

Exploring the Kindergarten Preparedness in Facing New Normal Education Era

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the readiness of kindergartens in Gianyar Regency in facing education in the New Normal era. The level of school readiness, such as the application of health protocols, is very important to predict the implementation of face-to-face learning plans and school management. This research is based on the Community Readiness Model which consists of 5 dimensions and 9 levels of readiness. 32 Kindergartens, out of a total of 159 kindergartens in the city of Gianyar, participated in filling out the readiness survey which was equipped with open ended questions. The results of this study indicate that; first, most community members know a lot about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. Second, at least some community members have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the efforts. Third, at least some community members are participating in developing, improving, or implementing efforts. Fourth, the leadership possibly being a member of a group that is working toward these efforts or being supportive of allocating resources to these efforts. Finally, some community members or leaders have looked into or are looking into using these resources to address the issue. Based on these results, it is expected that stakeholders will be able to increase their knowledge and concern about change, along with the use of the infrastructures.

Keywords

School Readiness, Face to Face Learning, Kindergarten, New Normal.

1. Introduction

Online education is an alternative solution for the government in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic issue. During this pandemic, students must not lose their right to learn and pursue education, and teachers must also carry out their obligations to teach students. However, there are various problems that arise when learning online, such as the competence of teachers and students in mastering learning technology, the need for a stable and even internet network, difficulties for parents in accompanying children to study at home, or parents not having enough money to buy internet quota (Siahaan, 2020). Researchers also found that there are so many challenges in online learning (Bowen, Richman, Bowen, & Broughton, 2014; Inoue-Smith, 2014; Margaliot & Gorev, 2020). The problems were mainly about willingness to engage in online learning class (Margaliot & Gorev, 2020), preparedness (Inoue-Smith, 2014), and supporting equipment (Bowen et al., 2014). Responding to these various problems, the government is trying to reopen schools during the new normal period, with various requirements and considerations (Dinas Pendidikan, 2021).

Habibi (2020) mention that the new normal era education meant in this study is a face-to-face learning plan that will bring students to school. face-to-face learning plans in the New Normal era certainly have an influence on school management and students who must meet health protocols. There are several requirements in realizing the plan, such as the condition of the child to be healthy, the school zone must be green, the existence of a permit from the local government, the readiness of the health infrastructure in schools and the permission of the child's parents (Sofanudin,

2020). The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a Circular No. 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Learning from Home in an Emergency for the Spread of Covid-19 (Yudi Firmansyah & Fani Kardina, 2020). Circular No. 15 of 2020 contains the following:

1. Arrangement of a shuttle mechanism for students by the education unit.
2. Clean and sterilize school facilities at least twice regularly.
3. Regular monitoring of the health conditions of school residents by the school regarding the symptoms of corona.
4. The provision of facilities for washing hands using soap by the school is mandatory.
5. Implement other health protocols such as maintaining distance and proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing.

The face-to-face plan will certainly have various impacts, both positive impacts such as the ease with which teachers teach their students again and negative impacts such as the large chance of spreading corona in school clusters. The positive and negative impacts of the implementation of this face-to-face should be known by all teachers and education staff so that they can be taken into consideration in implementing the face-to-face plan. In fact, conditions in the field show that some teachers are more enthusiastic in implementing the face-to-face plan without really paying attention to the negative impact of the plan so that they do not know the overall consequences of implementing the plan. Thus, so that every school can implement the face-to-face plan in this new normal era by minimizing the negative impact that will be caused, it is very important to know the level of readiness of the school parties involved.

This study aims to measure the level of readiness of kindergarten schools in Gianyar Regency through several dimensions that will assist in analyzing the efforts needed to realize the face-to-face plan. The results of measuring several dimensions of school readiness will help identify the strengths, weaknesses and obstacles of schools to realize the face-to-face plan.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic

The research on effect of COVID-19 Pandemic has been done by researchers around the world (Atilas, Almodóvar, Chavarría Vargas, Dias, & Zúñiga León, 2021; Mochida et al., 2021; Schmidt, Barblan, Lory, & Landolt, 2021). It was found that there was a substantial proportion of children and adolescents experience age-related mental health problems during the COVID-19 pandemic. These problems should be monitored, and support should be offered to risk-groups to improve communication, emotion regulation and appraisal style (Schmidt et al., 2021). Besides, an investigation on factors associated with the stress signs among children during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, showed that children showed increased stress signs during COVID-19 pandemic, and those stress signs had a relationship with parenting styles (Mochida et al., 2021). There are also various challenges faced by educators of young children, such as lack of preparation for distance teaching and learning, deficiencies in the pre-and in-service trainings to address the educational needs of young children distantly, and the need to work differently with caregivers (Atilas et al., 2021). Therefore, it is a very important thing to revisit the school readiness in facing new normal education era (Shofwan et al. 2021). Both during this pandemic and later after the cooling-down. Investigation on school preparedness should provide a very meaningful insight about how the readiness from both school and students meet.

2.2. The reactions to change

Community moves through stages before they are ready to implement programs, develop and deliver interventions, and take other actions to address an issue in the community. Often community efforts to implement programs and activities to change behaviors in a community meet with: (1) little enthusiasm in the community to provide resources or cooperate in implementation efforts; (2) resistance by community members and/or leadership who then erect obstacles; (3) lack of action by the community and/or by leaders to help move efforts forward; (4) failure! Resources run out, volunteers burn out, the new program is ineffective. One reason for this frustration and failure may be a lack of readiness to address the issue by community members and leadership. Matching a community intervention to the community's level of readiness is key to achieving success.

2.3. School Preparedness

In investigating the school preparedness from the school point of view, the most important thing to be considered is also the term 'school readiness' from the students' point of view. The theory of school readiness has fundamentally mention that in defining this concept, there are three main things that were given attention, namely mental, social, and emotional readiness (Ljungblad, 1964). Schools need to consider those points first before considering other things. Besides, the school readiness from both school and students' point of view have also been investigated by various researcher recently (Kjær, Bach, & Dannesboe, 2020; Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Needham & Ülküer, 2020; Puccioni, 2015; Sutter et al., 2017; Umek, Kranjc, Fekonja, & Bajc, 2008; Xie & Li, 2019).

Researchers in the field of school readiness had developed validated the instrument to measure school readiness (Stanley et al., 2014; Xie & Li, 2019). One of them are The Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research of Colorado State University. This model proposes five dimensions that can guide in assessing the level of community preparedness in responding to an issue (Stanley et al., 2014). The five components are calculated based on the attitudes, efforts and activities, knowledge and resources possessed by community members and leaders. The picture of the five dimensions of readiness is as follows.

1. Community knowledge of efforts, namely the extent to which community members, in this case the teacher knows the efforts, programs, and policies related to the face-to-face plan, their effectiveness, and whether these efforts can be accessed by all existing teachers .
2. Leadership, which is about the community's belief in the attitude of the leadership regarding the face-to-face plan and the extent to which the leadership supports the efforts to face this plan.
3. Community Climate, which is about teachers' attitudes towards face-to-face plans. The teacher referred to here is a kindergarten teacher in Gianyar Regency.
4. Community knowledge of the issue, which is the extent to which teachers know or have information related to face-to-face plans. Information relating to the face-to-face plan, for example, is in the form of causes of problems, consequences or impacts and chronology of developments in face-to-face plan problems.
5. Resources, namely the extent to which resources such as people, time, money, space, and other resources are available to support the face-to-face plan. Resources in this case are resources owned by the school that can be used to support efforts to face the face-to-face plan.

2.4. Level of Community Readiness

Community readiness is the degree to which a community is willing and prepared to take action on an issue. The level of preparedness for an issue can increase and decrease. Stanley et al. (2014) also divide the level of readiness into 9 levels, namely: Denial or resistance, Vagues awareness, No awareness, Preplanning, Preparation, Initiation, Stabilization, Confirmation and expansion, and High level of community ownership. Each dimension will receive a community readiness score. Thus, each dimension can be at a different readiness level.

3. Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods with data collection techniques, namely online surveys (in the network) (Adiyanta, 2019). The data collection procedure used was in the form of a qualitative survey in the form of a questionnaire with open-ended questions using the guidelines developed from the Tri Ethnic Center Community Readiness Handbook 2nd ed. (Stanley et al., 2014).

The steps taken to assess school readiness are:

1. Identify and clearly define the **issue**. The issue is Face-to-Face Learning plans in the new normal era.
2. Identify and clearly define and delineate the **community**. The community is kindergarten schools in Gianyar Regency.
3. Prepare the **questions**. The questions are organized by dimension which are equipped with open ended questions and are given in the form of online survey.
4. Choose the **respondents**. The respondents of this research are 32 Kindergartens, out of a total of 159 kindergartens in the city of Gianyar

5. **Conduct** the research. The respondents were given the link of the survey that they can filled in everywhere and anytime. The researcher emphasize that it is very important that the respondents rate the actual state of the community not what they would like to see. There are no -good or -bad scores.
6. **Score** the interviews. The results are processed in the form of qualitative method with five rating scales, one for each dimension. The researcher has prepared a set of guidelines for analyzing the data.
7. Calculate the **average dimension scores** in the scoring sheets that available in the module.

4. Data Collection

The data obtained will be analyzed qualitatively using thematic data analysis techniques. One important aspect of this process is data coding. The following is an explanation of each encoding (Creswell, 2014; Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2014):

1. Open Coding. At this stage, the collected data is given a specific code derived from the operational definition of the variable under study.
2. Axial Coding. At this stage, the coded data are grouped into categories arranged based on indicators from each dimension in the community readiness.
3. Selective Coding. In this final stage, these categories are linked with the theme of community readiness so that the results can determine the level of readiness that the community has..

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Numerical Results

Table 1 below shows the the assessment of kindergarten teachers' level of readiness in Gianyar Regency.

Table 1. The Results of the Readiness Level of Kindergarten Teachers in Gianyar Regency

CKI	CKE	CC	L	RRI
8	4	5	5	4
School Readiness Level : 5				

Table 1 displays the results of teachers' readiness scores of each dimensions concerning Face-to-Face Learning plans in the new normal era. The data can further be explained as follows:

1. The CKI code symbolizes the dimension of community knowledge of the issue at level 8
Community knowledge of issue has 8 score which means **Most** community members know a lot about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. At least some community members have **a lot** of knowledge about how much it occurs locally, its effect on the community, and how to address it locally. For instance, they know that face-to-face learning will bring positive and negative impact to their kindergarten kids such as easier to teach the children, but they will more easily exposed to covid-19. The teacher also has a lot of knowledge about addressing these issues like the requirements that needs to be done when the school is trying to do face-to-face learning in the new normal era.
2. The CKE code symbolizes the dimension of community knowledge of efforts at level 4
Community knowledge of efforts has 4 score which means at least some community members have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the efforts. About this, **some of efforts** that have been managed by some schools in Gianyar is face-to-face learning simulation, health equipment protocol preparation, also some of them have been asking the parents about starting the face-to-face learning. **Little** of the teacher who have been asked about the efforts were aware and know the benefit of the efforts for their school.
3. CC code symbolizes the dimensions of the community climate at level 5
Community climate has 5 scores which means at least some community members are participating in developing, improving, or implementing efforts, possibly attending group meetings that are working toward these efforts. Shortly, some of the teachers are supporting the school efforts toward the face-to-face learning by participating in implementing the efforts, but **only little** of them whom play important role such leading and speaking for the efforts.
4. Code L represents the leadership dimension at level 5

Leadership has 5 score, at least some of the leadership is participating in developing, improving, or implementing efforts, possibly being a member of a group that is working toward these efforts or being supportive of allocating resources to these efforts. Of these, the leader of the school which is the headmaster also supporting the school efforts by allocating some funding to the efforts or make a new program toward the issue like face-to-face learning simulations. Unfortunately, **only little** of them whom **speaking out publicly** in favor of the efforts.

5. The RRI code symbolizes the dimensions of resources related to the issue at level 4
Resources related to the issue has 4 scores, there are some resources identified that could be used for further efforts. Some community members or leaders have looked into or are looking into using these resources to address the issue. Turning to the details, some resources that can be used to address the face-to-face learning are teachers, financial donations, grant funding, classroom, health equipment, health workers, and permit from parents. Some schools have been looking into using these resources, **but they are not likely** to secure these resources by making sure that the resources will always available to address the issue.

Eventually the community readiness level is at level 5, namely the Preparation Stage. This stage means that the kindergarten schools in Gianyar regency are getting ready to change. Here a brief explanation of this stage:

- a. Most community members have at least heard about local efforts, such as the face-to-face simulation and the distribution of pickets to ensure health protocols are maintained.
- b. Leadership is actively supportive of continuing or improving current efforts or in developing new efforts
- c. The attitude in the community is -We are concerned about this and we want to do something about itl.
- d. Community members have basic knowledge about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms.
- e. There are some resources identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue; community members or leaders are actively working to secure these resources, such as employees, funds, donations, classrooms, health facilities, health workers, and seeking permission from parents of students

5.2 Graphical Results

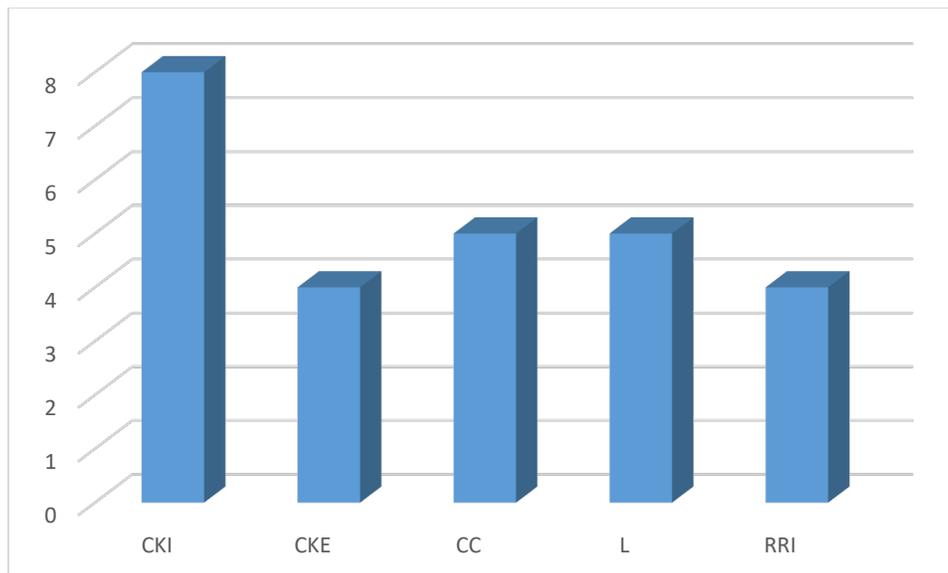


Figure 1. The Results of the Assessment of Kindergarten Teachers in Gianyar Regency

Figure 1 illustrates the readiness level of Face-to-Face Learning plans of kindergarten school in the new normal era in Gianyar regency. It is apparent from the information supplied that the highest score of all dimensions is the community knowledge of the issue and the lowest score is the resources related to the issue. Following this, the leadership's attitude which represent by headmaster's attitude and the community's attitude which represent by teacher's attitude toward addressing the face-to-face learning in new normal era has a same score. As the bar chart provide reveals, the teachers of Kindergarten have a lot off knowledge about the face-to-face learning, have some efforts toward the issue, and have some resources related to the issue. Finally, all of these dimensions lead to the school readiness score at level 5 which is the Preparation Stage.

5.3 Proposed Improvements

This has research implications that contribute to a new problem approach method, namely the community readiness model (CRM) which is applied to changes in the educational process during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is hoped that readers can find out the level of readiness of a community in responding to a problem through an analysis of the attitudes, efforts and activities, knowledge and resources possessed by community members and their leaders. Thus, it will add a new discourse in developing knowledge in the field of education and add a way of measuring the readiness to face change in society before determining the right program to deal with problems. Figure 2 illustrates the model of face-to-face learning in the new normal era.

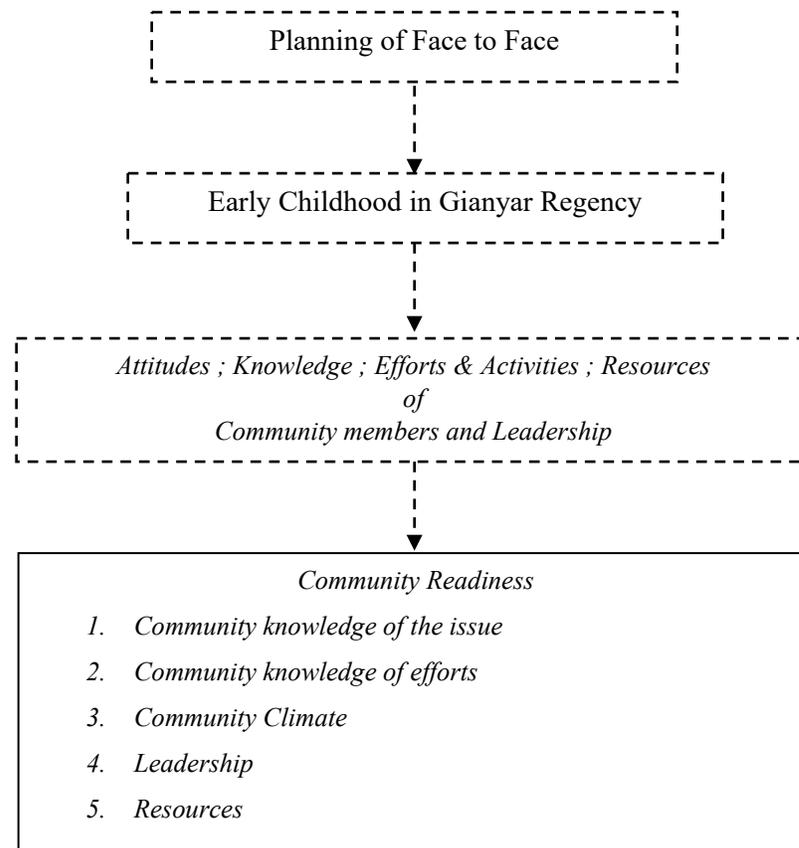


Figure 2. The model of face-to-face learning in the new normal era.

First of all, the issue is about planning of face-to-face learning in the new normal era. This issue is faced by Kindergarten school which is early childhood in Gianyar Regency. The research is aim to know the readiness level of the kindergarten schools by measures the attitudes, knowledge, efforts and activities, and resources of the community members and leadership to get the score of each dimension of community readiness.

5.4 Validation

This qualitative research used validation procedures, namely triangulation of data sources. Data obtained from different sources, namely kindergarten teachers, school assessors, as well as the rules that apply to education during the pandemic. Triangulation of these data sources ensures that the answers obtained from respondents are in accordance with the events in the field so that the validity of the results of this study can be achieved.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was obtained an overview of the readiness of kindergarten teachers in Gianyar Regency in facing face-to-face learning plans in the new normal era at stage 5, namely the preparation stage. At this stage the resources have been obtained, information has been gathered and a meeting to discuss the face-to-face plan has taken place. The principal is actively supporting to continue or increase the current efforts or in developing new ones. The attitude of the kindergarten teachers shows that they are paying attention to this face-to-face plan and they want to do something about it. They have basic knowledge about the causes, benefits, consequences, rules and conditions for dealing with the face-to-face plan. This picture of readiness identifies the weaknesses and strengths that exist in the field and can then be used as material for consideration in determining the appropriate program to make face-to-face learning efforts effective in Gianyar Regency.

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