

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses: 1) background of the study, 2) problem identification, 3) limitation of the problem, 4) research questions, 5) research objectives, and 6) research significances.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The pandemic situation turns out academic experts to reconsider face to face learning into online learning as adequate option in fulfilling equal opportunities of education (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Online learning can be defined as a learning process with taking advantage of the technological elements and internet to open unlimited opportunities for students' learning (Dhawan, 2020; Nurohmat, 2020). The process of online learning could be implemented synchronously and asynchronously (McBrien et al., 2009). Online learning is completed with its flexibility of accessing information, low of cost, and time efficiency which ease both teachers or students in learning process as long as supported with adequate digital competency and facilities (Gherhes et al., 2021; Paul & Jefferson, 2019).

Although some sources indicate that the pandemic has fostered digitalization in education (Alyoubi et al., 2021; Gustiani, 2020; Pereira et al., 2021; Shikalepo, 2020), its chaotic repercussions appear to outweigh the gained benefits. The pandemic has severely disturbed the educational system, resulting in substantial problems that fundamentally alter the education paradigm (Ahsan et al., 2021). School closure, a sudden shift from offline to online learning, the digital divide, an increase in the dropout rate, a psychological issue among both learners

and educators, and learning loss are just some of the most discussed consequences of covid-19 outbreaks (Ahsan et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Stefani & Tiatri, 2021) – indicating that there are additional fundamentally disruptive issues that have not yet been identified.

Learning loss, as one of the most discussed topic around learning in pandemic situation, refers to the condition of abilities that are being disturbed by internal or external factors (Pasani & Amelia, 2021). Learning loss in the education field also refers to the situation in which a student loses competence dimensions related to extended gaps or interruptions in their education – this appears to be related to the pandemic condition in which the education of students is severely disrupted (Alyoubi et al., 2021; Amran et al., 2021; Angrist et al., 2021; Simal et al., 2022). In addition, learning loss represents a circumstance in which students' abilities are surpassed by their grade. In other words, children with learning loss confront learning situations in which their competencies do not match – particularly is being left-behind.

Globally, the cases of learning loss have been analyzed by numerous experts during the pandemic (around 2020) and in the new-normal circumstances (around 2021-2022). In some Middle Eastern nations, such as Turkey and Lebanon, learning loss has been affected in cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and even linguistic development dimensions (Cambaz & Ünal, 2021). Africans also contribute significantly to the dissemination of information regarding learning loss, particularly in their countries. In the majority of African countries (Nigeria, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda), learning loss has been discussed as having an impact on education from a student, teacher, and stakeholder

perspective; thus, learning loss has disrupted the education system in the majority of African countries (Angrist et al., 2020; Angrist et al., 2021).

Moreover, young learners in the Netherlands, for instance, are losing their numerical, spelling, and reading skills due mostly to learning loss. In comparison to a case of impending pandemic, the ratio is even close to 60 percent (Engzell et al., 2021). Most literatures on learning loss in the United States address how it affects students' motivation, engagement, self-esteem, socioemotional, and mental-health resources. As a result, academic achievement among students in the United States has declined significantly, paralleling the loss of the most essential skills acquired through education prior to the pandemic (Kohli et al., 2021; Kutza & Cornell, 2021; Okoye et al., 2021).

These data displays indicate that there is no guarantee for developed countries, whose education and stability appear to be superior to those of developing nations, would avoid learning loss. These narratives are vivid enough to illustrate that learning loss has occurred in a variety of settings and disturbed various learning domains. Numerous studies on learning loss have confirmed that this would be a worthy topic to further scrutinize in an academic context.

Several experts also investigated the learning loss encountered by students in Asian countries, specifically Indonesia. In Indonesia and other south-east Asian countries (Vietnam and Malaysia), learning loss has been found to disrupt students' competency at macro levels, prompting the countries to address the complexity of learning to accommodate students' circumstances (Adi et al., 2021; Arsendy et al., 2020; Engzell et al., 2021; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). Several south-Asian countries (India, Bangladesh, Peru, and Pakistan) have characterized academic loss

as the loss of academic competency owing to school closure (Hossain, 2021; Sawarkar et al., 2020)

From descriptions offered by findings across countries, learning loss further means as specific condition in which students lose their particular knowledge, skills, or motivation due to the inequality or discontinuity education (Wahyudi, 2021; Zhdanov et al., 2022). In pandemic situation, learning loss has more tendency to the condition when students lose their opportunity and motivation for learning (Simal et al., 2022). In addition, learning loss occurs because of the absence of direct interaction between students and teachers, as well as limited learning management and assessments process (Munawaroh & Nurmalasari, 2021).

Articles reviews have portrayed that learning loss has disrupted learners across countries and dimensions – and it keeps occurring until further times. Relating to these situations, the potential signs of learning loss also occur in one of private schools in Bali. Researcher was compelled to follow up on the results of a preliminary study involving eighth graders of academic year 2021/2022 at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar, a private secondary school in Denpasar, Bali. The school's stakeholders have approved the feasibility of conducting the preliminary study, which employed approximately 200 students in August-September 2021.

Notably, eighth graders were chosen because they had been exposed to online learning for the first time since becoming junior high school students; specifically, since July 2020. There was a tendency of potential learning loss occurred to be higher compared to other grades – gaining information of learning loss would be more occupied. Geographically and culturally, this school is located in the capital city of Bali, which is also considered an urban area. This school tends

to have better infrastructure and human resources than rural schools; therefore, gathering data and information from an urban school could serve as a barometer for measuring learning loss in rural areas. If learning loss affects students in urban areas, the likelihood of learning loss occurring in rural areas and affecting them even more severely is greater. Hence, employing this setting would also provide broad descriptions toward learning loss which could be associated into other comparable settings.

Focusing on the observations and interviews about students' learning experiences as well as teachers' teaching experiences during a pandemic, the results of a preliminary study revealed interesting discussions that were highly associated with learning loss. First, it was discovered that the majority of observed students exhibit some indications of learning loss. The tendency of motivation degradation, low of students' performance, and lack of online interaction occur as the potential signs of learning loss experienced by students. In addition, a variety of learning loss repercussions were encountered, indicating that it has disturbed students' education on a broad scale. It was also interpreted that extensive research must be conducted in order to uncover more information regarding learning loss in this setting. Hence, further research was needed in order to occupy the extended discussion from the preliminary study's results.

Recent review articles and preliminary study have established that learning loss is an urgent topic of discussion. Learning loss has not yet been theorized in specific, hence there is still a need for data and information regarding learning loss to be gathered through a variety of research settings and dimensions. For the sake of gaining comprehensive descriptions regarding learning loss, this study focused

on the learning loss encountered by students as well as students' challenges of learning during pandemic and post-pandemic situation. Moreover, the teachers' challenges in teaching during pandemic and post-pandemic situation as well as teachers' strategy to mitigate learning loss were also emphasized to gain another triangulation form to saturate the learning loss' descriptions.

As a glimmer of hope that learning loss would be further hypothesized, it is anticipated that future results would contribute data and information regarding learning loss. In addition, it is anticipated that the presented data would help educational stakeholders, particularly educators, gain a better understanding of learning loss by providing explicit information about it. Therefore, the negative effects of learning loss can be directed to learning gain at both the micro and macro levels. Further results are also projected to preserve future generations from the degeneration caused by the learning loss of the present time.

1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Learning loss has become a major educational concern. Recent discussions on learning loss have taken place in practically all countries, both developed and developing. It is considered that the pandemic has opened the door to a number of variables that contributed to the occurrence of learning loss. Learning loss in the educational sense is primarily defined as the loss of learning competence as a result of extended gaps or interruptions in a student's education – the pandemic's closure of schools and disruption of the educational system on a large scale has strengthened its position as the leading cause of learning loss. Despite being well-described through numerous findings, learning loss is still being investigated in a

variety of contexts; thus, there is still a need to enrich data and knowledge on learning loss.

As a result of encountering a globally significant and critical issue, researcher was prompted to investigate learning loss through article review and a preliminary study at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar, a private secondary school in Denpasar, Bali. Findings from previous studies revealed that numerous countries have experienced learning loss in various dimensions and manifestations. In line with this, the observations and interviews done in the preliminary study revealed that learning loss has inhibited the education of observed students on a large scale. In addition, it portrayed that learning loss is an indication of a serious problem with the competency of future generations, which threatens the nation's progress. This research was required for the purpose of gaining learning data and knowledge, which would be utilized by many parties to mitigate the harmful effects of learning loss.

1.3 LIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the fact that learning loss encompasses a wide range of circumstances, it was necessary to impose some limitations in order to acquire a clear and in-depth understanding of the topic under discussion. First, the present investigations were limited to narratively describing the learning loss caused by the covid-19 outbreak, which results in protracted school closures. Data were limited to be conducted through observations, surveys, and interviews in the academic years 2021/2022 at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar, a private secondary school in Denpasar, Bali – considered an urban school.

The timeline of investigations was also limited into the academic years 2021/2022 only because this timeline occupied broad case of transitions from pandemic into post-pandemic situation. In the early of academic year 2021 (July – October 2021), the teaching-learning process was done on online learning circumstances. During the post-pandemic situation (November 2021 – July 2022), the teaching-learning processes were done in the form of hybrid-flexible learning (November 2021 – February 2022) and full offline learning (March – July 2022). Therefore, the timeline of academic year 2021/2022 showed extended timeline which offered broad discussion of learning loss which could be obtained from variative situations.

Geographically and culturally, confining the setting to urban schools allowed researcher to unearth more data, as many variables can be used as barometers, such as learning facilitations, human resources, and post-pandemic learning experiences. There, further findings may illustrate how learning loss disrupts education in better locations, but rural areas may face more difficult circumstances.

There were two categories of participants being limited in this research, the eighth graders students and teachers that taught eighth graders of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar in academic year 2021/2022. First, purposefully, eighth grade students could provide the most relevant data because these students have encountered online learning for the first time since entering junior high school. Preliminary findings indicated that eight grade students have participated in online education for almost two years, leaving them unable to recognize their teachers, classmates, or even the physical layout of their school.

In comparison to seventh and ninth graders, eighth graders are more likely to experience learning loss. In addition, eighth graders are typically mature enough to describe their learning experiences and would not be distracted by the inquiry process, unlike ninth graders who would be taking final exams. There, this grade was an ideal subject of research in addition to its capacity to provide the necessary data.

Furthermore, the teachers were also purposively selected and limited into the teachers that only taught the eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar in academic years 2021 because these teachers' perception and experiences regarding teaching students with learning loss' indications could further enrich and saturate the data need. Teachers' challenges in teaching during pandemic circumstances as well as their strategy to mitigate the chain effect of learning loss would shape comprehensive descriptions of learning loss – filling more enrichment toward the gap being identified.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The identified problems' descriptions and limitations shape some highlighted focuses to investigate, formulated as follow:

1. What learning losses are encountered by the eight-grade students during the transition from pandemic to post-pandemic education at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022?
2. What learning challenges are encountered by eight-grade students of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 during and in post-pandemic circumstances?

3. What teaching challenges are generally faced by the teachers of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 during and in post-pandemic situations?
4. What are strategies employed by teachers of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 to encounter learning loss at a private secondary school in Denpasar?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this research are described, as follow:

1. To investigate learning losses encountered by the eight-grade students during the transition from pandemic to post-pandemic education at SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022.
2. To investigate learning challenges encountered by eight-grade students of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 during and in post-pandemic circumstances.
3. To explore teaching challenges generally faced by the teachers of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 during and in post-pandemic situations.
4. To describe strategies employed by teachers of SMP PGRI 8 Denpasar academic year 2021/2022 to encounter learning loss at a private secondary school in Denpasar.

1. 6 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the conceptualization of learning loss offered by this research is expected to enrich data and information regarding learning loss that has not yet been theorized. The descriptions of learning loss offered is also expected to contribute on several theories around learning loss, in terms of form of learning loss encountered by students; students and teachers challenges during teaching-learning processes during pandemic and post-pandemic situation which leads into learning loss; and the strategy to mitigate learning loss that could be utilize by teachers. Therefore, this research would further provide references, data, and information of learning loss in comprehensive form.

2. Practical Significance

a) Educators

It is anticipated that educators who reach this writing would have deeper understanding of learning loss. Consequently, it would benefit educators in addressing learning loss concerns in an effective manner.

b) Educational Stakeholders

This research is expected to provide educational stakeholders at all levels with materials for further adjusting education systems to mitigate learning loss and its negative repercussions by providing references for learning loss discussions. In addition, it is anticipated that this research would serve as one of the key sources for academic discourse (seminars, conferences,

workshops, etc.) addressing understanding and minimizing pandemic-related learning loss.

c) Other Researchers

The results of this study are anticipated to be used by future researchers as one of their primary references and considerations while doing further research on the breadth of learning loss. In addition, it is anticipated that this research would provide a better understanding of learning loss, which has not yet been theorized. Therefore, researches that is more rigorous could be conducted using this study as a primary benchmark.

