

## **STUDENTS' INTEREST IN ONLINE-BASED THEMATIC LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research was motivated by the existence of a circular letter from the Minister of Education and Culture regarding the implementation of education policies during the spread of COVID-19, making face-to-face learning in schools stopped and switching to online learning. The purpose of this study was to determine the online learning practices applied by the teacher in thematic learning of MI AU students in Bogor Regency, as well as to determine students' interest in online thematic learning. The object of this research was 65 people, both men and women. The method used in this research is descriptive quantitative method. The data collection technique was carried out using a questionnaire in which the researcher arranged questions related to students' interest in online thematic learning. Furthermore, the questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of research on students' interest in online-based thematic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at MI AU showed student interest with a percentage of 76.22% of the 22 statement items given to students through a questionnaire. The learning practice uses the WhatsApp group application because the application is easy to use by parents. Thus, students' interest in online-based thematic learning shows a very high interest.

**Keywords:** student interest; thematic learning; online

### **INTRODUCTION**

Thematic learning with fun is one of the important efforts to stimulate student learning such as the use of information technology, namely computers or gadgets that are interconnected between students and teachers so that the learning and teaching process can run well. Aims to meet educational standards, and is expected to be able to help learning during the Covid-19 period. Learning changes without any prior preparation. Where teachers play a direct role in the education of students in the classroom, now parents must take over the responsibility of teachers in schools to supervise children in learning at home. Distance learning media have also been tried and used in every school. Facilities that can support *online* learning today include *Google Classroom*, *Google Forms*, *WhatsApp Groups*, and other media. After educators can master online learning, various models and learning methods will be created that has never been done by educators.

The previous studies related to thematic learning during the pandemic have been carried out by several researchers. Researcher A (Mustakim, 2020) researched the "Effectiveness of Online Learning Using *Online* Media During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Mathematics Subjects ". The results of the study describe students assessing mathematics learning using *online* media as very effective (23.3%), most of them assessing it as effective (46.7%), and assessing it as average (20%). Although there are also students who consider online learning to be ineffective (10%), and absolutely none (0%) who consider it very

effective. Finally, to improve the quality of online mathematics learning during the covid-19 pandemic, educators must fulfill ten respondents' suggestions, there are (1) learning is carried out through *video calls*; (2) the provision of concise learning materials; (3) minimize sending material in the form of videos to save quota; (4) the selection of material in the video must be based on the criteria of language that is easy to understand; (5) continue to provide material before the assignment; (6) giving varied and different questions for each student; (7) the assignment must include how it works; (8) assigning assignments according to the lesson schedule; (9) remind students if there is an assignment given; and (10) reduced tasks.

Researcher B (Parameswara & Dewi, 2021) researched the "Effectiveness of Users of Training and Assignment Methods in Online Learning During the Pandemic Period on Civic Education Subjects in Elementary Schools". The results showed that the method of training and assignment in distance learning during the pandemic in civic education subjects in elementary schools was effective. This can be seen from the data in the discussion showing that online or distance learning using training methods and assignments carried out during the pandemic can improve student learning outcomes in Civic Education subjects. Researcher C (Yulia & Putra, 2020) researched the "Students' Difficulties in Learning Mathematics Online". The results of this study found that there are still many difficulties for students in learning mathematics online but also many benefits, one of which is facilitating student access to the materials that have been provided, students can also share information and can access learning materials at any time until repeatedly.

Researcher D (Hidayat, et al , 2021 researched the "Efforts to Improve Online Learning for Civic Education Subjects in Islamic Primary School". The results showed that using the method of *mind mapping* and the STAD type cooperative model could improve learning outcomes as well as student creativity in Civic Education learning. With *mind mapping* can facilitate the understanding of learners in a learning note with creative, effective, and efficient in teaching civics subjects, especially civic education learning model is closely related to the improvement of children's creativity. Meanwhile, STAD should be grouped not randomly but according to the zoning of their respective houses. So, whether there is a pandemic or not, it doesn't really affect the learning that is carried out.

Researcher E (Nugraha, et al, 2020) researched the "Study of the Effect of Online Learning on Mathematics Learning Outcomes for Grade IV". The results of this study can be concluded that there is an effect of using online *learning* media on the mathematics learning outcomes of fourth-grade. The average value of the *post-test* shows that the experimental class is higher than the control class, which is 80.83 for the experimental class and 64.14 for the control class. Research F (Safitri & Nugraheni, 2020) researched "The Impact of Covid-19 on the Online Learning Process in Elementary Schools". The results of the study used documentation techniques by documenting the learning carried out during the teaching practice at SDN Mangkang Kulon 01 took place. Involving 26 students in class II. In learning, the learning media used are *youtube* videos made by the teacher as well as cognitive and psychomotor assessments through the *google form*.

Research G (Silalahi & Hartono, 2020) entitled "Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Learning Mathematics during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Case Studies on Prima Mandiri Integrated Islamic Elementary School Students". The results of the study concluded that students had difficulty understanding the concept of flat shapes. The difficulties experienced by students can be grouped into several types, namely visual perception abnormalities, spatial relationship disorders, and visual-motor associations. Therefore, in this pandemic situation, the active role between schools and parents is very important considering the age of students still in dire need of optimal supervision in using *gadgets* to support the online learning process. Research H (Sutrisno & Afsari, 2020) entitled "The Effectiveness of Using Video Media in Online Learning Science Class V SD Negeri 03 Munggur, Mojogedang District,

Karanganyar Regency for the 2019/2020 Academic Year". The results obtained from the questionnaire on students' interest in video media get the 'very good' category with an average rating *scale* on the *Likert scale* with an average answer percentage of 82%. The teacher also explained that the student's score after using video media in learning was obtained an average of 83.75 which was considered to have exceeded the specified minimum criteria of mastery learning (KKM). Research I (Jayul & Irwanto, 2020) entitled "Online Learning Models as an Alternative for Physical Education Learning Activities During the Covid-19 Pandemic". The results of the research are not all online learning methods can be used in the physical education learning process related to the practical aspects of psychomotor (motion). The method that has a video application can be used in the physical education learning process.

Research J (Lestari, et al, 2021) entitled "Application Online Learning of *Discovery Learning* model to Improve Social Sciences Learning Outcomes in Elementary Schools". The results of the study can be seen from the completeness of student learning outcomes which were initially in the pre-cycle of 42.3%. The first cycle of learning increased with a level of completeness of 65.4%. Then it increased again in the second cycle to 92.3% of all students. In contrast to previous studies, our research focuses on "Students' Interest in Online-Based Thematic Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period". The purpose of the study was to find out the online learning practices applied by teachers in thematic learning at MI AU Bogor Regency and to find out students' interest in online-based thematic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at MI AU Bogor Regency.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is the descriptive type quantitative method. This method is used to examine the population or sample, such as data obtained from a population sample and then analyzed by descriptive statistical methods. The data presented from descriptive statistics are in the form of exposure to actual state data or facts from the population results obtained by researchers. Descriptive statistical data is also not used to test a hypothesis. The research variable used is a single (independent) variable without comparing or connecting one variable to another. The research variable is students' interest in online-based thematic learning during the covid-19 pandemic.

Students studied at MI AU Bogor Regency with research subjects as many as 187 students, which were taken randomly. The sampling technique taken by the researcher is Proportional Random Sampling. Where proportional random sampling according to Suharsimi is the method used in selecting samples from the number of subjects studied and not the same. Therefore, to obtain a representative sample of taking subjects from each region. The research sample is guided by Suharsimi Arikunto who suggests that if the subject is less than 100 students, it is better to take all of them so that the research is a population study (Arikunto, 2006).

If the subject is large or more than a hundred students can use this sample. Samples taken between 10% - 15% to 20% -25% or even more than 25% of the total population. Based on the profile of the MI AU school in Bogor Regency, it is known that the number of students from grade 1 to grade 6 is 187 students. Based on the sampling procedure above, the sample to be taken is  $25\% \times 187 \text{ students} = 46$ . So the number of samples is 46 students. Thus, the researchers took 46 students from the MI AU class population, as representatives of the research subjects using proportional random sampling (Arikunto, 2006).

The data collection techniques used by researchers are: *first*, a questionnaire or questionnaire is a data collection technique carried out by giving a set of written statements or questions to respondents to answer them (Sugiyono, 2015). In terms of answering it using a direct questionnaire, it is a questionnaire sent and filled out directly by the respondent. In terms of how to answer using a closed questionnaire, it is a questionnaire that is prepared by

providing complete answer choices, so that the respondent immediately fills in by placing a check mark (√) on the answer to be selected.

Using a match-list or *check list* is a series of short questions where the respondent only needs to match by marking the check list (√) in the place provided by the researcher. In this study, the researcher took the questionnaire directly through the *google form* which was filled in directly by the correspondent and the closed questionnaire had an answer, so that the respondent just had to put a mark *check list* (√) for the choice he had determined. This questionnaire was given to students of MI AU Bogor Regency. The indicators for the students' interest questionnaire are as follows:

**Table 1. Students' Interest Questionnaire Grid**

Indicator	Description
1. Feelings of Pleasure	a. Happy to Participate in Online-Based Thematic Learning
	b. Student Opinion About Online Thematic Learning
2. Students' Interest	a. Enthusiasm in Following Online Thematic Learning
	b. Not Delaying the Thematic Learning Task From Teachers Even Online
3. Attention	a. Attention When Following Online Thematic Learning
	b. Desire in Online-Based Thematic Learning
4. Student Involvement	a. Actively Communicating in Online-Based Thematic Learning
	b. Active in Online-Based Thematic Learning

To determine the answer to this questionnaire, the researcher used a *Likert scale*. *Likert scale* is a type of scale used to measure attitudes, interests, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group. *The Likert scale* is stated in the form of a statement to be assessed by the respondent, whether the statement is supported or rejected. The statements proposed in this study are divided into two categories, are positive and negative categories. Statements submitted either on positive or negative statements are stated on the subjects Agree (S), Strongly Agree (SS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The four subjects of this category can be stated on each item score, namely (Riduwan, 2011).

*Second*, an *interview* is a conversation between two or more people between the resource person and the interviewer. The goal is to get accurate and reliable information from the sources by asking some questions. Interviews can be used to assess learning outcomes and processes. The advantage of interviews is that they can be in direct contact with students or teachers so that they can express answers more freely and in-depth (Sudjana, 2017). And *third*, the study of documentation is a technique of collecting data by distributing documents to obtain data or information related to the problems discussed. Documentation studies such as pictures or photos, school biodata, and others.

The data analysis technique used by the researcher is also descriptive qualification with a percentage. Researchers in addition to explaining the data, but also the results of the questionnaire on the percentages obtained to measure the extent to which students want to learn about students' interest in online-based thematic learning during the covid-19 pandemic. Data collection is done by adding up each answer and looking for the percentage of answers that have been filled in by students and divided by the number of ideal scores and just multiplied by 100. To find out the results of the filling that has been filled out by MI AU Bogor Regency students about student' interest in thematic learning during this pandemic, using the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Meaning:

P : student percentage value

F : number of answer (score obtained)

N : number of ideal score

(Ramadhan, et al, 2020)

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Online Thematic Learning Process

Thematic learning planning during the COVID-19 period 19 MI AU Bogor Regency from the results of interviews with low-grade thematic teachers named AW and high-grade teachers named VA obtained information that teachers prepare learning objectives and learning materials before studying the next day. Not only online thematic learning is prepared, but other learning as well. The material given to students is following the online learning lesson plans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, of course, some obstacles occur to teachers and students, that the interaction of students with teachers online so that the learning provided becomes less lively and there is no reciprocity. Submission of the material will also be difficult to understand immediately if there is a material that is not understood. The learning process for low and high grades online is like face-to-face learning in general, only this is through online. such as before learning begins and after learning the first must read the prayer first, the second habituation (reading the Qur'an and praying dhuha), the third giving today's material, and the last assignment. The difference that is felt when online learning and face-to-face is very noticeable. Because face-to-face learning better understands the condition of students directly in learning than online thematic learning, where teachers do not know the condition of children in learning, whether they are ready to learn or not.

The methods and media used in online thematic learning vary widely, such as face-to-face learning but are only applied online in both high and low classes. Applications used in online thematic learning for high and low-grade classes only use the *WhatsApp group* application, not using other applications, because the use of the *WhatsApp* application is easy for parents to use. The lessons that must be prepared for high and low grades are reading materials, lesson plans, and the learning process. The *WhatsApp* application is less effective for use in online thematic learning for both low and high grades because not all have mobile phones, sometimes some do not have a quota. The use of book sources and teaching materials for high and low grades uses textbooks, worksheets. Teaching materials can be taken from lesson plans or other sources that support learning. Student learning outcomes in thematic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic have decreased, both in high and low grades. The attitude of students in online thematic learning is very enthusiastic, both in the low and high classes.

### 2. Students' Interest in Online-Based Thematic Learning

#### a. Respondents Based on Gender

Respondents in this study were MI AU as many as 27 people (41.53%) were men, and 38 people (58.46%) were women. The respondents based on gender can be seen in the figure below:

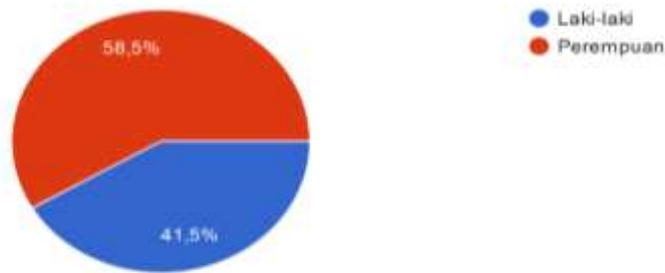


Figure 1. Respondents by Gender

b. Respondents Based on Class

The results showed that based on class consisted of various classes. The distribution is 15 people (23.1%) class 6, 16 people (24.6%) class 5, 19 people (29.2%) class 4, 15 people (23.1%) class 3. Respondents by class can be seen in the figure below:

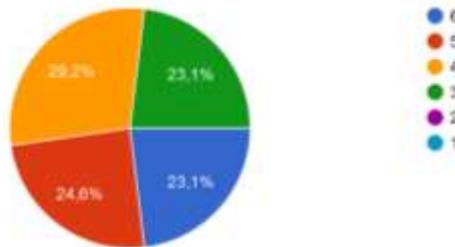


Figure 2. Respondents by Class

Table 2. Results of data item statements number 1 to number 22

No	Description	Answers				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	question number 1	70,8%				
2	question number 2		49,2%			
3	question number 3		43,1%			
4	question number 4		41,5%			
5	question number 5	43,1%				
6	question number 6	43,1%				
7	question number 7	38,5%	38,5%			
8	question number 8	40,0%				
9	question number 9	40,0%				
10	question number 10	30,8%				
11	question number 11		36,9%			
12	question number 12		40,0%			
13	question number 13		41,5%			
14	question number 14	36,9%				
15	question number 15	30,8%				
16	question number 16	32,3%				

17	question number 17		46,2%			
18	question number 18				26,2%	
19	question number 19		40,0%			
20	question number 20		43,1%			
21	question number 21	41,5%				
22	question number 22	43,1%				

Students' interest in online thematic learning during the covid-19 pandemic. The most frequently chosen answers were the answers "Strongly Agree" and "Agree". the highest was chosen from several statement items, namely item number 1 about feeling happy about online thematic learning even though from home alone, namely 70.8% chose the answer strongly agree. Item number 2 is about feeling very excited to participate in online thematic learning of their interests 49.2% chose the answer to agree. Item number 3 is happy to use the online method in thematic learning because it is easy for interest, 43.1% choose the answer to agree. Item number 4 about students are not easily bored when learning thematic online, 41.5% of those who choose the answer to agree.

Item number 5 is that students learn thematics online at home can be effective by utilizing information technology, their interests are 43.1% choosing the answer strongly agree. Item number 6 about *online* thematic learning in my opinion is easy to use and simple in operation, 43.1% of those who choose the answer strongly agree. Item number 7 is in *online* thematic learning, *there are* many new things that students have never gotten before, 38.5% of those who choose the answer strongly agree and agree. Item number 8 about the task given by the teacher makes students more interested in *online* thematic learning, 40.0% of interest chooses the answer strongly agrees. Item number 9 about teachers can provide information and facilitate it in *online* thematic learning activities 40.0% interest in choosing the answer strongly agree.

Item number 10 is if you often do thematic learning assignments online, it will be easier to understand the material, 30.8% of the interest choose the answer to agree. Item number 11 about students' attention is very large in online thematic learning, 40.0% of them choose the answer to agree. Item number 12, that is in online thematic learning, the teacher changes the learning material to be more interesting so that it can attract the attention of students whose interest is 40.0% choosing the answer to agree. Item number 13 about studying diligently is very useful for life, therefore *online*-based thematic learning attracts the attention of students, 41.5% of them chose the answer to agree. Item number 14, with *online* learning, I believe it will add insight to students' interest in thematic learning 36.9% chose the answer strongly agree.

Item number 15 is that although *online* thematic learning students believe it can make it easier to do the exam, 30.8% choose the answer strongly agree. Item number 16 about students will ask the teacher through *online* media when there is something that students do not understand when the thematic learning takes place, 32.3% of them choose the answer strongly agree. Item number 17 is that students can develop their communication skills, as a result of online-based thematic learning, 46.2% of them choose the answer to agree. Item number 19 about curiosity to the *online* thematic learning fosters the learning interest on students, 40.0% of them choose the answer to agree. Item number 20 is that students can grow their online-based thematic learning motivation, their interest is 43.1% choosing the answer to agree.

Item number 21 is to increase students' knowledge, students must be diligent in seeking information about thematic learning by utilizing *online* media, ask for it 41.5% chose the answer strongly agree. Item number 22 about students being able to understand well the

thematic *online* learning objectives from the material conveyed their interests 43.1% chose the answer strongly agree. There is also one question that chooses the answer “Disagree”, that is Item number 18, in other words in *online* thematic learning students find it easier to communicate online than face-to-face communication. 26.2% of those who choose the answer do not agree. The table of students' interests in online thematic learning at MI AU is as follows:

**Table 3. Data on students' interest in thematic learning**

No	Description	Acquisition
1	Highest Score	108
2	Lowest	56
3	Maximum Score	110
4	Average Value	76,22%
5	Total Student	65

In the table above, it can be seen that the percentage of student interest in online-based thematic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at MI AU was 76.22%. The students' interest in online-based thematic learning obtained a percentage of 76.22%. Interest is a feeling of liking for an activity or something that grows in students without any coercion (Slameto, 2018). Supported by the results of the previous study *first*, by Sobron, Bayu, Rani, and Meidawati (Sobron, et al, 2019) entitled "Student Perceptions in the Study of the Effect of Online *Learning* in Science Learning Interest". The results showed that the average score of students' interest was 2.78 with a percentage of 69.50% including the agreed category. In this aspect, it can be seen that online *learning* can increase students' interest in learning, especially in science learning. *Second*, research by Rapita Tanjung, Tamin Ritonga, Eva Yanti Siregar (Tanjung, et al, 2021) entitled "Analysis of Students' Interest in Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Ujung Batu Barus Village". The results showed 1) based on a questionnaire, 80% of students answered that they were not interested in *online* learning and 2) based on interviews, students gave reasons including not having an *android*, network which is not smooth and cannot afford to buy internet quota. It was concluded that 8 out of 10 students were not interested in *online* learning. *Third*, research by Metha E. Br. Simamora, and Wiputra Cendana (Simamora & Cendana, 2021) entitled "Use of Interactive Slide Media to Attract Elementary School Students' Interest in Online Learning". The results of the study showed that the slide media was effectively used to attract elementary school students' interest in learning. The effectiveness of the slide media can be validated by experts so that it can be a learning medium for elementary school students in online learning.

*Fourth*, research by Gracia F. Singkoh, Roos MS Tuerah, and Jeane Mangantangan (Singkoh, et al, 2021) entitled "The Role of Teachers in Increasing Students' Interest in Online Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period at St. Catholic Elementary School Antonius Kali". The results of this study in the era of the covid-19 pandemic affect the learning process, learning that is usually carried out in person is now being shifted to online learning. The role of a teacher in implementing online learning is the teacher's role as a motivator, mediator, and evaluator. There are several obstacles in the online learning process, that is the lack of internet costs (quota), the internet network is not smooth, not all students have *cellphones* and there are still many parents who are busy working. The teacher's role in increasing student interest in online learning is to provide appropriate learning methods such as providing animated learning videos and learning videos that are made in such a way as to use *power points* that are interesting and creative so that there is student interest in learning. *Fifth*, research by Rizki Rahayu Dalimunthe, Risma Delima Harahap, and Dahrul Aman Harahap (Dalimunthe, et al, 2021) entitled "Analysis of Primary School Students' Interest in

Science Subjects during the Covid-19 Pandemic". The results of research that have been carried out with four indicators obtained are feelings of pleasure towards science subjects by 89.74%, student attention to teachers with online methods (*zoom, google meet, WhatsApp group* discussions, assignments, and others) of 94.87% 89.74% of students enthusiastically participated in science subjects during the covid-19 pandemic. And lastly, science learning resources were 89.74%. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the interest of grade VI students at the Mis Al Washiliyah elementary school in Padang Matinggi in integrated science subjects during the covid-19 pandemic was very high. *Sixth*, research by Rika Kurnia Sari and Nyoto Harjono (Sari & Harjono, 2021) entitled "Development of based Interactive Learning Media *Articulate Storyline*- Thematic Learning Interest of Grade 4 Elementary School Students". The results obtained that interactive media based on *Articulate Storyline* can be said to be feasible with the results of material expert testing of 81% which is categorized as very good and from media experts 78% which can be categorized as good. Meanwhile, from the results of the student questionnaire responses, the results of the average validity of  $r_{\text{calculate}}$  the level of validation of the student learning interest questionnaire of 0.598, then the statement is declared valid. and for the reliability results as much as 0.925 is included in the very good category. From the tests that have been carried out, this-based interactive media *Articulate Storyline* is suitable to be used to help students to grow interested in participating in learning activities.

*Seventh*, research by Ria Yunitasari and Umi Hanifah (Yunitasari & Hanifah, 2020) entitled "The Effect of Online Learning on Students' Interest in Learning During the Covid-19 Period". The results showed that online learning during the covid-19 pandemic greatly affected students' interest in learning, students felt bored because they did not meet their friends and teachers directly. *Eighth* research by Fifi Ari Susanti (2020) entitled "Efforts to Improve Learning Outcomes and Interest in Learning Through Models *Examples Non Examples* in Online Learning for Fourth Grade Students at SD Negeri Keblukan for the 2020/2021 Academic Year". The results of the study can be seen that the value of students increases from cycle I to cycle II both the average value, classical completeness, student mastery, and student data that is complete or incomplete. The average value in the first cycle is 63.56 and the second cycle is 83.9. While the percentage of learning completeness in the first cycle is 41% to 83% in the second cycle and increased in the third cycle to 100%. The results of student interest in the first cycle of 49.78% increased in the second cycle of 89.78% and increased again in the third cycle to 93.5% so that it can be interpreted that online learning using models *examples non examples* can increase results and interest student learning.

The results of previous studies mostly explain that online learning can increase student interest. There are 2 presentations from the results of previous research that are not interested in online learning. Previous researchers have similarities with researchers, namely examining student interest in online learning, but what distinguishes previous research is researching interest in learning with the development of interactive learning media based on *articulate storylines*, student interest in online science learning, as well as improving learning outcomes and interest in learning through models *examples non examples* on online learning. In addition, researchers examined students' interest in online-based thematic learning and it can be concluded that online learning can increase students' interest in learning.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion of student interest in online thematic learning during the covid-19 pandemic, it can be concluded that the online learning process carried out by MI AU uses the *WhatsApp group* application, making it easier for parents to communicate with teachers. And there are still many parents who do not understand the use of

other students, so that learning only uses the *WhatsApp group* application. The learning process is carried out by low and high class online: *first*, reading prayers before and after studying. *Second*, student absenteeism and student readiness. *Third*, habituation (reading the Qur'an and praying dhuha). *Fourth*, giving materials and finally giving assignments, and collecting assignments can be sent via photos. As for the students' interest online-based thematic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at MI AU, Bogor Regency, the highest score was obtained with a percentage of 76.22%. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire given to students. The percentage of 22 statement items from the questionnaire data, the highest value is item number 1 with a percentage value of 70.8% about online-based thematic learning with pleasure even though learning from home. And the acquisition of the lowest percentage score is item number 18 with a score of 26.2% about *online* thematic learning, *it is easier to communicate through online media than face-to-face communication*. It can be concluded that the acquisition of a questionnaire on student interest in online-based thematic learning on item number 1 obtained the most scores answered with the answer "strongly agree".

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