Portrayal Analysis of Early Childhood Education in Cities and Villages: The COVID-19 Pandemic Era

Lely Masruroh 1*, Erni Munastiwi 2
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Jl. Laksa Adisucipto, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
* Corresponding Author Email: Erni.munastiwi@uin-suka.ac.id, Telp: +6281391425001

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has affected significant aspects of our society. In addition to degrading the economic system and human health throughout the world, it disrupts educational activities running in general. With the government’s policy of having to stay home, education is diversion through online learning. Online learning is applied to school institutions throughout Indonesia, both in the village and in the city. Network access and facilities in urban areas are better than in rural areas. This research is essential to be conducted as input to equalize online learning support facilities in the Ponorogo area of East Java. The method in this study uses qualitative with library studies and at the same time research in the field. Data retrieval using interview and journal analysis techniques after related books. The results of the study suggest that online learning conducted in the city tends to be more effective because of the ease of easy-to-diakses facilities and the full support of parents. Meanwhile, in the village online learning is less effective due to the lack of adequate facilities and lack of support from parents.

Keywords: pandemic covid-19, online learning, early childhood, cities, villages

Analisis Potret Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini di Kota dan Desa: Era Pandemi COVID-19


Kata kunci: pandemi covid-19, pembelajaran online, PAUD, kota, desa


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INTRODUCTION

Humanity is currently struggling against the COVID-19 pandemic, which first appeared in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019 (Devi Herliandry, Enjelina Suban, & Kuswanto, 2020, pp. 65–70; Shahzad, Hassan, Aremu, Hussain, & Lodhi, 2020). In Indonesia, the outbreak began in March 2020 and less than a month experienced a fast rate of transmission that reached over 1,285 Covid-19 positive patients and 114 fatalities in Indonesia by the end of March 2020 (Bayu, 2020). With that, the government has issued several social distancing policies (limiting social distance) by reducing human activities outside their homes to minimize the transmission of the disease. Some areas apply “lockdown” policies to limit access to places of public gathering such as closing down roads, malls, offices, factories, tourist attractions, flights, public institutions, and schools (Rizky, 2020)

With the application of “lockdown” policies, teaching and learning activities in various non-formal and formal education institutions from early education to higher education were stopped. With this pandemic, physical learning activities in classes are stopped. However, learning activities continue to be carried out between educators and students still taking place by applying online learning using applications and online-based E-learning. Although partial online learning systems have been in effect in the past, this system of complete online learning took place as a shock effect from the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The pandemic, with the immediate implementation of complete online systems, causes panic and shock in almost all walks of life, regions, offices of villages, sub-districts, districts/cities, provinces, centres and even the international world (Suwarwoto. 2020).

Childhood is a period of human growth and development into adulthood (Qodriyati, Raharjo, & Utsman, 2018). For a child’s growth, the age of 0 to 6 years is a difficult period that can determine the fate of the future of the individual itself, such as adolescence and adulthood. Childhood tends to see the activity in the environment as it grows. They imitate and style following what they perceived as an example. With rapid technological advances, parents should supervise and limit children's knowledge by leading to positive things (Tesa, 2018). Therefore, education and good habituation are essential to instil in children from an early age.

Education is an essential aspect of human life. With education, a person will be able to develop the potential they have and make education the basis of daily life (Doni Koesoema, 2010). The purpose of education is to create and empower people by the goals of human creation on this earth by making religious values a frame in an ideal society (Maragustam, 2018). Therefore, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, education must continue to be carried out using a new learning system, namely the online “learning from home” method.

In practice, education during the COVID-19 pandemic turned into a completely online system, where learning is accessed from home via the internet and applications that have been provided (Darmalaksana, 2020). The internet is a technological advancement that can be utilized by the community in terms of work and becomes a powerful tool in education. Besides, the internet also has the potential to support effective educational programs (Volerty & Lord, 2000), and with that, the implementation requires excellent and efficient learning facilities by utilizing information technology. In the era of advances in science and technology, this would undoubtedly be very influential on human behaviour. In the future, of course, humans will possibly use internet technology to complete all their work, including education. Information technology that can display images, photos, produce audio, video can be used as a choice of effective and efficient learning media (Erni Munastiwi, 2012). Some studies suggest that online learning provides very significant activities. Experts point out that all resources must be mobilized for the creation of online education which is indeed ongoing to become mainstream in 2025 (Palvia et al., 2018). Therefore, online learning requires mental readiness and the knowledge of parents, teachers and students in online learning so that learning objectives are achieved.
During the pandemic, people rely on digital access to facilitate business and educational activities. Many applications that are circulating supports the education system throughout the pandemic such as Zoom, Ruang Guru, Zenius.net, Quipper, Google Classroom and others (Gunawan, 2017; Dhawan, 2020; Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020). Some schools or universities also facilitate free E-learning services to help online-based learning exercises (Risky Nasution, 2020). Digital advancements have also facilitated and support students or educators in teaching and learning. Gadgets are one of the tools that can increase students' interest in learning. With the enhancement of gadgets in the system, students look more active and motivated to learn (Mahfud, 2018). In teaching and learning activities, proper learning media is crucial to be considered to make the learning process practical and efficient (Firmansyah, 2018). Throughout the pandemic, the application of education in Indonesia uses online-based learning media by utilizing applications that have been provided and are easily obtained through gadgets, laptops and computers.

Free applications and services provided by the government is the right solution to continue online teaching and learning activities in this fully online education system. The policy issued by the government regarding online learning is evenly established for all levels of the kindergarten education unit, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and universities. The impact of online learning policy in early childhood education institutions (PAUD), such as inadequate facilities and infrastructure, less maximum material delivery, burden of purchasing internet quota, sluggish internet connection, visually inclined learning style, lack of teacher flexibility in controlling children’s activities, pedagogy problems, technology (parents do not have Hp/laptop) (Nurdin & Anhusadar, 2020; Nurkolis & Muhdi, 2020; Satrianingrum & Prasetyo, 2020). Thus, e-learning policies in PAUD are less effective.

The results of a research conducted by Wahyudin Darmalaksa (2020) entitled "Analysis of WFH Pandemic COVID-19 Online Learning as a Challenge for 21st Century Digital Leaders" states that the effectiveness of online-based learning conducted amid the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has achieved significant results. Besides, online learning as a digital leader of the 21st century has been proven to be effective in the WFH pandemic Covid-19 era. In another study by Aan Hasanah (2020) on "Analysis of Student Online Learning Activities in the COVID-19 Pandemic", the results of his study stated that the implementation of online learning in students conducted at home in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus achieved "adequate" results. That is because there are many obstacles and challenges in the state of force majeure in the hope that it can be used as an evaluation of future educational challenges.

On the other hand, the parents of students also get confused when they have to accompany their sons and daughters to complete a stack of tasks, besides they also have to think about survival and work that occurs amid a crisis (Ahmad R, 2020). Educational institutions, both in cities and villages, have accepted policies set by the Indonesian government. Nevertheless, online-based learning between schools in cities and villages certainly has differences in their application. Therefore, this study analyzes the application of online-based early childhood learning in the COVID-19 pandemic in villages and cities.

METHOD

The approach in this article uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis approach. This research uses both a literature study and field study (Priatna, 2020). The first step taken is the study of literature in journals, books, magazines, daily news that is the subject of online learning in the COVID-19 era. Data collection by searching and information gathering is conducted concerning online learning system in the COVID-19 era. The validity of the data in research can be carried out with credibility tests such as increasing accuracy in research done by reading some references, books, previous research results and related documents (Sugiyono, 2007). To deepen the results of the study, researchers also conducted online interviews on
several subjects. The subjects of the study were kindergarten teachers and parents who were in cities and villages, especially in Ponorogo district, East Java. The information obtained was analyzed from the literature relating to research, studied in more depth, and surveyed to see how the implementation of learning in the COVID-19 era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

With the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic, education is carried out using a fully online method. The policy has been implemented throughout Indonesia since March 2020. With the policies that require online learning, it has not only affected the students' interest in learning but also influences teacher capability, especially in the use of learning methods and media. The implementation of the education system in cities are different when compared to rural areas. Cities have much more access to information, primarily through the internet network. In contrast, conditions in villages are the opposite, lack of information that is difficult to access via the internet. Hence, education services between cities and villages differ in their implementation.

In a geographic sense, cities are areas where the population is dense, residences cluster in groups, and the livelihoods of the inhabitants primarily do not come from the agriculture sector (Puji, 2017). In this research, data were obtained from the city of Ponorogo, East Java. The inhabitants of the city of Ponorogo on average have livelihoods as company employees, lecturers or teachers, shop owners, and home industries (Ambiro, 2017). Many kindergartens are advanced and excellent in Ponorogo. One of them is at Ma’arif Kindergarten Patihan Kidul. Ms Ani Lalilatun Nikmah a teacher, said that the situation was agitated due to the presence of COVID-19 disease. Ma’arif Kindergarten Patihan Kidul adheres to government regulations to dismiss physical teaching and learning activities in schools and compensate them with learning from home using online methods. The teaching uses the whatsapp group application, and in select subjects, use the zoom application. It was notified that the enthusiasm of students in participating in online learning has been remarkable. This result is in line with the results of the interview by Mrs Ianatus Sholihah a teacher at Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah Kindergarten, who said that online learning practices use Zoom more often and the system generally runs smoothly. Not only the enthusiasm of students, but parents also participate in motivating and guiding their children so that the spirit of supporting the implementation of online learning is maintained. Parental involvement is very much needed to determine the child's ability and at the same time direct the actions of children (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009).

The Zoom application can help students and teachers stay connected, inside and outside the classroom. Besides that, and the use of other online learning media such as Google Classroom, this media can make it easier for users to get much-needed materials from the internet. Virtual-based learning makes activities take place interactively between teachers and students. Using Zoom does not require a complex installation process. Students use Zoom with invitations made by the teacher (Naserly, 2020). For the access and usage of the application, it is crucial to have stable internet access so as not to hinder the learning process. It cannot be denied that cities have stable and high-speed internet access, so that through Zoom, it can support students and teachers in implementing online learning live and face to face.

In addition to using Google Classroom and Zoom, online learning conducted in the city also uses WhatsApp groups. The WhatsApp application is generally common and can be accessed easily on an Android mobile phone. The results of an interview conducted with Ms Linda Karinka a teacher at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten Singosaren, said that learning using WhatsApp groups requires supervision from students’ parents. It is because WhatsApp groups do not have video-calling features that can be accessed by many people at once. In the process, the teacher usually gives direction through voice notes about learning and assignments to be taught.
Moreover, specific subjects use the Zoom application to be able to see student activities directly provided by the teacher with the help of parents. The application of online learning is also carried out at Muhammadiyah Kindergarten Ponorogo. In an interview with Ms Suryaningsih, it is said that the online learning process requires creative teachers to be able to foster student enthusiasm. The teacher prepares learning that interests the child by making various learning videos. Online learning evaluation is taken from the results of the students’ performance. The teacher gives assignments to students, and then the results of the assignments are sent back to the teacher by sending soft files, photos, or videos to be given an assessment.

The support of parents who live in cities is robust and always motivates children by encouraging children’s enthusiasm to continue to follow learning even though using online methods. With the comfort of existing infrastructures in cities, online learning practices can generally run smoothly. Each school has either different or similar policies on the application of learning using online methods.

Meanwhile, villages are regions populated by citizens in rural areas who are part of the legal community and possess the right to autonomy in the ties of the Republic of Indonesia (Rahayu, 2016). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all economic activities were stopped. Communities living in rural areas had to endure the effect of this stoppage. One of them is Ngebel, Ponorogo rural community whose geographical location is in the mountains where the majority of the inhabitants are farmers. Educational activities in Ngebel have hindered since the government decided to implement learning from home policies in their education system. Learning activities are substituted by the application of online learning methods carried out in their respective homes. The results of the interview by Ms Maryani, a teacher in Dharma Wanita Kindergarten Ngrogung Ngebel, said that the implementation of online learning in Ngebel is quite difficult for teachers. It is because the teacher has never been equipped to deal with a crisis like this. Teachers must carry out online learning and use effective and appropriate methods. To solve this, the Dharma Wanita Kindergarten teachers of Ngrogung Ngebel held a conference to adjust the vision, mission and goals for online learning practices. Ngrogung Ngebel teachers are mostly elderly. Thus, they cannot wholly grasp the advancement of science and technology. In its practice, online learning uses the WhatsApp group application. Furthermore, teachers are also faced with challenges in managing students because obstacles arise due to infrastructural constraints such as devices and parental supervision.

The implementation of online learning utilizing gadget media and internet networks will be maximal and run smoothly if the supporting facilities are adequate (Mahfud, 2018). As a learning tool, a school must have a building and excellent facilities. In connection with this, the practice of learning as a result of COVID-19 requires people to remain at home, that pushes the education system to switch to the adoption of online learning (Darmalaksana, 2020). Hence, the implementation of online learning carried out in villages must have adequate facility support to get maximum results.

According to Ms Dilla Rahayu, a teacher at Mardisiwi Kindergarten Tegalombo, it is said that the practice of online learning that took place was a little challenging for teachers and students. The conditions of Tegalombo village generally causes challenges in obtaining internet signals. Additionally, most parents who work as farmers do not have enough time to oversee their children during online learning. After all, online learning using WhatsApp groups requires the help of parental supervision. The condition is even more critical with some parents who do not have gadgets yet, which are the primary requirement for online learning. Therefore, some students cannot join online learning. To overcome this, schools do not carry out online learning, so teachers arrange learning by going door-to-door and assign periodic assignments.

The application of online learning in the village uses only the WhatsApp group application. It is in contrast to the existing conditions in cities where learning can use Zoom and Google Classroom. Why is this possible? In villages, the lack of signals can hamper the online learning process, while accessing Zoom and Google Classroom requires reliable and high-speed...
internet connection. Besides, online learning conducted in villages is not very active due to the difficulty in obtaining internet access. Additionally, the profession of rural communities as farmers makes it less able for parents to oversee and motivate children to take part in online learning. Achievements in learning are influenced significantly by supervision. It is similar to the opinion of (Fitria & Erni, 2019), which explains that supervision is the key to success in education. Teachers should cooperate with parents to regularly observe their children when online learning takes place. The aim is that online learning can run as expected. Meanwhile, in cities, parents generally work as office employees, lecturers/teachers, and other professions. They can easily supervise their children during online learning exercises. Besides, cities are also supported by adequate facilities such as sophisticated gadgets to high-speed internet networks (Benedict, 2017). The following will display the differences and similarities in the application of online learning in cities and villages.

Tabel 1. Differences and Similarities in the Application of Online Learning in Cities and Villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences/Similarities</th>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>Adequate and supportive facilities.</td>
<td>Inadequate facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Internet networks tend to be stable and smooth.</td>
<td>Internet networks tend to be unstable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The applications used are more varied: Google Classroom, Zoom, WhatsApp group, etc.</td>
<td>The application used is only WhatsApp group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Preparation for teachers is more stable and quick to adapt.</td>
<td>Teacher preparation is lacking and difficult to adapt, because of the lack of support from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Students get full support from parents.</td>
<td>Students do not get full support from parents, because parents do not have gadgets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Students can adapt to online learning, because they are accustomed to using gadgets.</td>
<td>Students are difficult to adapt, generally technology illiterate, tend to lack concentration of learning because of lack of motivation from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students need a long time to adapt to online learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>Learning problems faced are the same.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teachers change their learning method.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers arrange an emergency curriculum referring to the previous curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teachers are required to be creative and innovative in learning.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The difference in education in cities and villages is not only positive and negative. Some things need attention, namely: children who live in the village have an excellent spirit on struggling and a better enthusiasm for learning despite all the limitations. In the case of online learning with different facilities between cities and villages, the difference is substantial. The facilities in the village are minimal. Lack of support from schools, parents and the unavailability of adequate infrastructures can lead to ineffective and inefficient learning. It also has an impact on school quality and student performance which tends to decrease (Erni Munastiwi, 2018). Adequate infrastructure also affects the quality of education, because in the education process itself requires facilities that are following the needs so that learning can run as expected (Fitria
& Erni, 2019). Therefore, the success of online learning is determined by the readiness of the teacher, parental support and the readiness of the child and the availability of adequate infrastructure that can facilitate learning. Likewise, in online learning, the success of online learning is determined by several things. Because the conditions of education in cities and villages are different, the reality of online learning success can be achieved by schools in the city. In contrast, the success of online learning cannot be fully achieved in schools in the village.

The success of education that implements online learning in the city is quite good. It is because of the rapid advancement of technology which is very quickly absorbed by children in cities. It is no wonder that millennial children in cities hold gadgets everywhere and wherever they are. Nevertheless, it needs extra supervision from parents, because the improper usage of gadgets will bring harmful effects for children. Village children who are not so conspicuous in gadget ownership have their pluses in terms of character. In contrast, they can socialize and have good morals because they do not possess negative influences from the improper use of gadgets. Monitoring the use of gadgets is so crucial because children still need guidance from parents about the good and the bad, the right and the wrong (Chusna, 2020). Thus, there is a difference in the success of online learning for young children in cities and villages. Children who study in cities do not experience obstacles so that online learning can be successful. The success achieved is very much determined by the readiness of the teacher, the readiness of the parents and the readiness of the child and the availability of tools that support online learning including the availability of a stable internet network, the availability of sufficient phone credit. In comparison, early childhood learning in the village experienced the opposite.

CONCLUSION

The results of the portrait analysis of early childhood learning in cities and villages in the COVID-19 era stated that online learning of early childhood carried out in cities tends to be more productive and successful. It is due to the ease and availability of accessible facilities, teachers are more mentally prepared and competence in using communication tools. Additionally, there is full support from parents and students’ readiness to accept online learning. In contrast, online learning that is carried out in the village is ineffective and cannot be appropriately implemented because of the unavailability of facilities and infrastructure to support online learning. Teachers also generally do not support because of the age factor, which contributes to their reluctance to learn how to use communication devices. It is exacerbated by the lack of support from parents and children who are not ready to accept online learning fully. Therefore, online learning in villages can not be said to be successful.

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