

GOOGLE CLASSROOM AS EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION MEDIA (STUDY AT SMA NEGERI 2 PERCONTOHAN KARANG BARU)

Afriani Eka Mulyana ¹⁾, Ratri Candrasari ^{2)*}

^{1,2}Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh – Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ratri@unimal.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the role of Google Classroom as an alternative media in SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru. Google Classroom is an example of new media that is now widely used in education. This Google Classroom also has many features that make it easier for users to carry out the learning process even though it is not face-to-face. Teachers and students who use Google Classroom also find it helpful to have features that make the learning process easier at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, with research data collected through observation, semi-structured interviews with several informants, and documentation. At SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, teachers play an active role in the establishment of an effective communication process during the learning process. The results showed that the use of Google Classroom in SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru had a positive impact and was quite effective. Both teachers and students admit that it is not too difficult to use Google Classroom as beginners. Teachers and students also feel helped to do online learning with this Google Classroom. The features in Google Classroom are also easy to use.

Keywords: *Google Classroom, Educational Communication, New Media.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menggambarkan peran Google Classroom sebagai media alternatif pada SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru. Google Classroom merupakan salah satu contoh new media yang sekarang banyak dipergunakan dalam pendidikan. Google Classroom memiliki banyak fitur yang memudahkan pengguna dalam melakukan proses pembelajaran walaupun tidak melalui tatap muka secara langsung. Guru dan murid yang menggunakan Google Classroom juga merasa terbantu dengan adanya fitur yang memudahkan proses pembelajaran di SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dimana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Temuan lapangan yaitu para guru di SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan berperan aktif dalam terjalannya proses komunikasi yang efektif selama proses pembelajaran. Penggunaan Google Classroom di SMA negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru memiliki dampak positif dan cukup efektif. Selama proses pembelajaran guru dan siswa sama-sama mengaku bahwa tidak terlalu sulit dalam menggunakan Google Classroom ini sebagai pemula. Guru dan siswa juga merasa terbantu melakukan pembelajaran secara daring dengan adanya Google Classroom. Fitur-fitur yang ada pada Google Classroom juga mudah digunakan.

Kata Kunci: Google Classroom, Komunikasi Pendidikan, Media Alternatif.

PRELIMINARY

In the current era of globalization, the learning process has changed rapidly. Many innovations have been developed in the field of education. One of the changes that stole the most attention was the advances in information and communication technology (Danaher *et al.*, 2013). The development of technology makes users interact easier, access learning materials, add knowledge, and get a more attractive learning experience.

Communication plays a significant role in the educational process and determines the success of education. Educational communication factors influenced the level of achievement of education quality (Yusuf, 2010). Good communication between teachers and students makes the information conveyed by the teacher acceptable to students. Teachers need to use the media as an alternative and an integral part of education to support those efforts (Asnawir & Usman, 2002; Jamalludin, 2016; Audie, 2019).

In connection with the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020, the government issued to carry out learning activities from home. This policy is to break the chain of virus spread and maintain the security and safety of students and teachers. The publication of the appeal made the learning process carried out from home by utilizing technology and internet media (Candrasari, 2020). Several educational institutions that previously conducted face-to-face learning now have to use digital media. One of these digital media is Google Classroom.

Specifically, Google has launched its newest application called Google Apps For Education (GAPE). GAPE is a technology provided and designed for schools and universities by prioritizing information technology and online collaboration. One of the existing facilities in GAPE is Google Classroom. Google Classroom helps teachers and students to carry out the online learning process as a medium of communication (Sukmawati, 2020).

Users optimize internet connection in accessing Google Classroom. Computers, mobile phones, and tablets are needed to access Google Classroom based on Android and iOS. This Google Classroom helps teachers and students connect digitally. Google Classroom easier for teachers to provide materials and assignments to students. One of the advantages of Google Classroom is that students can have online discussions with teachers or other students.

Based on initial observations, most teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang use the Google Classroom application as an alternative media for online teaching and learning. This study tries to explore the motives of users choosing the Google Classroom application compared to other media. This study also discusses the obstacles faced in the school for using Google Classroom. This issue is to be discussed to improve the quality of online learning

in the Covid-19 era. That is very important because the three previous studies conducted by Hammi (2017), Afrianti (2018), and Hapsari & Pamungkas (2019) did not examine the relevance of Google Classroom to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research location is SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The reason for choosing this school as the research location is because the author sees that most teachers use Google Classroom as an alternative media for the online learning process. The type of this research approach is descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research methodology puts forward a phenomenological approach (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2009). Data collection techniques combine observation, interviews, and documentation. The selection of informants as data sources in this study base on the principle of subjects who master the problem, have data and are willing to provide complete and accurate information. There were ten informants in this study. The number of informants consisted of five teachers and five students at SMA Negeri 2 Perontohan Karang Baru. Data analysis interactively using the Miles & Huberman model (cited in Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Motivation for Using Google Classroom

The Google Classroom application has many advantages. Some features such as the main page display student assignments make it easier to organize classes and provide data storage on Google Drive. In addition, Google Classroom can also accommodate all types of files and can add a profile picture. There are also other features that can be used by students in developing learning materials, namely, post reuse, create questions, create assignments, and create topics. Google Classroom can be said as one of the learning media that can be a means of communication in online learning because it can be linked directly to Google Meet. Smartphones, computers, or laptops are the equipment used to access this application.

Users have their motives in choosing the Google Classroom application. Google Classroom can make it easier for teachers to share knowledge with students so that the learning process runs smoothly. The teachers' creativity increase because they make unique videos explaining, provide course materials in PowerPoint format, and directly distribute online journals related to the subject matter. One of the teachers of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan admitted that he had used the Google

Classroom application during online learning. When the author asked about the reason for choosing Google Classroom, one of the French language teachers, Mrs. Prihatiningsih, responded as follows:

“The reason for choosing the Google Classroom application is because the government requires teachers to teach online actively. In addition, the school also suggested that they compactly use Google Classroom as a learning medium so that students are not confused by many other applications. Google Classroom is not that difficult to use. Google Classroom is also one of the applications recommended by the Ministry of Education and Culture.” (Interview, November 4th, 2020).

The Google Classroom app is easy to understand. The Ministry of Education and Culture recommends the use of this application in schools. In the words of Mrs. Retno Susanti, an English teacher at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, regarding a similar reason for using Google Classroom:

“The Covid-19 pandemic requires teachers to find solutions because of the difficulty of reaching students. Therefore, the use of Google Classroom is effective for the learning process. The features in Google Classroom are also easy to understand, so many of us teachers use Google Classroom as an alternative medium for the learning process.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

Similarly, Mrs. Sri Rahayu, a mathematics teacher at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, also describes the advantages of Google Classroom, as she stated:

“Regarding indirect learning, Google Classroom is one of the alternative learning media used in the SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan. The features contained in it are arguably not hard to use.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

We confirmed informants from students. Yuyun Melani as a student of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan said:

“This Google Classroom application is easy to use. Its features are also easy to understand.” (Interview, November 6th, 2020).

We concluded that the practical aspect underlies the selection of Google Classroom as a learning medium during the Covid-19 pandemic. Another aspect is the suitability of students' abilities and suitability for learning. Each teacher has their considerations in choosing the media. The reason may also be practical. That intends to assist in delivering teaching materials. Mrs. Prihatiningsih as a French teacher at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan said:

“This feature is complete. We can directly assess the assignments by students. Students are more active in doing their tasks in that way. Teachers can also set a time limit for students to complete tasks. Google Classroom also provides a comment column so that students can interact with the teacher regarding the clarity of the material, and so on.” (Interview, November 4th, 2020).

Another advantage of the Google Classroom application is its connectivity with another application called Google Meet. Mrs. Retno Susanti as an English teacher at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan conveyed:

“The features in Google Classroom found us helpful. We can make video calls through Google Meet directly connected to Google Classroom. That can reduce the difficulty of interacting between teachers and students during the pandemic.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

According to the teachers of SMAN 2 Percontohan, the features available in Google Classroom are complete. However, they still need to collaborate with the other learning media like videos from Youtube. That makes the learning process is more optimal. Sri Rahayu, who is a Mathematics teacher at SMAN 2 Percontohan, expressed her opinion:

“With the existence of Google Classroom, moreover, its features are arguably more complete than other applications, making it easier for us teachers to teach. For math lessons myself, I prefer to explain the material through videos from Youtube that I send in this Google Classroom. For a more detailed discussion, students will usually comment if they do not understand. Actually, teachers also have to be smarter in utilizing the features available in Google Classroom so that learning and communication that occurs in it can be more effective.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

The same statement was also stated by Mrs. Julia Ramadhani as a Citizenship Education teacher. He is satisfied with the Google Classroom application. According to him, teachers need creativity in optimizing the use of Google Classroom, as she said:

“For me, because I teach PKN, this Google Classroom feature has met the needs of users. Because, PKN is required to read more, so I just need to be more careful in carrying out the learning process with students so that they don't get bored. Assignments that the teacher can give directly through the google form also make it easier for the assessment process later... so it saves more time.” (Interview, November 9th, 2020).

According to the narrative above, the Google Classroom feature has fulfilled the needs of Mrs. Julia as an alternative learning medium for students of the SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan. Not only that, but this application also allows interaction between teachers and students. Mrs. Rasiah as a Biology teacher at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan added:

“This feature makes it easier for teachers to interact more with students. There is a chat room where teachers and students can interact not only through comments or assignments.” (Interview, November 9th, 2020).

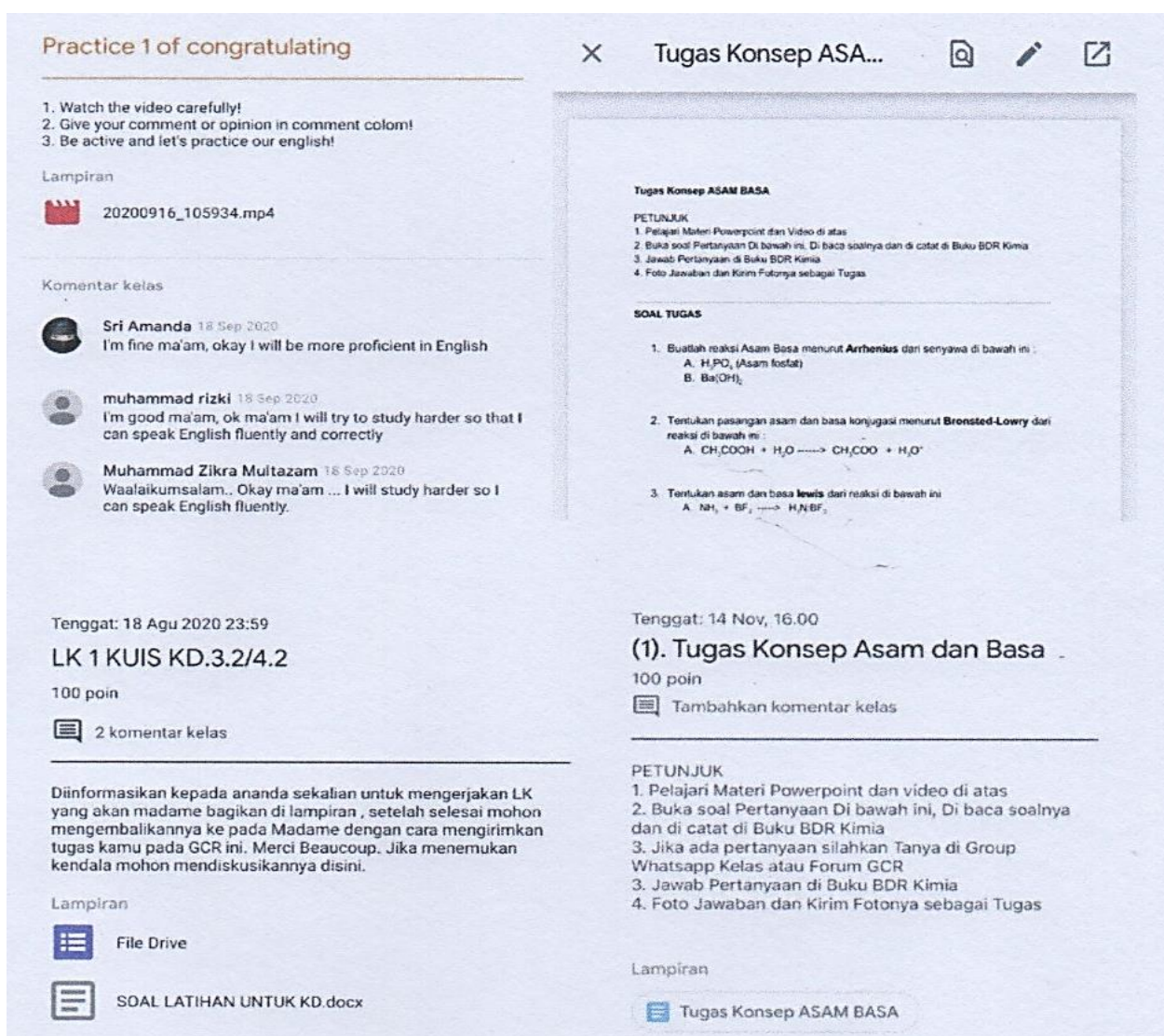
Based on the statement above, Ms. Rasiah explained that the Google Classroom feature itself is good, especially since there is a chat room where teachers and students can interact with

each other. That makes it very easy for students to get a more detailed explanation from the teacher. One of the students, Arini Rizkia, also added:

“The first time using Google Classroom, the features are easy. We are not confused about when to use it.” (Interview, November 6th, 2020).

In the opinion above, the Google Classroom feature itself makes it easy for users who are using it for the first time. Because the appearance of Google Classroom is also simple, it makes users not confused when they first use it. Moreover, the average user is students, according to Bakti et al. (2018), come from the post-millennial generation.

Figure 1. Display of Material Giving and Assignments in Google Classroom



Source: Google Classroom Group SMAN 2 Percontohan Karang Baru

In addition to having advantages in the process of teachers providing subject matter, the Google Classroom application is also effective in the process of giving and assessing assignments by teachers. This was felt by Mrs. Prihatiningsih herself as in her opinion:

“The good thing about using Google Classroom is that it is easier for us to provide learning materials. We can also use the google form for assignments and administering exams as well as include the value per point if it is multiple choice. When the task has been done by students, then an assessment will appear. Teachers can also interact directly in the comments column or on the chat feature on Google Meet.” (Interview, November 4th, 2020).

Meanwhile, Mrs. Retno Susanti also shares the same opinion:

“We can also set a deadline for submitting assignments because there is also a calendar in Google Classroom. So students can see the time that has been set by the teachers.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

The Google Classroom feature makes it easy for students to interact with teachers. Thus, several teachers and students of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru stated that the Google Classroom application as a learning medium had a positive role as an alternative media in educational communication. Moreover, using an Android technology smartphone makes it easier for students to receive the subject matter taught by the teacher. Students can see the subject matter delivered by the teacher in the form of PowerPoint, documents, or videos. Teachers and students are also easy to use the features in Google Classroom. Other teachers use additional applications in conducting learning at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru.

However, the use of the Google Classroom application faced some obstacles experienced by users. Based on the results of interviews that we conducted with Mrs. Prihatiningsih, some obstacles when using Google Classroom were:

“Sometimes the unfriendly signal appears and disappears. And changes to Google Classroom, of course, there are always additions such as features, ways of working, and others. So we teachers also have to balance these changes.” (Interview, November 4th, 2020).

Mrs. Retno Susanti also describes her problems:

“Sometimes the signal is not good because the weather is also an obstacle during the learning process. Not only that, sometimes there are students who don't have the internet quota.” (Interview, November 4th, 2020).

Based on the explanation above, some obstacles faced include poor internet network, changes or additions to new features, and internet quotas owned by students. Mrs. Sri Rahayu as a Mathematics teacher added the obstacles experienced when using Google Classroom, especially in mathematics, namely:

“The obstacle that I experienced when using Google Classroom was that I had extra in explaining the lessons. That is because mathematics lessons were required to have detailed explanations so that students understood the lesson. In this Google Classroom, there are no features specifically for counting, so the teacher must be creative, such as providing explanations of material via video, through PowerPoint so that students can understand.” (Interview, November 5th, 2020).

In biology subjects, the obstacle faced is not being able to carry out practical learning. Biology lessons emphasize the learning by doing method. Mrs. Rasiah, the teacher, said the problem she experienced were:

“The internet network is the problem that we most often experience. Another obstacle is Google Classroom is difficult in practical lessons. So you have to send a video tutorial that contains detailed practical explanations. The sources can be from Youtube or PowerPoint explanations.” (Interview, November 9th, 2020).

Meanwhile, Google Classroom in particular, and online classes in general, added pressure for the students because the teachers gave more assignments. Yuyun Melani, who is a student of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, admitted that the problems she experienced while using Google Classroom were:

“For problems that often occur... that's a signal like an error. Sometimes we don't have a quota. There are also more tasks than usual, and the deadline for submitting assignments is faster.” (Interview, November 6th, 2020).

2. Google Classroom and the New Alternative Learning Media

Based on the observations, we found most of the teachers of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru use Google Classroom as media of learning. Teachers use the computer room facilities in this school to share knowledge through Google Classroom. It was the first time experience for teachers to use Google Classroom as an alternative medium of learning. Sometimes teachers also use the library as a place to carry out the teaching process using Google Classroom.

There is a teacher in this school who is in charge of the computer room administrator. The teacher also shares knowledge with other teachers on how to use this Google Classroom application. Another reason for using Google Classroom as an alternative media is a suggestion from the principal. The principal considers Google Classroom to be the choice of online learning media. Students are still supervised in the learning process even though not face to face. They hope that the Google Classroom application can control learning that cannot be done face-to-face between teachers and students.

Following the results of further research carried out, we obtained data about Google Classroom as an alternative media in education. We interviewed five teachers and five students in

science and social studies classes. This interview consists of statements about Google Classroom as an alternative medium at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, Karang Baru.

According to the interviews, the teachers said that Google Classroom was an effective alternative media to replace face-to-face learning. The teachers admitted that they were greatly helped by the existence of this Google Classroom. Teachers can easily carry out the teaching process even though they are not face-to-face. The existence of Google Classroom as a learning medium is much better than nothing.

We also participated in the learning process held in the class group of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan Karang Baru, by joining the English and French class groups. We also saw a learning process that occurred in the class group. We followed the teacher to explain the material through videos, Powerpoint, and other media. We also saw how the attendance and assessment process occurred in the group because the researcher was in the group through the link provided by the relevant teacher.

Perkembangan media kini semakin pesat dengan kehadiran teknologi baru. Hal ini cukup mempengaruhi dunia pendidikan dan kegiatan pembelajaran. Salah satu tuntutan yang muncul bagi sekolah yaitu menyediakan fasilitas belajar dengan kelas digital. Keunggulan yang dimiliki Google Classroom membuat aplikasi ini banyak dipilih menjadi media pembelajaran selama pandemi Covid-19. Media pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan, Karang Baru yaitu Google Classroom yang merupakan salah satu bentuk media baru. Aplikasi ini dapat menjadi ruang berkomunikasi dan berinteraksi antara guru dan siswa selama pembelajaran. Hal ini perlu diperhatikan, sebab proses berbagi pemahaman bersama dan pertukaran pesan dimungkinkan dengan adanya interaksi (Cangara, 2008).

In realizing the communication and interaction space, video conferencing is needed. The process of teaching and questioning between teachers and students is possible through videos that are played live. Parents at home can also participate in supervising the learning process. Then other application support is needed.

Students and teachers can take advantage of virtual face-to-face features through Google Meet. Google Meet is connected directly with Google Classroom. Teachers and students can easily use it. In addition, the teacher can explain the material or even give assignments through the chat feature. Here users are equally facilitated so that interaction can be more effective and efficient (Yosal, 2004). Therefore, the role of Google Classroom's new media as an alternative media in education is very effective.

Figure 2. Display of the SMAN 2 Percontohan Class Group



Source : Google Classroom Group SMAN 2 Percontohan Karang Baru

The picture above is a view of the Google class group of SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan. Most teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan use Google Classroom as an alternative medium in education. Google Classroom helps students easier to see assignments and learning materials.

The reason for using Google Classroom as an alternative media at SMA Negeri 2 Percontohan is practicality. Google Classroom is practical and easy to use. Google Classroom also helps the learning process indirectly and is easily understood by teachers who initially have never used this Google Classroom application. The second reason for choosing Google Classroom as a learning medium is that application is under the level of development and experience of students. The third reason is following learning. This Google Classroom can also be adapted to the plan of learning materials and is also expected to be able to present learning efficiently.

Google Classroom can be an alternative way for indirect learning. Teachers have their own opinions about the role of Google Classroom itself during the learning process. The teacher's response is good. Moreover, the features are easy to understand and also help teachers in terms of learning. Connecting Google Classroom with Google Meet allows teachers to easily conduct face-to-face classes virtually. There are many benefits in using Google Classroom, such as the assignment process can be done through the google form. Meanwhile, the assignment deadline can

also be given by the teacher to students considering the calendar feature that can be used as a reminder for both teachers and students. However, teachers must be creative in using the features in Google Classroom.

Teachers are required to be ready for the rapid development of technology. There are more and more Google Classroom features, so teachers must be able to keep up with these developments. The teachers felt the assessment was easy. Communication can also be more efficient because of the comments column available. The provision of materials and assignments is available in the class chat room.

Students' opinions regarding the role of Google Classroom as an alternative media in education are positive. Lots of new learning experiences through Google Classroom. One of them is that students are more sensitive to the sophistication of technology that is rapidly increasing. In addition, students to be more creative and active during the learning process to get good grades. Students also admitted that it was easy to use some features of the Google Classroom, even since the first time they had used it. Simple display and also no ads make learning and the process of communicating smooth. It is easier for students to see the material and take assignments because the features are directly focused on class assignments. So students don't need to be confused about learning in the Covid-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The role of Google Classroom as an alternative medium in education at SMAN 2 Percontohan Karang Baru can be considered quite effective. The results of interviews with informants support this statement. Teachers and students tell how the role of this Google Classroom application during the learning process. Google Classroom excels because it has relatively complete features. They have chosen Google Classroom as a learning medium during the Covid-19 pandemic was based on the ease of using the application. However, there are still several obstacles faced by teachers and students in online learning using the Google Classroom application. These obstacles include poor internet networks and limited internet quotas owned by students. That requires serious attention from the Indonesian government.

REFERENCES

Afifuddin, B. A. S., & Saebani, B. A. (2009). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.

- Afrianti, W. E. (2018). Penerapan Google Classroom dalam Pembelajaran Akuntansi (*Skripsi*, Universitas Islam Indonesia Yogyakarta).
- Asnawir & Usman, B. (2002). *Media Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: Ciputat Press.
- Audie, N. (2019). Peran Media Pembelajaran Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan FKIP*, 2(1), 586–595.
- Bakti, I. S., Hamdi, E., & Nur, M. (2018). Pergeseran Pola Pemberian Nama Anak pada Generasi Millennial dan Post-Millennial. *Jurnal Sosiologi USK (Media Pemikiran & Aplikasi)*, 12(1), 24-37.
- Candrasari, R. (2020). Learning Communication Strategy at Colleges during Covid-19 Pandemic and the New Normal Phase. *The International Conference on Social Science, Political Science, and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM) 2020*.
- Cangara, H. (2015). *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi*. Jakarta: PT. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Danaher, P. J., Wilson, I., & Davis, R. (2013). *A Comparison of Online and Offline Consumer Brand Loyalty, Marketing Science*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Hammi, Z. (2017). Implementasi Google Classroom Pada Kelas XI IPA MAN 2 Kudus. (*Skripsi*, Universitas Negeri Semarang).
- Hapsari, S. A., & Pamungkas, H. (2019). Pemanfaatan Google Classroom sebagai Media Pembelajaran Online di Universitas Dian Nuswantoro. *WACANA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, 18(2), 225-233.
- Jamalludin, J. (2016). Manfaat Media Komunikasi dalam Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran. *At-Tabligh*, 1(1), 14-26.
- Sugiyono (2017). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sukmawati, S. (2020). Implementasi Pemanfaatan Google Classroom dalam Proses Pembelajaran Online di Era Industri 4.0. *Jurnal Kreatif Online*, 8(1).
- Yosal, I. (2004). *Community Relations: Konsep dan Aplikasinya*. Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Yusuf, P. M. (2010). *Komunikasi Instruksional*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.