

## Long Distance Learning, Challenges And Opportunities

**Vera Sri Wahyuni, Dian Wulandari, Soewarto Hardhienata**

Program Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Sekolah Pascasarjana Universitas Pakuan

[veraswahyuni@gmail.com](mailto:veraswahyuni@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruption to Indonesia's education sector where approximately 45 million students are unable to continue their learning activities in school. One solution is Long Distance Learning, this study aims to find out (1) the long distance remote learning system applied, (2) the impact of the Long Distance Learning system on student achievement, (3) obstacles in the application of Long Distance Learning system. The research method used in this study is qualitative method with descriptive research type qualitative approach. The results of this study show that the implementation of Long Distance Learning still has many obstacles such as inadequate equipment and poor internet connection, in addition to the increase in learning success is still small and ineffective

Keywords: PJJ, Long Distance Learning, Covid-19

### INTRODUCTION

Since COVID-19 spread throughout the provinces in Indonesia, the government together with the Ministry of Education and Culture decided to carry out Long Distance Learning activities (PJJ) through the internet. This aims to reduce the risk of the spread of Corona virus, especially in children. PJJ activities have been implemented since April 2020 until now. Reported from the official website covid19.go.id page, there are some areas that are still in the red zone, which is at high risk of COVID-19 transmission. Other areas are dominated with orange color, indicating the risk of transmission of Corona virus in a moderate level. While the yellow zone indicates a low level of risk, and the green zone means no case.

The widespread spread of Covid-19 has forced the government to close schools and encourage Long Distance Learning at home. Various initiatives are carried out to ensure learning activities continue despite the absence of face-to-face sessions. Technology, more specifically the internet, smartphones, and laptops is now widely used to support Long Distance Learning. One of the largest telecommunication service providers in Indonesia recorded a 16% increase in broadband flow during the Covid-19 crisis, due to the sharp increase in the use of

Long Distance Learning platforms. However, disruption to the traditional education system has harmed students from underprivileged families and those in rural areas. They are students who, even under normal circumstances, already face barriers to accessing education. Now they need to face additional barriers arising from inequality to access technological infrastructure. Indonesia's topography in the form of islands and mountains requires the procurement of internet and mobile telecommunications. However, 4G coverage is mostly concentrated in Java Island because mobile telecommunication service providers, which rely heavily on the market, certainly prioritize urban areas over rural areas with fewer populations (Khatri, 2019). Figure 1 shows the unbalanced distribution of household internet throughout the region. The connectivity gap makes students from underprivileged families in rural areas outside Java very unearned. The sudden change from face-to-face methods in the classroom to Long Distance Learning at home also demonstrates the need to increase teacher capacity. Some research shows that the competence of information, communication, and technology (ICT) of Indonesian teachers is not spread evenly throughout the region (Widodo & Riandi, 2013 quoted from Koh et al, 2018). What's more, there is a gap in the quality of education in all regions in Indonesia, especially between Java and outside Java, and among socio-economic conditions (Azzizah, 2015; Muttaqin 2018). Uneven internet access, teacher qualification gaps, and quality of education, as well as a lack of ICT skills are vulnerabilities in Long Distance Learning initiatives in Indonesia.

The rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruption to Indonesia's education sector where approximately 45 million students are unable to continue their learning activities in school. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) need to consider the implementation of Long Distance Learning that is adjusted to the differences in the characteristics of regions in Indonesia. Long Distance Learning adds to the barriers for students who are already difficult to access education, so diversification of delivery media other than the internet needs to be considered. The option could be a radio program or using a postal service for areas with low connectivity.

Local governments need to play a more active role in helping schools without having to wait for initiative from the central government. In addition to using existing School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds, local education agencies must provide funding support and further technical guidance for schools in their area, such as access to recording studios and equipment, to facilitate the adoption of Long Distance Learning. Such guidelines should also not forget private community schools.

Indonesia needs to start large-scale capacity building programs in order to better run Long Distance Learning throughout the region. These efforts require strategies and supervision of the use of BOS, increasing the capacity of principals

and allowing them to gain greater autonomy in schools, as well as equipping teachers with technical and non-technical skills for Long Distance Learning.

The Covid-19 crisis shows a large-scale need for state and private partnerships between relevant ministries (Kemendikbud and Kemenag) and their telecommunications and hardware service providers. The partnership can use existing infrastructure to expand the implementation of Long Distance Learning throughout Indonesia.

In the implementation of Distance Education, there are often obstacles or discrepancies with the supposed learning, many think the responsibility of teachers in implementing PJJ is much lighter than with traditional learning (Semradova & Hubackova, 2016). Currently the education system faces many problems, during the COVID-19 pandemic learning in Indonesia is diverted to distance education, but the lack of equipment, personnel, resources, and limitations of educational technology, as well as the skills and quality of teachers are not sufficient (Dursun et al., 2013)(Jaya, 2017). The use of internet media / e-learning has considerable constraints, network connections and technical errors such as server down and error hinder the success of learning (Nurmukhametov et al., 2015).

The use of hypermedia technology has no added value if used only to replace tasks that use handwritten paper (Yengin et al., 2011). At this time many people are not responsible for committing crimes even in the world of education, one of which is the leaking of accounts listed in the discussion application and supporting learning that harms many parties and the learning process is disrupted. Although the use of android and web applications as a learning medium can foster interest, motivation, and independence of learning and rapid development (Tahar, n.d.), it is difficult to control the development of learning. Although game education can foster interest in learning, the improvement in learning success is still small and ineffective (Education et al., 2012). The creativity of teachers in providing materials through the media is also needed as a factor that influences the interest of students learning in this PJJ (Simbolon, 2014). Problems in accepting material concepts and principles will be difficult in learning pjj without face-to-face although educators can utilize learning media such as power points, hyperlinks, video tutorials, compact disks (CDs) and cai-based interactive multimedia (Abdi et al., 2018)

The world of education is currently gaining a very valuable experience, the usual educational process centered in a building called a school, with the social distancing Covid-19 is finally the learning process moved into the home of students based on internet connection or television channels (TVRI). This event is a very rare event in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak, the learning process of students will at least be fully accompanied by parents who may be mostly also carrying out work from home. Here a momentum comes to the surface, because parents will meet their basic obligations again as the primary educator as well as in charge of the

educational process of their children. Previously, for some parents who were busy with various work affairs, many gave authority to the school as a whole as the focus of the educational process for their children. this condition due to Covid-19 provides opportunities for parents to build closeness and be directly involved in their children's learning at home.

Covid-19 is very impactful for all sectors in Indonesia, both social, economic and even political all affected by the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, socially this is very noticeable changes in Indonesia, ranging from the disbursement of all educational institutions, the prohibition of gathering in public places so that the call to worship at home. Covid-19 managed to change the behavior of the community, especially the Indonesian people, in addition to the government's appeal, the community also has an interest if their behavior patterns do not change, some of the patterns of community behavior that will change when and after the Covid-19 outbreak is completed are: First, healthy lifestyle, Easter spreader Covid-19 many appeals both from the government or community organizations and non-governmental organizations to implement a healthy lifestyle such as wearing a mask when out of the house , often wash your hands and drink more vitamins.

Second, it is a pattern of distance education since there has been an appeal from the ministry of education and culture for schools and colleges to establish home learning for two weeks, many schools and colleges are not ready so many use social media applications and also other free applications. For some universities already have an e-learning website so it is not too surprised by the existence of home learning instruction or the concept of distance education. The founder of distance education is quite effective for certain conditions. After Covid-19, there will most likely be many universities and schools that prepare and implement distance education through e-learning websites. The ease obtained is very much especially for students and lecturers who can not attend the campus but can still access lessons through e-learning.

## **METHOD**

Qualitative research method is the method that will be used in this study. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive and tends to use analysis. The foundation of theory is used as a guide to focus research in accordance with the facts in the field. In addition, the basis of this theory is also useful to provide an overview of the research background and as a discussion material of research results. The type of research approach used is descriptive method, which is a method in researching the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present. The purpose of this descriptive research is to make systematic, factual and accurate descriptions, depictions, or paintings of the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena investigated.

The type of descriptive method that is done is library research library is an activity to observe various literature related to the subject matter raised either in the form of books, papers or writings that are helpful so that it can be used as a guideline in the research process. According to Kartini Kartono (1986: 28) in the book *Introduction to Social Research Methodology* suggests that the purpose of library research is to collect data and information with the help of various materials in the library, the results are used as the basic functions and main tools for research practice in the field. Because using library research means that data sources are taken from various data sources relevant to the topic raised, namely Long Distance Learning during the Covid-19 emergency.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Learning is the most important investment for every nation especially for a developing nation that is actively building its country. Development can only be done by human beings who are prepared through learning, in order to achieve the essence of humanity, namely as a caliph on earth. The development of learning is inseparable from the responsibility of an educator, how the educator transforms the knowledge possessed with existing teaching materials, as well as by paying attention to teaching methods that are easily accepted by students so that the goals are achieved in accordance with what is expected.

Long Distance Learning as a model of distance education is not a new model of education. At first it started with a written course, then developed in the form of formal higher education in the form of an Open University. The background of Long Distance Learning is for people who work every day by having a busy working time, living and working away from educational institutions will feel how much opportunity costs are lost if they have to follow conventional learning or lectures at the institution because it provides several hours each day to sit in class, adjust the schedule of study, practicum and all other activities with working hours. Therefore, various efforts are made that support the realization of Long Distance Learning with better quality and service by utilizing the development of information and communication technology.

At the beginning of its implementation, Long Distance Learning by the community is considered as a type of alternative education or second-class education that loses prestige than conventional education that requires the presence of learners. Along with the rapid development of information and communication technology Long Distance Learning is held online through the internet. Online Long Distance Learning is highly appreciated by people who even considered it more prestigious than conventional education that tends to take advantage of technological advances less.

Long Distance Learning allows students to complete high school, continuing education and college courses without physically being on campus. Classes may be taken online, through audio or videocassette instruction or by mail.

Since the covid-19 emergency on March 16, 2020, almost all schools in Indonesia have adopted a policy for online learning or distance learning (PJJ). With online learning teachers and students alike learn to utilize technology as a learning medium. In carrying out online learning with various limitations of capabilities, facilities and infrastructure in the form of mobile phones, laptops and networks for teachers and students as well as limited capabilities in the use of technology, the implementation of online learning must still be pursued so that the process of transforming science to students is not interrupted.

Teachers as the spearhead of education make various efforts such as implementing Long Distance Learning (PJJ) through Whatsapp Group media, Google Classroom, Moodle, and other online learning applications. For synchronous learning teachers also make use of Google Meet media, Zoom Cloud Meeting, Cisco Webex and so on. Nowadays, there are many online learning resources and science content on the internet.

Utilization of various Long Distance Learning media (PJJ) that are processed in accordance with the ability and desire of teachers. The demands of teachers are not only academically but also the ability to communicate what to do in Long Distance Learning (PJJ) Such as in Google Classroom, Moodle and Group Whatsapp learning media, teachers send learning materials, learning video links, assignments and as a medium of communication to perform mentoring and mentoring processes to students.

The obstacles faced by students in Long Distance Learning (PJJ) that occur in students are also present in teachers such as not having an android phone, data package and signal network. These obstacles can be obstacles in the learning process. But teachers certainly understand the situation and provide solutions and solutions to problems faced to students so that students can still follow the learning process. Tasks can be taken and collected at school when conditions are safe and remain in compliance with health protocols. Network or signal interference by providing a longer working time span so that the workmanship of the task does not become a heavy burden.

With various limitations in the situation of the Covid 19 pandemic becomes a challenge for a teacher to continue to learn and practice learning online. In addition, teachers must be able to present fun and innovative learning to overcome the learning difficulties faced and collaboration of learning media so that learning is not monotonous and can still present an interactive learning atmosphere between teachers and students.

As for the recommendations given from this study is to Adjust the implementation of Long Distance Learning in accordance with regional conditions,

Establish a working group in the region to provide guidance, develop a supervisory framework and strategies for the use of BOS, provide greater autonomy to BOS principals can now be used by schools to support vulnerable families who are struggling with additional expenses to purchase internet packages and phone credit, equipping teachers with the skills to carry out Long Distance Learning

## CONCLUSION

Long Distance Learning (PJJ) has not run optimally. Some students find it difficult to understand the concept of the lesson, because not all teachers do *live teaching*. PJJ also relies on many applications during the learning process to task collection, making it less efficient.

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