



Utilization of the WhatsApp-Based Internet for Elementary School Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: At this time internet has become one of a necessity for every human being, even up to elementary school student. Internet is used as a place to share information and communication, one of the applications that can be used is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a long-distance messenger application that is almost used by people around the world, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic which requires all activities to be carried out at home, including school activities. Therefore, this article aims to discuss the use of the WhatsApp application in learning for elementary school students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this study, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of the WhatsApp-based internet was useful as a means of communication between teacher-students, teacher-teachers, and teacher-parents. Besides, the WhatsApp application is also useful as a medium for sharing information about materials and tasks that must be completed at home. Thus, WhatsApp has become an important part of the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research was conducted using the literature study method, which is to collect journals related to the use of WhatsApp in learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Internet, WhatsApp, Learning, Elementary School, Covid-19 Pandemic.

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some type of common cold. (Unicef.org). The Covid-19 pandemic that occurred throughout the world including Indonesia for approximately nine months, has changed all aspects of life, one of which is a change in the learning process that cannot be done in class face-to-face. The learning process is only carried out at home using various media such as laptops / PCs/smartphones that must be connected to the internet, radio, and television broadcasts in the form of educational programs either delivered by the government through its broadcasts or other private broadcasts. Also, learning from home utilizes teaching materials such as books, modules, and the environment around the house (Wahyudin, 2020).

Learning by utilizing the internet network becomes learning that is very much done in schools in big cities. This is because the internet has become a primary need for most Indonesians, even children. It can be proven

by the data submitted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), of the total population of Indonesia in 2018 which reached 264.14 million, it turned out to be 171.17 million. Thus, more than 50% of Indonesia's population are users of the internet or social media. Learning using internet networks can be carried out through various platforms such as video conferencing, learning management systems, assessment tools, internet-based multimedia teaching materials, and the use of social media such as Instagram, telegram, and WhatsApp. The use of the internet in the learning process is not a new thing in the world of education, because some schools have combined ordinary learning with internet-based e-learning in the learning process, known as blended learning.

However, the distance learning process using the internet can be carried out well if the supporting media used can be fulfilled, such as a laptop/smartphone with a large memory storage capacity and a smooth internet network and adequate quota,



especially in the use of video conferencing, and multimedia teaching materials. Meanwhile, not all students have the same privileges in getting a good education using the platform. So that some schools take advantage of social media, one of which is WhatsApp as a support for the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. WhatsApp is a representation platform owned by Facebook, inc. WhatsApp can be used on mobile devices or desktop devices with cellular still having to be connected to the internet network. WhatsApp can be used by providing a standard cellular number, (Wikipedia. id). WhatsApp became the most popular messaging application in 2015 and until now WhatsApp users have reached 2 billion, (whatsapp.com). The results of the Global Web Index survey in 2016 stated that the 6 highest frequency of social media users in 2016 was WhatsApp at 60%, followed by Facebook at around 54%. About 75% of Facebookers sharing photos via WhatsApp while only 49% share (Andi, 2017: 6). Meanwhile in Indonesia according to APJII in 2018 the use of the WhatsApp application was 84% and continues to grow.

The increase in WhatsApp users is also influenced by the pandemic situation and the learning process that must be done remotely or in school from home. So that the use of WhatsApp is believed to be a solution for students who have limited quotas and the ability of their smartphones to access video conference-based platforms or learning management systems. This is in line with what was conveyed by (Yulianto, 2020: 339) applying online learning using the WhatsApp group during the COVID-19 pandemic or the new normal period, it can be a solution when students experience limitations in internet access, and 98% of students choose to use WhatsApp group as a learning medium during a pandemic or new normal. Apart from not requiring more internet access, by using WhatsApp, educators can easily share learning materials with students, can communicate and information via chat, voice telephone, or video call. Besides, WhatsApp was also chosen because it is easier and more flexible to be a medium of contact between teachers, children, and parents, even though conditions are limited by distance, space, and

time (Hutami, 2020). Also, WhatsApp in learning includes collaboration and cooperation between students and educators in carrying out the learning process in class or at home (Barhouni, 2015).

In research conducted by (Ucu, et al., 2018) WhatsApp is the second technology that is widely used in the e-learning model. Especially during the Covid-19 epidemic, learning to use WhatsApp as a learning medium is considered effective during emergencies like this time, (Dewi, 2020). This is reinforced by research conducted by (Yulianto, et al., 2020) that 98% of students prefer to use WhatsApp groups to be used in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. WhatsApp has become an application that almost all Indonesians have on their smartphones or gadgets.

The use of WhatsApp as a chat and communication application is part of technological developments that should be used in life, especially in education and the learning process. If some research has a perspective, WhatsApp is only a medium for information or communication in the learning process. So, through this research, it is hoped that the overall use of WhatsApp connected to the internet can be seen as a learning platform during the Covid-19 pandemic. Primary school is the level of education for early or elementary students, who in the learning process should use fun methods or media and train their potential, when a pandemic occurs, elementary school students lose friends and playtime with friends, using WhatsApp students can re-interact with friends at school from home for free easily.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a literature study. A literature study is research that is closely related to theoretical studies as well as several references that cannot be separated from scientific literature (Sugiyono, 2012). Literature research is research that uses books, literature, and other documents as the main object (Hadi, 1995: 3). Library research utilizes library sources to obtain research data, library research limits its activities to



library collection materials without requiring field visits. In conducting library research, the steps that must be taken are 1) Equipment that must be prepared, 2) Compiling a working bibliography, 3) Time management, 4) Recording important things in the research (Zed, 2018). In this study, the literature used is books, journals, and articles that are relevant to the topics raised in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

E-learning

Learning using the internet is also called e-learning because e-learning learning is learning that uses the internet network as a medium or means of the learning process. "E-learning is learning that uses electronic circuits (LAN, WAN, or the internet) to convey the contents of learning, interaction, or guidance" (Munir, 2009: 114). This is in line with what was conveyed by Darin E. Hartley, who stated that E-Learning is a type of teaching and learning that allows the delivery of teaching materials to students using the Internet, Intranet, or other computer network media. It can be understood that e-learning is learning that is not only connected to the internet but learning using computer devices such as CD / DVD / In focus and so on as part of e-learning learning. E in e-learning has the meaning as "how" learning can be digitized so that it can be stored in electronic form, then what material or learning can be accessed or obtained by students and the use of electronics should be able to achieve the goal of improving skills in improving tasks (Sri Anitah, 2011: 128).

So why is the use of computer devices such as CDs / DVDs useful as digital storage media for e-learning? Thus, e-learning can be interpreted as learning that uses internet networks and other networks as well as the use of a set of technological tools such as computers or, more broadly, the use of smartphones/gadgets as media or supporting methods and models to be implemented. As stated by Suad and Suherman (2006: 146), electronic learning or a learning system using the internet is an attempt to connect learning (students and learning resources (databases,

experts/teachers, libraries) that are physically separated or even far apart.

Use of WhatsApp

Based on the results of various journals and research that have been done, WhatsApp is one of the platforms that has many benefits, especially in the learning process. The features were available on the WhatsApp application such as sending pictures, documents, current or specific locations, videos, links (website addresses), and contacts. Broadly speaking, the WhatsApp application in learning has two roles, namely as a means of communication and a means of information.

WhatsApp as a means of communication

By using WhatsApp, we can communicate anywhere and anytime with people who also have the application and are both connected to an internet network connection (Asiyah, 2018: 3). WhatsApp is useful as a means of communication between teachers and students, through the use of WhatsApp teachers who cannot be present in class can still provide assignments and materials to students who are in class, so that the learning objectives or achievements that must be achieved can be achieved (Baskoro, 2015: 43). Communication also occurs when students ask about material that they feel is unclear, or the teacher asks questions via WhatsApp messages to students about the material delivered by the teacher. Apart from teachers and students, through the WhatsApp application which is made in the form of groups, parents can also respond to assignments or materials submitted by the teacher (Hutami & Nugraheni, 2020: 127). Through WhatsApp, discussions can also be held between students without having to gather, because it is done through messages on the WhatsApp group (Sukrillah, et al., 2009: 95). Besides, WhatsApp is also effective for conducting discussions between school supervisors and teachers (Elianur, 2017: 13).

WhatsApp as a means of communication between teachers and students, teachers and parents, and students and students, is even more intense in learning in elementary schools. The use of WhatsApp in learning in



elementary schools during the pandemic was used as a means of doing attendance, sharing videos containing learning material, and assignments that must be completed. Means of reporting tasks and habits that have been completed. Can also make video calls by the teacher with students to interact and tell stories, video call activities can be done with a maximum of three students simultaneously. In high-grade elementary school students, WhatsApp is also used as a medium for discussion about assignments given by the teacher, which can be monitored by parents. Because the communication that exists between parents and teachers is a bridge of communication that is beneficial for children's growth and development (Suyadi, 2012: 159). The use of WhatsApp as a means of communication is also indirectly useful in practicing vocabulary use and the ability to write words for elementary school students.

WhatsApp as a means of information

The purpose of e-learning, which makes information a part of the learning process that must be shared, can be put to good use by WhatsApp (Prajana, 2017: 122). Through the use of WhatsApp, information is not one-way but three-way because the information obtained can be shared back with different individuals (Zulfaya, 2020: 295). Information obtained through the WhatsApp application has different kinds. This is because of the many features contained in WhatsApp. Not only text, but WhatsApp also has a feature to send images, videos, voice, GPS location via GPS hardware or Google Maps, contacts, and documents in the form of the word, ppt, pdf. Sharing of information can also be done using WhatsApp status that lasts 24 hours, can be a photo or video for 30 seconds. Information dissemination using the WhatsApp application can be done easily and widely in a short time.

Information is not only in the form of insight or knowledge regarding learning material, information can also be in the form of news about student developments while at school. However, when a pandemic, information in the form of news becomes different because the teacher will ask parents about student learning activities at home. For elementary

school students, WhatsApp is still an option for sharing information in the form of assignments or materials and assignment reports. WhatsApp has the potential to be used as a means of delivering information containing learning that can be accessed individually to individuals easily, WhatsApp can be a literacy medium to convey and get information effectively (Zulfaya, 2020: 295). Students can also share reading literature as material for discussion, conduct, or send voice messages in the form of information via WhatsApp groups.

WhatsApp groups as a means of information and communication suggestions are connected. Because information is obtained by communicating first. WhatsApp is very useful and helps in the process of communicating, giving, and receiving information (Yusmita, Larisu, and Saidin, 2018: 11).

Apart from being a means of communication and information, the use of WhatsApp is considered effective in increasing student motivation in certain subjects (Indriyani & Suliworo, 2018). The same thing was conveyed by Rembe and Bere (2013) in (Chang & Chen, 2015) that the WhatsApp Messenger application was able to increase student learning motivation, this motivation occurred because of the speed in forming study groups and had an impact on the development and development of knowledge because of the learning motivation of students. can be increased, so the use of WhatsApp in learning can also improve student learning outcomes, (Somantri, 2019). After further knowledge, WhatsApp is also useful to be used as a medium in realizing a culture of literacy during the Covid-19 pandemic because WhatsApp is one of the media that is close to participants in everyday life (Aswan, 2020: 20).

CONCLUSION

The development of technology and communication is something that cannot be stopped in the changing and shifting times. As with technological developments, the outcome of viruses and pandemics cannot be predicted. The current state of the pandemic has changed a lot of the order of life,



education is one of them. The use of technology is a solution that can be done when learning cannot run normally. Learning using WhatsApp-based technology and the internet is an option in implementing learning during the Covid-19 pandemic for primary school students. WhatsApp is useful as a means of communication between all parties involved in learning at home, such as parents, teachers, or household assistants. Through communication, the information in the form of knowledge, ideas, or certain news will be obtained. Information obtained through the WhatsApp application can be easily shared, or even simply for storage. The information obtained is not only in the form of text, but also in the form of documents, images, videos, or certain website links. This is very, very important in the elementary school learning process because the information obtained is not monotonous and there are many choices. Through the WhatsApp application, educators can also do call as a means of building interaction in the learning process. Apart from being useful as a means of communication and information, with appropriate learning methods and models, WhatsApp can increase student motivation and learning outcomes. Through WhatsApp, we can also build a school literacy movement, especially when the situation is in a pandemic and it is difficult to carry out activities that require several people to gather, then using WhatsApp as a medium can be a solution.

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