

Research article

The Impact of Teaching Culture Online in Indonesia During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant changes in all aspects of human life, including the field of education. The learning process has shifted from classroom to online platforms in schools and universities across Indonesia. This article highlights the opportunities and challenges of remote/distance learning in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article also highlights the impacts of online learning on all actors involved including teachers and students. The authors conducted a literature review of articles related to the impact of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

At the time, the world is facing a major issue. The issue started from the emergence of a disease outbreak caused by a virus which is familiarly called as Covid-19. The outbreak caused drastic changes to almost all aspects of human life including weakening the world economy, reducing direct social interactions significantly, and putting people to deadly concerns and risks.

The coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic has presented monumental challenges for various industries, including education sector. Since the virus was declared a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, the education system in many parts of the globe underwent a sudden shift in terms of learning style, from the conventional learning in the classroom to online learning. The adaptation of virtual learning using various applications or tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom Meeting etc., does come with demanding challenges as well as beneficial opportunities.

The Covid-19 required countries across the globe to adopt social isolation and health protocols to curb the spread of the virus. Public spaces including schools and universities as well as other educational institutions were forced to close down to

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prevent its spread. The government subsequently adopted alternative methods and education system to accommodate learning for all students. Online or virtual or e-learning became an urgent necessity rather than an option[1].

E-learning is defined as electronic media used for various learning purposes ranging from conventional classroom add-on functions to online substitution for face-to-face meetings with online encounters[2]. E-learning became widely known and developed along with the introduction and widespread use of computers by the wider community, especially by academics as well as for educational purposes. E-learning is considered as an innovation where the learning process is no longer involving only listening to material descriptions from teachers or lecturers. It also creates a more dynamic and interactive learning process in order to generate or increase skills and materials understanding as expected. There are three functions of e-learning to learning activities in the classroom, which are as a supplement of materials that is optional, complementary, or substitutional[3].

Meanwhile, Kentnor[4] argued that online education can be defined as a form of distance education or learning using computers and internet as the delivery mechanism. The characteristics of online learning are: (1) learning using electronic media; (2) use of software or applications and internet network; (3) distance learning; (4) more dominant role of media in learning; and (5) online learning requires students' independence[5]. The use of computers as an educational platform emerged in the United States' corporations during the 1980s as companies used computer-based programs to train new employees. Universities and colleges experimented with the process in the 1990s. However, most universities faced numerous challenges during the implementation of online education which included the lack of understanding of this method of teaching, the lack of institutional support, and fear that the quality of education in the online environment suffers[4].

In Indonesia, the implementation of online learning initially started in the 1980s which was based on Indonesia's goal to advance information technology. The method of online learning developed quite rapidly in the 2000s through the Indonesia Global Development Learning Network and the Indonesia Higher Education and Research Network (INHERENT). At that time, more than 300 universities had joined the INHERENT network. Universities that are members of INHERENT could share online learning models that could be followed by all students in Indonesia. Furthermore, universities were also able to share up-to-date lectures[6].

The implementation of online learning in Indonesia gained momentum again when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. The Indonesian government has issued various policies and initiatives to deal with learning obstacles during the Covid-19 pandemic. The principle of education policy during the Covid-19 pandemic is to prioritize the health and safety of students, educators, education staff, families, and society in general, as well as considering the growth and development of students and psychosocial conditions in an effort to fulfil educational services during the Covid-19 pandemic[7]. The following are several policies and programs made by the Ministry of Education and Culture during the Covid-19 pandemic: (1) Internet data quota assistance; (2) Flexibility in the use of BOS (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*) funds; (3) Allocation of *BOS Afirmasi* and *BOS Kinerja* for Covid-19 assistance in public and private schools most affected by the pandemic Covid-19; (4) Wage subsidy assistance for teachers and non-PNS education personnel; (5) Emergency Curriculum; (6) Teacher Learning Program; (7) Teacher-Sharing Pages; (8) Learning from Home Program on TVRI; and (9) Webinars series during the pandemic[8].

The process of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic created noteworthy changes as all levels of education were forced to transform to adapt immediately to implement online learning. Online learning stood as the sole choice in the context of preventing the spread of Covid-19 in the educational sector during the struggle against the virus. However, this form of learning can also be interpreted as limiting access to education. Social restrictions have an impact on education policy as learning must be conducted with various consequences. This is very influential on the adaptation period due to changes in the learning mechanism and system. Effective online learning must take into account various factors such as speed, student-teacher ratio, pedagogy, both students and teachers' roles online, synchronization of online communication, online assessment, and sources of feedback[9]. Therefore, the implementation of online learning in Indonesia comes with its own opportunities and challenges.

Based on the research conducted by Firmansyah[10], several advantages of online learning are: (1) learning can be done anywhere and anytime; (2) train students' learning independence; (3) more varied learning; (4) wider learning resources; and (5) save time, cost, and effort. By saving time, costs, and energy, students will be more focused in their process learning which increases the achievement expectations. The existence of online learning also makes students more independent and confident because learning is more student-centred and they are more daring in expressing their opinions. Another advantage is that there are many learning resources which not only focuses

on textbooks. These learning resources can be accessed via the internet on various websites in the form of text, images, or videos.

Distance learning provokes independence for students and teachers in maximising the use of technology and the Internet. Since not all individuals are capable of computer literate, the requirement of computer usage during the pandemic causes students and teachers to be more accustomed and skilled in completing work with IT. Several acknowledgments from educational practitioners show that this moment of social distancing has resulted in increased creativity and competence in carrying out their respective duties.

For students, from pre-school level to secondary school, online learning provides them space to implement learning activities and complete assignments at home. These allow students to interact more intensely with their family in a more meaningful learning situation. University students are much more independent in expressing their opinions, attitudes, and behaviour more productively. University students have easier time in adapting with online learning as they are more likely to be computer literate. The series of lectures are mediated through various digital-based applications where student competencies automatically experience an increase in more established IT competencies due to the demands of a series of activities that are dominated by digital media. They can also remain productive in completing their final assignments, such as journal articles, thesis, or dissertations, even though mentoring and consultation are conducted online by utilizing various electronic media and representative communication access points during the pandemic[11].

Online learning has a significant influence on university students' language literacy skills, including being able to create a learning community and learning materials can be accessed at any time with technological sophistication. Online platforms can improve reading skills, generate positive reading perceptions, encourage class discussion, and develop reading and critical thinking skills. Internet users are increasingly encouraging people to upload their work, including written work such as articles, essays, and many more. People on the Internet are constantly searching for reading and uploading their writing which automatically increases reading and writing literacy. Therefore, literacy really needs to be fostered to create generations with inclination to like to read and write. Especially in this digital era, everything requires literacy skills, including language literacy[12].

Despite its advantages, online learning also poses significant challenges to educational sector, especially to disadvantaged students or educational practitioners due to unequal access to technology and Internet connectivity. In several countries, it is

reported that among those who adopt online learning, the average actual benefits are much smaller than expected. Network problems, lack of training, and lack of awareness are stated as the main challenges faced by educators. Lack of awareness is stated as the most important reason by those who do not adopt online learning followed by lack of interest and doubts about the usefulness of online learning.

For teachers or educational practitioners, online learning poses several challenges which can be divided into several indicators including: 1) the process of delivering learning materials, 2) the process of interaction with students in the learning process, 3) the quality of utilisation of facilities and elements in learning, 4) managing teaching materials to be delivered in the learning process, and 5) preparation of curriculum devices that are in accordance with current conditions[13]. To solve this issue, schools or any educational institutions can hold trainings or workshops for teachers regarding the use of online learning media such as Google Classroom, Google Forms, and many more. Furthermore, schools can also strengthen supporting facilities and infrastructure used by teachers in the learning process such as building Internet networks to optimise distance learning process.

Research from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in March 2020 with subjects aged 14-17 years (69% women and 31% men) totalling 717 from 29 provinces throughout Indonesia show that 58% of students prefer face-to-face learning rather than study-from-home programs. One of the contributing factors was that participants thought that communication with friends was limited, they experienced technological limitations, from internet facilities, gadgets, to electronic books. Several students also consider that their schools lack good programs or implement online learning poorly which significantly affects their learning outcomes. One of the biggest challenges of online learning is the limitation of provision of materials from teachers to students where teachers only hands assignments merely to complete lesson plans[14]. Meanwhile, KPAI (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia*) received 213 complaints from students and parents in various regions regarding the implementation of online learning. Most of the students complained about the difficult daily assignments with limited or short period of time of completion. Parents also complained about paying school fees in full since there were no learning activities held in school as well as experiencing economic problems due to the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak[15].

Schools and teachers implement government policies to study from home as an effort to curb the spread of Covid-19 but at the same time ensure students are engaged in constructive activities through online learning. Various online media platforms are used in online learning, while teachers, students, and parents are expected to continue to

make adjustments over time. Various positive responses were conveyed by students and teachers such as saving time and cost, more efficient and flexible time of learning, increasing computer literacy, and so on. Network limitations, lack of training, lack of awareness, and interest were stated as the main challenges faced during the implementation of online learning. The obligation to study online is also a serious obstacle, especially for students with limited resources. To assist student learning and achievement, an appropriate educational environment and system that facilitates academic achievement must be provided. Good communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination are needed among the parties involved, starting from the government, teacher associations, parents, and students themselves.

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