

## I am Tired of Teaching: Relationship between Teachers' Boredom and Their Psychological Disorders during Covid-19 Pandemic

(Saya Lelah Mengajar: Hubungan Kejenuhan terhadap Gangguan Psikologis Guru di Masa Pandemi Covid-19)

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**Abstract:** The continuous practice of online learning potentially carries boredom and negative effects on teachers' psychology. This study investigates the effects of boredom on teachers' psychological disorders during online learning. This correlational study used an explanatory design, involving 113 teachers from different educational levels (junior, senior, and vocational schools) in Malang, Indonesia. The participants were selected through cluster random sampling technique. The data collection process was carried out using two standardized instruments, the DASS 21 (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale) and ABS-10 (Academic Boredom Scale). The obtained data were analyzed using correlation and linear regression analysis to examine the relationship and degree of contribution of predictor variable toward the dependent variable. The results indicate that boredom has a significant relationship with teachers' psychological disorders. The boredom toward the online learning routine is a predictor carrying significant contribution toward teachers' psychological disorders. The findings conclude that the psychological help and coping strategy enhancement to face boredom are essential for teachers.

**Keywords:** psychological effects; online learning; boredom; Covid-19

**Abstrak:** Kegiatan mengajar secara daring (dalam jaringan) yang dilakukan secara terus menerus berpotensi memunculkan kejenuhan pada guru dan berdampak negatif pada kesehatan psikologis mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hubungan kejenuhan terhadap gangguan psikologis yang dialami oleh guru selama pelaksanaan kegiatan pembelajaran daring. Penelitian korelasional dengan desain eksplanatori digunakan untuk menjawab tujuan penelitian. Seratus tiga belas guru dari tiga jenjang pendidikan yang berbeda (sekolah menengah pertama, sekolah menengah atas, dan sekolah menengah kejuruan) di kota dan kabupaten Malang, Indonesia dipilih menggunakan teknik *cluster random sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan dua instrument terstandar, yaitu *DASS 21 (Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale)* dan *ABS-10 (Academic Boredom Scale)*. Data yang telah terkumpul lantas dianalisis menggunakan analisis korelasi dan regresi linier untuk mengetahui hubungan dan besaran kontribusi dari variabel prediktor terhadap variabel dependen. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kejenuhan berhubungan signifikan dengan gangguan psikologis yang dialami oleh guru. Kejenuhan terhadap rutinitas selama kegiatan pembelajaran daring merupakan prediktor yang berkontribusi signifikan terhadap gangguan psikologis guru. Berdasar pada hasil analisis, penting bagi guru untuk mendapat bantuan psikologis dan meningkatkan keterampilan strategi coping yang baik untuk menanggulangi kejenuhan.

**Kata kunci:** dampak psikologis; pembelajaran daring; kejenuhan; Covid-19

## INTRODUCTION

As a strategy to adapt to and escape from the Covid-19 pandemic, the government instructs the implementation of new normal in all sectors (Bogliacino et al., 2021; Codagnone et al., 2021; Raghavan et al., 2021), including education (Gintings & Hermawan, 2020). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture has formulated a relevant learning curriculum, method, and model for the Covid-19 pandemic (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). This formulated policy inclines to be implemented in online and distanced learning.

The implementation of online learning carries positive and negative effects for the teachers, simultaneously. This online learning is a solution for the area that has implemented lockdown (Hew et al., 2020; Mukhtar et al., 2020). In online learning, students and teachers can access the learning activities from everywhere and at any time. Besides, the online learning material grows students' learning independence.

In addition, online learning also brings a number of issues. Lizana et al. (2021) reveals that teachers' mental health tends to decrease during a pandemic. The psychological issues investigated in that study covers teachers' anxiety, stress, loneliness, and well-being. Theoretically, psychological disorders occur due to the minimum face-to-face social interaction and the great amount of assignment carried out during the working from home (WFH) period, resulting in psychological disorder, physical burn out and work exhaustion (Lizana, et al., 2021). Another study signifies that social distancing, self-isolation, and lockdown during a pandemic may result in boredom (Boateng et al., 2021), since the repeating, monotone, and less meaningful routine during WFH results in excessive boredom for an individual (Martarelli, 2020). This boredom theoretically causes loneliness and general mental disorder (stress, anxiety, and depression) (Boateng et al., 2021).

Essentially, someone's boredom brings both positive and negative influences controlled by an individual. Someone with the ability to manage boredom, innovates new ideas and creativity to get away from their boredom (Mann & Cadman, 2014). In contrast, a person with no skills in managing boredom experiences psychological disorder (Yan et al., 2020). Boredom has been observed to be the most relevant stress trigger during the WFH period (Presti, et al., 2020). Yan et al.'s (2020) study indicates that improperly managed boredom causes various emotional distress, such as anxiety, depression, and fear.

Studies have confirmed that high boredom affects someone's performance (Abazari et al., 2020; van Hooff & van Hooft, 2017; Witteveen & Velthorst, 2020). Therefore, studies on teachers' boredom are necessary to be carried out since they have participated in online learning for a relatively long time. Thus, this study focuses on the correlation between teachers' boredom and psychological disorders.

This study seeks to identify the level of teachers' boredom and its effects on teachers' psychological health during online learning in a pandemic. As teachers are the learning facilitators for students' optimum task development, this study becomes essential. If the results of this study confirm that teachers experience academic boredom, distress, anxiety disorder, or depression, then curative and preventive means can be provided. Besides, this study is expected to give a general illustration and a new perspective on teachers' boredom and mental health during a pandemic situation.

## METHOD

This study adopted a correlational approach with an explanatory design. The research participants were 113 teachers, selected through cluster random sampling, representing three educational levels (junior, senior, and vocational schools) in Malang, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 45 public school teachers (16, 15, and 14 teachers from junior, senior, and vocational high schools, respectively) and 68 teachers from private schools (13, 34, and 21 teachers from junior, senior, and vocational high schools). The data were gathered through two instruments adopted in Indonesian, namely Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) 21 and Academic Boredom Scales (ABS-10). DASS 21 is a short version of DASS 42 developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), consisting of three variables (depression, anxiety, and stress), with a 0.86 reliability score (Alpha Cronbach). Meanwhile, Academic Boredom Scales (ABS-10) was developed by Acee et al., (2010), consisting of 10 items using two indicators (self-focused boredom and task-focused boredom) and nine scale range ("not at all" to "extremely"). The reliability level of each indicator is 0.90 and 0.91 (under-challenging, along with 0.78-0.80 and

0.83-0.86 (over-challenging). The prepared instruments were randomly disseminated through Google Form and Whatsapp groups of teachers from junior, senior, and vocational high schools in Malang. The teachers were given one month to fill the instruments. After one month, the obtained data were used as the research participants. The gathered data were analyzed using linear regression analysis to investigate the relationship and contribution of boredom toward teachers' psychology.

## RESULTS

Data presented in Table 1 shows that, generally, the teachers implementing online learning during the pandemic experience boredom categorized as a medium, high anxiety, medium stress, and medium depression ( $M_{\text{boredom}} = 29.8$ ,  $M_{\text{depression}} = 20.9$ ,  $M_{\text{anxiety}} = 15.5$ , and  $M_{\text{stress}} = 18.6$ ). The categorization was carried out following the manual for DASS 21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

**Table 1. Teachers' Demographic Data and Psychological Condition**

School Level	School Status		Total	Boredom		Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
	Public	Private		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Junior	16	13	29								
High	15	34	49	29.8	7.7	20.9	11.7	15.5	11.4	18.6	11.6
Vocational	14	21	35								
Total	45	68	113	Moderate		Moderate		Severe		Moderate	

Before further analysis was carried out, data normality and linearity tests were carried out as the initial prerequisite statistical test. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, presented in Table 2, indicate that the data are normally distributed with each significant value more than 0.05. Meanwhile, the results of the linearity test indicate no deviation toward the linearity between variables, resulting in a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Therefore, the analysis on boredom's relationship and contribution toward teachers' psychological disorders can be carried out.

**Table 2. Inferential Analysis of the Prerequisite Test**

Variable	Normality Test Data			Linearity Test		
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Deviation from Linearity		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	F	df	Sig.
Boredom*Depression	0.17	113	0.08	2.85	14	0.10
Boredom*Anxiety	0.12	113	0.09	3.93	14	0.14
Boredom*Stress	0.14	113	0.15	2.42	14	0.13

The relationship between online learning boredom and teachers' psychological disorders is presented in the results of correlation and regression analysis shown in Tables 3 and 4. In Table 3, Sig. \* ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\* ( $p < 0.001$ ), and in Table 4, predictor: task boredom and life boredom; dependent: depression, anxiety and stress; \* ( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\* ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results of correlation analysis presented in Table 3 show that the daily routine boredom has positive and significant relationship toward the teachers psychological disorder (depression, anxiety, and stress) ( $r_{\text{depression}} = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r_{\text{anxiety}} = 0.30$ , and  $r_{\text{stress}} = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively).

The boredom toward daily assignments only has positive and significant correlation toward anxiety and stress, with no positive relationship with depression ( $r_{\text{anxiety}} = 0.20$ ,  $r_{\text{stress}} = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $r_{\text{depression}} = 0.07$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Even if boredom has a feeble relationship with other psychological disorders, but it has a significant and positive correlation with three variables, as shown in Table 3. This finding illustrates increasing teachers' boredom toward the daily task and life, potentially increases their psychological disorders.

**Table 3. Correlation on Boredom, Depression, Anxiety, and Stress**

	Depression	Anxiety	Stress	Boredom	Task Boredom	Life Boredom
Depression	-					
Anxiety	0.89**	-				
Stress	0.94**	0.93**	-			
Boredom	0.15	0.20*	0.23*	-		
Task Boredom	0.07	0.20*	0.19*	0.35**	-	
Life Boredom	0.19*	0.30**	0.30**	0.36**	0.75**	-

**Table 4. Regression Model and Coefficient of Boredom, Depression, Anxiety, and Stress**

Simultaneous Summary Model (Task Boredom*Life Boredom)						
	Depression			Anxiety		Stress
R	0.22			0.31		0.30
R <sup>2</sup>	0.05			0.10		0.10
F	2.84			5.80**		5.81**
Std. Error	11.6			10.96		11.1
Partial Summary Model						
Variable	Task Boredom			Life Boredom		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Depression	0.07	0.004	0.48*	0.19	0.04	2.02*
Anxiety	0.20	0.040	4.56*	0.30	0.09	11.40**
Stress	0.19	0.040	4.17*	0.30	0.09	11.26**
Partial Coefficient						
Variable	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Task Boredom	-0.18	-1.25	-0.07	-0.53	-0.09	-0.65
Life Boredom	0.32	2.28*	0.36	2.60*	0.37	2.69**

A relatively low positive and significant relationship between task boredom toward stress and anxiety, as well as routine boredom toward depression, anxiety, and stress, then the investigation on the contribution of boredom toward teachers' boredom is essential. The results of statistic analysis shown in Table 4, show that tasks and routine boredom, simultaneously have significant contributions only toward anxiety and stress ( $F_{\text{depression}} = 2.84$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $F_{\text{anxiety}} = 5.80$ , and  $F_{\text{stress}} = 5.81$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , simultaneously). The results indicate that boredom, as the predictor variable, significantly predicts the appearance of psychological disorders (stress and anxiety).

In addition, the contribution of each psychological disorder variable can be determined from the value of  $R^2$ . Data shown in Table 4 indicate that boredom predicts teachers' psychological disorders by 5, 10, and 10% for  $R^2_{\text{depression}} = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{\text{anxiety}} = 0.10$ , and  $R^2_{\text{stress}} = 0.10$ , respectively. It signifies the presence of other variables that probably also contribute greater toward the emergence of psychological disorder.

Interestingly, the partial effects of task and routine boredom toward teachers' psychological disorders are different. Routine boredom during online learning is observed to be the predictor of teachers' psychological disorders. Referring to the results of partial coefficient statistical analysis presented in Table 4, the boredom of routine significantly affects teachers' psychological disorder ( $t_{\text{depression}} = 2.28$ ,  $t_{\text{anxiety}} = 2.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and  $t_{\text{stress}} = 2.69$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), compared to the boredom of task ( $t_{\text{depression}} = -1.25$ ,  $t_{\text{anxiety}} = -0.53$ , and  $t_{\text{stress}} = -0.65$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the boredom of daily routine is a significant predictor of teachers' psychological disorders.

## DISCUSSION

The research results suggest that boredom carries an unsteady correlation and low contribution toward the teachers' psychological disorders, different from studies carried out by Yan, Gan, Ding, Wu, and Duan (2021). Boredom essentially worsens the existing distress, but the findings in this study do not fully support the study from Yan, Gan, Ding, Wu, and Duan (2021). It possibly occurs due to the presence of other variables that decrease the negative effects of the participants' boredom. The allegedly variable is coping skills. Theoretically, great coping skills affect someone's mental health in resolving an issue (Wood & Bhatnagar, 2015; Yan et al., 2021). Szabó, Pukánszky, and Kemény (2020) also describe that individuals with excellent coping skills can suppress the negative effects of psychological disorders. Thus, investigation of these coping skills is essential.

In addition, another variable that possibly carries a greater effect than boredom on psychological disorders is economic hardship (Witteveen & Velthorst, 2020). Besides, the anxiety of the future life can also trigger psychological disorders (Höge et al., 2015; Robichaud & Dugas, 2015). The appeared psychological disorder can get worsen by the presence of other supporting variables, such as losing a job, decreasing working performance, wedding status, age, gender, or migration and urbanization status (Bierman et al., 2021; Witteveen & Velthorst, 2020). These problems are presumed to carry greater effects on someone's psychological health during a pandemic.

Aside from economic hardship, the apprehension on the self and family health can also result in psychological disorders (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020). As suggested by the results of descriptive statistic analysis, the highest psychological disorder faced by the participants is anxiety. The anxiety and apprehension of losing their closest people disrupt the individual psychological homeostasis (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020). The psychological disorders are marked by excessive anxiety and fears with exact reason or not (Robichaud & Dugas, 2015). Excessive anxiety can result in more severe psychological disorders, such as generalized anxiety disorder (Huang & Zhao, 2020; Robichaud & Dugas, 2015). These findings signify that investigation on these variables should be carried out.

The results of the statistical analysis also show that boredom in daily activities possesses greater effects on psychological disorders than academic boredom. The results signify that the participants' psychological disorder during the Covid-19 pandemic closely correlates with the workload, caused by losing the job or WFH situation (Witteveen & Velthorst, 2020). The teachers' boredom appears since they have to work from home for a long time after they are habituated with dense activities at schools (Allen et al., 2020). Non properly controlled boredom can be the stressor for more severe psychological disorders, such as loneliness, high anxiety, and distress (Boateng et al., 2021; Witteveen & Velthorst, 2020). Therefore, boredom management skills is essential because it helps individuals to properly control their boredom, resulting in lower stress level.

One of the means to control boredom is by a more meaningful variety of daily activities (Ellen et al., 2021; Martarelli, 2020). The transformation toward more meaningful activities has been confirmed to be one of the effective coping mechanisms in controlling boredom and maintaining psychological health (Cohen et al., 2020; Ellen et al., 2021). If someone feels that their daily activities are boring then their body needs of activity change (Martarelli, 2020). Exercising, practicing their hobby, or playing with family can be alternative activities (Mason, 2013). Martarelli (2020) explains that meaningful activities generate happiness.

In addition to independent boredom management, individuals can consult their boredom with school counselors. The teachers can also carry out self-assessment on their boredom, guided by the school counselors. Aside from the results, psychological services should be provided (Peng et al., 2020). The school counselor can provide curative services, such as counseling on the moderate and high boredom, and preventive services, such as psychoeducation on the low and normal boredom. These psychological services are essential to enhance the teachers' psychological health and maintain their performance in education.

## CONCLUSION

Generally, the results of this study offer an alternative perspective on the effects of teachers' boredom and its contribution toward their psychological disorders during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this study, boredom is observed to have an insignificant correlation and a low contribution with teachers'

psychological disorders, different from other previous studies. Therefore, this study can be a reference for future studies on relevant topics. Future studies can investigate the relationship between economic hardship on teachers' psychological health. Second, they can focus on a wider range of variables, potentially affects teachers' psychological health in Indonesia. Third, future researchers can investigate the direct and indirect relationship between teachers' coping skills and their psychological disorders during Covid-19 pandemic.

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