

“Master Teacher” Transformative Learning Strategy in Digital Media: “Ruangguru” in Indonesia

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Abstract: Ruangguru is a digital media learning application created by a startup that understands Generation Z. It provides teaching materials for elementary, junior high, and high school children that can be accessed via Android, iOS, and PC (Windows and macOS), as part of their daily use. This breakthrough was made to maintain school-aged children's interest and motivation to learn, as Ruangguru carries the tagline: Belajar Jadi Luar Biasa (Learning Becomes Extraordinary) through facilities such as videos, practice exercises, private lessons, as well as tryouts. The novelty in this study lies in the concept of "Master Teacher". Based on the observation and interviews conducted, Ruangguru uses the term "Master Teacher" to refer to the instructors, which raises an understanding of the quality instructors Ruangguru has. Therefore, the researchers intend to reveal the Master Teacher's learning strategy during the online learning process through digital media. The objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to explore the Master Teacher's learning strategy while preparing interesting digital media-based applications; 2) to identify Ruangguru's target audience 3) to explore reasons for using Master Teacher as part of the learning strategy. The research has used case study as a qualitative method to collect data through interviews, observation, and literature studies. The results of this study indicate that: 1) Ruangguru as a learning application provides content for various levels in an interesting way through videos, practice questions, private lessons, tryouts which can be accessed from a smartphone; 2) Ruangguru's content is adapted from the national curriculum and specifically designed by the best and experienced teachers. It is aimed at Generation Z ranging from elementary, junior high, to high school students; 3) Master Teacher (MT), as Ruangguru's strong point, serves as a representative in delivering digital media-based transformative learning strategies to Generation Z; 4) Transformative learning strategy is used by Ruangguru Master Teacher (MT) because it suits Generation Z's characteristics that like Ruangguru's digital media as a platform to deliver messages. Since the urgency and potential of learning through digital media are considered as an important finding in this research, it is recommended that the results of this study are utilized, disseminated, and developed in learning processes.

Keywords: Learning, Transformative, Master Teacher, Digital Media, Ruangguru

INTRODUCTION

This article describes research on digital media education aimed at Generation Z. As one of the largest educational technology start-up companies in Indonesia, Ruangguru shows the emergence of the digital learning culture. Within five years, this company works on missions to improve teacher's quality by providing working opportunities and income to Indonesian teachers. One of its missions, concerning the teaching method used by its teachers becomes an interesting area of in-depth study.

In this case, the novelty of the research lies in Ruangguru's "Master Teacher" concept. Based on observation, "Master Teacher" is used as a term to refer to its teachers. It emphasizes the quality of instructors that the company has. Therefore, the researchers would like to reveal its

transformative learning strategy used by those teachers during the online learning process through digital media.

Growing up in an environment connected to mobile technology and social media, Generation Z has unique characteristics. Thus, to meet the needs of this Generation, Ruangguru offers innovation through learning methods. As digital media technology develops, various educational start-up companies began to emerge, including Ruangguru. This phenomenon seems to raise academic interest, as various scientific research on Ruangguru has also increased. The researchers view that digital learning culture has emerged, which is a new learning method developed further by educational companies. The phenomenon shows change from face-to-face learning to learning through digital media, as an implementation of transformative learning.

Other research shows that transformative learning could also be conducted through "Digital Storytelling" (Skouge & Rao, 2009). It is considered as an important resource and powerful way to express experiences and explore ideas. By using stories, the teacher takes the students on a journey of discovery – introducing them to new things and life experiences. Skouge & Rao (2009) also illustrate how they have used "digital storytelling" to teach educational core values. They provide various forms of digital storytelling reports about their work with students throughout the Pacific region. They also demonstrate how digital stories compositions can be a valuable learning tool and empowering experience for students with special needs in various communities throughout the Pacific.

In addition, similar studies of Generation Z also shows the generation's preference for digital media-based learning. In their findings, Bassiouni et al. (2014) conducted a thematic review of Generation Z's characteristics accustomed to digital consumer culture. This multi-disciplined review discussed video games and Generation Z's habits through the perspective of 'active gamers'. This generation assumes greater autonomy as consumers, especially in using video games within the digital consumer culture (Bassiouni et al., 2014).

Based on the previous studies above, the author obtained the value of originality which differs from the studies mentioned previously. While previous studies reveal the characteristics of generation Z and different transformative learning methods, in this study, the two things are combined. Engaged in the field of education, Ruangguru has a unique learning method applied by the Master Teachers.

The transformative learning concept is a unique, abstract, and ideal learning theory with critical reflection as its peak (Mezirow, 2000). Within this concept, learning is understood as a process of giving new meaning to experiences to direct future actions. Mezirow (1991) conveys some elements that must be fulfilled while conducting the learning processes to reduce adult dependency on educators. Transformative learning also helps students understand ways of using learning resources, especially others' experiences. This includes the teachers as facilitators, and how to engage themselves interactively during the learning process. In this research, the efforts made by the "master teacher" during the transformative learning process are revealed.

Mezirow (1991) shows two changes in the transformative concept. The first change occurs in the instrumental domain (usually in the form of problem-solving or withdrawal of cause-effect relationships), whereas the second is communicative, involving understanding values, feelings, and morals while interacting with others. Since the urgency and potential of learning through Ruangguru's digital media are considered important in this research, case study method is used to reveal the research findings. Interviews, observation, and literature studies were used to collect the data presented in this research entitled "*Master Teacher Transformative Learning Strategy in Digital Media: Ruangguru in Indonesia*"

METHOD

In this research, case study method was used to explore the Master Teacher's learning strategy in Ruangguru digital media platform. As a pioneer of educational digital media, Ruangguru managed to attract public attention, especially Generation Z users. Several unique and interesting things need to be revealed in this study, in relation to the use of Master Teacher (MT). Therefore, case study was chosen as a method to meet the study objectives.

In case studies, there must be a unique point causing the research to be carried out (Creswell, 2012). The unique point of this case is seen in the research topic. Master Teacher (MT) only exists in Ruangguru digital media platform, which is not only a symbolic phrase intentionally used but also a representation of Ruangguru itself.

The data collection techniques, as stated by (Sugiyono, 2012) in qualitative research studies consist of:

1. Literature studies, by reviewing various literature research data on learning strategies, digital media, generation Z, as well as previous studies about Ruangguru.
2. Observation, by observing the Master Teacher's learning method through Ruangguru's website.
3. In-depth interview, conducted with the Master Teacher's manager, as well as Ruangguru's management and communication consultant. Interview guidelines were constructed based on the research data needed before contacting the interviewees.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research results reveal new findings regarding Ruangguru's learning method, especially conc the Master Teacher. Ruangguru's communication consultant, RD stated that Master Teacher is the representation of Ruangguru. Therefore, the more well-known the Master Teacher is, the more well-known Ruangguru will be. That statement shows the significance of the Master Teacher's existence in the digital media platform, as a unique feature of Ruangguru.

Referring to Rasiah's (2014) study, the use of digital technology through Facebook as well as outdoor team-based learning complements in-class face-to-face learning. The findings show a positive impact of team-based strategy toward students' experience and motivation. Facebook was perceived as an innovative and effective tool in a student-centered learning environment. It enriches their educational experiences, increases subject matter relevance, and encourages them to collaborate effectively with their peers and faculty. Meanwhile, from the educator's perspective, the use of Facebook in team-based pedagogical settings significantly improves the teaching and learning process because it enables educators to adjust to students' digital learning styles. Moreover, it also provides innovative ways to engage and motivate students in the learning process (Rasiah, 2014).

In contrast to the above research, the objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to explore the Master Teacher's learning strategy while preparing interesting digital media-based applications; 2) to identify Ruangguru's target audience; 3) to explore reasons for using Master Teacher as part of the learning strategy. The findings of this study are described below. First, the author found that Ruangguru as a learning application provides content for various levels in an interesting way through videos, practice questions, private lessons, tryouts which can be accessed from a smartphone. After conducting an observation, the content provided meets the needs of Generation Z, ranging from elementary, junior high to high school students.

Ruangguru's tagline informed through its digital media platform is "#BelajarJadiMudah (#LearningBecomesEasy) through fun missions containing videos, quizzes, and summaries!"

Thousands of learning videos, practice exercises, and summaries for each major subject from elementary, middle, and high school levels are ready for you to get good grades in daily tests, midterm, final exam, national exams, and even SBMPTN. In fact, Ruangguru has also been trusted by local governments throughout Indonesia, consisting of 326 city/district governments and 32 provincial governments. Moreover, the platform itself clearly shows 6,000,000, as the number of users felt helped by the Ruangguru. Figure 1 shows the Ruangguru platform.

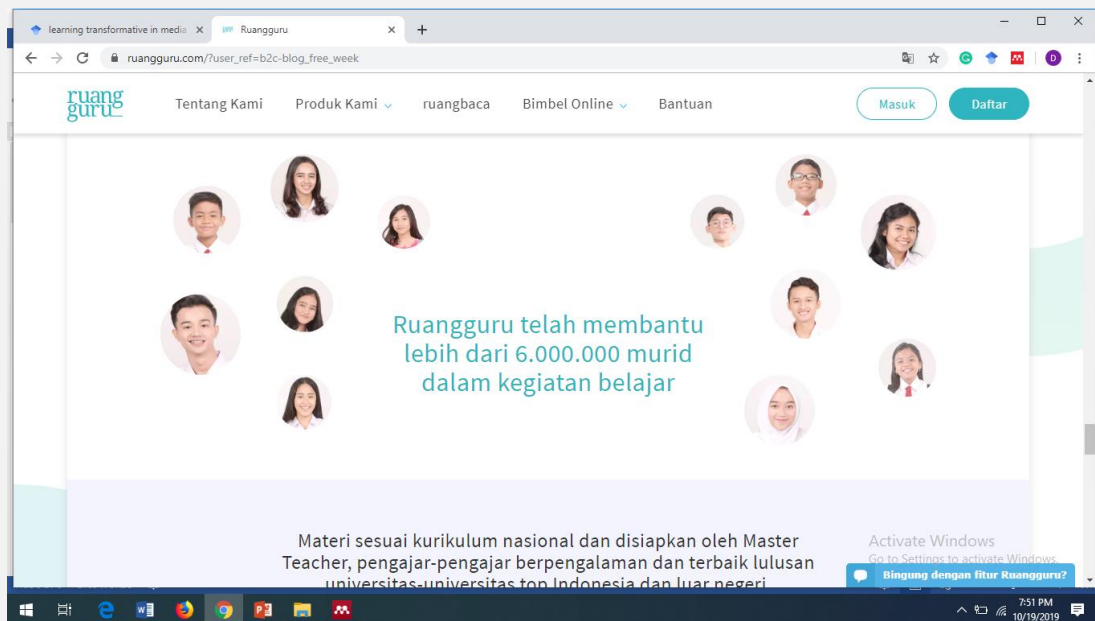


Figure 1. Ruangguru Platform

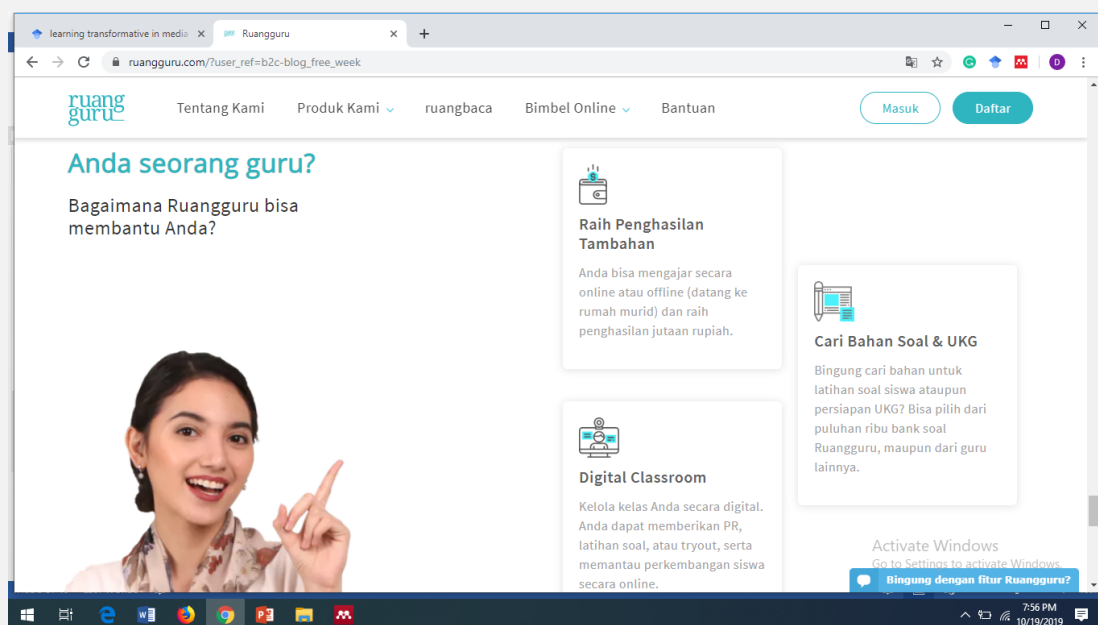


Figure 2. Ruangguru interface

From Figure 2 above, it could be seen that Ruangguru's platform is varied, interesting, and multifunctional. It also invites teachers to increase their income by joining Ruangguru. In addition, it also introduces online and digital classroom questions as well as exam materials. Learning rooms, digital bootcamps, course rooms, test rooms, and classrooms are products created to fulfill Generation Z's needs. Thus, the content provided is relevant to the generation's digital media learning strategy.

The second finding in this study is that Ruangguru's content is adapted from the national curriculum and specifically designed by the best and experienced teachers. It is aimed at Generation Z ranging from elementary school, junior high school to senior high school students. Based on observation, the platform revealed data about Ruangguru as the largest and most comprehensive technology company in Indonesia. It focuses on education-based services, with over 6 million users and over 150,000 teachers serving more than 100 subject areas.

Meanwhile, RD, as one of the interviewees, stated one of Ruangguru's interesting feature:

"Actually, Ruangguru has managed to steal public's attention because of the profile of its founders, which was founded in 2014 by Belva Devara and Iman Usman, both made it into the successful entrepreneurs under 30 in Forbes 30 under 30 for consumer technology in Asia. Belva Devara is a young man who can obtain a double degree at two best universities in the world, Stanford and Harvard, at a very young age."

The above statement also confirms that Ruangguru is indeed designed specifically for young people, the majority of generation Z, ranging from elementary, junior high, to senior high school students. This is also in line with Ruangguru's founder who is active in the field of education and has successfully completed his double degree studies at two of the best universities in the world.

Furthermore, the third finding in this study is Master Teacher (MT), as Ruangguru's strong point, serves as a representative in delivering digital media-based transformative learning strategies to generation Z. In this case, DO as Ruangguru's education consultant presents the interview results himself. According to him, the learning strategy chosen by Ruangguru was adjusted to the characteristics of Generation Z who like the culture of digital learning. It was also one of Ruangguru's strength, as he stated:

"First, the MT was chosen through a series of difficult selection [process]. They were given a number of difficult questions with a limited amount of time, demanded to be able to think fast too, even though the questions tested were related to their field of study. That's just for initial selection. Next, interview several times [sic], starting from HRD, users, and others. It's still related to the test phase."

From the statement above, RD emphasized that the Master Teachers are qualified people chosen through a tight selection process. This also implies that the selection process represents "Master Teacher" as qualified, competent, and experienced teachers in their field.

Figure 3 shows one of the Master Teacher who is a representation of Ruangguru himself. In fact, the interviewee also emphasized that the better Master Teacher (MT) they have, the better the community's appreciation of Ruangguru. Therefore, RD also emphasized that a Master Teacher (MT) in Ruangguru must have good skills in presenting himself in front of the camera.

"Well, then there is adjustment in front of the camera [...] because the learning is video-based, so the Master Teachers must be able to be all out in front of the camera. Although teachers are used to public speaking, not all of them can speak fluently in front of the camera. Then, there is no age limit for becoming Master Teachers, but on average, the Master Teachers who passed the selection are young. Another factor, because it is considered more interactive in front of the camera, and attracts the interests of students as well, since the teacher is still young."



Figure 3. One of Master Teacher profile

The fourth finding is transformative learning strategy is used by Ruangguru Master Teacher (MT) because it suits Generation Z's characteristics that like Ruangguru's digital media as a platform to deliver messages. An interesting point is a fact that transformative learning strategy is considered as a fun learning method because it suits the needs of generation Z. They like the method of delivering messages through digital media. RD mentioned that since Master Teacher is a representation of Ruangguru, it causes the series of processes undertaken by MT itself to be very strict and complex. Moreover, he must be able to look attractive in front of the camera.

"In terms of educational background, first, it must be in line with the subjects. Secondly, on average, some MTs have gained a master degree at a young age, some are preparing to gain a master degree, while some have their Bachelor's degree. However, Ruangguru's Master Teacher must be a fulltime employee. They have to be present at the office even though from that day there was no recording session. So, everyone is focused, so that they focus only on Ruangguru, not sharing it with others."

From the excerpt above, it seems that the young aged Master Teachers are demanded to attract the users when delivering the message. Thus, the learning method must be interesting, as

Master Teachers serve as important communicators for the users that influence their decision to use Ruangguru's product.

"They are required to make an interesting recording as possible, as they can take videos many times until the content team considers it as ok, from the way they talk, gesture, teaching material, and their expressions are also considered by the content team. Several times I also pay attention to the MTs, they like to practice in front of themselves so, it means they still feel nervous in front of the camera. Because MT is going to be Ruangguru's representative for students. The better the MT, the better people's view towards Ruangguru."

Based on these findings, the authors can also see the existence of learning as education's core process that should be carried out by positioning students as main actors. Thus, learning can be undertaken by them with full awareness, willingness, and meaningfulness by being actively involved in it (Hardika, 2012). In addition, the author also remembers one expert's views who stated that to make it happen, teaching activities need to be understood more as an effort to facilitate learning (in the form of mentoring, direction, giving motivation, and so on) than the delivery of information (Schwarz, 2012). In addition, learning also needs to be interpreted not only as of the transfer of knowledge but rather as the transfer of learning, so that it can lead students to the transformation of thought patterns and action (Sullivan, 2001). Critical thinking is an important thing that must be possessed by every student, so it becomes the core of the concept of transformative learning.

On the other hand, substantially, learning is a process of modification or change of human capacity to a higher level (Gagne, 1985). Learning is a transformational effort, where attitudes, perspectives, even old beliefs are constantly being reconstructed and renewed based on the increased capacity of knowledge and experience gained. In relation to this, Jack Mezirow put forward the theory of transformative learning which is defined as learning that is able to change problematic frameworks to be more inclusive, tolerant, reflective, open, and emotionally accepting change (Mezirow, 2000). Seeing Mezirow's statement above, the concept of Master Teacher (MT) applied by Ruangguru has indeed implemented a transformative learning strategy, in order to be able to attract the interest of Ruangguru users, those who part of Generation Z.

CONCLUSION

Learning strategy is a main point that must be considered in the world of education, especially from the findings of the research conducted. The results of this research show that: Ruangguru as a learning application provides content for various levels in an interesting way through videos, practice questions, private lessons, tryouts which can be accessed from a smartphone. Ruangguru's content is adapted from the national curriculum and specifically designed by the best and experienced teachers. It is aimed at Generation Z ranging from elementary, junior high, to senior high school students. Master Teacher (MT), as Ruangguru's strong point, serves as a representative in delivering digital media-based transformative learning strategies to Generation Z.4) transformative learning strategy is used by Ruangguru Master Teacher (MT) because it suits Generation Z's characteristics that like Ruangguru's digital media as a platform to deliver messages.

Therefore, the transformative learning strategy used by Ruangguru is an appropriate effort as a result of new innovations that are in accordance with the needs of Generation Z. In this

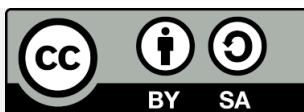
case, digital media-based learning method such as Ruangguru is a solution in relation to the transfer of knowledge needed by Generation Z.

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