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## **Portraying Indonesian English language teachers' readiness for teaching online classes**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Amidst the proliferation of the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia, educators, students, and educational institutions are still adapting to the implementation of online instructional methods. This investigation delves into the preparedness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in conducting online classes, as well as the obstacles they encounter while doing so. The purpose of this study is to serve as a foundation for schools to develop effective strategies for administering online classes and to equip teachers with the necessary skills to facilitate learning in the online realm. This current research employed a mixed-method design to gather the essential information required to address the research questions at hand. The data was collected through an online Likert-scale questionnaire and focus group interviews. The questionnaire was utilized to evaluate teachers' preparedness across three dimensions: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), teachers' presence, and institutional support. A total of 336 EFL teachers from various high schools in Indonesia voluntarily participated in the survey, while nine participants took part in the focus group interviews. The findings of this investigation indicate that, on average, EFL teachers possess a moderate to high level of perceived preparedness across the three dimensions as mentioned earlier. This suggests that the majority of teachers are adequately equipped to engage in distance learning. However, the present findings also shed light on the concerns expressed by teachers during the online teaching and learning process. These challenges encompass the proficiency of teachers in utilizing TPACK, the workload imposed on teachers, the psychological well-being of students, and the support provided by educational

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institutions. Furthermore, this exploration provides a concise overview of the intricate nature of teachers' preparedness.

**Keywords:** *Teaching readiness; Online teaching; Online class; TPACK*

## **1. Introduction**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused severe health crises around the world, as well as affected all life aspects, including the education field. As all the teaching and learning activities have to be shifted to online mode, everyone involved in education has to adjust to the abrupt new demands of keeping education running. Teachers, students, parents, and education institutions are all required to adapt online teaching and learning. In the Indonesian context, the adventitious study-from-home policy enacted in March 2020 has forced all education institutions to switch to online teaching and learning with no or little preparation in terms of internet connectivity, teacher ability, and student-parent readiness (Fachriansyah, 2020). Because of this, teachers, in particular, are called for readiness to teach online classes (Lapada et al., 2020).

Online learning is defined as a learning conducted at a distance through electronic devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones and requiring internet connections (Gonzalez & Louis, 2018). Being identical to distance learning (Churiyah & Sakdiyyah, 2020), online learning is not a new concept (Howard et al., 2020; Subekti, 2020). However, in the context of Indonesia, online learning has been used “in a very limited number of schools and it was used minimally as a platform to provide extra exercises and to administer classroom management such as filing students’ grades” (Lie et al., 2020, p.805) only. The majority of teaching and learning activities in Indonesian schools have been conducted in full face-to-face classroom settings. In line with this, special training and preparations for teaching in online mode are lacking or even absent. As a consequence, the majority of teachers in Indonesia are not really familiar with teaching in online mode. This same fact also applies to school EFL teachers.

Apart from the fact that school EFL teachers have little or no experience in teaching online classes, they are demanded to reformulate their teaching programs in order to support their students’ learning in fully online class settings. Only with well-prepared online learning programs will students be able to benefit optimally from receiving education during the pandemic. These realities somehow reflect inequality among educators in Indonesia that brings enormous consequences to the young generation. In line with this, ensuring the quality of the teachers means endeavouring to give the best quality of education to the students despite the pandemic situation. Informed by the above, it is understood that an entire shift in pedagogical approach to teaching and learning and the use of a range of new technologies are required (Howard et al., 2020) in order to enable teachers to facilitate students optimally in online learning environments. Having this in mind, there is an urgent necessity to explore EFL school teachers’ readiness for

shifting their teaching from face-to-face to fully online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gonzalez and Louis (2018) reported that there is a great deal of both qualitative and quantitative research investigating the effectiveness of online learning. However, research on online EFL learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is rarely found, especially in Indonesian secondary and high school settings (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Seeing this gap in literature, this study is conducted to mainly see how ready Indonesian school EFL teachers are for teaching online classes by addressing two research questions: (1) How ready are Indonesian EFL teachers for teaching online classes? and (2) What challenges are faced by Indonesian EFL teachers while teaching online classes?

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Online learning*

Online learning has become an increasingly popular mode of education, offering flexibility and accessibility to learners of all ages and backgrounds. This term has been defined in a number of ways (see Anderson, 2008; Bakia et al., 2012). Online learning refers to an educational method that relies primarily on the use of the internet as the main way of communication (Bakia et al., 2012). Meanwhile, according to Anderson (2008), online learning is a specific type of distance education that focuses on offering educational opportunities that are more flexible in terms of time and location compared to traditional campus-based education.

Apparent advantages of implementing this mode of learning are that online learning provides learners with flexibility and convenience, allowing them to study in their own places, at their own pace and schedule (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Moreover, online learning enables students to have personalized learning experiences thanks to advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning (Wang, et al., 2021). These advanced technologies also provide learners access to various learning materials, digital resources, and other sources of information (Li & Wu, 2022), which could enhance their understanding and engagement with the subject matter.

In the Indonesian education context, online learning is not an entirely novel concept. Even before the pandemic, early research has reported on the practices of e-learning in Indonesian higher institutions (Darmayanti, et al., 2007; Rahmawati, 2016). However, the implementation of e-learning had not been popular in lower levels of education such as elementary and secondary schools until the pandemic hit in early 2020 (Yani, 2020). At that moment, the sudden shift to emergency online learning posed challenges for both teachers and students in adapting to the new pedagogical approaches and technologies.

The online learning implementation in Indonesia has faced various challenges related to infrastructure, access, teacher readiness, pedagogical approaches, assessment, and learning outcomes. In remote areas and underprivileged districts, there are difficulties for both students and teachers in accessing online learning platforms (Nurjannah et al.,

2021; Rasmitadila, et al., 2020). Unequal access to devices, such as laptops or smartphones, further exacerbated the disparities in online learning participation, which caused a digital divide (Lestyanawati & Widyanoro, 2020). Besides, the sudden shift to emergency online learning posed challenges for teachers in adapting to new pedagogical approaches and technologies. Most teachers were not given any training prior to the implementation of online learning; consequently, they showed lack of technical skills and appropriate pedagogical strategies during teaching in the online mode (Lestyanawati & Widyanoro, 2020; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Besides, challenges in student engagement, motivation, and social interaction were also evident in online classes (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Recent research by Saputra et al. (2022) even reported that the biggest challenge in online learning is related to assessing students. All of the aforementioned challenges have surely affected the learning outcomes of online learning.

## *2.2. A sense of readiness for teaching*

A sense of readiness or preparedness for teaching has been a prominent research interest in the area of pre-service and in-service teachers' professional development for over two decades. Prior research has strongly suggested that this aspect should be considered into account to ensure the attainment of quality teachers as it may have a significant influence on other factors of quality teaching, such as a sense of self-efficacy in teaching (see Kim et al., 2018; Turgut & Sahin, 2016), commitment for teaching (see Hedge et al., 2018) as well as the effectiveness of teacher education (see Stites et al., 2018).

Considerable number of studies on perceived readiness for teaching highlight that this factor is context and task specific. Siwatu (2011), for example, reported that there was a significant correlation between a sense of preparedness and school sites. In more detail, the research results indicated that pre-service teachers who did their teaching practicum in a suburban area felt more prepared and confident than those in an urban area. This study emphasises the relationship between a geographical context and perceived readiness. Regarding specified tasks, an exploration completed in Australia revealed that early career teachers felt less prepared to teach diverse students in terms of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic aspects as well as indigenous students and students with a disability. In line with this, Stites et al. (2018) investigated pre-service teachers' sense of preparedness towards inclusive education. The findings indicated that the participants appeared to feel less prepared due to insufficient knowledge of inclusive practices.

When Covid-19 outbreak attacked the world, it was obviously challenging for teachers and teachers-to-be when they had to shift straight away from their regular face-to-face ways of teaching and learning to totally online processes. However, this unexpected condition is a good way to see teachers' readiness as technology has been part of the required for teaching, and TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) has been suggested to be integrated into teaching and learning for a long time (see Kohler et al., 2013; Voogt & McKenney, 2017). The role of technology in

education has become more real and seriously considered. It is, therefore, interesting to know that more recent studies in the area of teachers' professional development, including explorations towards a sense of teaching readiness or preparedness, concern with the pandemic situation.

Mirke et al. (2019), for example, conducted a massive survey with the aim to assess teachers' readiness for online teaching and learning. The survey showed that a sense of readiness has a significant correlation with age, gender, and geography. Younger, male, and urban teachers appeared to have a higher level of readiness in terms of technology. Howard et al. (2020) reveal that secondary school teachers' perceptions of readiness are diverse. The research findings show that there are four categories of teachers' profiles according to the levels of perceived readiness, namely high, medium, low, and mixed perceptions. Further, Howard and colleagues recommend that the schools should provide the necessary support for the teachers.

To this point, the rapid change in the world situation actually has pushed global education to create a great breakthrough. Distance or online teaching and learning cannot be avoided anymore, even though it has become a compulsory process. Therefore, a study on teachers' readiness for online teaching and learning is relevant to be conducted to respond to this new normal.

### *2.3. Measures of teachers' readiness*

It is argued that the indicators for examining teachers' readiness for teaching online are TPACK self-efficacy, online teaching presence, and institutional support (Howard et al., 2020; Scherer et al., 2021). TPACK is one indicator of teachers' online teaching preparedness since it determines the essential qualities of teachers in terms of their knowledge of employing technology in teaching (Misieng, Ramanair, & Rethinasamy, 2018; Tondeur et al., 2017). Developed firstly by Mishra and Koehler in 2006, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework was designed to identify the types of knowledge needed by teachers to implement effective pedagogical practices. This framework consists of some intersections among core knowledge. The first intersection is Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), which is the type of knowledge that a teacher is supposed to have for managing teaching in technology-supported instructions (Solak & Cakir, 2014). The second knowledge is Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), which is teachers' knowledge of how to deliver the subject matters using technology appropriately (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007). Meanwhile, the third intersection is Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which consists of the ability to design and deliver the subject matter being taught. The central intersection among the three elements, i.e. technology, content, and knowledge, is TPACK, which is stated as the 'Total PACKage' for teaching effectively using technology (Thompson & Mishra, 2007).

The second indicator for measuring teachers' readiness in the present study is online teaching presence. The teaching presence concept originated from the Community of

Inquiry framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001). Online teaching presence covers teachers' behaviors related to designing, organizing, facilitating, and instructing in the online learning contexts in order that educational purposes could be achieved despite the fact that learners and teachers are not working at the same time nor at the same location (Martin, Budhrani, & Wang, 2019). It plays a significant role in online learning, as it connects learners and instructors who are not physically connected (Zhang et al., 2016) since they are separated by distance and time. There are several pedagogical practices that indicate teaching presence, including providing timely instructions and feedback to students and monitoring online interactions among students (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2010).

The success of online teaching and learning implementation cannot be separated from the support from the schools/institutions (Howard, et al., 2020). It is also believed that the level of institutional support significantly affects the implementation and sustainability of online teaching and learning as institutions provide the structures, resources, and professional development opportunities for the teachers (Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, & Santiago, 2017). After all, these facilitations provided by the institutions contribute to teachers' contextual readiness, while the TPACK and online teaching presence are what construct teachers' personal readiness (Scherer, et al., 2021).

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Research design*

This study employed a mixed-method design since it used both quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination to provide a better understanding of research problems and questions than either approach on its own (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The research procedures consisted of collecting data through an online survey and interviews, analysing both sets of data separately, merging both data to see whether they were divergent or convergent, and, finally, interpreting the results of data analyses.

#### *3.2. Data collection instruments and procedure*

To measure EFL teachers' readiness for teaching online classes, the instruments used were a questionnaire and focus group interviews, which are elaborated as follows.

##### *3.2.1. Questionnaire*

The 5-point Likert scale questionnaire consisted of four parts. This questionnaire design was adapted from Howard et al. (2020) scale that has been tested in terms of reliability and internal consistencies. The first part collected information about respondents' demographic profiles. The second part of the questionnaire investigated teachers' self-efficacy from the lens of the TPACK framework. Adopting the TPACK framework, this second part of the questionnaire was developed based on the pedagogical and content-related aspects of online teaching readiness; those are the ones that directly intersect with technological aspects. Thus, three dimensions of the TPACK framework

became the focus, i.e. TPCK, TCK, and TPK. Meanwhile, the third and the fourth parts of the questionnaire focused on teachers' online presence and institutional support for online learning, respectively. The complete design of the questionnaire (Howard et al., 2020) is displayed in the appendix.

The questionnaire was distributed in an online format to English teachers of both secondary and high schools. The questionnaire was distributed through multiple and mixed modes, including WhatsApp group, Telegram group, Line group, and Facebook, in order to help gain response rates as advised by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014).

### 3.2.2. Focus group interviews

Further, to support the findings, recorded focus group interviews (FGI) with some purposively selected participants were also conducted with the aim of gaining deeper insights into the English teacher's readiness for teaching online classes. Besides, these interviews were conducted to reveal the challenges faced by English teachers in conducting online teaching. The objective of conducting FGI was to gain a holistic understanding of participants' challenges in teaching online classes through a form of collective interview (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). By doing FGI, the participants could respond to other participants and their responses could reveal more about the subjects' point of view compared to a researcher-dominated interview (see Ary et al., 2010).

### 3.2.3. Participants

This research population was secondary school (SMP, SMA, and SMK) English teachers in Indonesia. The simple random sampling technique was used in this research, so "all members in the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the random sample" (Ary et al., 2010, p.150). Responses were gathered from secondary and high school EFL teachers regardless of their gender, length of teaching experience, location of school, school type (public or private), and school level (secondary or senior high school).

The online questionnaire was sent through various pathways to reach English language teachers all over Indonesia. Within about a month, there were 336 respondents, consisting of 89 males and 247 females, who participated in this survey. Additionally, a consent form for an interview was included in the questionnaire and nine respondents agreed to participate in the interview. Interestingly, they came from 22 out of 38 provinces all over Indonesia. Therefore, the 30-minute discussion for each interviewee was indeed enriching. Table 1 presents detailed information about respondents' demography.

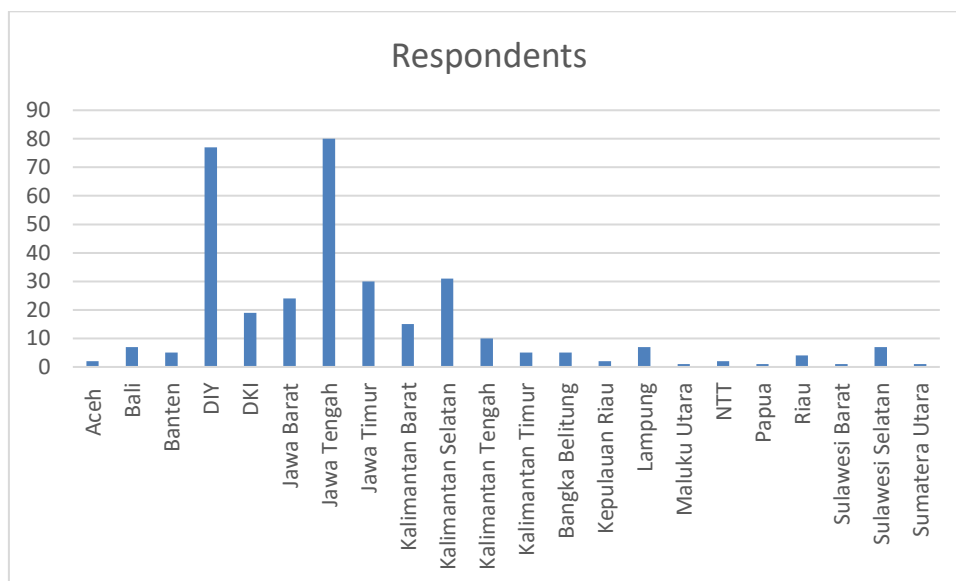
**Table 1**

Demography of the respondents.

Aspects	Categories	N	%
Sex	Male	89	26.49
	Female	247	73.51

Aspects	Categories	N	%
Age	20 – 30 years old	60	17.86
	30 – 40 years old	127	37.80
	40 – 50 years old	99	29.46
	>50 years old	50	14.88
Academic background	S1 (Bachelor)	280	83.33
	S2 (Master)	56	16.67
Teaching experiences	<5 years	38	11.31
	5 – 10 years	80	23.81
	10 – 15 years	100	29.76
	15 – 20 years	61	18.15
	>20 years old	57	16.96
Workplaces	State JHS	53	15.77
	Private JHS	47	13.99
	State SHS	68	20.24
	Private SHS	37	11.01
	State VHS	52	15.48
	Private VHS	77	22.92
	Multi schools	2	0.60

\*JHS = Junior High School; SHS = Senior High School; VHS = Vocational High School



**Figure 2.** School sites

### 3.2.4. Data analysis

The data gathered from the questionnaire were processed and described using descriptive statistics. Meanwhile, the qualitative data analysis was performed according to Creswell (2012). First, after all interview results are transcribed verbatim, the qualitative data obtained from the interview are analysed, reduced, and coded into six themes, namely students' motivation, students' progress, socio-economic background, teachers' workload, technological support, and school policy. Subsequently, findings as shown in the data are presented and interpreted.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Readiness in TPACK

In this study, teachers' readiness was assessed through the Likert- scale questionnaire, which included three aspects, namely technological content knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, and technological pedagogical content knowledge as presented in Table 2. In terms of technological content knowledge (TCK), the survey addresses respondents' ability to use technology for delivering specific concepts, implementing curriculum, and using various programs. The quantitative data show that most of the respondents, over 50%, are moderately confident with their ability with a mean of 3.73 -3.91. These results reveal that the respondents have adequate readiness in the aspect of technological content knowledge.

The second aspect of teachers' self-efficacy in the survey relates to technological pedagogical knowledge which include the ability to create a positive online atmosphere, apply various online teaching methods, facilitate and encourage online interactions. Table 2 indicates that the respondents' perceived TPK self-efficacy appears to be slightly lower with a mean of 3.44 – 3.55.

Thirdly, the data regarding technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) also reveal that the respondents have a medium level of self-efficacy with a mean of 3.53 – 3.77. This aspect includes statements about the ability to use technology for assessments and to manage online class practices.

**Table 2**

Readiness in TPACK.

Statements	Percentage (%)					Mean	SD
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent		
1. to use technological representations to demonstrate specific concepts in my content area.	0	1.19	25	55.65	18.15	3.91	0.69
2. to implement the curriculum in an online environment.	0	1.19	35.12	53.57	10.12	3.73	0.65
3. to use various courseware programs to deliver instruction.	0.30	3.87	26.49	49.70	19.64	3.85	0.79
4. to create an online environment which allows students to build new knowledge and skills.	0.30	4.76	41.37	46.43	7.14	3.55	0.71
5. to implement different methods of teaching online.	0.30	7.44	44.64	42.56	5.06	3.45	0.72
6. to moderate online interactivity among students.	0	7.74	41.96	41.96	8.33	3.51	0.76

7.	to encourage online interactivity among students.	0.60	11.01	40.77	39.29	8.33	3.44	0.82
8.	to use online student assessment to modify instruction.	0.60	5.06	40.18	46.13	8.04	3.56	0.74
9.	to use technology to predict students' skill/understanding of a particular topic.	0	3.57	33.63	50.89	11.90	3.71	0.72
10.	to use technology to create effective representations of content that depart from textbook knowledge.	0	2.68	30.06	55.06	12.20	3.77	0.69
11.	to meet the overall demands of online teaching.	0.30	7.14	38.69	47.02	6.85	3.53	0.74

#### 4.2. Readiness for being present

Teachers' presence in the online learning and teaching context is an essential aspect to be investigated. This aspect is assessed through ten related questions which includes teachers' presence when communicating goals, giving instructions, engaging students, and providing feedback, as presented in Table 3.

The responses vary from medium to high levels of self-efficacy. The data reveals some concerns of the respondents in terms of providing timely feedback, keeping students on task, and engaging students. As seen in the responses to question number 9 and 10 about teachers' feedback, even though over 50% of the respondents convincingly acknowledged their commitment to feedback, a significant number of the respondents (26.49% and 31.85%) chose neutral which shows their hesitation to their readiness. Similarly, regarding readiness to keep the students on task (number 8), some respondents (25%) did not indicate their agreement or disagreement.

**Table 3**

Readiness for being present.

Statements		Percentage (%)					Mean	SD
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree		
1.	To clearly communicate important course topics.	0	2.08	19.05	56.25	22.62	3.99	0.71
2.	To clearly communicate course goals.	0	1.19	16.96	55.95	25.89	4.07	0.69
3.	To provide clear instructions on how to participate	0	2.38	17.56	55.95	24.11	4.02	0.72

	in course learning activities.							
4.	To clearly communicate important due dates/time frames for learning activities.	0	1.79	21.73	53.57	22.92	3.98	0.72
5.	To be helpful in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics that help students to learn	0	1.49	16.96	50	31.55	4.12	0.73
6.	To be helpful in guiding the class towards understanding course topics in a way that helps students clarify their thinking.	0	0.60	13.10	48.51	37.80	4.24	0.69
7.	To keep course participants engaged and participating in productive dialogue.	0	2.98	19.64	48.51	28.87	4.03	0.78
8.	To keep the course participants on task in a way that helps students learn.	0	1.79	25	50	23.21	3.95	0.74
9.	To provide feedback that helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses relative to the course's goals and objectives.	0	1.79	26.49	51.79	19.94	3.90	0.72
10.	To provide feedback in a timely fashion.	0	3.57	31.85	48.51	16.07	3.77	0.75

#### 4.3. Readiness of institutions

The third dimension of readiness assessed relates to support provided by the schools. This includes the clarity of school policies, responses, and actions towards online learning. The overall results indicate the positive readiness of the school with a mean of 3.85 – 4.13 as shown in Table 4. The survey results reveal that over 50% of the respondents perceive highly their school readiness to support teachers' professional

development in this distance learning. However, the findings also reveal teachers' concerns, such as planned professional development (M=3.85) and ICT infrastructure (M=4.01).

**Table 4**

Readiness of institutions.

In the institution . .	Percentage (%)					Mean	SD
	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree		
1. There is a clear vision and objectives towards online learning.	0	4.76	18.15	38.10	38.99	4.11	0.87
2. There is a supportive environment as regards professional development for online learning.	0	4.17	16.96	41.07	37.80	4.13	0.84
3. The current ICT possibilities and infrastructure as regards online learning are taken into account.	1.49	4.17	19.05	42.26	33.04	4.01	0.91
4. Attention is paid to the teacher change processes inherent to changing to online or blended learning.	1.19	3.87	14.88	42.26	37.80	4.12	0.88
5. There is a professional development strategy towards online learning.	0.89	6.25	25.30	42.56	25	3.85	0.90

#### 4.4. Teachers' challenges

The survey results of this study, as presented in the previous section, provide not only information about the teacher's perception of their readiness for distance teaching and learning, but also some concerns. Regarding the readiness in TPACK, Table 2 indicates that the respondents face challenges in terms of facilitating students' interactivity (M = 3.44), applying different online teaching strategies (M = 3.45), and creating a conducive and effective learning environment (M = 3.55). These concerns appear to show the respondents' concern, about whether or not they are able to meet the

expected goals ( $M = 3.44$ ). Another challenge, based on the survey, relates to feedback. Table 3 consistently shows that providing constructive feedback in a timely manner is a problem for some teachers. Furthermore, the third aspect of the survey, which assesses institutional readiness, reveals that some schools are considered not to have clear strategies yet to support the teachers' professional development towards online learning.

In order to obtain further information from the respondents, an invitation to participate in focus group interviews was sent to the survey participants. There were nine participants who were willing to join the interviews, which were held in three different schedules. Those participants were teachers from various schools: junior high school, senior high school, and vocational school. Additionally, in terms of school sites, four teachers were from schools located in the urban area, i.e. Jakarta, Bogor, Lampung, and Yogyakarta. Meanwhile, the five other participants were teachers at schools located in rural areas, i.e. Kalimantan regions and Banjarnegara, Central Java.

From the interviews, there were some common themes emerging to address the second research question, which relate to teachers' challenges faced during this distance learning. The themes are elaborated in the following section.

#### *4.4.1. Students' motivation*

The findings of this current study show that the shift from face-to-face meetings to virtual meetings may influence students' motivation. Such a phenomenon does not only happen in remote areas, but also in urban areas. One respondent said, "Students who actively participated in Zoom were less than 50%. It was really hard to motivate the rest of the class even though extra points were offered [to students' participation]" (Le).

#### *4.4.2. Students' progress*

Ensuring that the students have a good understanding of a lesson during online classes is another concern emerging in the FGD. This issue appears to be common among the participants regardless of the school sites and school levels. They have shared similar experiences, as said by the following respondents (pseudonyms). Wis acknowledged that she could not really recognize whether her students understood the lesson or not. At the same time, Fin thought that lack of direct interactions with students could be the reason why she was unable to sense whether her students could really understand her lesson or not.

#### *4.4.3. Socio-economic background*

Another challenge faced by teachers in remote areas is how to adjust distance learning for students who have limited access to online classes. Some students come from lower economic-class families. Therefore, this pandemic has forced the students to be part of the family support and help their parents to earn a living.

Some students in our school had to help their parents in this pandemic situation. To them, schools meant assignments. The most important thing was that they could pass. Students should help their parents to harvest rubber. They did not always have money for the data plan, so they often submitted tasks. (Wid)

#### *4.4.4. Teacher's workload*

The new way of teaching has borne a new system of monitoring the teaching and learning process as reported by some participants. The discussions reveal that there have been some efforts made by the local government and schools to ensure that distance learning runs well. This implies that teachers have some extra tasks to do, as shown below.

Teachers had more tasks. Not only teaching, but also looking for students. Sometimes students wanted to join the online class but suddenly disconnected in the middle of the class. Because of that, teachers should do home visits which sometimes take 1-2 hours to get to the student's house from school. We were not always lucky. Sometimes we could not meet the student or even found out that the student had got married. In this case, teachers are like a human workshop to fix and manage many things. (Fin)

#### *4.4.5. Technological support*

This theme is one of the major challenges emerging from FGDs. Some participants, who are teaching in a remote area, shared their experiences of how gadgets and internet connections can be a serious problem as shown in the following translated quotes.

50% of the students shared mobile phones with their parents. The students mostly lived around the rubber and palm plantations. Support (data plan) from the government did not work well due to poor signal in the area. To get a better connection, students should go up the hill. (Wid)

#### *4.4.6. School policy*

School policy has an important influence on the success of the implementation of the online teaching and learning process. Based on the results of the focus group interviews, most of the schools indicated their unpreparedness for the sudden change in the class mode. The findings show that some schools appear to be able to adjust to the new situation by making new regulations and policies to cope with the challenge. Here are some examples of the school policies regarding exams and professional development.

It had been more than a year since we stayed at home. We were confused because there was no clear system yet. [We] only gave assignments [to students]. We didn't really know whether they did the assignments or not. In the academic year of 2020/2021, the system was clearer. The process of the online teaching and learning was similar to face-to-face classes in terms of schedule. The Zoom platform was used for all meetings and Moodle for exams. Online exams for every subject were scheduled in advance. The students came from middle – high class so they had no problem with gadgets and internet connections. (Ad)

Other than those, some other schools still face difficulties in making some adjustments due to the students' condition. There were three teachers from two schools located in relatively remote areas who stated something different from the findings above. In the interview, they admitted that

The schools did not provide a clear-cut guidance on how the online learning should be conducted. Especially in terms of class preparation, the school provides no control. Teachers are given freedom to develop the lesson plans and decide what technology to use according to the agreement with the students in every class. (Wis)

## **5. Discussion**

School support plays a significant role in ensuring teachers' overall readiness in online teaching and learning, including the TPACK aspects. Teachers' perceived readiness in TCK as shown in the questionnaire was relatively higher than other aspects. But that is not the case for the two other aspects, i.e., TPK and TPACK. This finding is similar to some research findings, where teachers struggle in creating and delivering suitable learning materials using technology (Lie, et.al. (2020); Churiyah & Sakdiyyah, 2020; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). To cope with this, teachers need to have the ability to integrate their technological knowledge with pedagogical and content knowledge in order to create a student-centred class (Lie et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a need for schools and institutions to supervise teachers more in terms of TPK, i.e., the knowledge about using ICT to implement effective instructional practices and strategies (Scherer, et al., 2021). Unfortunately, based on the focus group interview results, not all the training provided by institutions seemed to have given emphasis on TPK aspects, i.e., how the technology should be employed in delivering instructions effectively. It is, therefore, suggested that any forms of training and preparation programs provided by institutions need to be grounded on TPACK so that teachers are able to not only operate the technology, but also develop appropriate and context-specific teaching strategies using the technology.

This is also closely-related to the findings regarding online presence. From the questionnaire, it was found that teachers' readiness in terms of online learning presence was considerably high ( $M=4.01$ ) yet concerns and hesitations were still found in terms of providing meaningful and timely feedback consistently. This is similar to what Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) found in their research. Their study revealed that the school teachers had a problem in giving personal feedback to the students due to the limited time and students' frequent late submissions of tasks. Since institutional support is one of the determinants of teachers' personal readiness, more attention should also be given to teachers' teaching processes, particularly in providing more consistent timely feedback. Facilitations from schools such as mechanisms, policies, and infrastructures, need to be

provided so as to ensure teachers' personal readiness for online teaching, i.e. TPACK and teachers' online presence.

In relation to this, the questionnaire results also showed that the perceived readiness of the institution was considerably high ( $M=4.04$ ). This finding was confirmed by the focus group interview, in which almost all schools had already got well-established visions and policies regarding the conduct of online instructions. In addition to this, almost all participants from both urban and rural areas had got some sort of trainings to familiarize the teachers with the technological platforms that can be used for teaching. However, there were a few teachers' responses which explained that their schools did not provide a clear-cut guidance nor a clear policy on what technology platform to use for delivering instructions. These responses emerged from three teachers who are from rural areas. The discrepancy in responses between teachers from rural and urban areas indicated that geographical locations seemed to be a factor that determines the readiness of institutions. In this case, schools located in urban areas are considered more ready than those located in rural areas.

Regarding teachers' challenges in teaching online classes, the focus group interviews revealed that the most dominant challenges faced by school EFL teachers were difficulties in ensuring that the students really learn and make progress and raising students' motivation in online learning. Some previous research that investigated online and distance learning reports similar challenges regarding students' low motivations in online learning participation (Gustiani, 2020; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). This indicates that there is a tendency that students become less motivated when they were to learn in online class settings. Some possible causes of students' low online learning motivations include the lack of social interactions (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021), lack of instructional support provided by teachers and schools (Agbejule, Ndzibah, & Lotchi, 2021), not supportive online learning environment due to socio-economic factors (Mauliya, Relianisa, & Rokhyati, 2020; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021), and poor access to the internet due to geographical and financial factors (e.g. Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Yuzulia, 2021).

## **6. Conclusion**

A sense of readiness is an essential aspect of the teaching profession that is interesting to be further explored. This pandemic situation has pushed teachers in a lot of places, including Indonesia, to quickly shift their routines from face-to-face classes to online. The sudden transformation obviously brought some impacts on the process of teaching and learning processes. Accordingly, the current research intends to examine teachers' perceived readiness dealing with this online learning by addressing two research questions, namely the level of teachers' readiness and challenges experienced by teachers.

This mixed-method investigation reveals that most of the participants, who come from diverse school levels and provinces in Indonesia, appear to have positive perceptions associated with readiness in TPACK, readiness for presence, and readiness of institutions.

The statistical analysis indicates that they are in a moderate to high level of readiness for online teaching and learning. In addition to that, the survey of this study shows some challenges that the participants should cope with. Furthermore, the thematic analysis has also identified key themes that relate to the challenges of distance learning. The descriptive data highlight some major concerns, namely students' motivation, students' progress, teachers' workload, family background, technological support, and school policy.

The present assessment of teachers' readiness provides rich and valuable information about English language teachers' real conditions in diverse regions in Indonesia. The analysis results reveal that the participants' perceived readiness is closely related to their contexts, including knowledge proficiency, geographical location, students' psychological and family background, workload, and school policy.

This study suggests that teachers' readiness for distance learning does not only rely on their knowledge proficiency, including TPACK, but also on some aspects around them. The importance of technological knowledge and skills have been considerably increasing in the educational field. The ability to integrate technology in teaching and learning has been a key requirement that teachers should have and continuously improve recently. However, technology can sometimes be a challenge for teachers who are in remote areas. Due to the locations, internet connection is one common problem that students have when they should access lessons from home. Furthermore, some students should help their parents since the pandemic has affected their financial situation. Consequently, the students may think that studying is not their priority anymore. Besides, some students lack adequate facilities to support their distance learning because of their family's economic condition. This situation seems to decrease their motivation to study. Therefore, teachers should make extra efforts to ensure their students can join the online classes and understand the lessons. Home visits, teachers' regular reports are examples of recent tasks that teachers should do to monitor students' progress during online learning. Considering the complexities of the implementation of distance learning, therefore, support from schools, such as school strategies to manage online classes, facilities, trainings for teachers, appear to have an influence on teachers' performance in the online mode of teaching.

It is evident that teachers' perceived readiness is worth investigating. As suggested by the current research, teachers' readiness, in this case English language teachers, is a complex factor and dependent on specific contexts. Therefore, further studies are recommended to explore the complexities of teachers' readiness or preparedness in a more thorough way. A case study or phenomenological study is a potential research method to portrait particular contexts comprehensively.

### **Declaration of conflicting interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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