

## Distance Learning Policy During Pandemic Covid-19

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### Article History

Received : January 7<sup>th</sup> 2021

Revision : February 11<sup>th</sup> 2021

Publication : March 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

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### Abstract.

This study analyzes the learning process online, supporting factors and factors inhibiting teachers' carrying out online learning during the covid-19 pandemic. This research was conducted in several elementary schools in Nganjuk district, calculated from September to January 2021. This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative method research. The subjects used in this study were primary school teachers and some education-related policymakers. Data collection techniques used in this study in the form of open questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, documentation and field records. The result of this study is that the covid-19 pandemic has a huge impact on the learning process, learning that is usually carried out directly is now diverted into online learning. Students feel bored and bored during the learning. Online learning for primary school-age children is less effective. There are several factors supporting teachers in the online learning process, namely the availability of mobile phones, quotas and a stable internet network. In addition to the supporting factors in online learning there are also several factors inhibiting teachers in online learning. The inhibitory factors include that not all students have mobile phones and many parents are busy working. it is necessary to government from various parties, both from the government as the regulatory holder and the community as policy users. so it is expected that both can synergize and maximize the academic potential of students.

**Keywords:** Education Policy, distance learning, Coronavirus Pandemic

### INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 pandemic that hit the world has changed the system of human life in all areas of life, including the world of education. There is a policy to do work from home (WFH), social and physical distancing(Wajdi et al., 2020),should the community stay at home, work, worship and learn from home. Such conditions require educational institutions to innovate in the learning process. With the elimination of the National Exam, studying at home through certain applications, online lectures, online tutoring and seminars is an example of education services that accelerate the application of education in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. From some of the above cases demanding the role of technology in the field of

education during the covid-19 pandemic, educators and students are expected to adjust and utilize technology (Yulia, 2020).

Citing data from the Indonesian Teachers Association (IGI), Lestari Moerdijat, vice chairman of People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) revealed that based on the implementation of Distance Learning implemented in the last three months, 60% of teachers have inferior skills in the use of information technology while teaching (Indonesia, 2020). The obstacles of stuttering technology among teachers must be addressed immediately. Various ways can be done to overcome the poor understanding of technology among Teachers.

Distance Education (PJJ), which is referred to as distance education in English terms, is an institution-based formal education whose students and instructors are located in separate locations that require an interactive telecommunication system to connect the two and the various resources required in it. E-learning is part of distance education that specifically combines electronic technology and internet-based technology (Rudiantara et al., 2016; Sholihah & Handayani, 2020; Tedja, 2020; Warsihna, 2019).

Advances in communication and information technology present new opportunities and challenges in the world of education. Emerging new options include broader access to richer multimedia content and new learning methods that are no longer limited by space and time. On the other hand, technological advances with various digital innovations that continue to develop also present new challenges for education providers to continue to adapt education infrastructure to the new technology.

Distance Learning (PJJ) is the main choice in delivering materials to students during the pandemic. Online, offline and blended is a way for Teachers to carry out the Process of Distance Learning. Ability of IT and teachers' adaptation in delivering material that is different from what is commonly done is essential to know. The ability of technology to use laptops, WhatsApp, and various media types that can be used to carry out online learning is crucial. Whatever form of learning process online, offline, and blended must still be implemented to keep the learning running. Various ways are done to take place, and students still feel the education even though it does not demand curriculum completion.

All learning activities in the distance learning plan in the form of learning scenarios are outlined in a learning script instead of teacher activities that were initially conducted face-to-face by collaborating parents of learners in the learning process conducted at home. Parents act as the successor to the delivery of materials that teachers should do, especially for elementary classes. Although there are obstacles in the field, such as the lack of opportunities for parents to do mentoring because of busy work and lack of knowledge in the IT field, some parents do not have a mobile phone and the lack of ability of parents in reading.

Therefore, the role of the Master is significant in overcoming various obstacles that are done in delivering material either online, offline or blended. Teachers should map students and parents about home distance, mobile phone ownership, internet network, internet packages, or parents' ability and opportunity to accompany their children in learning activities.

As the main actor in learning, the teacher has to package distance learning to be accessible to all students. But the reality in the field shows that there are still many

teachers who have not mastered Technology (IT), such as using a laptop or teaching through the internet. Due to the lack of understanding of IT, teachers are forced only to give books to read, giving tasks to be done that are important children keep learning from home and are not unemployed. As a result in the long term students experience saturation of learning, because they feel they do not get an impressive learning experience, It is inconceivable how the condition of the generation during this pandemic, there will be a decrease in learning achievement in learners.

## **METHOD**

This research is descriptive research with qualitative approach, the analysis is done by looking at the percentage distribution of each aspect of measurement. The research was conducted by disseminating online forms to respondents. The respondents consisted of principals, teachers, students, and parents at several elementary schools in Nganjuk. Respondents to the survey included principals, teachers, pupils and randomly selected parents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Nowadays, teaching and learning activities no longer take place face-to-face in schools, but with Distance Learning (PJJ). Students learn from home with guidance from teachers and parents. The school began to set the right learning strategy to deal with the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, the media (application) used for online learning was WhatsApp.

This application has the advantage of being relatively cheap in the use of internet quota and almost all parents of students already know it. The disadvantages include WhatsApp group videos can only be followed by four people, so it can not be used for maximum direct learning. Also, the application is also ineffective for collecting student assignments, so it is necessary to look for other alternatives.

Kemendikbud aired a Program of Learning from Home (BDR) broadcast by TVRI in mid-April 2020. This program is filled with educational and fun impressions as a learning alternative for students, parents, and teachers. The advantage is that students just watch TVRI accompanied by their parents to summarize the material delivered. The disadvantage is that not all students in their homes have televisions, some have televisions, but they can't catch TVRI broadcasts, then the viewing schedule sometimes changes and does not cover all subjects, so it is still necessary to look for alternative applications.

Online Learning Media (applications) that can be used include Zoom (video conference platform), Jitsi Meet (video conference platform), Google meets (video conference platform), Cisco Webex (video conference platform), Google Classroom, Google Form, Quiz, School E-learning, and WhatsApp.

While the application used in various schools starting at the end of April 2020 is E-learning School. E-learning School was chosen because it has several advantages, among others, has a variety of features both for teachers and for students that allow Teachers to innovate and create; School Teachers throughout Indonesia can share any information that is useful in the features of Teachers sharing, Students and Teachers can share ideas and open discussion forums so that they can communicate with each other between Teachers and Students. The URL address of E-learning

School:<https://elearning.kemenag.go.id/> In general the results of evaluation of the implementation of PJJ conducted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, mention that not all schools can carry out PJJ activities online (online) in full, most of them organize PJJ offline (offline).

The obstacles faced are the limitations of human resources, limitations of infrastructure facilities such as laptops or mobile phones owned by parents of students, difficulty in internet access, unstable electricity conditions, and limited internet quotas that parents can provide. The minister of education at the Webinar on Learning Policy Adjustment during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which was conducted virtually through Zoom and broadcast live from the YouTube channel of the Ministry of Education stated that there are some obstacles faced by teachers, parents, and students during PJJ at least include:

1. Teachers experience obstacles in PJJ and tend to focus on completing the curriculum.
2. The learning time is reduced, so the Teacher cannot meet the burden of his teaching hours.
3. Teachers have difficulty communicating with parents as mentors at home
4. Not all parents are willing and able to accompany children to study at home because there are other responsibilities such as work affairs, home affairs, etc.
5. Parents have difficulty in understanding lessons and motivating children when accompanying home learning.
6. Students have difficulty concentrating on learning from home and complain about the many assignments from teachers.
7. Increased stress and saturation due to ongoing isolation at home can cause anxiety and depression for children, access to learning resources either due to problems with electricity or internet coverage, or funds for access.

Solutions that can be taken include Teachers participating in the Teacher Sharing Program, Online Bimtek Series, and Webinar Series, providing free quotas, relaxation of BOS and BOP, "Learning from Home" on TVRI, learning on RRI radio, Learning House, and cooperation with online learning platforms. The step that can be taken is to develop an emergency curriculum. The emergency curriculum preparation uses the main legal basis of the Emergency Curriculum Guidelines in Schools, namely the Decree of the Director General of Education No. 2791 of 2020. It is also supported with some other legal basis (Brdiczka et al., 2009; Handarini & Wulandari, 2020; Plowman et al., 2012).

The emergency curriculum is a simplification of the number of KDs referring to K-2013. The emergency curriculum is expected to facilitate the learning process during the pandemic with essential KD selection. The expected impact after the implementation of the emergency curriculum for teachers, parents, and students, among others, the availability of simple curriculum references, reduced teaching burden for teachers, students no longer feel burdened with demands to complete all curriculum achievements, Teachers and learners can focus more on education and essential and contextual learning, parents at home easier to accompany their children to learn, so that psychosocial welfare teachers, learners, and parents become better. The

implementation of PJJ during the Covid-19 emergency period for each school varies greatly, according to the School's assumptions and readiness.

Some things related to policy in distance learning are required some considerations including:

1. Switching from face-to-face learning to distance learning during an unprecedented crisis will be a huge challenge for teachers with little experience or preparation. Now, teachers need to be creative and flexible by staying true to good teaching and inclusive learning principles.
2. Build personal and professional strength, acknowledge challenges, overcome them, and reach out to fellow teachers and Principals for help and guidance.
3. Ensures technology, platforms, tools and resources are available to teachers and students of print, audio and radio, video and TV, computer-based, Internet-based and phone-based.
4. Ensure adaptable teaching and learning materials for distance learning. Find free-to-access educational resources and ensure they are quality.

### **Local Government Policy Related to Distance Learning**

Kemendikbud gives freedom for each school to choose its online learning platform (Kemendikbud, 2020). However, to encourage the process of knowledge sharing, kemendikbud provides a free online learning platform called "Rumah Belajar" and a platform for sharing between Teachers called "Teacher Sharing Program". "Rumah Belajar" provides teaching materials and communication features for its users, while the "Sharing Teacher Program" shares the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) with Teachers throughout Indonesia. For areas where the internet connection is not very good, the government is working with TVRI, a state television station, to deliver the learning materials contained in the Learning at Home program for several months (Kurniasari et al., 2020; Learning, 2020; Plowman et al., 2012).

The Covid-19 crisis also forced schools to reallocate larger budgets for distance learning spending. Regulation of the Ministry of Education No. 19 of 2020 and Circular Letter of the Ministry of Finance number B-699/ Dt.l/PP.03/03/2020 permit the use of BOS funds for the implementation of distance learning. This includes internet connection fees for students and teachers and the purchase of remote learning support devices.

Through Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2020, the Ministry of Education's budget was increased by 96%, from Rp36 trillion to Rp70.7 trillion. The use of the large increase has not been detailed, but many predict the funds will be used to support further distance learning initiatives.

At the local government level, the DKI Jakarta Education Office has issued a Circular Letter on distance learning regulation. The agency uses a special section on their site to share information about carrying out distance learning. In addition, the page also provides a guide to using "Si Pintar by Simak", which is an integrated school information system of DKI Jakarta, where online learning modules can be accessed. The site also provides Google Classroom tutorials for Teachers, a scheduled program for "Home Learning" on TVRI.

Private stakeholders in the education sector have provided a variety of ready-made solutions to support distance learning implementation. Kemendikbud

started cooperation with online learning service providers and technology companies (Kemendikbud, 2020). Some learning platforms have given free access to some, or even all, of their content during this pandemic. Some telecommunication companies also provide free internet quota to access available online learning platforms (Bao, 2020; Costinela-Luminita, 2011; Panigrahi et al., 2018).

Not only the business sector, but private schools are also adapting to the current situation. Private schools in underprivileged areas in Jakarta (low-cost private schools) implement semi-online ways for distance learning. They use the messaging service platform via WhatsApp, which is widely used in Indonesia, to conduct class discussions and share assignments and learning materials. Those who do not have adequate devices are encouraged to borrow a smartphone or laptop from their relatives.

Low-cost private schools attract low fees to educate students from underprivileged families, and at the same time these schools also keep them financially independent and independent of government budgets (McLoughlin, 2018). These schools are often forgotten in the education system, but in fact they play an important role in educating children from underprivileged families by providing affordable and high-quality education. Low-cost private schools have very limited resources to switch to distance learning, therefore the Ministry of Education must expand its reach to these schools. The policies taken by the local government include

### **Adjusting the implementation of distance learning according to regional conditions**

To complement TVRI programs in areas with limited internet access, learning materials can be done over the radio as has been done in other countries such as Argentina and Fiji. The Argentine government provides seven hours of radio content hosted by Teachers-Experienced teachers through government radio networks during the closure of school buildings, while the Fijian government is working with two radio stations to provide reading and numeracy lessons for grade I to VIII students and also for early childhood education (The World Bank, 2020). The Government of Indonesia can also work with PT Pos Indonesia to help Teachers distribute worksheets and modules to students, a practice drawn from France's positive experiences (AFP, 2020).

### **Establishing a cluster of work in the area to provide guidance**

In the absence of certainty about the end of the ongoing pandemic, the Ministry of Education is currently preparing a remote learning plan until the end of the year (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Although distance learning activities are highly dependent on school initiatives and resources from the Ministry of Education, local governments also need to assist schools by forming a task force that further provides financial assistance outside BOS and access to recording studios and equipment for schools and teachers. This task force should pay special attention to low-cost private schools that play an important role in providing education to urban poor with fewer resources than public schools and more established private schools

### **Develop surveillance frameworks and strategies for the use of BOS**

The Ministry of Education should consider developing a robust surveillance framework to monitor the use of BOS for distance learning. Good supervision helps ensure that funds are used in accordance with the ministry's original intentions and to identify the areas most in need of assistance. The Ministry of Education also needs to consider whether this expansion is temporary or whether components can be adopted permanently.

### **Granting greater autonomy to principals**

Schools can now use BOS to support vulnerable families struggling with the extra spending to buy internet packages and phone credit, but the condition was only set one month after the start of distance learning in mid-March. Such delays can be prevented if the principal has broader autonomy to use BOS funds without obtaining approval from the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Education.

Greater autonomy in emergency times such as the Covid-19 crisis is essential, especially for public school principals. Its implementation requires both bureaucratic flexibility and better decision-making capacity by the principal. Since the Ministry of Education has given decision-making authority to individual schools, the authority can be expanded again to BOS, especially in emergencies. On the contrary, the Ministry of Education should consider incorporating the school management skills budget into the school leadership transformation agenda that the Ministry can also carry out for schools.

### **Equipping Teachers with skills to carry out distance learning**

Distance learning has been the most widely perceived obstacle in the education sector even before the pandemic, but the current crisis is significantly accelerating the adoption of its implementation. It is important to include distance learning skills in future Teacher-Teacher training programs.

The use of information and communication technology has been included in the training curriculum. However, there are doubts about its effectiveness given its content which is largely irrelevant to distance learning. For successful adoption of distance learning, Teachers need to have basic technological skills (such as using computers and connecting to the internet) and using recording devices and software and methods for delivering lessons without face-to-face interaction. These skills will be required when using online learning platforms in Indonesia. More importantly, the gap between training and execution scenarios in the field needs to be minimized.

Considering this, distance learning should be integrated into the Ministry of Education's long-term Teacher education program called the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG).

### **Maintaining government and private partnerships in the education sector**

Partnerships between government and private in terms of online learning platforms have grown in recent years, but Indonesia still has to overcome its digital divide. The Covid-19 crisis could be the beginning of a large-scale partnership between the government and the private sector to fill systemic gaps such as those in

Hong Kong. There, a consortium of stakeholders from various parties, from educational organizations and the entertainment industry, which provided free learning materials during Covid-19, has decided to continue its services even after the pandemic subsides (Chang et al., 2021; Code et al., 2020; Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020). Similar cooperation also needs to be considered in Indonesia. Lastly, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Education also need to evaluate the feasibility of government-private partnerships with technology service providers in infrastructure procurement to support online or distance learning (Dewi et al., 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the emergency curriculum requires teachers to change the paradigm on the planning and implementation of learning and the assessment of learning outcomes because learning activities are no longer carried out in schools, but carried out by students from home. Learning activities from home (BDR) demand cooperation between teachers, parents and students.

Learning from home is to meet the demands of competence (KI-KD) in the curriculum and emphasize character development, noble morality, *ubudiyah* and independence of learners. Teachers must be more creative and innovative in presenting lesson materials and assigning tasks to students, to realize more meaningful, inspiring, and more fun learning activities so that students do not experience the saturation of learning from home.

Related to the ongoing pandemic, it is necessary to hold cooperation from various parties, both from the government as the regulatory holder and the community as policy users. so it is expected that both can synergize and maximize the academic potential of students.

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