

SURVIVING ONLINE LEARNING CHALLENGES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CAN WE?

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic which was announced by the WHO as an international disaster and all countries had to make strategies to survive during the pandemic. The role of education aspect is the one of aspects that had affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and almost all of education in the world change to be online systems. On the other words, all elements of education such as teachers, students and other educational institutions must be able to adapt in the new system. The aim of this qualitative study is to investigate and find out the impacts, challenges, and opportunities experienced by online learner during pandemic. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with the method of interviewing students in 3rd and 5th semesters at Tidar universities related to the phenomenon of online learning. Phenomenological instruments by interviewing were selected in order to obtain accurate data from participants. As a result, technology, economics, learning and assignments become the obstacles experienced during their online learning. In addition, technological innovation and acceptance of online learning become the opportunities after the existence of the online learning. The covid-19 pandemic encourages researchers and innovators to innovate and develop research in the health and technology fields so that the entire system can survive the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: The Covid-19 pandemic, education system, online learning

Introduction

In the mount of December 2019 at Wuhan, Hubei, China, have appeared a series of unknown pneumonia cases cause with a clinical picture very similar to viral pneumonia. In-depth sequencing research of the lower respiratory tract samples showed the novel coronavirus presence, which was named as 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (Huang et al. 2020). As cited in (Nicola et al. 2020), Sohrabi et al. highlighting the outbreak level on 30 January, 2020 with the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the information about COVID-19 outbreak being a global emergency to the world. In spite of the fact that the origin of the pathogen virus, which immediately became a pandemic, was not objectively determined by the scientific researcher, several people claimed that the disease was caused by contact with the animals sold in Wuhan's market and their consumption (Erol and Danyal 2020).

Subsequently, the rapid spread of this pandemic in the world effected at the entire field, such as health, economic, and also education sector. This virus brings a lot of effect in all aspect of live in every country. All of countries across the world have imposed some protective policies to stop the increasing spread, such as social distancing, avoiding unnecessary travel, and a ban on congregations. Even though, the purpose of this strict protocol is to prevent the spread of the virus which continues to increase, it has had widespread socioeconomic implications. Nicola et al. (2020) argue that, importation issues and lack of staff are the key concerns for businesses due to disruption to supply chains and self-isolation policies.

The restrictions caused by non-pharmaceutical interventions like social distancing have also impacted education at all levels because learners and teachers are unable to do offline learning. These limitations will limit chances for the students to learn during the condition of social distancing terms (Fernando M. Reimers and Schleicher 2020). The new phenomenon in human history happened when the online or digital teaching activity has made tens of millions of teachers and students have to change offline teaching into online teaching (Yao et al. 2020). Online learning draws attention to internet-based courses offered with synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronous learning is a form of learning with direct interactivity between students and the teachers using online forms such as video conferences, online application, website and other. In contrast, asynchronous learning is a form of learning indirectly (not at the same time) using an independent learning approach (Rusmiati et al. 2020).

Online learning is depend on the use of technological devices also internet connection. The teachers and students with poor connections will have trouble in accessing the online leaning. The dependency of online learning on technological equipment and the development of the equipment was a big challenge for schools, teachers, and learners (Adedoyin and Soykan 2020). According to Fishbane and Tomer (2020) as cited in (Adedoyin and Soykan 2020) found that different levels of internet accessibility that can not be felt by all elements of students become a problem for those with low socio-economic power, so this becomes an additional burden for them in doing a virtual meeting during online learning. Another difficulty arises through the limits of the software particularly in terms of its functionality. The inhibiting factor when making group presentations online is their relatively limited ability to interact with other groups and listeners in delivering the materials (Gillett-Swan 2017).

Methodology

In this case, the researchers used descriptive qualitative research with phenomenology approach. Qualitative descriptive is a method to study spacious summarization, in everyday terms of specific events experienced by individuals or groups (Lambert and Lambert 2013). While phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory also are descriptive qualitative approaches, basically, they are not typically in the descriptive domain because they also explain the phenomena. According to Sandelowski, as cited from (Lambert and Lambert 2013) qualitative descriptive research should be seen as a categorical, alternative for inquiry because the researcher does not need to move as far from or into the data and require a conceptual or highly abstract rendering of the data, like in the other qualitative designs.

The phenomenological method, which verifies subjective human experience, is usually used in answering questions (Lopez and Willis 2004). When using phenomenology, in making important methodological decisions, the researchers need an awareness of basic assumptions like an interviewing the participants. Although some of different approaches can be overlap, they have different ontological and epistemological foundations. A range of approaches are used to thermalize meaning, but some of them would advantage from clarifying ontological and epistemological assumptions (Sundler et al. 2019). The phenomenological approach of descriptive qualitative method was chosen to be used in this research because it is appropriate to the theme and the current phenomenon about the challenges that the students faced on the online learning during Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the researchers provide questions related to learning with the online system during the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, the researchers interview some students about their perception in the online learning during thi Covid-19 pandemic. In this study, the researchers interviewed participants to represent the opinions of other participants. Researchers target participants from 3rd and 5th semester students at Tidar University.

Table 1: Data of the response

No	Type of questions	Response
1.	Did you encounter any difficulties during online learning?	100% participants have problem
2.	What are the obstacles you experienced during online learning?	1. Technology 2. Internet connection 3. Economic 4. The material
3.	Do you think online learning is effective in delivering material?	100% participants think online learning are not effective for learning and teaching
4.	Please give your feedback regarding the online learning system that is being implemented today!	1. Online conferencing is quite helpful in delivering material, only sometimes the signal becomes an obstacle, especially if the lecturer gives the material or assignments outside of class hours there is no feedback on assignments 2. The learning system is sometimes boring, uninteresting 3. In my opinion, lecturers or teachers have done their best to provide online learning to students or students, for various systems used. The problem here is that we are not ready to accept

online learning. More effective and good offline learning

4. I think online learning is the last option that can be done to support learning during a pandemic. However, learning with this system does have various obstacles during the process. Time management, delivery of material, self-management to access to technology and the internet are the main problems encountered during online learning. During online learning we find it very difficult to manage the time because of the learning hours that are not well controlled. Sometimes we have to wait a long time for the teacher to explain the material in the video conference forum. Consequently a lot of time is wasted and we also have to find a place that is less comfortable to get a good connection.

Based on the table above, the researchers found of some perceptions of the students. The researchers give four questions related to the online learning system during Covid-19 pandemic. First question is did you encounter any difficulties during online learning? In the first question all of the participants find the difficulties in online learning process. Second question is what are the obstacles you experienced during online learning? In this second question, the participants argue that technologies like gadget or computer are the problem that sometimes they found. Besides that, internet connection, understanding the material and economic also that usually the participants found.

Subsequently, for the third question is do you think online learning is effective in delivering material? In this part, all of the participants think that during online learning all of them found that it is not effective to deliver the material. All of the participants find that they are difficult to understand the material clearly. On the other words, they think that understanding the material in online learning system are difficult because some problem that they found. Internet connection and teachers' explanation are the obstacles that students found. Sometimes, the teacher just gives the material without explanation. Besides, the teachers also just give them a lot of exercise with a short deadline. Some of them argue that "online learning very ineffective in the delivery of material or otherwise. Because certainly many of the students don't get the "feel" when they get material via online, as a result students only attend lectures as a formality, different from face to face."

Afterwards, the last question is please give your feedback regarding the online learning system that is being implemented today! In this part, the participants give their own feeling or perception about the online learning system during Covid-19 pandemic. Some of them argue that online conferences with some applications are effective to minimize the misunderstanding through the material. They argue that

“online conferencing is quite helpful in delivering material, only sometimes the signal becomes an obstacle, especially if the lecturer gives the material or assignments outside of class time there is no feedback on assignments”. However some of them also argue that online learning is make them fell boring because there is no interaction between them. They just listens the teachers’ explanation without any comment. Because they just feel like they want to end the lesson as soon as possible.

Besides that, the participants also argue that online learning sometimes it just waste their time to wait the teachers “I think online learning is the last option that can be done to support learning during a pandemic. However, learning with this system does have various obstacles during the process. Time management, delivery of material, self-management to access to technology and the internet are the main problems encountered during online learning. During online learning we find it very difficult to manage the time because of the learning hours that are not well controlled. Sometimes we have to wait a long time for the teacher to explain the material in the video conference forum. Consequently a lot of time is wasted and also have to find a place that is less comfortable to get a good connection.”

Challenge

Announcement made by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding the coronavirus pandemic, President Joko Widodo announced a national disaster in Indonesia in early March 2020. The declaration affects all state structure systems including the education system. After this news was officially declared, various mechanisms were put in place to administer the country with a new style or system. Current conditions, the number of people infected and the death rate is still increasing all over the world. The recommended by the World Health Organization to avoid and reduce infection rates, containment, mitigate the situation, contact transmission tracing, self-isolate, maintain social distancing, and wearing masks, maintaining health and always washing hands after activities.

The report from UNESCO (2020), show that after being declared an international disaster, lot of countries across the world have temporarily closed educational institutions or replaced them with online systems to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and also to reduce the rate of infection. Crawford et al. (2020), show a result that a new system emerged for students and teachers where they had to study and work from home (WFH/SFH) which led to a system with an online learning platform. However, the implementation of this program show the different risks of the online learning, problems or challenges experienced by the teachers and student teachers during online learning, especially referring to the higher education institutions (HEIs) (Bao, 2020).

Technology

Life after the Covid-19 pandemic is certainly not the same anymore. Like most the other aspects of life in digital era, the Covid-19 has a serious impact on the education system, as students, teachers and educational organizations around the world are forced to adapt (Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020). This pandemic has caused all areas of schools from elementary to university level around the world to replace them with online systems that are assisted by technology (Toquero, 2020). All academic activities undertake distance and virtual learning.

During the pandemic, the government has implemented a new order for all fields. The online system that is now being implemented forces all people to be more intense in using technology. In the education system that is now being carried out online certainly forces students and teachers to adapt quickly. The intense use of technology is expected to help students and teachers in teaching and learning activities. However, the use of technology in online systems certainly gets into its use.

Economic

Changes in the learning system that seem hasty have forced the government to implement the system of distance education through an online or digital learning system, the correspondence of education, the external studies, flexible in the learning system, carried out on a massive online system (Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, Syaodih, Nurtanto, & Tambunan, 2020). According to World Bank (2020) states that almost all countries have implemented the different of learning systems because the schools are closed face-to-face due to Covid-19. The dilemma of various countries in overcoming covid-19 has made the government and even the community feels the impacts such as health and the economy. the spread of the covid-19 virus that continues to increase forces the government to issue policies regulated in PP No. 21 of 2020 concerning PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) with the aim of breaking the chain of spreading Covid-19. This policy made several companies take steps to reduce considerable losses due to Covid-19. This has led the company to take steps to terminate its employees (PHK).

The dismissal experienced by most of the employees certainly has an impact on economic problems. The online learning system, of course, the parents of students who experienced the dismissal felt overwhelmed. They have to spend additional money to buy internet quotas or electronic devices such as cell phones or computers to support their children studying. It cannot be denied that the condition of students in the low socio-economic backgrounds will definitely consider this condition as a difficulty to adapt during the pandemic situation. In other words, Fishbane and Tomer (2020) show their investigation related to financial problems that lead to the student learning system. In their research shows that students without internet access addressing poverty level of people in the country has increased, the level of internet accessibility has decreased drastically and the implication is that the condition of students in the low of socio-economic power find it as a difficulties for buying a broadband connection so that it can interfere with their accessibility in experiencing learning.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

After the teacher has delivered the lesson, here appears an assessment in which the teacher measures the learning activity to ascertain instructional objectives through tests, quizzes and examinations which are conducted online. Osterlind (2002), many descriptions related to the tests or exam and measurements or analysis theory with few details about the planning to the development and writing of the task items by the teachers or the instructors that can be given to students to measure the level of material absorption. In the online system, the assessment is carried out online where the teacher is limited to the supervision of students so that the teacher

is not free to control and control the cheating committed by students (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015)

In addition, the explanation given by the teacher was not optimal. This has an impact on the students' lack of understanding of the material being taught. In addition, the tasks given are more than the face-to-face learning system, making students only focuses on assigning tasks, not understanding the material. During the pandemic students have had different experiences and opportunities for digital or online learning system during this condition and also has made assessments more difficult and complicated to adapt. Each student has different obstacles from other students, which certainly makes learning less effective.

Opportunities

Application of online learning besides having risks also has the benefit, such as the flexibilities to the implementation (Smedley, 2010). Online learning that is carried out also makes all elements have the interactivities to apply (Leszczyński et al., 2018). On the other hand, this program also self-pacing in implementation of online systems (Amer, 2007) and opportunities that face-to-face of learning systems do not have. Learning with an online system is useful for aligning local and global systems to deal with the deployment of the Covid-19 pandemic also maintaining the calendar of academic. Almost all elements of education around the world have responded to this situation by rapidly in the digital transformation era and forced them to adapt quickly.

According to Wang and Zha (2018) the role of the education system that is carried out online is to provide a social role as a place for pandemic eradication. This is certainly very helpful for medical personnel who are at the forefront of fighting Covid-19. Manfuso (2020) has transparent that Greg Flanik as a chief information officer of Baldwin Wallace University in Ohio, stated that the global pandemic is an opportunity for all aspects of technology utilization and making everyone use online learning tools will be the highest achievement that can be achieved during 2020. Based on this statement can be concluded if the global pandemic provides an opportunity for the acceptance of education with an online system that can be accepted by the community. This certainly provides an opportunity for the development of the education system with a new order. So it is hoped that during the learning process carried out continuously, it can provide opportunities for progress in various fields of innovation and research.

Technology innovation

Universities and research canter have a heavy burden during the pandemic to stabilize all aspects so that they can survive the covid-19 pandemic. In addition, research and related fields are assigned the task of providing instruction at the forefront of pandemic prevention and control. As a result of this responsibility and in the short term, several universities in Indonesia in collaboration with research institutions has produced several innovations in several scientific fields and developed vaccines to help and solve the problems from health workers in dealing with all the elements to stop the spread of this new virus which continues to increase its toll.

According to Beech (2020) equates the opportunities for the innovation of technological that brought by this pandemic with the Second World War which is

an opportunity for the development of rocket technology and digital computers. In addition, the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has proven to provide a positive impetus for technology development around the world.

Conclusion

The spread of the Corona Virus which has continued to increase until now since it was first declared an international disaster by WHO has greatly affected all aspects of life. The presence of the corona virus has also rocked the education field globally. Then, this pandemic forces many education fields to stay temporarily closed and replace their learning system. In Indonesia, various levels of education ranging from elementary school to university have stopped face-to-face teaching and replaced it with an online system. This is because Indonesia is one of the countries in Asia with high rate of transmission of Covid-19 cases. In other words, the government and all elements of education must develop scenarios quickly so that the entire education system can survive and adapt during a pandemic. The covid-19 pandemic made all of system realize that the strategic planning is an urgent matter for all educational elements so that they can survive until the end of the pandemic (Rieley, 2020).

In conclusion, a sudden change in the education system certainly has obstacles in its implementation. During a pandemic, online learning is growing rapidly almost all academic institutions have switched to the online system. Technological problems such as computers and gadgets, economics, internet connections that are not comprehensive and teaching methods are the main obstacles in the application of distance learning methods which is applied in almost all educational institutions. From the data that has been discussed, almost all participants experienced problems in carrying out learning with the online system.

In this period, it also can open up opportunities to make education better. The covid-19 pandemic forces the development of digital technology to develop rapidly. There are so many innovative platforms that can be used as an online teaching medium. In addition, during this pandemic, it also opens up opportunities for acceptance of online learning systems. In Indonesia, nowadays distance learning is still rare. However, the covid-19 pandemic provides an opportunity for all elements to accept the online system. Over time, this system will be accepted by all elements of education to support development in the digital era. This bad situation will become a new stage for digital learning and enable the society to accept e-learning technology, innovation and digital developments in a better direction (Dhawan, 2020).

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