**Instructional Communication during the Covid-19 Pandemic:**

**Islamic Education Teachers’ Adaptation in Digital Learning**

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***Abstract.*** *The Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruption in the area of educational communication, as traditional teaching and learning has been replaced by online digital teaching and learning. Thus, it requires teachers to adapt quickly to new technology in order to meet the lesson objectives and deliver their lessons successfully. This study aims to explore the process of instructional communication, more specifically the 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 as its core. In-depth interviews and introspection were conducted with four Islamic education teachers across grades. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that teachers went through five stages which include confusion, trial and error, capacity building, being adapted, 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 in order to deliver the lessons effectively.*

***Keywords****: Instructional Communication, Adaptation, Digital Learning, Elementary Education, Religious Education*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruption in the area of educational communication, as online teaching and learning has replaced the traditional face-to-face method. In Indonesia, Study from Home policy was implemented since March 2020 (Kemdikbud, Kemendikbud Imbau Pendidik Hadirkan Belajar Menyenangkan Bagi Daerah yang Terapkan Belajar di Rumah, 2020) which pushed both teachers and students to interact digitally offsite. However, the concept of home-schooling had 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 as ‘emergency remote teaching’(Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021; Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

As the teachers were not prepared for the sudden shift, an early national survey discovered that the lack of facilities, lack of teaching management skills, and digital device usage became major obstacles in implementing Study from Home (Kemdikbud, Analisis Survei Cepat Pembelajaran dari Rumah dalam Masa Pencegahan COVID-19, 2020). Another follow-up survey conducted five months later highlighted positive changes felt by both teachers and students. Nevertheless, online teaching was still considered ineffective (Kemdikbud, Survei Belajar dari Rumah Tahun Ajaran 2020/2021, 2020), including in primary schools.

Several research 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’s conditioning, students’ 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 Indonesian language, and time-consuming assessments (Putri, Purwanto, Asbari, Wijayanti, & Pramono, 2020).

Among primary school subject teachers, religious education teachers might face more challenges to implement online teaching. Reflected in the name of the subject *‘Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti’* (Islamic Education and Character), the objective of this subject is not only to develop knowledge but also to develop character of the students. However, research is still limited to the discussion on the e-learning implementation (Syahfitri, et al., 2020; Yusuf M., et al., 2020), use of media (Jaelani, et al., 2020; Muslimah, 2020) and teaching practices (Iswanto, Santoso, Muzayanah, & Muawanah, 2021). The teachers, who are the main actors, receive lack attention. Meanwhile, to be able to conduct the lessons successfully, the teachers are required to adapt quickly so they could 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 teacher’s adoption of information and communication technology (for example Mevarech, 1997; Lloyd & Yelland, 2003). Similarly, in these models (Oberg, 1960; Mevarech, 1997) the experience of adaptation is represented in a U-curve, indicating that individuals face a negative experience before reaching the state of being adapted. Theoretically, adaptation as a sociocultural phenomenon may pertain to various kinds of sociocultural phenomena such as entering a new school, a new working place, a new life (as husbands and wives), a new religious group, and so on.

The nature, process, and phases of adaptation are deemed more difficult when people enter situations characterized by sociocultural characteristics different from their own, such as when students have to adjust themselves when studying abroad. However, when entering new ways of learning, such as when using the online platforms such and Zoom and Google Meet due to the Covid-19 pandemic, even the same school teachers and students, without moving anywhere, might 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 a been a relatively few studies on educational adaptation on the part of elementary school students as well as teachers, let alone in Indonesia. It is based on this reason that researchers aim to explore the nature of adaptation as encountered by teachers in charge of instructional communication, more specifically those who teach the school subject “Islamic Education and Character” in the Mutiara Bunda Elementary School in Bandung.

**METHODS**

A qualitative approach was used in this study to explore and understand the teachers’ instructional communication in terms of their 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 J. , 2013). Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest, three to six interviews is considered acceptable to carry out a phenomenological study which aims to unravel the subjects’ experience, understandings and perceptions. Hence, in this study we have interviewed four subjects as elementary school teachers to delineate their perceptions and experiences in adapting themselves to the new way of teaching as part of instructional communication, 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 researcher to gain rich data capturing the informants’ 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 opportunity to understand the perspective of the informants, considering that each individual might have different angles of seeing things, as a result of 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 as its core. Purposive sampling technique was used to be able 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:

* HR, female, 1st and 2nd grade Islamic Education teacher with 10 years experience in teaching.
* RD, female, 2nd and 3rd grade Islamic Education teacher with 3 years experience in teaching.
* AB, male, 4th and 5th grade Islamic Education teacher with 2 years experience in teaching.
* AZ, male, 6th grade Islamic Education teacher and teaching team coordinator with 10 years 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 interview, the participants received a compensation for data credits used.

After the interview recordings were transcribed, thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns across the datasets. Thematic analysis offers flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and involves data exploration based on relationships, commonalities, as well as differences across datasets (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

After analyzing the data, five themes emerged as stages that the teachers’ went through during the Covid-19 pandemic. These stages include confusion, trial and error, capacity building, being adapted, and efforts to find new solutions (see IMAGE 1).

Application, timeline

Description automatically generated

***IMAGE 1.*** *Stages of Adaptation*

***Stage A: Confusion***

The research participants had mixed feelings while describing their first reaction during the pandemic. Most of them felt that it was challenging since they had never faced it before. 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 the Covid-19 pandemic happened and could stop things from running as usual.

Although the participants’ feelings varied, the first stage was characterized 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 effective it would be to reach the learning aims.

‘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 was panicked with the questions: How do I have to teach? What is the method? Will the teaching process be effective or not?’—AZ

‘[…] It is rather tough. Although we have done many teaching ways, the students’ learning process has remained one way, because it is based on one screen. […] To be honest, at 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 for 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 familiarization and habit building, such as establishing prayer, 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 things such as skin color, race , and opinions and they 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 active learning method which is student-centered. Before the pandemic, games, storytelling, discussions, watching videos, presentations, singing songs, roleplays, crafting, were generally used as interactive delivery methods. Alas, 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 a different method.

In our interviews, despite sharing the same concern, the degree of concern for HR, as the 1st 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. Yet, 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 can only grasp very simple instructions.

***Stage B: Trial and Error***

After facing confusion as 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 on how to conduct the teaching and learning process. At this stage, all participants tried various strategies, including exploring different platforms, delivery methods, and assessments. Without prior knowledge on effective online teaching and learning practices, the teachers learnt that their most of their attempt to teach did not work. The trials and errors the teachers faced include trying video conference 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 own limitation. As a consequence, 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 of them faced problems related to how to deliver 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 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 was thinking 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, students’ 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 have a clue on how far the students understand 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, 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 assessing students’ progress.

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

Such as surah memorization 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 resulted in change of the mode of learning. The mode of learning which was mainly asynchronous changed 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 kept on going, the research participants entered another stage, which was capacity building. At this stage, the participants gained more knowledge and skills on how to use various platforms to engage students. Based on the interviews, the capacity building consisted of several kinds: reflection, school support, and sharing with others.

*Reflection.* Some teachers indicate that their practice became better as they reflected on their experience. They analyzed 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 those 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’ own reflection, capacity building was also supported by the facilities the school provided. The participants explained that the school provided teachers with both internal and external professional development opportunities. The internal opportunity came in the form of 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 challenges faced previously, 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 that the children wouldn’t get bored during online learning. One of it was through games, like 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 the applications, it is 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 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 is more focused on choosing appropriate ones to reach the students’ learning aims. They mentioned using various platforms, including Padlet, Word Wall, Quizizz, and Google Form. AB, as the 4th and 5th grade teacher, for instance, described his strategy to increase participation in his class, especially for students who are silent.

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 listen 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 word wall, it was very complete, […] then 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 the material is made in digital form, like a Wordwall, Padlet, even like a 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, who was stuck at the beginning, also began to find alternative methods to deliver materials and increase engagement for 2nd and 3rd 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 handling 1st and 2nd 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 had also figured out strategies to make the first graders ready to learn.

I chose learning *adab* (etiquette) as the first topic to introduce because it serves as a lock […] similar to a 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 can create engaging lessons, they were already comfortable to conduct 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 realized that although in general the transition to online teaching and learning could be managed, they still needed to find solutions to other problems that emerged. It seems that online learning is not a panacea and cannot replace face-to-face communication in learning, as the applications had their own 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 low 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, another difficulty that a higher grade teachers faced was facilitating group discussions as Google Meet had limited features.

If it's face-to-face, it's more convenient to make groups, discussion forum. 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 didn’t seem to face the same problems. The problem that still persisted for these teachers were the proper delivery method for transferring not only knowledge but also values, which would be better if it is delivered through face-to-face communication.

So there are topics that would be better if they are delivered offline [...] for example, prayer, and *akhlak* is also like that, right.—HR

In addition, the way of assessment was still problematic, for example, assessing how to do the prayer was still difficult to do through videos. Besides, there were times when the students were helped by their parents or caught cheating. Therefore, the assessments did not represent the students’ own ability. 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 shifting to online teaching and learning, the teachers managed to adapt in their instructional communication although 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, being adapted, and efforts to find new solutions. However, each stage is transitional and not clear cut. If a certain stage has started, it does not mean that the previous stage has stopped.

Confusion as the teachers’ initial response was not surprising since they were not familiar in 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 on how 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 major challenges faced were related to technological mastery, delivery methods, and assessments. This resonates with challenges faced by other primary teachers in Indonesia (Rasmitadila, et al., 2020; Putri, et al., 2020). Previous research had mentioned that difficulties were found in delivering Islamic education materials related to practical activities and moral related content (Susanti, 2020; Iswanto, et al., 2021). 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. The practice of reflective teaching helps teachers to handle situations of ambiguity and confusion (Shanmugavelu, Parasuraman, & al., 2020) as they can analyze their own practice, for instance when they tried different delivery methods. This cyclical process enables the teacher to monitor, evaluate, and revise their own practice continuously (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 perspective of teaching (teaching as a religious service or *amal jariyah*) which seem to help her cope with the challenging situation. Having a sense of meaning is found to promote resilience (Park & Slattery, 2013) which plays a critical role 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, Aiswarya, Aditya, & Girish, 2021). In addition, teaching practical activities and transferring moral related content was still found to be 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 context of instructional communication 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 consisting of five phases, namely: Confusion, Trial and Error, Capacity Building, Being Adapted, and Efforts to Find Solutions. Each phase is characterized by a set of typical learning process, albeit still overlapped with the previous phase and the subsequent one. We found out that the adaptation process is more or less flat as seen in the diagram above, without the study subjects experiencing extreme or critical phases.

The study revealed that regardless of the sophistication and the mastery of learning technological tools, the Elementary School teachers as the informants felt that the face-to-face communication is far more effective than the digital one. 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.

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

Meanwhile, 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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