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Non-Millennial Teachers' Strategies in Coping with the Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This article discusses the strategies used by five non-millennial teachers (aged 54-59 years old) of a junior high school in coping with the online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Ngawi, East Java, Indonesia. The teachers were interviewed, and the data were transcribed and analyzed by creating a data repository, expanding the codes, describing the coded data, and drawing conclusions. The results revealed that the teachers had several strategies used, which were to increase students' interest in learning, provide students with knowledge and attention, create efficient learning resources, and use SIMPEL (Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran or Learning Management Information System), which is specifically available only in Ngawi. SIMPEL was specially developed by the Ngawi district education office, to ensure that the learning processes in Ngawi Regency continue to run optimally during the COVID-19 outbreak. SIMPEL substituted the use of online YouTube videos and materials because the materials were already provided by the system, decreasing the need for the teachers to depend on other resources. Despite these teachers also using other online platforms, hence issues such as the slow internet connection, running out of quotas and blackouts, hindered their efforts to use these platforms at times. Hence, WAG was the most used media to conduct their online learning due to its simplicity and availability.

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These teachers continued to strive to learn digital technologies ever since they changed from their previous face-to-face teaching strategies.

Keywords: COVID-19, non-millennial teachers, online learning, teaching strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak being widespread in Indonesia since March 2020, the Indonesian government requires teaching and learning activities to be done through online teaching at every education level ([Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2020](#)). One of the government policies is to suspend all activities and non-academic activities until further notice. The Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, therefore, advises all education institutions from the lowest level of education to the highest level to pursue online learning. Through online learning, students can still carry out learning activities even though they do not meet their teachers directly or face to face ([Aristovnik et al., 2020](#)).

Online learning is a form of learning that uses interactive communication to assist in learning events. [Hurlbut \(2018\)](#) believed that online learning has successfully promoted interactive and cooperative learning among students, deepening their engagement as well as comprehension regarding course materials. According to [Rusman and Lukman \(2017\)](#), online learning is mostly learning experiences intended to help students learn to be simpler, more interactive, and precise as well as up-to-date incorporating modern networks. Understanding the concept of an online curriculum-based digital application that incorporates immersive technologies has a significant effect on deciding the results of their learning.

Online learning has benefits that are possible to help students in many ways. This is especially so when students experience compulsive tendencies in face-to-face classes, online learning can become comfort zones because they can freely inquire and respond despite feeling self-conscious about some of the other students ([Paul & Jefferson, 2019](#)). Online learning experiences in teacher preparation programs offer a different collection of sorts of situations ([Sarkar, 2016](#); [Stern, 2016](#)). The effectiveness of online learning relies much on the encouragement and ability of students to study individually ([Purwanto et al., 2020](#)).

Despite the benefits, online learning has some negative consequences as well, such as frustration, decreased work enthusiasm, and increased energy costs or internet quotas ([Nurhasanah & Sobandi, 2016](#)). Learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic was far beyond prior student learning routines. Not only do students struggle with transitioning to online learning, but teachers also struggle with changing the way they teach ([Ogunleye, 2019](#)). Many teachers were initially not technologically illiterate (i.e., clueless) when they started online learning. In this research, they are called traditional or non-millennial teachers.

The traditional or non-millennial teachers who were out of date in online classes continued to outclass participants or found it hard to follow up with the technologies and still keep up with face-to-face or more conventional strategies to manage the class ([Arista & Kuswanto, 2018](#)). [Figueredo and Villamizar \(2015\)](#) and [Schmidt and Fulton \(2016\)](#) said that traditional teachers who aim to change their teaching strategies by

bringing new teaching media into the classroom frequently failed because they did not properly consider the technology model, the pedagogical, and the internet information required to implement ICT into the teaching and learning process. Along with age diversity, lack of experience in teaching hybrid, and confusion in the use and operation of learning applications, teachers have different strategies to solve awareness of certain work situations like how to operate the education platforms (Poyo, 2018).

Due to the sudden COVID-19 outbreak, educational systems, teaching, and learning processes came to a halt (UNESCO, 2020). In Indonesia, most teachers deal with the challenges of strategies in teaching online experience. The non-millennial teachers are forced to shift their teaching strategy from face-to-face strategies to online-based teaching strategies. If non-millennial teachers choose to train students to also be digitally competent, they need to have basic knowledge on the use of technological educational tools and software, or they would have trouble using technology efficiently throughout online classrooms (Wei & Chou, 2020).

Many non-millennial teachers need more time to learn about today's online materials, such as video call conferences, entertaining content, and the creation of time-saving search strategies using the internet (Rana et al., 2018). Several recent studies have shown that teachers' teaching strategies have a significant impact on student academic achievement (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Sutarto et al., 2020). Previous studies have extensively researched teaching strategies, but these articles mainly address strategies used by millennial teachers and focus on the face-to-face instructional model. According to the findings of the preliminary studies, the teaching-learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn students' attention, supplied content, and the teaching and learning practices could go well. But, in this present study, the researchers focused on the Indonesian context, especially on those teachers who were not familiar with technology or the online environment who have shown limitations in using online technology to create materials for their students. The research question for this study is:

- What are the non-millennial teachers' strategies for online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak?

2. METHODS

By using purposive sampling, the study was carried out in a junior high school, in Ngawi, East Java, Indonesia. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this school demonstrated an online learning course of study, and WAG (WhatsApp Group) is one of the alternative media to complement online classes. The researchers limited this study to five non-millennial English teachers that have more than 32-39 years of face-to-face classroom experience and are between 54 to 59 years old (see Table 1). The non-millennial teachers seldom used technology in their teaching activities. They also rarely joined seminars about integrated or blended learning. These teachers used WAG to teach English students throughout the pandemic.

This study employed the qualitative approach because it is viewed as a method of investigating a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world framework (Yin, 2018). Accordingly, this study used interviews to collect information on the strategies that the teachers used in their classes in coping with the online

teaching, and their perspectives on the online teaching and learning processes. The teachers are coded in the paper, respectively.

Table 1. Data of respondents.

Respondent	RN	ES	TB	FJ	DW
Gender	F	F	M	M	M
Age	56	59	54	56	56
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree
Year Experiences	32	39	33	32	34

The data from the interviews were analyzed using the analysis model of Miles et al. (2014). Three flows of activities were involved in the techniques: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. After classifying the data from semi-structured interviews (recording), the recordings were transcribed and further categorized based on the themes that appeared within the data. The researchers also employed interview extension and data triangulation as data validation procedures. When the data gained in the previous interviews were judged insufficient, an extension of the interview was employed, and source triangulation was used to confirm the veracity of the data through several sources (Sugiyono, 2013).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Strategies to Increase Students' Interest in Learning

The non-millennial teachers informed that their priority with online classes was to achieve the goal of their learning lessons. Since online learning experiences were new to both teachers and students, therefore the most important thing to do when developing an online lesson plan was to determine the objectives and priorities to be achieved and to ensure that the students are interested in the new mode of learning. As stated by one of the teachers:

- (1) "In my opinion, online learning may be flexible and interesting but cannot meet proper classroom management, enhanced student attention, and their potential. So, we teachers must be able to come up with new strategies to attract the attention of students". (FJ)

Following FJ's statements, strategies used by these teachers to attract and increase students' interest in continuous learning, despite then have shifted to online, was by greeting the students when the online class started, asking how they were doing that day, and providing pieces of advice or encouragement before the lesson started.

- (2) "This online class shares the difficulties that teachers encounter when adapting classes from face-to-face to online, quality standards, and typical errors without any previous experience, and so, we must develop an enjoyable learning environment to encourage students. When online, we must remember to greet the students, ask how they are doing, and give pieces of advice or encouragement before the lesson starts". (RN)

In (3), TB stated that their other strategies to be carried out were the fundamental concepts of lifelong learning, such as independent learning, supporting students with

learning activities, learning by literacy, developing postmodern students for studying, and so on. And he ensured that he constantly reminded his students about these concepts even though while teaching online.

- (3) “I also believe that for online learning to be successful and interesting, learners must be self-directed and proficient in the use of digital technologies/applications. As teachers, we must always remind that to our students. We also must continue to improve these skills and knowledge as we teach online and give materials to attract students’ attention in class.” (TB).

Despite academic tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic being carried out of school, the students still had to study diligently. The teachers informed that they tried to keep the students motivated and their minds focused on education through constant reminders, for example, through WhatsApp Group (WAG), as exemplified in the next excerpt.

- (4) “My vision is that students could most likely learn the material with not many differences either online or not. And I usually use continuous in-personal communication to every student for motivation in learning through WhatsApp Group updates”. (FJ)

3.2 Strategies to Provide Students with Knowledge and Attention

The non-millennial teachers claimed that since online teaching was new to them, thus they must use compensatory strategies to help them perform tasks in an alternative manner (i.e., online teaching). This was done by striving to use technology, such as the WAG on their phones to teach, Google Classroom, Zoom, PowerPoint presentations, and SIMPEL (*Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran* or Learning Management Information System), which is discussed in 4.4.

- (5) “Online teaching has some restrictions and we are not used to it, giving online materials was not easy in a limited time as well as attracting the student’s attention. Whereas, traditional class and exam patterns are more soothing to us. So, we had to learn something new, such as using WhatsApp Group to teach, interact and communicate with students”. (ES)
- (6) “We teachers start to learn to use WhatsApp or Google Classroom, and several of us also do PowerPoint presentations. There is also SIMPEL that has helped us a lot”. (TB)
- (7) “I learned how to use apps such as Google Classroom or Zoom to distribute class discussions, while WhatsApp served as the main platform for delivering materials as part of an engaging learning experience”. (RN)

The teachers also notified that before the online lesson started, they always tried to pass on the materials before the class started. Then the students were prompted to go through the materials before the teachers started classes online. To ensure that they went through the materials, the teachers would ask relevant questions to ensure their comprehension of the materials.

- (8) “I think, transferring knowledge in teaching and learning activities are very important, and even if online learning applications are used, material delivery should be efficient. I always send my materials before I start class, then I ask the students to go through them, then when the class starts, I ask questions to ensure they understand what we will learn that day”. (TB)

DW in (9) further informed that his students are free to ask questions in her WAG online class on subject matters or materials that were unclear, and time and location were not a hindrance when done online. He would do his best to answer them one by one when she had the time because learning was not restricted to the 'assigned' class time by the school.

- (9) "The students are excited to participate in online discussions through online classroom sites, and also the WhatsApp group, where we can address the problems with the materials which I have given. Online learning helped students to keep up with the lesson with time and location comfortable to them, and me, too. We teachers also did not have to waste precious class time helping missing students 'catch up'. We can do this out of our assigned class time when online and we have the time". (DW)

3.3 Strategies to Create Efficient Learning Resources

The participant teachers were all unfamiliar with online learning technologies during the start, therefore, it took them extra time to start their teaching when the online learning first started, and prepared teaching materials and tasks that could be passed on online.

- (10) "We, as old teachers in this school, find it very difficult to make online-based materials at first. More than that, we were required to make learning materials interesting and easily understood by students even though we could not pass on the materials to them directly by hand. It was a struggle at first, but we learn". (ES)
- (11) "Junior high school students are still the same as elementary school students, where they get bored easily when learning only uses text and paragraphs. So, without any interaction and image or sound that supports learning, it will be boring during these online times. We old teachers must get creative". (RN)

The teachers claimed that familiarized themselves with the Internet to search for interesting materials for their lesson plans. This computer network had assisted them in creating and providing interesting materials to their students.

- (12) "We learned to browse the Internet and search for online learning media, such as visual, photographic, film or audio from YouTube. This information and communication technology also helped us prepare an organized and effective learning syllabus". (DW)
- (13) "Sometimes we as non-millennial teachers find it difficult to prepare materials that are easy to be understood by all students, but the Internet is a big help. We can make the materials more entertaining and easier to understand with everything available on the Internet". (ES)

3.4 Strategies to Use SIMPEL (*Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran* or Learning Management Information System)

From the interviews, it was also found that the non-millennial teachers also employed the learning media that was developed by the local government of Ngawi, namely SIMPEL (*Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran* or Learning Management Information System). SIMPEL is a website-based learning platform developed by the Ngawi district education office, to ensure that the learning processes in Ngawi Regency continue to run optimally during the COVID-19 outbreak.

SIMPEL is equipped with the learning contents from the elementary to the junior high school levels. Digital contents come in various instructional videos, material premises in the form of PPT and eBooks, and student assignments in the form of worksheets.

- (14) “With the SIMPEL learning web, it is very helpful for us teachers because, in SIMPEL, it assists us in providing a fun learning”. (FJ)
- (15) “We, as traditional teachers, are bewildered when traditional classroom instruction is replaced by online learning. But with the presence of the SIMPEL platform, I am personally very happy, because it is not only easy to use but the materials provided are also suitable”. (ES)



Figure 1. Homepage of SIMPEL.

Figure 2. SIMPEL’s user menus.

Even though the non-millennial teachers still used other online platforms for teaching (i.e., WAG, Google Classroom, Zoom, PowerPoint presentations), SIMPLE supported them most in teaching because besides providing a simple and convenient usage for the teachers, this platform also provided materials (in various resources, from texts to videos) which are already prepared for every school level. As a consequence, the teachers were able to optimize the time spent on app discussions with their students.

- (16) "I like using this platform because it helps me to deliver the materials quickly and most students understand better because the materials and videos presented can be played back for further understanding". (DW)
- (17) "When using SIMPEL, I can include materials and videos for me to discuss with the students at the next meeting before I give them worksheets to work on". (TB)
- (18) "The materials contained in SIMPEL are also not arbitrary because they are always monitored by the Ngawi district education office. Although this platform is new and only Ngawi is using it, but in my opinion, this has helped us, traditional teachers, to teach online". (RN)

Despite the benefits of SIMPEL in providing interactive materials and worksheets, hence there were also shortcomings when it came to using online platforms. FJ reported issues such as slow Internet, running out of quotas, and blackout that were common in Indonesia. These problems sometimes hinder them in using SIMPEL, and WAG was the best option during these unfortunate issues.

- (18) "I am a teacher from the "baby boomer" generation, and is far less capable of incorporating online media into the learning experience. I try my best to learn and keep up, but when used as a learning tool, online media networks also have faults, such as slow Internet, running out of quotas, blackout, and so on. Due to these problems, sometimes it withholds me from using them". (FJ)

4. DISCUSSION

COVID-19 pandemic has a major impact on global education. To stop the virus from spreading, traditional learning has been replaced by online learning. The scheme, which is implemented in all Indonesian schools for the past couple of years, faces a variety of challenges. Among them is the significant effects on non-millennial teachers. Non-millennial teachers at a junior high school in Ngawi, East Java, Indonesia, for example, used a variety of strategies to keep up with their online teaching and learning to their students. The strategies were: ways to increase students' interest in learning, ways to provide students with knowledge and attention, ways to create efficient learning resources, and using SIMPEL (Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran or Learning Management Information System), which is specifically available only in Ngawi.

The ways that teachers used to increase their students' learning interest, even though learning online, was to constantly remind and encourage them on the importance of learning. This approach is in line with [Ayua \(2017\)](#), [George \(2020\)](#), and [Yen \(2020\)](#), where they emphasized the teachers' role in recapping students with the importance of learning at home. Furthermore, ensuring students' involvement in classwork and teamwork in the learning process is also another way to gain students' interest in learning ([Wei and Chou, 2020](#)).

The next one, ways to provide students with knowledge and attention, was by striving to use technology during online teaching. Even though they had never been used to such situations before, they were willing to learn new things so that their teaching continued. Among their efforts were learning to use WAG on their phones to teach, Google Classroom, Zoom, PowerPoint presentations, and SIMPEL (*Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran* or Learning Management Information System). According to [Firdaus \(2018\)](#), [Hurlbut \(2018\)](#), and [Yuying \(2020\)](#), this kind of effort

taken to ensure that their teaching endured with interesting materials is a way to motivate students to keep learning, even during difficult times.

In the strategies used to create learning resources, the non-millennial teachers improved themselves by preparing materials beforehand. This preparation assisted the teachers to effectively start class by having the students go through the materials first, and could later ask them questions if they did not understand the materials. Bao (2020), Schrum and Hong (2002), and Wei and Chou (2020) have noted that the difficulties students may face in autonomous learning through the application of technology. Therefore, these teachers' strategies to optimize teaching materials and establish students' learning independence may promote students learning development.

Finally, the strategy used to select an easy and appealing learning media, which was SIMPEL. This platform was only available for teachers in the Ngawi district, nevertheless, it had tremendously supported the non-millennial teachers in building up their online teaching skills. In line with previous findings (Febrianto et al., 2020; Sung et al., 2016; Sutarto et al., 2020; Yang & Kuo, 2020), the use of suitable learning media will improve engagement and desire to learn by not only facilitating the delivery of content but also the success of reaching learning goals. Teaching using modern tools (i.e., ICT), that are attractive, cost-effective in terms of support, easy to use, and useful are among other essential considerations to consider when choosing media for teaching (Alperi & Handayani, 2019; George, 2020; Sung et al., 2016). In this research, the use of SIMPEL covered the needs of the teachers to spend much time spent creating videos for teaching, which is among the concerns of online teaching described by Kebritchi et al. (2017) and Fithra (2020).

Nevertheless, there were also setbacks in implementing the various online platforms for teaching, including SIMPEL, when connection issues arise. There were also cost issues, in which Internet quotas were also costly. Blackouts, which were common in Indonesia, could also hinder the teachers' efforts in teaching online. These issues were also the problems put forward by previous studies when it comes to using ICT to teach in Indonesia (Muslem et al., 2018; Silviyanti et al., 2014).

5. CONCLUSION

This article discusses the strategies used by non-millennial teachers of a junior high school in coping with the online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Ngawi, East Java, Indonesia. These teachers strived to learn digital technologies and had to change their previous face-to-face teaching strategies. Five teachers, aged 54-59 years old, were interviewed. The results revealed the teachers had several strategies used to increase students' interest in learning, provide students with knowledge and attention, create efficient learning resources, and use SIMPEL (Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pembelajaran or Learning Management Information System), which is specifically available only in Ngawi. SIMPEL was specially developed by the Ngawi district education office, to ensure that the learning processes in Ngawi Regency continue to run optimally during the COVID-19 outbreak. SIMPEL substituted the use of online YouTube videos and materials because the materials were already provided by the system, decreasing the need for the teachers to depend on other resources. Despite these teachers also using other online platforms, WAG was the most used media to conduct their online learning due to its simplicity and availability.

This research may have certain limitations and provide some suggestions for further researches. The sample size of this study was limited to only one school, and thus not sufficient to be generalized to all teachers in Indonesia. Data were collected merely from interviews. Therefore, the results may not adequately address all of the strategies used by other non-millennial teachers during online classes. The process of their students becoming active and autonomous learners after receiving materials and learning from the teachers in online classes was not further researched. Hence, future related studies should cover these limitations.

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