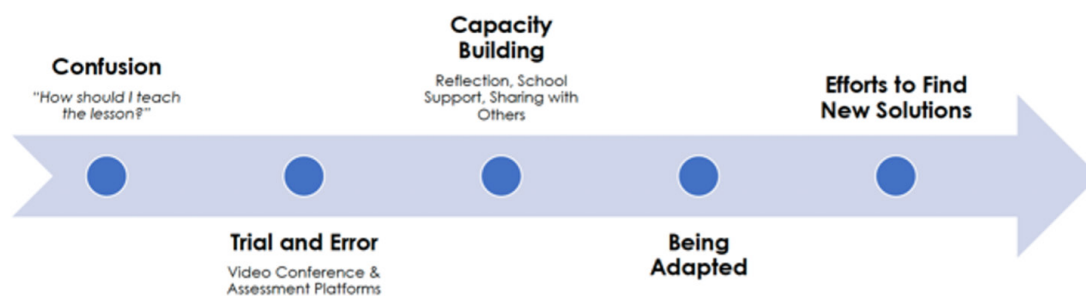
FIGURE 1. Stages of Adaptation

moderator variables prior to or during adaptation, such as demographic variables (ethnicity, gender, age, and religion) and cultural differences or expectations.

After analysing the data, five themes emerged as teachers' adaptation stages during the Covid-19 pandemic. These stages include confusion, trial and error, capacity building, being adapted, and efforts to find new solutions (see Fig. 1).

Stage A: Confusion

The research participants had mixed feelings while describing their first reaction during the pandemic. Most of them felt it was challenging since they had never faced it. They used words and phrases such as 'quite tough', 'really really tough', 'sad', 'Oh, is it real?' and 'challenged' to describe their experiences. However, a participant also felt 'awed' as she was amazed by the power of Allah that the Covid-19 pandemic happened and could stop things from running as usual.

Although the participants' feelings varied, the first stage was characterised by 'confusion'. During the first week of shifting to online teaching and learning, all teachers across grades had the same concern 'How should I teach this [the material]?' They were thinking about what method to use, whether the students would enjoy it, and how it would reach the learning aims effectively.

'I did not know how to deliver all the lessons to the school children based on the abundant curriculum. There were so many objectives. How was it possible to achieve the objectives? I was confused.'—RD

'[…] As far as I know, in religious teaching since the era of the Prophet Muhammad, the angel Gabriel directly descended to meet with the Prophet. At the time of the Prophet, the time of the Prophet's companions, and until recently, teaching has been conducted off line, based on direct and face-to-face interaction. Now we have to teach online. Deep in my heart, initially, I felt panicked because I had these questions: How do I have to teach? What is the method? Will the teaching process be effective or not?'—AZ

'[…] It was rather tough. Although we have taught in many ways, the student learning process has remained one way, because it is using one screen. […] To be honest, in the beginning it was very difficult, I mean, to ensure whether the children were happy and the class was fun during the online learning.'—AB

The general learning aim of Islamic Education was to instil not only Islamic knowledge but also values and practical

applications. The aims for lower grades (1st to 3rd grade) focus more on concept familiarisation and habit building, such as establishing prayers, making ablution, and eating manners. On the other hand, higher grades (4th to 6th grade) focus more on critical thinking and case studies, for instance, on manners towards parents. They should appreciate differences in many dimensions such as skin colour, race and opinions and are more encouraged to express their opinions and the right way they behave if they encounter such differences.

In order to reach the learning aims, the school system incorporates a student-centred active learning method. Before the pandemic, games, storytelling, discussions, videos, presentations, singing songs, role plays, and crafting, were generally used as interactive delivery methods. Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit, not all of these methods could be shifted online. Thus, the teachers needed to figure out new ways to reach the learning aims using different methods.

Despite sharing the same concern in the interviews, the degree of concern for HR, as the first-grade teacher, seemed to be more than just figuring out appropriate delivery methods to reach the learning aims. She explained that first-grade students had limited concentration. She also faced a different challenge as her students were not familiar to primary school systems beforehand:

> '*Actually this was a challenge, especially for students of Grade 1, especially because they had not yet entered a school. However, suddenly they had to attend the lessons online. Yes, it was a challenge for me to deliver the lessons and to make the students enthusiastic to follow this model of learning.*'

Besides the above challenges, the

confusion faced by the first-grade teacher was also about how to deliver instructions because the students could only grasp straightforward instructions.

Stage B: Trial and Error

After facing confusion as an initial response, the participants tried their best to "survive" and go through the semester. Online learning had become the default mode since the government policy to stay and work from home lasted longer. The school responded by creating general guidelines for conducting the teaching and learning process. All participants tried various strategies at this stage, including exploring different platforms, delivery methods, and assessments. Without prior knowledge of effective online teaching and learning practices, the teachers learned that most of their teaching attempts did not work. The teachers' trials and errors include trying video conferences and assessment platforms.

Trying Video Conference Platforms. The platforms used during the first few months of the shift were frequently changed. Zoom, Jitsi, and Google Meet were used interchangeably as each platform has its limitation. Consequently, all teachers had to learn to operate these technological applications. Although all the participants eventually managed to operate basic features of the video conference platforms, some faced problems related to delivering engaging lessons.

> *When [I'm teaching] online, [...] at the very beginning, I'm really stuck. What can I do other than sharing my screen and explaining? Sharing the PowerPoint Slides. I'm just sharing my screen, and then explaining. It's just like that. —RD*

> *At first, the children were lively,*

[before online learning] it was fun in class, right? But when they were [learning] online, they were silent, so I talked like a radio announcer, calling them but there was no response. That was the challenge. What is noteworthy, is this, [I thought of] how to make the children more lively [...] I mean when we're online, the children are willing to talk [...]—AB

In addition to online engagement problems, RD, a participant who lived at the foot of a mountain in the Garut Regency, faced another challenge related to network problems.

The first challenge was learning [...] online applications for virtual [meetings], such as Zoom, [Google] Meet, [...] Jitsi [...]. Well, but the problem is Jitsi, oh my, the network connection really has to be strong. [...] Well, I'm [accessing it] from my home. I have to look for strategic places [places with internet network coverage]—RD

Trying Platforms for Assessments. During the first months of online teaching and learning, student assignments were mainly collected via WhatsApp after the task instructions were delivered shortly through video conference platforms. Thus, the teachers had to clarify instructions via chat messenger and could not monitor what and how the students were doing during the task. The teachers also faced limitations in giving feedback as they did not know how far the students understood the instructions and materials. Assessments also became more problematic because of the heavy load of tasks received through WhatsApp, which caused the smartphone to be in an error state.

So, it's like, when the children were in the early stages of the pandemic, they sent assignments not through Jitsi. We only use Jitsi to explain about the assignments. [Then] the children work on it themselves. [When they are working on the assignments], they only ask via WhatsApp, that's it. Then, if the assignment has been sent, oh, [if] the result is correct, it means that they understand how to do it. But if [they do] not [understand], we send a chat through WhatsApp.—RD

Well, I felt like I'm really stuck. I felt that because there were many children. All of their assignments were received through WhatsApp which made my cell phone's memory capacity really full. Especially when you receive the assignments. Because I'm [handling] 6 classes, right, 130 kids, so that was quite a thing.—HR

After one semester had passed, a whole-school evaluation was conducted. As a result, the main platform used was changed to Google Suite. This meant that Google Meet was used as the main video conference platform while Google Drive would be used for compiling assessments. However, the lower grade teachers faced difficulties in assessing student progress.

[When we] migrated to Google Drive, the [cell phone] memory capacity was full again. It even caused my cell phone to be in an erroneous state.—RD

Such as surah memorisation tests, it takes a long time, right, the duration for each child. Meanwhile, other children must wait. So, some assessments required a longer time to be conducted, but there wasn't

enough time.—HR.

The whole-school evaluation also changed the mode of learning from mainly asynchronous to synchronous learning from 7.45-13.30 WIB (Western Indonesian Time). One research participant described it as 'it has started to be enjoyable' not only for the teachers but also for the students although it was 'more exhausting'.

Stage C: Capacity Building

As the trial-and-error phase continued, the research participants entered another stage, capacity building. At this stage, the participants gained more knowledge and skills in using various platforms to engage students. Based on the interviews, the capacity building consisted of reflection, school support, and sharing with others.

Reflection. Some teachers indicate that their practice improved as they reflected on their experience. They analysed the challenges they faced and started to come up with strategies to tackle them, as captured in these comments:

I tried [some strategies] so I learned [from it]. Oh, something was lacking from what I did yesterday. So, it was because of that experience as well that I finally found effective strategies—HR

When the new academic year started, I had to discuss a lot. How could it work? Oh, first, before learning, we try to trigger them with games, it could be directly from YouTube, or talking about issues that happen frequently. So, at the beginning of the lessons, I often joke with children, so it's like having a chat—AB

School Support. Besides the teachers' reflection, capacity building was also supported by the school's facilities. The participants explained that the school provided teachers with internal and external professional development opportunities. The internal opportunity came from sharing sessions, in which more digital literate teachers shared their knowledge and skills. On the other side, the external opportunity was given to several teachers to participate in online workshops held by another institution. Thus, these workshops helped the teachers to conquer previous challenges concerning delivery methods.

The school responded quickly, to handle confused teachers like me. So, at that time, there were practical activities. We had a kind of training on how to operate […] for instance this application, this application, and this application.—RD

Training programs were conducted, so the children would not get bored during online learning. One of them was through games, such as introduction to online games.

Sharing with Others. Teachers also independently sought information by asking other teachers personally, including their colleagues. They gained insights on which platforms to use.

For an application, it was tried out with the children. For games, sometimes I try to search for them myself. I explored them myself as well. And sometimes we share [information and experience] with other teachers. [I said], 'Hey, try to use this [application], try to use that [application].'

It seems that reflection, school support, and sharing with others helped the teachers to move to the stage of being adapted, as they started to put their new

knowledge and skills into practice.

Stage D: Being Adapted

After experiencing online learning for several months and having a chance to develop their technical skills, the teachers finally entered the stage of being adapted. At this stage, the participants already knew the "pros and cons" of using a specific platform and focused more on choosing appropriate ones to reach the students' learning aims. They mentioned using various platforms, including Padlet, Wordwall, Quizizz, and Google Form. As the 4th and 5th-grade teacher, AB, for instance, described his strategy to increase participation in his class, especially for silent students.

> *How can the material, which I want to convey, be grasped by the children without me talking. Because if I talk a lot, I don't know whether the children are listening or not, right, because there's no response at all. That's why I tried to design the materials using technology. For example, first [..] I know there's an application called Wordwall [...] and also Quizizz, it's common, and Padlet too. So, one of the things I did was [designing] how the material I wanted to convey could reach the children in a way that the children themselves all responded. I don't want the same student to respond again and again. I want everyone to respond. That's why, when the material is made in digital form, like Wordwall, Padlet, even like Google Form, I hope that for people, or for children who have difficulty speaking, at least they are active through writing. So even if there is no word coming out of their mouth, at least there is their writing.—AB*

RD, stuck at the beginning, also found alternative methods to deliver materials and increase engagement for second and third-grade students.

> *Like, for example, when I want to present material [...] what's the best way to deliver it, should it be through watching [videos] or presentation, it's about the method [...] through playing games. I figured out, oh, during the pandemic, it's difficult to do a role play activity, so whether we like it or not, besides explaining, giving slide presentations, support is given through watching videos. Alhamdulillah, there's a lot in YouTube, and it is credible because it has been sorted out by the school.*

> *I'm finding something like this, but [...] I'm still learning, it still needs to be more in depth. Now, for example, there is one class that is really silent, is it because the children are all quiet, or is there another reason? Well, finally, I gave them an asking-question ticket, for instance, one child has to write whether a question or feeling in Padlet. They can write directly, so they use an application, and we know from that.*

HR, who once faced difficulties in handling first and second-grade students' assessments, had also managed to choose short videos as an alternative media instead of assessing the students directly during video conferences. Besides, she also figured out strategies to prepare the first graders to learn.

> *I chose learning adab (etiquette) as the first topic to introduce because it serves as a lock [...] similar to an agreement at the beginning. The main thing is, the etiquette*

has to be cultivated, because it is going to have an impact on time effectiveness.—HR

As the teachers already had a repertoire of various applications that could create engaging lessons, they were already comfortable in conducting the teaching and learning process online. They also expressed that online learning was already enjoyable or manageable.

Now I feel stable. I am prepared although this kind of teaching will take a long time […] I myself have enjoyed this long distance learning atmosphere which was seemingly tough at the beginning—AB

Praise be to God, I have adapted myself to the existing technological tools […] I am still learning to discover the way to make the students interested in learning, albeit online—RD

Additionally, another teacher expressed that she was able to face the difficulties 'because for me teaching is not just a profession, but a service […] I hope it will be part of […] amal jariyah'.

Stage E: Efforts to Find New Solutions

At this stage, the research participants realised that although the transition to online teaching and learning could be managed in general, they still needed to find solutions to other problems that emerged. Online learning is not a panacea and cannot replace face-to-face communication in learning, as the applications had their limitations.

Higher grader teachers were facing the issue of low motivation from the students, which manifested in the action of turning off video cameras during classes, and inadequate responses.

Many children set the camera off. There are even children who play online games during the online learning session, because they feel bored –AZ

Apart from handling low motivation students, a higher-grade teacher's difficulty was facilitating group discussions as Google Meet had limited features.

If it's face-to-face, it's more convenient to make groups as discussion forums. We know very well what the children are doing in class when they participate in the learning process. During the pandemic, we can't divide [them] into groups because of the limitations of the applications we use.—AZ

Conversely, lower-grade teachers did not seem to face the same problems. The problem for these teachers was the proper delivery method for transferring not only knowledge but also values, which would be better delivered through face-to-face communication.

So there are topics that would be better if they are delivered offline […] for example, prayer, and akhlak.—HR

In addition, the way of assessment was still problematic. For example, assessing how to do the prayer was still challenging through videos. Besides, there were times when the students were helped by their parents or caught cheating. Therefore, the assessments did not represent the student abilities. The teachers have also thought about efforts that they will make in the future to handle the problems, such as upgrading IT skills, having more technical support, and not

only attending but also creating a forum for sharing problems.

The findings of this study show that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the Islamic education teachers in SD Mutiara Bunda. Overall, after one year of shifting to online teaching and learning, the teachers managed to adapt to the use of the digital platform in developing their students' character. However, there were ups and downs throughout the process. Similar to the pattern of adaptation, when new technology was integrated in the curriculum (Mevarech, 1997) it involves a decline in performance before overcoming the difficulties. In this research, the participant teachers went through five stages of adaptation, including confusion, trial and error, capacity building, adaptation, and efforts to find new solutions. However, each stage is transitional and is not clear cut. If a particular stage has started, it does not mean the previous stage has stopped.

Confusion as the teachers' initial response was not surprising since they were unfamiliar with online teaching. Indeed, designing an online pedagogical strategy is difficult (Sun, 2011). It became problematic at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic as the teachers lack references and role models to navigate the situation. Moreover, they were teaching primary school students, who are considered not fully capable to conduct learning independently (Afriansyah, 2020).

As the teachers moved to the trial-and-error stage, the significant challenges faced were related to technological mastery, delivery methods, and assessments. This resonates with challenges other primary teachers faced in Indonesia (Putri et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Previous research had mentioned difficulties in delivering Islamic education materials related to practical activities and moral related content (Iswanto et al., 2021;

Susanti, 2020). However, in this study, this difficulty was more profound in lower-level teachers, while higher-level teachers put effort to overcome the challenge of transferring moral-related content though discussions.

An important finding was that reflective teaching, school support, and sharing with others contribute to the state of being adapted. Reflective teaching helps teachers to handle situations of ambiguity and confusion (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020) as they can analyse their practice, for instance when they tried different delivery methods. This cyclical process enables teachers to continuously monitor, evaluate, and revise their practice (Pollard, 2018). In addition, the school's support in upgrading facilities and providing training programs was also shown to smoothen the adaptation process, which plays a significant role during adaptation. This is consistent with previous research (Afriansyah, 2020). Interestingly, one of the teachers talked about her teaching perspective (teaching as a religious service or amal jariyah) which seemed to help her to cope with the challenging situation. Having a sense of meaning promotes resilience (Park & Slattery, 2013), which is critical for teachers to strive (Kangas-Dick & O'Shaughnessy, 2020).

The teachers who are in the state of being adapted seem to be more creative and innovative in designing their courses and delivering their lessons. This positive Covid-19 pandemic impact is also seen in other primary school teachers in Indonesia (Lestari & Gunawan, 2020). However, although the teachers finally entered the stage of being adapted, several problems still occurred, including low students' motivation and group interaction limitations. This was not surprising since weaknesses and barriers of online learning were described in previous literature (Muthuprasad et al.,

2021). In addition, teaching practical activities and transferring moral-related content was still an issue for lower-grade teachers after over a year of online learning transition.

CONCLUSION

In general, this study gave a glimpse of the adaptation experience of Islamic education teachers in the Mutiara Bunda Elementary School in Bandung due to the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, it explored the process of adaptation experienced by four teachers in charge of teaching the subject of Islamic Education and Character. The adaptation consists of five phases: Confusion, Trial and Error, Capacity Building, Being Adapted, and Efforts to Find Solutions. Each phase is characterised by a set of the typical learning process, albeit still overlapped with the previous phase and the subsequent one. The researchers found out that the adaptation process is more or less flat as seen in the diagram above, without the research participants experiencing extreme or critical phases.

The study revealed that regardless of the sophistication and mastery of learning technological tools, the research participants felt that face-to-face communication is far more effective than digital communication. The digital learning platform turned out to make the students less motivated in the learning process aiming not only to transfer knowledge to the students but also to develop their character. Indeed, human character development will be more feasible if the students meet their teachers in social natural environment where the teachers can set good examples through their behaviors which can directly be observed and emulated by students. Apparently, the teachers need to further develop their knowledge, creativity, and skills in using digital tools to make the students more enthusiastic in the learning

process. By so doing, the students will pay more attention to the learning material without setting the camera off. Seemingly, teaching students at the elementary level is a more significant challenge compared with teaching those at the secondary level, let alone at the tertiary level.

Although this study does not aim to make generalisations, the researchers suggest that different studies be conducted to unravel the adaptation process experienced by teachers in charge of different school subjects, and teachers in charge of the same or different subjects in the higher levels (Above Grade VI) and different schools. Other researchers may also employ different research methods to unravel learning obstacles through the digital platform and find out the impact of the digital learning tools on both the teachers and the students, even by conducting deductive (quantitative) research employing inferential statistics.

Meanwhile, the researchers also suggest that the school under study have a research and development department to monitor timely effective online learning methods and character education; maintain school support; and initiate discussion forums with other Islamic education teachers.

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