Semi-Online Learning as a Solution to the Digital Divide in Education in Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged Regions (3T)

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Abstract

The increasingly widespread spread of Covid-19 has prompted the government to issue an appeal for implementing distance learning as an undertaking to maximize learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the implementation of distance learning is arduous, especially in Frontier, Remote, and Disadvantaged (3T) regions, due to the digital divide in the 3T regions. This study aims to explore the practice of semi-online learning at SMK N A Waingapu East Sumba and SMP B Merauke. This research method uses qualitative research with data collection through interviews and literature studies which are then analyzed with interactive analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman. This research was conducted at SMK N A Waingapu East Sumba and SMP B Merauke. The research's results indicate that both schools carry out semi-online learning models to support learning amidst limitations in digital access. SMK N A Waingapu chose to conduct a limited face-to-face learning system for students with weak economic situations, while SMP B Merauke gave questions modules for students to work on at home.

Introduction

Education is one aspect of life that has been impacted by the Corona Virus Disease 19 (Covid-19) epidemic (Schleicher, 2020; Siahaan, 2020). According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), the Covid-19 pandemic has infected at least 407,000 schools, 3.4 million teachers, and 56 million students (Prasetyo, 2021). When Covid-19 first appeared in Indonesia, all levels of education (from early childhood education, elementary school, junior high school, high school/vocational school, and university) chose to conduct learning activities from home to stop the spread of Covid-19. The adoption of online learning is tailored to the capabilities of each institution and is typically accomplished through the use of digital technologies such as Google Classroom, Zoom, telephone, live chat, and so on (Sudarsana, et al., 2020, p.5).

The online learning policy has been in effect in several provinces in Indonesia since March 16, 2020, but it was not implemented in several schools in the regions at the time due to a lack of readiness to conduct online learning—which, of course, required facilities such as smartphones, laptops, or computers, as well as internet constraints (both network quality and the cost of purchasing internet data) (Harnani, 2020). According to Winaya (in Sudarsana et al., 2020, p. 175), there are several barriers to the implementation of online learning, including: 1) technological inequality between schools in big cities and regions, 2) limited teacher competence in the use of learning support applications, 3) limited resources in the use of technology—for example, the internet, and 4) the lack of an integral relationship between teacher-student-parents in online learning.

Seeing numerous challenges toward online learning, the government, particularly the Ministry of Education and Technology, took steps to address them, including issuing Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) (Mendikbud, 2020) and providing assistance Learning of internet data for students, teachers, and lecturers that can rely on it. The following are the provisions for online learning contained in Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 about the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) point two:

a) There is no obligation to accomplish curriculum objectives for grade promotion or graduation (point 2a)
b) Emphasis on life skills education, including the Covid-19 epidemic (point 2b)