

DISTANCE LEARNING PROBLEMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic that occurred requires the government to take a stance to prevent the spread of the virus, including in the education sector. The online learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic had several problems. This research aims to find out the issues of Distance Learning or what is commonly referred to online during the Covid-19 pandemic and its solutions. Following the issues raised, this research data was obtained from various sources, such as journals, websites, and other sources. The results of this study indicate that there are multiple problems or problems experienced by students, namely, students become bored and less interested in participating in online learning activities because learning activities tend to be replaced with online assignments, students do not have learning support facilities, uneven internet network access sometimes tricky, high cost of internet quota, and not ready to implement the teaching and learning process remotely or online.

Keywords: *Problems, learning, online, the covid-19 pandemic, solutions.*

Background

The progress of a nation today and the future is determined by the younger generation, who will be the successors of the country itself. A quality generation is produced from a quality education system as well. Education is a long-term investment that has great value, especially for the younger generation, who are the determinants of the progress of a nation.

The quality of human resources is the key to the realization of Indonesia Gold, and education is one of the keys to developing human resources itself. However, currently, the problem of education in Indonesia is still hampered by two basic problems: access and quality of education. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised several critical problems that must resolve because they involve the sustainability and quality of education and the welfare of teachers and students. The quality of human resources is the key to the realization of Indonesia Gold, and education is one of the keys to developing human resources.

However, currently, the problem of Education in Indonesia is still hampered by two fundamental issues: access and quality of education.

At the beginning of 2020, the world was in uproar with a new virus variant called the coronavirus. The disease is called Covid-19. This virus first attacked China, discovered in November 2019 to be exact in the city of Wuhan. The first cases of Covid-19 were linked to a wet market in Wuhan. The coronavirus is thought to have passed from wild animals to humans.

The first case of Covid-19 in Indonesia occurred in early March 2020. From then on, Indonesia began to face the Covid-19 pandemic. At first, Covid-19 was a common virus, but it turns out that this virus can spread very quickly. Covid-19 spreads so fast and has spread to almost all countries. Until now, the exact cause of the coronavirus has not been found, but it is known that animals initially spread this virus. Covid-19 has impacted almost all sectors of life. Even the education

sector has also been affected. Therefore, due to the impact on the education sector by Covid-19, the government issued a policy to conduct Distance Learning.

Starting April 17, 2020, it is estimated that 91.3% or around 1.5 billion students worldwide are unable to attend school due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. This number includes approximately 45 million students in Indonesia or about 3% of the global affected student population. Amalia & Sa (2020), they showed that covid-19 has an impact on both health and worldwide economic factors. However, it impacts a variety of other fields, including education. Because of the many key events in national education, such as the existence of national tests, college entrance selections, and others, it is crucial to plan. Looking at the situation and conditions in Indonesia, the implementation of online learning is considered relevant at this time. As stated in Law no. 20 of 2003, article 1 paragraph 15, Distance Learning in Education, Students separated from educators use various learning resources through communication technology, information, and other media. In its implementation, Distance Learning is divided into distance learning (online) and distance learning outside the network (offline).

The quick transition from face-to-face classroom learning to distance learning at home requires increased teacher capability. Widodo & Nursaptini (2020), they assumed that Indonesian teachers' information, communication, and technology (ICT) competencies are not uniformly dispersed throughout the country. In according with Azzizah (2015), she showed that there are variations in educational quality within Indonesia, particularly in Java and outside Java, and between socioeconomic conditions. In Indonesia, the implementation of distance learning is sensitive due to the unequal internet network, teacher certification gaps, education quality, and a lack of ICT capabilities.

In implementing Distance Learning, academic units can choose an approach (online or offline or a combination of both) according to the availability characteristics, the readiness of facilities, and infrastructure. Through Distance Learning, it hoped to make learning activities in various ways. Can adjust this to the interests and conditions of each party, both teachers, students, and parents. (Adisel, Gawdy, 2020) said that teachers' role in learning activities is expected to help consider the gap in access to learning facilities at home.

From the explanation above, one type of learning is distance learning in a network or online. Teachers and students do not do direct learning face to face in class but online using the internet network. Learning activities can be carried out together, at the same time using a variety of applications that can support learning activities. These applications include Whatsapp, Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Schoology. The use of the internet and technology changed delivering knowledge. It became an alternative to learning carried out in the classroom.

Based on the technology used, distance learning activities are grouped based on technology, namely Computer-based learning and Web-based training. Adisel & Gawdy (2020), they said that this system is a continuation of CBT and found on internet technology to allow two-way communication between users. However, the problem is that the internet network in our country is still not evenly distributed.

The internet, smartphones, and laptop technology are now widely used to support distance learning. One of Indonesia's largest telecommunications service providers recorded a 16% increase in broadband flows during the Covid-19 crisis due to the sharp rise in distance learning platforms.

However, this disruption to the traditional education system has harmed students from

underprivileged families and those in rural areas. Even under normal conditions, they are students who already face barriers to accessing education. They need to meet the additional obstacles that inequalities have created to access technology infrastructure.

In the form of islands and mountains, Indonesia's topography requires internet and cellular telecommunications. However, 4G coverage is mainly concentrated on the island of Java because cellular telecommunications service providers, which are highly dependent on the market, prioritize areas urban areas over rural areas where the population is less. Figure 1 shows the unequal distribution of household internet in all regions. This connectivity gap makes students from underprivileged families in rural areas outside Java very disadvantaged.

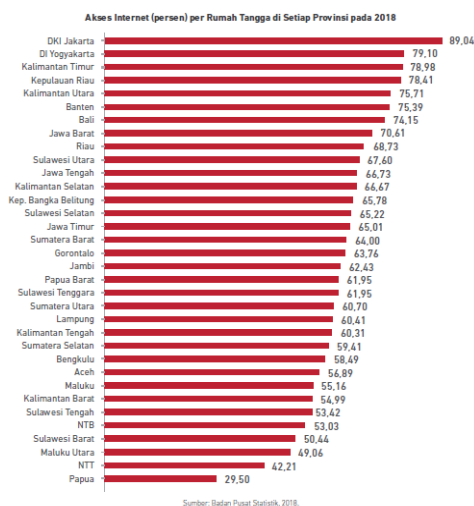


Figure 1

The distance learning process should ideally accommodate students' learning needs to develop their talents and interests according to their education level. To achieve this, it is necessary to prepare educators and provide an appropriate curriculum, availability of learning resources, and support for stable devices and networks so that communication between students and educators can be effective. The current state of distance learning cannot be called ideal because there are still many obstacles. This obstacle is also a challenge in the implementation of distance

learning. Its implementation is a must so that educational activities can still be held during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research Methods

This research was conducted in one of the secondary schools in Bekasi. The research method used in this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is descriptive research. The theoretical basis is used as a guide so that this research is by the facts in the field. The theoretical basis is also helpful in providing an overview of the background and material for discussing research results. The type of approach used is a descriptive method, which is a method used to examine a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, and a system of thought or current events. This research aims to make a factual and accurate description of the facts between the phenomena studied.

The type of descriptive method used in this research is a literature study, or it can also be called library research. Because it uses a literature study, the data sources taken are obtained from various relevant sources to the topics discussed. The data sources are secondary data collected through journal articles, e-books, websites, and sources relevant to the research problem. The researchers in this paper only discuss the challenges of distance learning during the Covid-19 epidemic. This concept is put into action by gathering data, managing it, and objectively presenting it.

The data collection technique used in this research is literature study. This technique is used to obtain the basics and opinions in writing which is done by studying various literatures related to the problem under study. According to Sugiyono (2013), research results will also be more credible if they are supported by existing photographs or academic and artistic writings.

According to Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña (2018), they assumed that qualitative data analysis activities are carried

out interactively and continuously until complete, described in four steps. The four steps are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The reason the researcher uses this method is because according to Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña (2018), qualitative data analysis activities are carried out interactively and take place continuously until complete, so that the data is saturated.

Finding & Discussion

Education is the most crucial thing in our lives. It means that every human being deserves it and is expected to develop. Since the government implemented social distancing to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, there were restrictions on large numbers of meetings, including among educators. It impacted learning activities in educational institutions, which were initially face-to-face in class, into distance education with an online system.

Based on the results of a literature study from various references, it can be seen that the results of the implementation of distance learning carried out by teachers still get a poor response, which comes from the parents of students who protest against the teacher. In this case, the teacher realizes that he is not ready to implement the distance learning process. It is evidenced by the many protests from the parents of the student's guardians. Because during this pandemic, teachers only give very many tasks. Teachers need good cooperation with various parties, such as teachers, peers, parents, students, and educational study centers who can provide solutions or instructions for implementing learning to teachers. However, it is undeniable that several teachers have implemented knowledge using this distance method quite well in this case.

Learning activities are said to be effective if the learning can increase the interest and motivation of students to obtain good learning outcomes. One of the success factors of implementing distance learning activities

quite well is the role of a teacher. To apply distance learning, teachers must deliver material effectively and efficiently. In line with Rahmawati & Yulianti (2020), they said that several things must be considered so that learning is effective. There are four indicators: (1) The quality of education, even though it is carried out remotely, must be maintained, meaning that the level of information provided to students is significant. Must be quickly learned and adapted to the level of mastery learning; (2) Conformity with the level of education, which means the teacher should ensure the readiness level of students in accepting new material; (3) Incentives, which indicate how much effort the teacher makes to motivate students to complete or do the tasks and materials given; (4) Time, which means the time needed to complete learning activities.

Online learning has become an inevitable choice for educational institutions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this learning method can be a solution so that the learning process can continue. Teachers can still teach and students can still study at home. Online learning is identical to the use of internet-based technology, which is highly dependent on the availability of information technology. Bilfaqih, Y. & Qomarudin (2015) showed that online learning organizes online learning classes to reach a dense and broad target group. The transition from face-to-face learning to online learning is not as easy as imagined. Readiness to learn from both teachers and students needs to be well prepared. Online is a learning activity that is delivered using the help of electronic technology. Online can connect students with learning resources that are separate or far apart but can still interact virtually. However, it is not easy to change the face-to-face habit in the classroom to be virtual with the help of technology. Asmuni (2020), stated that online learning has become an inevitable choice for educational institutions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this learning method can be a solution so that the learning process can continue. Teachers can still teach and students

can still study at home. Online learning is identical to the use of internet-based technology, which is highly dependent on the availability of information technology.

The problem is that not all students can operate technology-based learning media properly. Students who experience issues when using it and teachers who are, on average, old. Online learning carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic is basically by the ideals of free learning as aspired by the Minister of Education and Culture. Thus, without struggling, the government can pressure education providers to use technology in learning activities.

In the implementation of Distance Learning, discrepancies are often found with learning activities. Many think that the teacher's responsibility when implementing Distance Learning is more accessible than face-to-face learning activities in class. In line with Simbolon (2013), he said that when carrying out distance learning activities, teacher creativity in providing the material is also needed as the main factor to motivate students' interest in learning during online learning. In compiling a lesson, the teacher is expected to have the ability to determine concepts in which this concept must focus on the students' skills. Thus, the teacher will arrange teaching materials according to the idea. During the current pandemic, of course, the methods and learning models carried out by teachers must be adjusted to the applicable regulations, namely by always keeping a distance and not making direct physical contact, or it can be done by distance learning.

Distance Learning Problems During the Covid-19 Pandemic

According to Basar et al. (2021) he showed that in online learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, several problems were found, namely:

First, students become bored and less interested in online learning activities because their learning activities tend to be replaced with online assignments. It is not uncommon for student assignments to pile up.

Second, students do not have learning support facilities such as cellphones or laptops used during online learning. Not infrequently, some of them use their parents' cellphones to participate in learning activities.

Third, some students live in areas or places not covered by the internet network. The geography of Indonesia, which is made up of islands and mountains, requires the supply of internet and cellular services. However, because mobile telecom providers, who are highly dependent on the market, prioritize urban areas over less populous rural areas, 4G coverage is mostly focused on Java Island. For example, the network condition usually becomes unstable when it rains heavily or when the lights go out. It causes them not to participate in online learning activities properly, even in places where the internet network is already covered.

Fourth is the high cost of buying an internet quota. Online learning activities through Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Youtube, and Google Classroom require the internet to access them. If you often use these media, you will use more quota.

Fifth, implementing the remote or online teaching and learning process is not yet ready. The transition period from face-to-face learning to online certainly requires quite mature and good preparation. However, until now, there are still some obstacles when implementing it.

Students' learning environment at home has been deteriorating for a long time, causing them to become bored and lazy. Teachers frequently struggle to engage pupils in the learning process because students believe no one is monitoring them and so no one is guiding them. From dawn until lunch, the learning process takes quite a long period.

To measure student learning outcomes while participating in distance learning activities, the problem faced by teachers is the difficulty of students capturing and understanding every learning indicator conveyed by the teacher in each learning process. However, teachers have repeatedly delivered learning indicators through various learning media such as Google Classroom. However, in reality, students sometimes do not even open Google Classroom, even though all learning materials and explanations have been delivered in Google Classroom. Not to mention to see learning materials to fill out the attendance list in Google Classroom, students rarely do it.

Learning Solutions During the Covid-19 Pandemic

From the various problems that have been mentioned above, several alternative solutions can be found that might help reduce the multiple obstacles that exist. These solutions include the following:

First, the learning media used are more varied not to feel bored. The learning material to be delivered should be delivered to students the day before so that students can read the material first. When the teacher explains, students can better understand and still ask questions if something is not understood. Assignments are given a time limit for the collection that is neither too fast nor too slow. Students can complete them optimally, and there is no accumulation of too many assignments.

Second, in the webinar "Education Systems in the Midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic" held on Sunday, August 20, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, said that if schools certainly have School Operational Assistance funds, these funds can be used to buy smartphones, tablets, and laptops which can later be loaned to students who do not have online learning support facilities.

Third, students can look for locations around their homes that can still be reached by the

internet network or join their friends who have a Wi-fi connection at home. Distance learning increases the barriers for students who already find it difficult to obtain an education. Therefore, alternative distribution methods other than the internet should be examined. Radio broadcasting or the postal service may be viable options for places with limited access.

Fourth, to save on buying quota, students can request tethering from family members at home or by using internet quota only when needed.

Fifth, teachers are provided with how to make the best use of existing technology, and learning materials are prepared interestingly. It is critical to include distance learning skills in future teacher training programs.

According with Basar et al. (2021), he showed that a teacher's attitude toward students in distance learning is divided into several indicators, including 1) addressing a teacher's character or character towards the learning process, 2) responding to the character or character of students towards the learning process, 3) assisting students in growing their self-confidence in the learning process, and 4) providing guidance to students in the learning process who have obstacles during distance learning.

As a result, to perform professionally, a teacher must understand and be able to use a variety of teaching methods. (1) Teachers must be able to arouse students' interest in the subject matter provided and use a variety of media and varied learning resources to do so; (2) teachers must arouse students' interest in being active in thinking and seeking and finding solutions to the problems they face; (3) teachers must develop students' attitudes toward fostering social relations, both among friends and with the community; and (4) teachers must invest in their students' future success.

According to Permendikbud No. 65 of 2013 as cited by Bagja Sulfemi (2013), teachers must prepare the following things: 1) condition students to always be ready to follow the learning process, 2) provide learning motivation to students by the benefits and applications of learning materials in everyday life, 3) ask questions relating to the previous material with new material or material to be studied next, 4) delivering students to a problem that will be carried out to study material and explaining the learning objectives to be achieved, and 5) conveying an outline of the scope of the material and an explanation of the activities what students will do to solve problems or assignments.

In this case, the teacher must be good at processing the class to create a conducive learning atmosphere, motivate students and attention, and even build more communication with parents of students regarding the development of students during learning activities at home.

The explanation above illustrates that distance learning can run according to the conditions experienced with various simple and complex problems. Every problem faced can be solved by presenting a variety of solutions from the teachers so that learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, the important thing is that students continue to learn even from home because the implementation of distance learning does not pursue curriculum completeness but emphasizes literacy and numeracy competencies.

In applying distance learning, teachers use various technological devices in education. They can choose various applications according to the needs and characteristics of the subjects, students, and the environmental situation they face to help deliver learning materials to students. However, it is recognized that in the practice of distance

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learning, the teacher is more dominant in giving assignments, not in explaining the material.

Conclusion

Distance learning is not a new system in education, especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic. There are still many obstacles and problems, so learning activities are not optimal. Distance learning activities that are currently being carried out cannot be called ideal learning conditions but rather an emergency condition that requires online learning to be carried out.

The government cooperates with various parties to make multiple efforts to overcome problems that occur during online learning activities, both in terms of regulations, increasing educator readiness, expanding internet networks, and accessing learning resource materials to run effectively and efficiently. However, these efforts must continue to be improved so that the optimization of distance learning is not only for emergency conditions such as what is currently happening but also to be carried out in everyday situations according to learning needs.

In online learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers should not give assignments in enormous numbers because this can trigger the saturation level of students so that learning becomes less than optimal. When online, study hours should be shortened. It is because online learning does not mean moving from school to home.

Therefore, teachers' creativity in delivering learning materials to attract students' interest in learning is essential. In addition, the government also needs to support the implementation of distance learning; one way is by providing facilities that can help the performance of education

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