



# The Commitment of Special School Teachers Towards The Implementation of Distance Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRAK

Pandemi COVID-19 menjadi tantangan bagi guru untuk tetap menjalankan pembelajaran. Salah satu alternatif yang dapat dilakukan guru adalah pembelajaran jarak jauh. Kelangsungan pembelajaran sangat ditentukan oleh komitmen guru. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengungkap kontribusi komitmen guru terhadap keberlangsungan pembelajaran, serta mengetahui sumbangan efektif dan relative komitmen guru terhadap pembelajaran di sekolah khusus. Pendekatan penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah accidental sampling, dimana penentuan sampel berdasarkan kebetulan, siapa saja yang secara merespon dengan peneliti dapat digunakan sebagai sampel. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan angket. Instrumen komitmen guru mengadaptasi dari skala komitmen dikembangkan Allen dan Meyer yang telah memiliki validitas dan reliabilitas yang mencukupi. Instrumen pembelajaran menggunakan validitas isi, dan reliabilitas instrumen menggunakan teknik interrater. Angket dikirim melalui Whatshap kepada seluruh komunitas guru di seluruh Indonesia yang dibatasi selama 3 hari dan terkumpul 872 responden. Data dianalisis dengan regresi berganda dengan bantuan SPSS 23. Hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa komitmen guru terhadap pelaksanaan pembelajaran jarak jauh dipengaruhi oleh komitmen guru sebesar 2,5% dan dipengaruhi oleh variabel lain yang tidak ada didalam model regresi linier sebesar 97,5%. Komitmen normative memiliki sumbangan efektif (1,31%) dan sumbangan relative (51,77%), merupakan kontribusi terbesar dibanding kedua aspek

## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for teachers to keep learning. One alternative that teachers can do is distance learning. The continuity of learning is largely determined by the commitment of the teacher. The purpose of this study is to reveal the contribution of teacher commitment to the continuity of learning, as well as to find out the effective contribution and relative commitment of teachers to learning in special schools. This research approach is quantitative research. The sampling technique used is accidental sampling, where the determination of the sample is based on chance, anyone who responds to the researcher can be used as a sample. Data collection techniques using a questionnaire. The teacher commitment instrument was adapted from the commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer which has sufficient validity and reliability. The learning instrument uses content validity, and the instrument reliability uses the interrater technique. Questionnaires were sent via WhatsApp to all teacher communities throughout Indonesia which were limited to 3 days and collected 872 respondents. The data were analyzed by multiple regression with the help of SPSS 23. The results showed that the teacher's commitment to the implementation of distance learning was influenced by the teacher's commitment by 2.5% and influenced by other variables not included in the linear regression model by 97.5%. Normative commitment has an effective contribution (1.31%) and a relative contribution (51.77%), which is the largest contribution compared to the other two aspects of commitment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as one of the countries with the highest number of COVID-19 patients in Asia, has not been spared the impact on the education sector based on circular letter number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020 regarding the appeal for online learning and working from home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The obstacles experienced by educators or teachers in Indonesia are almost the same as those previously described. Based on the results of interviews with some elementary school teachers, online learning makes learning objectives not fully conveyed to students, and the teachers themselves still do not understand the use of the latest technology (Anggianita et al., 2020; Mailizar et al., 2020). In addition, the factor of the level of parental participation in online learning is still low (Huda, 2020; Khasanah et al.,

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2021). These existing obstacles are a challenge in the implementation of online learning considering that online implementation is a must so that educational activities can be conducted during the covid-19 pandemic (Arifa, 2020; Onyema, 2020). The coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) pandemic has changed the mindset and actions of every individual, including teachers. Teachers have limitations in carrying out learning so a strategic step is needed. These restricted steps disrupt daily routines including school or study activities (Mailizar et al., 2020; Minsih et al., 2021). Data shows that more than 90% of registered students (1.5 billion young people) worldwide are now out of school (Lee, 2020). This is due to the closure of schools as a global effort to face the coronavirus outbreak and calls for all school activities to be conducted online. The closure of school activities has a major impact on the quality of teaching and learning and academic achievement and can threaten children's education rights (Anggianita et al., 2020; Onyema, 2020). The quality of online teaching and learning experiences many obstacles, both from students and from teachers as facilitators. Findings from research on students' perceptions of online learning found that many of the students had difficulties because there was no direct interaction with the teacher so the material presented could not be conveyed optimally (Bestiantono et al., 2020; Khasanah et al., 2021). Lack of internet access and inadequate technology are also obstacles to the online learning process. In addition, the existence of extra responsibility on the teacher affects the learning process for students (Alam & Ahmad, 2017). According to UNICEF, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education is for students from poor families and with disabilities.

This is also felt by educators for children with special needs. The results of the study stated that students with special needs could not attend lessons on television regularly, ignored online learning and teachers did not get feedback from the activities provided and findings have shown that children have difficulty adapting to distance education (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020). Learning of children with special needs in the pandemic era is a complex problem from the unpreparedness of schools, especially teachers, the lack of ability of parents to handle children with special needs, and other environmental factors (Minsih et al., 2021; Young & Donovan, 2020). This requires teachers to be able to rack their brains to create learning goals and achieve the teacher's main tasks. Teacher commitment is complex because teachers bond not only with their organizations or schools, but also with other entities such as their colleagues, students, professional associations, and the teaching profession itself (Altun, 2017; Ni, 2017). Changes in learning activities from home require a commitment to the teacher's main tasks that must be conducted even if not face to face. Formulated three dimensions of organizational commitment as follows: affective, continuance, and normative (Billy & Taat, 2020). Affective commitment is related to the teacher's emotional relationship with the school, identification with the school, and the teacher's involvement with activities in the school. School members with high affective commitment will continue to be teachers in the school because they have the desire to do so. Continuing commitment is related to the awareness that teachers in schools will experience losses if they leave school. Teachers in schools with a high continuance commitment will continue to be teachers in schools because they need to be those teachers. Normative commitment describes a feeling of attachment to continue to be in school. Teachers with high normative commitment will continue to be teachers in schools because they feel they have to be in the school. Strong teacher work commitment has a positive psychological relationship towards work compared to teachers who have low teacher commitment, It can be shown through the willingness of teachers to strive to provide effective learning and high enthusiasm (Thien et al., 2021).

Learning must be delivered remotely. Distance learning using digital media or delivering/taking learning assignments via courier. Most students with special needs cannot access digital media, so the role of parents is very much needed. Parents of students with special needs besides being busy with daily routine activities, also experience difficulties in assisting their learning which is different from other children. There are 6 actions that teachers can take during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely solving complex environmental problems; practicing effective communication; having flexibility in the implementation of learning; applying the latest technology; combining old and new concepts; becoming a facilitator for change. Taking into account this situation, the continuity of learning for students with special needs is not necessarily delegated to their parents, but the teacher must commit so that learning continues in various ways by referring to these 6 actions. The commitment of teachers during the current pandemic is a challenge in itself. Increasing competence is used as a reference for increasing awareness of a sense of commitment that must be renewed (Lie et al., 2020). Many new learning strategies are applied during this pandemic which requires teachers to be creative. The purpose of education with online learning is the creativity of the teacher (Huda, 2020). The research that has been conducted there are several strategies used by teachers during this pandemic such as only applying online chat, using video conferencing, and combining online chat and video conferencing in the online teaching and learning process (Lestyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020). The task of special education teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic is more difficult because they are faced with family conditions and the needs of students are

different, learning for children with special needs must be conducted individually and many other factors (Yusuf, 2020). This becomes more of a challenge for special education teachers during the current pandemic. Not only creativity is put forward, but the form of communication with parents and guardians is a scourge in itself. A survey of universities in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States reported that 41% percent of 119 students with special needs required 3 accommodations in online learning namely the need for increased exam time due to distractions at home; the need for greater flexibility with tasks due to difficulty managing workloads; the need for more asynchronous learning due to prolonged use of computers (Kunkes, 2020). With immediate workplace transitions, such as switching from classroom physical contact to remote and online, mixed modalities, teachers must remain committed to providing quality and accessible education for all learners across cultural, social, economic and geographic backgrounds (Baloran & Hernan, 2020).

Distance learning for students with special needs has more difficulties than learning for students without special needs. The difficulty comes from all factors, namely teachers, parents, and students themselves as well as the available facilities. Whatever the conditions, learning in special schools must take place. One of the important roles is the commitment of the teacher to carry out learning with various alternatives. This study seeks to reveal the contribution of teacher commitment to the continuity of learning in special schools. So far, it is understood that special school teachers are committed to carrying out their duties based on affective commitment, namely the emotional attachment of teachers to serving students with special needs in learning. In addition, it seeks to reveal the effective contribution and relative contribution of the components of this commitment to the continuity of learning in special schools.

## 2. METHODS

The approach used in this research is quantitative research. The subjects of this research are special school teachers in Indonesia, namely teachers who work in special schools and teach students with special needs. Sampling using the accidental sampling technique, namely the determination of the sample based on chance, anyone who coincidentally/coincidentally meets the researcher can be used as a sample if it is deemed that the person who happened to be met is suitable as data. This is due to the covid 19 pandemic. Teacher commitment is measured using the organizational commitment scale from Allen and Meyer (Billy & Taat, 2020) which was adapted by researchers into the scale of teacher commitment to the continuity of learning. The number of items on the scale is 24 items which are divided into 3 components of normative, continuance, and affective commitment. Each component consists of 8 items. Statistical data from this instrument is normative commitment obtained alpha coefficient of 0.79, continuance commitment alpha coefficient of 0.75, and affective commitment coefficient alpha of 0.87. The content validity of the learning instrument uses expert judgment which consists of 2 language experts, 2 construct test experts, and 2 psychologists. The six experts argue that the learning instrument is feasible to use. The results of the reliability test of the interrater technique obtained  $K = 0.80$  (sig 0.010), which means the learning instrument has sufficient reliability. The media used is Google Forms social media in the form of a questionnaire. Questionnaires were sent to various Whatsapp groups for special school teachers in Indonesia. Questionnaire delivery was limited to 3 days and collected 872 respondents. A number of respondents all came from special school teachers spread from Java (92%), Sumatra (3%), Kalimantan (2.2%), Sulawesi (1.9%), Bali (0.4%), NTB (0.3%), NTT (0.2%). Data analysis used multiple linear regression analysis. Before data analysis, normality and linearity tests were performed. Data analysis uses SPSS software to reveal the contribution of teacher commitment to the continuity of learning, and the effective contribution and relative contribution of the components of this commitment to the continuity of learning in special schools.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

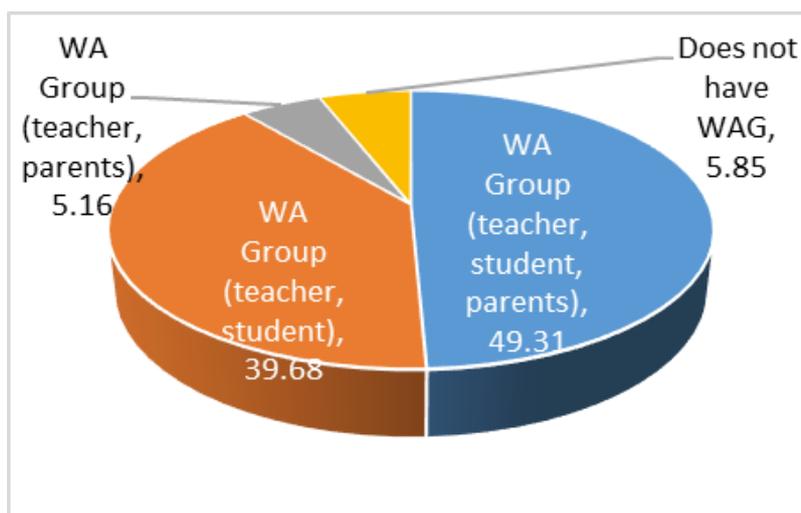
### Results

A total of 872 respondents participated in this study, the demographic of teacher in a special school is presented in Table 1.

Figure 1 show the results of the questionnaire that have been sent online show that some teachers conducted the learning process through the WhatsApp (WA) application with details 49.31% of WhatsApp groups consisting of teachers, students, and parents, 39.78% of WhatsApp groups consisting of teachers and students, 5.16% of WhatsApp groups consist of teachers and parents of students, the remaining 5.85% do not have WhatsApp groups.

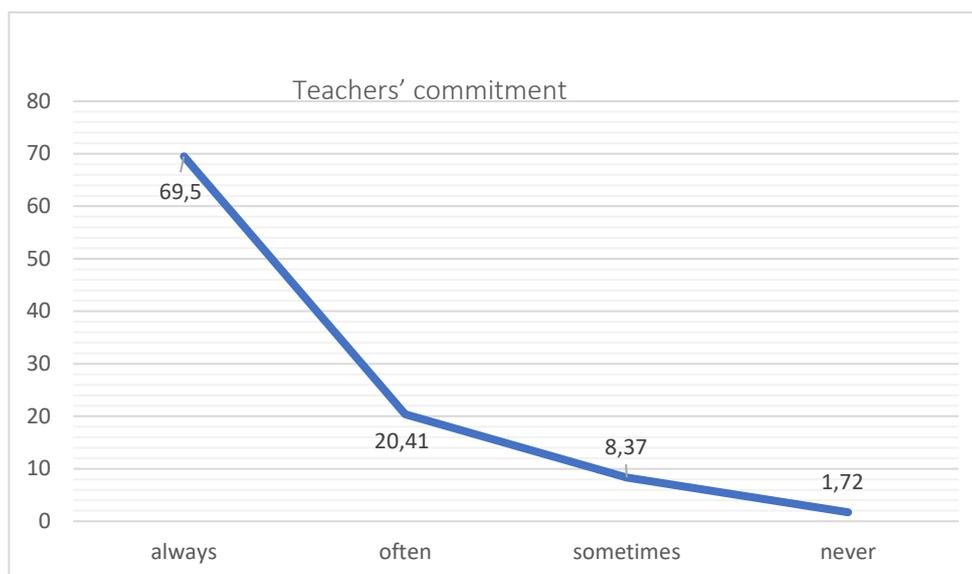
**Table 1.** The Demographics of Teachers in a Special School

No	Status			Education			Years of Service		
1	Civil Servant	329	38 %	Undergraduate SEN	396	45 %	Less than 5 years	196	22 %
2	Contract	123	14%	Undergraduate NON SEN	364	42 %	5 to 10 years	216	25 %
3	Keep the foundation	420	48 %	Magister SEN Undergraduate	46	5 %	11to 15 years	240	28 %
4				Non-SEN	66	8 %	16 years and over	220	25 %
	TOTAL	872			872			872	



**Figure 1.** Learning Facilities

Other data obtained in the study were the modification of the lesson plans made by the teachers. 58% of the teachers used the old schedule and it was fulfilled, 36% modified the lesson plan and it was fulfilled and the remaining 6% were not scheduled to modify the lesson plan. The existence of a modification of the lesson plan will affect the modification of the teaching materials used by the teacher. The survey results found that 38.07% of teachers always modify the teaching materials used in the distance learning process, 21.33% often modify the teaching materials, 31.31% sometimes modify the teaching materials and the remaining 9.29 don't modify the teaching materials. The provision of teaching aids by teachers in distance learning is also reviewed in this study, as much as 70.87% always use teaching aids, 19.72 often use teaching aids, 8.60% sometimes use teaching aids and the remaining 0.80% do not use props. The provision of teaching aids is related to the provision of learning media. From the results of the study, it was found that about 40% of teachers sometimes use teaching aids. The current pandemic makes teachers conduct distance learning, but there are still some teachers who do offline learning even though the meeting rate is greatly reduced, 77.29% of teachers are still learning offline. However, about 58% of teachers have also conducted online learning. Learning assessments are also conducted offline and online. Offline assessments are conducted by more than 78% of teachers and online assessments more than 58% have never conducted online assessments. The main task of the teacher can be achieved with the commitment of the teacher to conduct distance learning. From the results of research related to teacher commitment in conducting distance learning that presented in Figure 2, it was found that 69.50% always, 20.41 often, 8.37 sometimes and the remaining 1.725 never. The commitment component itself consists of normative, continuous, and affective commitments.



**Figure 2.** Teachers' commitment

The data obtained were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. Before performing multiple linear regression analysis in the study, some assumptions or requirements must be met. This requirement or assumption is proven by a series of classical assumption tests. Before data analysis, normality and linearity tests were performed. The normality test results from Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed that the data were normally distributed (normative commitment: 0.119, affective: 0.557, continuance: 0.090, and learning 0.110) or greater than 0.05, while the results of linearity analysis showed that all linear variables were all variables. (normative commitment: 0.170, affective: 0.058, continuance: 0.070, and learning 0.106) has a significance value greater than 0.05 ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ).

**Table 2.** Statistics Table Learning Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	28.148	1.089		25.837	0.000
1 Normative	0.484	0.174	0.101	2.779	0.006
Continue	0.453	0.166	0.099	2.734	0.006
Affective	-0.053	0.163	-0.012	-0.324	0.746

The results of the regression using the SPSS program obtained the regression coefficients as in the Table 2. Based on the Table 2, it is obtained that the multiple linear regression equation is  $Y = 28, 148 + 0.484 + 0.453 + 0.053$ . The equation is explained as follows: 1) If the teachers' normative commitment increases, the implementation of distance learning will increase by 0.484; 2) If the teachers' continuous commitment increases, the implementation of distance learning will increase by 0.453; 3) If the affective commitment decreases, the implementation of distance learning will decrease by 0.053. Meanwhile, in the t-test to determine whether there is a partial influence of the teacher's commitment to the implementation of distance learning, it can be seen in the sig value table. It was explained that the normative component obtained a sig. 0.006 which is compared to the probability value, the significance value  $< 0.05$  probability so that there is an influence from the normative component variable on the implementation of distance learning. The continuous component has the same significance value of 0.006 which is compared with a probability value of 0.05, the value of sig.  $< 0.05$  probability value so that the continuous aspect affects the implementation of distance learning. Lastly, the affective aspect has a significance value of 0.746 which is compared to a probability value of 0.05, which means the sig.  $>$  probability value of 0.05 so that the affective aspect does not affect the implementation of distance learning. Simultaneously, the effect of teacher commitment in the implementation of distance learning can be seen in the F test table and it can be concluded that the value of sig. 0.000 which is compared with a probability value of 0.05, the value of sig  $< 0.05$  so that it can be concluded that the teacher's commitment affects the implementation of distance learning.

The coefficient of determination from the previous regression equation obtained an R-Square value of 0.025 which indicates the proportion of the influence of teacher commitment in the implementation of distance learning is 25%. Therefore, the implementation of distance learning can be influenced by the teacher's commitment by 25% and is influenced by other variables that are not in the linear regression model by 75%. The effective contribution of each commitment variable to the learning variables in a row is (a) the normative commitment variable to the implementation of distance learning is 1.31%; (b) the variable of continuous commitment to the implementation of distance learning is 1.28%; (c) the variable of affective commitment to the implementation of distance learning is -0.05%. The relative contribution of the commitment variable to the implementation of distance learning is (a) the variable of normative commitment to the implementation of distance learning is 51.77%; (b) the variable of continuous commitment to the implementation of distance learning is 50.36%; (c) the variable of affective commitment to the implementation of distance learning is -2.13%.

## Discussion

The obtained results show that teacher commitment affects distance learning with a proportion of 25%. Teacher commitment can give responsibility, responsiveness, and an innovative attitude toward the development of science and technology. The work commitment of teachers themselves can be influenced by many things, including working conditions (Grant et al., 2019; McKenzie et al., 2020). Distance learning activities that are less familiar with the learning process that usually occurs in children, because they are accustomed to doing face-to-face learning become one of the challenges for the teacher's performance (Altun, 2017; Han & Keefe, 2022). The impact of the Covid-19 virus outbreak on the world of education is the change in the pattern of face-to-face learning activities to online or distance learning. There are many challenges experienced by educators or teachers in the implementation of distance learning today. The results of the study stated that the implementation of online learning during the current covid-19 period was not yet fully effective (Hamid et al., 2020; Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020). High levels of student boredom and parental anxiety levels related to teacher performance that is not visible in online learning are one of the psychological impacts experienced by students and parents (Irawan et al., 2020; Tirajoh et al., 2021). Behind that, educators also experience other obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure or supporting resources, limited pedagogical skills of teachers in managing online learning effectively, and a lack of teacher-student and student social connections during the learning process (Minsih et al., 2021; Subekti, 2021). It is also felt by teachers of children with special needs that the problems faced are more complex. These obstacles are one of the triggers for teachers currently in the teaching and learning process. The demands of teachers' main tasks that must be completed require a high commitment during current conditions. As an educator, the awareness that this work is a long journey comes with it. Continuity commitment is an ongoing commitment based on one's concern about losing something that has been gained so far. From the results of partial data analysis, it was found that this commitment had an effect on the implementation of distance learning for children with special needs. The relationship that has been built with students is one of the assets in increasing this commitment. Based on the results of correlation research about the level of empathy with professional commitment has a positive relationship, the higher the empathy, the higher the professional commitment (Raharjaningtyas & Masykur, 2013). Teachers who have a high normative commitment will continue to be teachers in schools because they feel they have to be in the school (Damanik et al., 2018). From the results of the analysis of research conducted, there is a negative relationship between normative commitment and the implementation of distance learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that if the normative commitment of teachers decreases.

Overall, the relationship between teacher commitment and the implementation of distance learning is very influential, there needs to be a stimulus to the teacher's work commitment to conduct distance learning. Factors influencing the success of remote teachers during the pandemic are the importance of maintaining teacher work motivation to ensure high-performance e-learning, and the need for joint efforts by teachers and administrative staff to prevent professional burnout (Lozova et al., 2021). The motivation of the teacher will overcome the existing challenges. With the current challenges, teachers learn very quickly, learning to use the technology that is currently developing (Niemi & Kousa, 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that the teacher's work commitment to implementing distance learning is motivation. Teachers of children with special needs are required to be even more creative in developing distance learning programs today. Teacher job design/autonomy, poor socio-economic/human conditions, and student disengagement also have significant indirect effects through satisfaction and commitment. However, administrative support and team efficacy are of the utmost importance to these teachers in their influence. Among several demographic variables, teacherage is the strongest demographic factor, with more experienced teachers having lower intentions to leave, the authors suggest

that several conditions and attitudes embedded in the teachers' responses are influenced by administrators (Conley & You, 2017). Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher commitment is strongly influenced by many factors from motivation, work environment, and oneself. Comparing the state of teacher commitment before and after the covid-19 pandemic in terms of the results of research conducted, it was found that teacher commitment plays an important role in learning. Many factors can affect student achievement, including teacher commitment. From the results of the study, it was found that teacher commitment during the current pandemic affected the implementation of distance learning. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers must be able to promote in time. This is due to a change of paradigm that the world has become a global village with smart technologies, social media, and the internet.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Poor students and students with special needs have the biggest impact on learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This impact is felt by parents, teachers, and students with special needs. Parents have a low priority for mentoring their children with special needs. Teachers are not ready to face the sudden change that is distance learning. Learners have limitations in facilities and assistive technology in learning. An important factor that can be expected for learning to take place is the commitment of the teacher. The results of this study prove that the implementation of distance learning can be influenced by the teacher's commitment. Normative commitment has the largest contribution compared to the other two types. This shows that the continuity of learning for students with special needs is more influenced by the obligation to teach as a profession.

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