THE ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATORS' ROLE TOWARDS THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' LITERACY PROBLEM THROUGH THE HEUTAGOGY APPROACH

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Abstract: The analysis of this study tries to observe the low literacy level of students in primary education, especially regarding the implementation of e-learning through the *Belajar dari Rumah* during the Covid-19 pandemic. This problem is assessed through a heutagogy approach. The analysis uses a diagnostic case study method with internet searching techniques. This diagnostic study is founded that educators' mastery of implementing LMS-based e-learning in hybrid (blended and flipped classroom) via interactive and integrative multimedia is a significant factor in providing interesting material with quality texts to increase elementary students' literacy. Optimizing e-learning through the heutagogy approach becomes the foundation for realizing independent learners as the vision of *Merdeka Belajar*. Thereby, the embodiment of *Merdeka Belajar* through heutagogy is an urgency in strengthening the educators' quality, professionalism, and creativity to produce a *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* based on literacy level as one of its bases.

Keywords: educator, learner, literacy, *merdeka belajar*, heutagogy

Learning recovery is the primary concern of the Ministry of Education and Culture through the *Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka* (IKM) at the education unit level in overcoming the learning crisis, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The *Merdeka Belajar: Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program in tertiary institutions was the basis for submitting the 2020-2035 Indonesian Education Roadmap in mid-2020 in discussing the *Merdeka Belajar* (independent learning) program as a whole. Implementing *Merdeka Belajar* requires adaptive and innovative responses from educators, policymakers, and educational curriculum makers. The *Merdeka Belajar* discourse in the 2020-2035 Indonesian Education Roadmap itself departs from the issue of primary and secondary education, which is experiencing a downward trend in literacy, numeracy, and science from 2015 to 2021 based on a survey by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) on inadequate student learning outcomes caused by gaps in effectiveness and teaching methods as well as a rigid and material-based curriculum, in addition to the 2019 Elementary School Teacher Competency Score (UKG) which has still at 54.8%.

This issue is also the primary research of the Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Program in Indonesia in *Indonesian Children: In School but Not*

Learning: A 2000-2014 Analysis (Beatty et al., 2018), which describes a decrease in learning rates of around 10% in each elementary grade; especially if it looks at the literacy achievements of Indonesian students based on the results of the 2015 and 2018 PISA reports from a score of 397 to 371 which is also still below of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average score. The survey also highlighted that learning levels had started to be low since Grade I Elementary School, and less learning outcomes between grade levels. A similar highlight in the RISE Policy Note on *Strategies to Improve Indonesia's Teacher Recruitment Process* (Huang, 2020) reveals that the main problem lies in the low quality of teachers, which can be seen in high teacher absenteeism, low mastery of teaching materials/media and learning models/methods as well as evaluation learning, and conventional approaches that equate the learning process with memorization.

The other RISE Policy Note on Improving the *Quality of Teacher Education Delivery in Indonesia* (Revina, 2022) emphasizes the fundamental problem of teacher professionalism, one of which focuses on the quality of prospective bachelor teacher education students and their curriculum where lecturers and courses pay more attention to the competency of developing learning tools according to curriculum guidelines without following the latest developments in the educational discourse which ultimately has an effect on an understanding of administrative and uniform pedagogy of teaching and learning conditions in the classroom with various situations according to the facilities and infrastructure of the local school environment. This Policy Note recommendation encourages addressing these fundamental problems, which in this study focus on the issue of the quality of prospective teacher students in the Bachelor Degree in Teacher Education (especially Elementary School) and reforming the teacher education curriculum and teacher's professional standards.

The capability of educators and the quality of teaching as the main issues that have been issues since the beginning of their education, have become increasingly problematic during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in addressing low literacy levels in elementary schools as the main problem of the learning crisis. Distance Learning (PJJ) is the initial solution in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic to replace Face-to-Face Learning (PTM) to make the learning process continues. Its implementation was officially conducted nationally through the Learning from Home (BDR) program in education units. The BDR process covered the widening literacy gap and learning crisis. However, because the teacher's quality and professionalism were already a fundamental problem before the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching creativity and internet connectivity in PJJ is another problem.

The 2019-2020 survey by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), even before the Covid-19 pandemic, showed an increase in penetration of Indonesian internet users from 64.8% to 73.7% (196,714,070.3 people); however, the penetration behaviour was high lacking in accessing or using platforms and learning content in 2019 or ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic. The main issue regarding the BDR implementation in the SMERU Issue Notes survey on *Preliminary Analysis of the Driving Factors behind Disparities in Distance Learning at the Elementary School Level* (Bima, 2020) also forms the basis for observations where teachers are highly competent in pedagogy (concerning PPG graduate teachers) have more effort to choose and adapt alternative teaching methods as of learning remains interesting for students, compared to teachers with low competence (especially outside Java) who only use one teaching method. The low pedagogical competence of teachers is also a significant factor in students' weak literacy skills. In addition, in a study by the SMERU Research Notes on *Learning from Home: A Portrait of Teaching and Learning Inequalities in Times of the Covid-19 Pandemic* (Alifia et al., 2020), he observed that the implementation of PJJ was still only for the sake of responding to the learning crisis at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers who graduated from PPG have a slightly higher intensity than teachers who are not graduates from PPG in terms of their teaching percentage every day in elementary schools using digital applications, which are indeed influenced by the presence or absence of internet access. In other words, the ministry's policy to improve teacher quality through PPG,

on the one hand, has had a positive impact; on the other hand, it also revealed that another main problem lies in the education of elementary school teachers and their curriculum as of they still need more pedagogical mastery at PPG for two semesters to ensure the teacher's quality and professionalism.

Inequality in literacy in elementary school's learning process, which depends on the teacher's quality, professionalism, and creativity, must be a joint study and evaluation. The urgency of this issue is none other than because it is the basis of a learning crisis and will be even more lame if it is not resolved as soon as possible. The increasing inequality in student literacy during the Covid-19 pandemic in the BDR implementation can be an analytical study to find an initial solution. In this case, the massive information technology with various audio-visual multimedia applications or platforms in the digital era can also foster students' interest in reading independently. However, it requires teacher creativity in processing and designing learning media according to the selection of learning models/methods (Indriani & Suteja, 2023). Similar research also found that educators' mastery of e-learning is a foundation for operating interactive and integrative learning media to independently strengthen students' digital literacy in a more active learning process (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2023).

As these issues and foundations, it is urgent to tackle the increasingly lame and low literacy of elementary school students as a basic level of education through an approach that can adapt technological advances and developments in learning models/methods/media for the sake of improving the teacher's quality, professionalism, and creativity in creating essential and contextual learning to student's reading interest in the current digital or virtual era. It is also the vision of IKM conceptually to be more liberating and independent and to strengthen the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. The views of Kenyon and Hase (2013, pp. 10-15) on such educational phenomena should be reconstructed and revitalized through a heutagogy approach (self-determined learning) or learning how to learn, which is similar to independent learners or learner-centred learning as the discourse of *Merdeka Belajar*; as an exciting and fun learning approach where students can search and find for themselves what they want to learn and explore freely and not just to meet learning targets or curriculum. Thereby, mastery of e-learning and understanding of the heutagogy in improving the teacher's quality, professionalism, and creativity is the focus of analytical studies to address the imbalance in the literacy levels of elementary school students in the learning process to embodying *Merdeka Belajar*, especially seen in the BDR implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic as a comparative case study.

METHOD

With a qualitative approach, this study uses the diagnostic case study method in analyzing research related to the educator's quality, professionalism, and creativity during the PJJ/BDR full implementation, then hybrid (blended and flipped classroom) via the Learning Management System (LMS) or other platforms in elementary schools during the Covid-19 pandemic as a focus on problems with the unequal literacy of elementary school students as the main problem of the learning crisis. The intended qualitative design refers to Creswell and Guetterman (2019, pp. 16–18), which focuses on the collection, analysis, and study of related data to be interconnected in an interpretive manner in describing the phenomenal basis of the focus of this diagnostic study problem. In this regard, Gerring (2017, pp. 98–100) emphasized that diagnostic cases ultimately function intensively in confirming and identifying data interrelatedness. In collecting the database, this diagnostic study uses internet searching techniques to see traces and related progress data. In internet-based data collection, Hewson (2017, pp. 58–59) and Marotzki et al. (2014, pp. 461–462) argue that the utilization of sources or associations of internet data providers that can be used in various research designs and directions has indeed become an inter-method in collecting easy and accessible data to everyone.

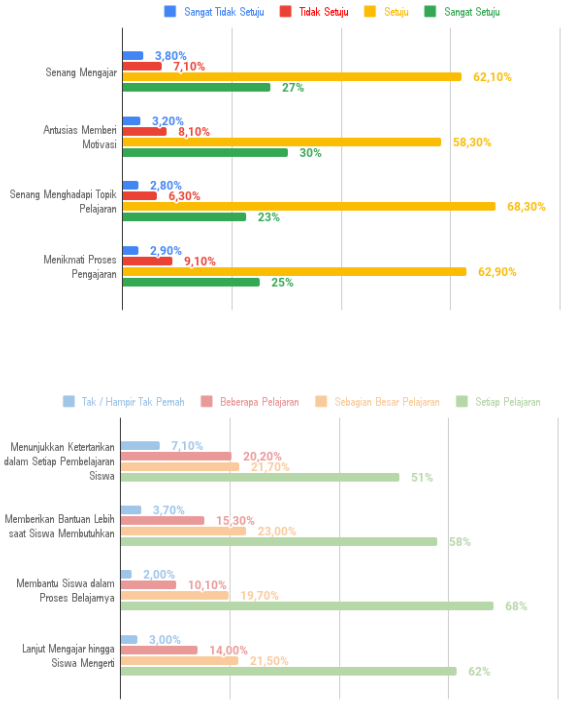
For this reason, this diagnostic study chose the research and survey data from RISE, SMERU, PISA, and APJII as a basis for examining the focused problem; to examine the data on the BDR implementation and the IKM progress on the *Merdeka Belajar* embodiment; in order to compare it to the findings and

recommendations made by UNESCO, OECD, and INOVASI (Innovation for Indonesia's School Children) to address the increasing inequality and low literacy of student's learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. The internet data collection is arranged according to database patterns, connected according to data interrelatedness, and classified according to phenomena or general data descriptions, to represent the initial findings then and interpret them with related literature that leads to the focused problem while validating the database itself (Creswell, 2013, pp. 182–191; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, pp. 263–265). Further referring to Creswell and Guetterman (2019) and Flick (2018), this diagnostic study report was also evaluated for data collection and analysis while interpreting the findings to ensure the data commensurability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Quality and Professionality of Teaching-Learning on the Elementary School Student's Literacy Level

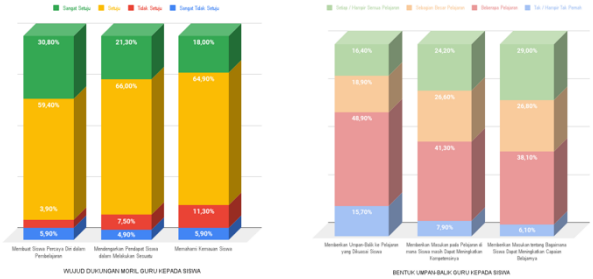
As research from the RISE Program in Indonesia and SMERU during the Covid-19 pandemic questioned learning in primary education, the fundamental problem of increasing lameness and low student literacy lies in the teacher's knowledge and pedagogical skills regarding quality, professionalism, and creativity. However, the indicators for the results of the 2018 PISA report related to teacher performance in Indonesia illustrate a high level of interest in carrying out the teaching-learning process for students, as shown in Graph 1, which shows an average of 62.90% of students agree, and 26.25% of students strongly agree that teachers enthusiasm for teaching where an average of 59.75% is carried out in each lesson by the teacher in accompanying and helping students to follow and understand lessons. Graph 2 also shows the high tendency of teachers during the learning process, where an average of 63.33% of students agreed, and 23.37% of students strongly agreed that teachers provide support and motivation in the learning process, whereas an average of 24.10% conducted in almost the size of the lesson and 23.20% in almost all lessons by the teacher in providing feedback and input as of students can further improve competence in the liked subjects.



Grafik 1. (a) Teacher enthusiasm; (b) Forms of teacher assistance in learning (Source: PISA 2018)

The teacher's high enthusiasm to teach and support the learning process in almost all subjects should be examined more deeply for the student's low literacy. Meanwhile, the teacher's overall interest and tendency to teach index is still at 0.39, classified as low and very low compared to the average OECD score of 0.01 with a standard deviation of 1. In other words, teacher interest and inclination in teaching are unrelated directly to the level of process and student learning outcomes. It can also be said that the teacher's interest and tendency in teaching are directly unconnected to the teacher's quality and professionalism in mastering and applying pedagogy according to the needs of students and current educational progress as the main problem for the declining student literacy level in Indonesia. The teacher's interest and tendency to teach in the end must be distinguished from the quality and professionalism of teaching in mastering the selection and application of learning models/methods according to the students learning character and characteristics in the

digital era, which demands teacher creativity to design interactive and integrative learning media in order to grow student literacy levels.



Grafik 2. (a) Teacher moral support to students; (b) Forms of teacher feedback in learning (Source: PISA 2018)

To deepen this data, the SMERU Field Report regarding learning readiness during the Covid-19 pandemic took the form of a diagnostic study of elementary school learning in Bima Regency (Hastuti, 2020), Dompu Regency (Utari et al., 2020), North Lombok Regency (Nurbani, 2020), North Lombok Regency (Nurbani, 2020), Central Lombok (Kurniawan et al., 2020), also explained a similar matter regarding the teacher's low qualifications and competence to determine learning models/methods and evaluate the learning process professionally as the main problem with the low learning outcomes of elementary school students in each of these study locations. Hastuti specifically clarified that the main problem occurred due to several internal and external factors, especially about some non-graduate education teachers (PGSD) who tended to give lesson texts without explanation and were often absent (p. 3); Utari et al. also found that some teachers un-master learning methods and even un-master teaching materials because their educational backgrounds un-match, so they only dropped their teaching obligations without paying attention to students' tendencies towards the subject (pp. 2-3); likewise with Nurbani's findings which reveal that the main reason students unlike certain subjects, is due to the teacher's teaching method in which the teacher often writes notes on the whiteboard without sufficient explanation and gives too many assignments and is rarely present in class (pp. 2-7); Kurniawan et al. also revealed the teacher's low mastery of learning models and methods in processing teaching materials (p. 2).

These findings casuistically emphasize the low readiness for teaching and learning in elementary schools, which is also a significant factor in the increasing inequality and low literacy level of elementary school students. The teacher's creativity in applying digital platforms to present quality reading is ultimately very influential in boosting student literacy levels, especially in the *Merdeka Belajar* embodiment via *Merdeka Mengajar* (Sinaga, 2023). Regarding the low level of student literacy, referring to the 2018 PISA results show that only about 27% of Indonesian students have competency level 1b (the rest are at a level less than one or very bad), namely being able to understand the most effortless text or short literal and general sentences but unable to make simple conclusion of a long sentence; where this problem should be solved by increasing the quality and professionalism of elementary school teachers to teaching students to understand reading on Indonesian language subject matter in particular or accustoming students to reading in general as a basis for forming students' reading skills at the elementary level (Wuryanto & Abduh, 2022; Situmorang, 2022). To overcome this problem, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) created the School Literacy Movement (GLS) program in 2016, which seeks to synergize and integrate the reading culture of elementary school students by ensuring the availability of quality and interesting books along with adequate reading rooms through intense teacher assistance as a prerequisite (Kartika & Nuryasana, 2022).

The PJJ Phenomenon during the BDR Implementation as a Reference for Evaluation of the Elementary School Student's Literacy Level

Based on these fundamental causes, the results of *Survei Belajar dari Rumah terhadap Siswa dan Orang Tua* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020a) are used as a comparative study. This survey was conducted from 18 May to 1 June 2020 (end of Even Semester of the 2019/2020 Academic Year), with a total of 38,109 students (4,784 elementary school students) for the online survey and 1,908 students (43 elementary schools) for the SMS survey, spread across 34 provinces where indeed

the instrument only accommodates the student's point of view. Later in this diagnostic study, the survey results focused on elementary school students' responses to their way of learning at home, the use of media/applications for student and teacher interaction in PJJ, and student barriers during BDR.

According to student responses in the survey, the percentage of PJJ processes during the BDR implementation illustrates that learning proses still mainly use conventional models/methods coupled with unsupported learning media/applications toward learning interactions. Learning outcomes are administratively completing learning targets without regard to the process and students' understanding of the like subject matter. It can be seen from the top three dominant ways students learn from home separately, namely 85.9% by doing questions from the teacher, 62.7% from TV, and 53.4% from textbooks; where there are still 36.6% learn interactively with teachers, 33.9% from digital learning resources, and 18.2% from online learning applications which should indeed be the main requirement for the PJJ effectiveness. Although also on the one hand, as many as 85.4% used social media as the leading platform during PJJ within the time limit of this survey, and only 22.2% via online class applications and 19.9% via video conference applications. The latter was that 63.5% of students needed help to understand the lesson, 55.9% could not ask questions directly to the teacher, 54.3% needed more concentration, 36.3% felt bored, and 32.5% could not ask friends directly, being the main obstacle.

The BDR survey from the student's point of view was also emphasized in the *Survei Belajar dari Rumah Tahun Ajaran 2020/2021: Responden Guru dan Siswa* (Kemendikbud, 2020b), which was conducted on 8 – 15 August 2020 (beginning of the Odd Semester of the 2020/2021 Academic Year) with 384 teachers through telephone interviews as the focus of this diagnostic study on learning methods and support facilities. The results of the BDR survey from teacher responses in this survey further emphasized the BDR survey from student responses in the previous semester regarding the PJJ inefficient process, which is directly connected to the implementation of learning methods and media to interactions between students and teachers.

Learning methods by giving assignments increased to 92.3%, asking students to read textbooks increased to 88.1%, asking students to use various online learning resources increased to 75.1%, and providing interactive material through online media increased to 85.7%. It can also be seen that the use of social media has increased to 84.3%, online class applications have increased to 29.9%, and video conference applications have increased to 28.4%. Regarding the application of online classes as learning media, Google Classroom is mainly used by teachers in non-3T areas, as much as 33.2%. However, 59.6% do not use the app, and teachers in 3T areas as much as 4.5%, although 90.9 % do unused the app. While video conferencing, such as WhatsApp and Zoom, is mainly used by teachers in non-3T areas as much as 19.8% and 18%, although 53.9% do unused the app, and teachers in 3T areas as much as 15.9% and 2, 3% even though 79.5% do unused the app at all.

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the two BDR surveys, both emphasize the application of online classes and video conferences by varied learning methods and internet signals and also adequate devices as a condition for creating interactive and integrative PJJ to realize personalized student learning. Mastery of learning platforms in the form of learning media/applications is indeed the basis for creating interactive and integrative learning in the implementation of e-learning in synchronous (live via face-to-face or virtual via audio/video/web-conference) and asynchronous (self-directed via object materials or collaborative via chat-discussion) which is also based on the teacher's capability for selecting and applying learning models/methods appropriate to the context and learning characteristics. This issue also makes the subject matter even more complicated, especially regarding the access of internet signal speed (network and quota) and the availability of compatible devices.

The *Booklet Pembelajaran Online* (Ditjen Dikti, 2020) as a reference for tertiary institutions in implementing PJJ at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic based on the Joint Decree of the Four Ministers Number

01/KB/2020, emphasizes that implementing PJJ requires digital/virtual infrastructure and requires more readiness of lecturers than what has been needed in PTM so far. It needs not only includes LMS and the like as a substitute for classrooms but also emphasizes innovation of learning objects and materials directly integrated with learning resources on the internet in the form of textual images or audio-visual via websites or social media to be able to present PJJ similar to PTM which focuses on student interaction to foster interest in the subject matter as early as the primary discourse of MBKM. This phenomenon is also the awareness of educators (teachers and lecturers) to evaluate and optimize PJJ to apply it comprehensively.

Regarding the demand for PJJ implementation, Usman (2021) emphasized that the ineffective BDR was due to access to e-learning facilities to the ability of teachers to respond to the PJJ forms and models, which worsened learning outcomes for students in disadvantaged groups and the region, would remove bonuses demography of education in Indonesia if there is no action to immediately find the right and fast formula for changing the current pattern of education. The PJJ must be a complete form of education within the framework of the e-learning concept, no longer only to cover PTM during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Thus, this problem also needs to be addressed to improve the main problem of teachers' quality, professionalism, and creativity in the imbalanced literacy level of elementary school students in terms of reading texts or subject matter books which also affect reading interest in general.

The Challenges and Expectations of E-Learning Optimization to Overcome the Elementary School Student's Unequal Literacy Levels

The less optimal implementation of PJJ starting from the mid-end of the Even Semester of the 2019/2020 Academic Year to the Odd Semester of the 2021/2022 Academic Year, is a challenge for all related parties and stakeholders, both at the level of education providers as well as formulators and policymakers to restore learning and respond to the latest educational conditions. Usman and Kurniasih (2021) also highlight this matter which emphasizes the total evaluation of PJJ to be equal or in tune with PTM through equalizing knowledge and improving skills on the main requirements for implementing e-learning holistically. Improving teacher pedagogical quality and professionalism should be a significant concern for stakeholders in primary education, especially with the challenge of optimizing e-learning which in turn requires teacher creativity in choosing and determining various learning models/methods and integrating them with interactive and integrative learning platforms to be able to present subject matter in an attractive digital/virtual display according to the current trend of millennial students to overcome lameness and low literacy in elementary school.

The results of *Profil Pengguna Internet Indonesia 2022* (APJII, 2022) provide particular highlights on the challenges and hopes for optimizing PJJ when PTM reopens in a limited manner in the Even Semester of the 2021/2022 Academic Year. In general, this report shows that there is growth and development in Indonesia's internet user penetration in a better and more equitable direction at the provincial level, but it is still concentrated in Java. Particularly, APJII surveyed the education sector from 11 January to 24 February 2022, with 321 respondents on Java regarding the PJJ implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic. All respondents are the focus of this diagnostic study, namely 31.15% of students (in particular 26.79% of SD/MI/equivalent students) and 30.53% of teachers.

Generally, the teacher's quality level of PJJ directly (virtual synchronous) and indirectly (self-directed or collaborative asynchronous) is technically well implemented. This exemplary level of PJJ quality has shown through the application of virtual synchronous PJJ (virtual face-to-face) as much as 30.53% with 78.64% via Google Meet, 77.67% via Zoom Meeting, 15.53% via WhatsApp Video Call, 10 .68% Microsoft Teams, and 4.85% via a developed school platform, while asynchronously self-directed or collaborative as much as 10.59% with 96.26% via WhatsApp, 53.27 % via Google Classroom, 8.10% via Telegram, 7.71% via Gmail, 4.05% via a developed school platform, and 2.80% via Facebook Messenger, even as much as 58.57% combine virtual synchronous and self-directed/collaborative asynchronous.

The percentage level of PJJ application challenges faced by students and teachers is equally high in the problem of lack of interaction in the learning process, which lies in students' reading interest in text or subject matter. Other problems in succession, namely overabundant assignments given to students because there is also excessive material that must be conveyed/completed by the teacher; the PJJ process is unattractive due to the teacher's lack of creativity in determining and applying learning models/methods/media; lack of devices and adequate quota/network; and the amount of material that students do not understand because the teacher does not sufficiently understand teaching methods/techniques from an e-learning perspective as a whole. This problem must be a common challenge. This challenge then raises a high expectation for the e-learning optimization in a hybrid (blended/flipped) framework for teachers can be more creative in teaching synchronously/asynchronously for students can be more active in the learning process and so as un-overburden students with plenty of assignments but to foster learning independence which will ultimately affect student's literacy levels.

The other exposure is the high hopes for optimizing e-learning for the government, namely preparing and managing a combination of PJJ-PTM in a hybrid and balanced way to provide adequate devices and platforms for teachers and students, improving the quality of the internet network, bearing internet quota costs for students and teachers, providing regular training for teachers in mastering e-learning synchronously and asynchronously more creatively; which in IKM has been made available following its application in each respective educational unit. In other words, it is not merely the quality and professionalism of learning and teaching that needs to be improved methodically and technically; creativity to create exciting and fun learning has also become something that educators can no longer ignore through designing materials with interactive and integrative multimedia by tendencies and characteristics of student learning, especially towards the literacy level.

E-learning optimization can begin from understanding and mastering a combination of face-to-face or virtual synchronous and self-directed or collaborative asynchronous learning/teaching via the LMS to the completeness of learning devices and platforms, network availability, and internet quota. This optimization is urgent based on student's e-learning experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic in two surveys on the results of BDR implementation and related APJII reports, which describe learning as less exciting and even tend to burden students with assignments or require students to read the subject matter from textbooks themselves without any explanation from the teacher. This learning experience, on the one hand, makes students more burdened with all subjects; on the other hand, it also affects the level of student literacy or, in this case, students' interest in reading the subject matter. In an analytical study of the practice of personalizing e-learning teaching in several developing countries as a case study (Beatty et al., 2020), have examined this matter by providing nine guidelines for recovering decreased competence (literacy, numeracy, and science) in students and six aspects that must be monitored periodically. The guidelines and aspects in this diagnostic study are focused on emphasizing the learning stage, which is based on the learning tendencies and characteristics of students as their basic abilities; the provision of simple learning tools and platforms that can be easily practiced by teachers as habituation; and the development of hybrid e-learning which will become a form of learning in the global education.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in July 2022 also released an overview of the learning loss phenomenon experienced by schools worldwide due to the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the emphases is training to continuously improve the teacher's competence and qualifications in mastering hybrid e-learning models and methods for student competency levels. In line with this, in the RISE Research Director's greeting at the RISE Program in Indonesia workshop entitled *Fighting the Learning Crisis, Building Foundational Skills* on August 2, 2022, Princhett emphasized five priority actions to support the continuity of the process and progress of education over the learning crisis, mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic: 1) Commit to the basis of learning itself in terms of literacy and numeracy; 2)

Measuring the level of learning processes and outcomes in primary education, especially in periodic and continuous; 3) Aligning the education system (curriculum, evaluation, and teaching) and the fundamental objectives of learning; 4) Support teachers to develop and improve the quality and professionalism of their teaching; and 5) Adopt an adaptive approach that can be implemented in order to optimize the learning context effectively.

The Heutagogy Approach as a Focus in Growing (Digital) Literacy for Elementary School Students

The INOVASI Policy Research on *Qualitative Study of the Policies for Literacy and Multigrade Approaches in Batu City and Probolinggo with the Specific Challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic* (Raihani & Sari, 2022, p. 57) found that to strengthen policies in overcoming literacy problems in the two research locations lies in the teacher's pedagogic quality and professionalism in each class to respond to technological advances and educational developments in the digital era into interactive and integrative learning processes to foster students' interest in reading, both in the school environment as well as families and communities. In addition, various recommendations from research and survey results on this problem through hybrid learning and teaching approaches during the Covid-19 pandemic are the focus of this diagnostic study to analyze it through a heutagogy approach.

Educators' quality, professionalism, and creativity (elementary school teachers and PGSD lecturers) are the main foundation. Indeed, this central problem needs to be scrutinized where the fundamental problem lies in the initial (study program) quality of education (PGSD) and (pattern) recruitment of (prospective) elementary school teachers themselves. To cover these issues, contextual training is needed for educators in technical and practical so they can be directly applied continuously to create an exciting and fun learning process and focus on students' literacy (reading) abilities independently. It is where the heutagogy approach becomes interesting because of its practical flexibility and adaptability to technological advances in educational development to allow teachers to obtain training processes that suit their needs in increasing their professionalism (Sulistya, 2019).

Hase and Kenyon (2013, pp. 22–28), who have been discussing the heutagogy since 2000, realize that the learning process is centred and focuses on the self (tendencies and characteristics) of learners, including educators, in exploring their knowledge and skills naturally and instinctively; not merely an education system in the form of a closed curriculum. The study and practice of heutagogy are also increasing, especially concerning e-learning. Furthermore, Blaschke (2013) sees the connection between the heutagogy and the application of technology–starting with the development of Web 2.0 (advanced digital world) in 2003-2004, which has enabled users to read as well as express their expressions in the form of uploads on early social media and especially Web 3.0 discourse (virtual world) which is more open to access and personalization of internet users–in learning and teaching lies in the complexity of education itself which then increasingly provides or returns its focus to the intensive personalization of student learning experiences (p. 57). The learning experience emphasizes personalizing text readability in an interactive and integrative manner.

Blaschke also stressed that e-learning in hybrid emphasizes the core of heutagogy to the concept of platform-based independent learners that can better design and create new contexts in personalized learning that apply digital/virtual networks as a teaching-learning platform (h. 141). The application of interactive and integrative multimedia in processing subject matter can then affect the accessibility of reading as a discourse on the development of Web 3.0. Furthermore, the urgency of elementary school students' literacy problems which depend on the teacher's quality, professionalism, and creativity, makes the heutagogy approach become a significance for the importance of applying LMS-based hybrid e-learning. Launching the *Guru Belajar dan Berbagi* program by the Kemendikbudristek in the Odd Semester of the 2021/2022 Academic Year has become one of the most appropriate training models for embodying *Merdeka Belajar* via the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform.

Therefore, the educator's role occupies a central position in embodying Platform-based Learning Freedom in presenting personalized learning to realize the Pancasila Student Profile, which focuses on strengthening literacy and numeracy as a basis. Through the heutagogy according to Tay's experience (2013), the transition from pedagogy and andragogy approaches to heutagogy by providing free space for students to experience their learning process will further assist them in acquiring and processing what they want to know (pp. 181-182). Tay also emphasized that freedom and interest in experiencing the learning process are the foundations that prepare students for independent learning (p. 184). This independent learning includes how students are interested in reading the entire material and exploring it further, both in the form of physical and digital literature.

Through the heutagogy, educators also gain the freedom to create content and context of subject matter to improve the readability of the material as a whole and continuously with adaptive learning models/media via interactive and integrative multimedia becoming a particular interest to the current students (gen Z) towards the digital/virtual world (Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 or often called Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Industrial Revolution 5.0). Educators can also contextualize material essentially according to learning achievements and teaching needs in an applicative manner from various digital learning sources or e-learning classes that are interesting and fun to create student involvement and activeness (Adriyanto et al., 2021); as in the context of blended learning to provide independent learning experiences (reading material) prior to the learning schedule (flipped classroom). Indeed, it does not merely prevail to elementary school teachers but to PGSD lecturers synergistically to increase the literacy of elementary school and PGSD students (prospective elementary school teachers).

Digital literacy through e-modules in e-learning for elementary school students in related research and studies has also shown an increase in students' reading power of subject matter so that it also influences their independent learning experiences and improves their learning outcomes simultaneously (Sanova et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2022). It relates to interesting and fun multimedia through interactive and integrative learning applications or platforms. Meanwhile, digital literacy for PGSD students as prospective elementary school teachers also shows the same thing, namely increased reading power and students' desire to seek advanced literature on course material which is indeed strongly influenced by the choice of creative learning models/methods and innovative teaching multimedia designs by PGSD lecturers (Nopitasari et al., 2023). In addition, the influence of digital technology in learning is a significant factor in increasing the literacy of elementary school teachers to master the e-learning embodiment fully, thus can create fun learning for students with exciting material through creative and innovative multimedia (Hutagalung & Purbani, 2021). Thereby, the heutagogy for educators to master e-learning as a whole is one of the urgent solutions to increase the literacy power of students digitally.

CONCLUSION

Various research and studies on elementary school students' literacy problem as a fundamental problem of the learning crisis in Indonesia since elementary education highlight the strengthening of the educators' quality, professionalism, and creativity. Therefore, the transition from pedagogy and andragogy to heutagogy then provides a way to embody *Merdeka Belajar* via *the Merdeka Mengajar* platform in a comprehensive manner in order to provide a broad and accessible space for the growth of interest in reading in elementary school students. The availability of devices and the affordability of good internet networks must also be increased in scope in the regions. For this reason, the *Guru Belajar dan Berbagi* program needs to expand its affordability and accessibility for elementary school teachers in the regions, significantly to increase mastery in updating their teaching knowledge in order to apply LMS-based hybrid e-learning (blended and flipped classroom) via interactive and integrative multimedia to able to provide interesting and quality material for elementary school students.

It is the main requirement for building fun learning following learning tendencies and characteristics that focus on increasing student

literacy as one of the IKM bases to strengthen the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. Through heutagogy, increasing the literacy of educators and students becomes more dominant based on independent and personalization of learning which lies in what and how educators can realize learning that can develop student literacy with essential and contextual reading materials.

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