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## IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS POST COVID-19: OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC POLICIES

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out how the challenges of higher education institutions are after the Covid-19 pandemic and what are the strategic policies of higher education institutions in the implementation of post-covid-19 education and learning. The method used is descriptive method and the data collection method is through field research and literature. The data were then analyzed descriptively qualitatively. The results obtained: First, the challenges of higher education institutions after the Covid 19 pandemic are: (a) Closing of educational institutions; (b) Creation of learning materials or content; (c) The level of achievement of learning targets is not optimal; (d) The online lecture system has not been fully followed by adequate lecturer capacity; and (e) The transformation of digital learning also has the effect of fatigue conditions and increased stress. Second, various strategies for educational institutions after the Covid-19 pandemic are: (a) Lecturers and students must improve internet and computer literacy skills; (b) Redefining learning outcomes; (c) Lecturers must ensure the readiness of lecture materials with perspective; (d) Determine the duration of each learning unit; (e) Assessment in the form of quizzes and independent assignments must be ready; and (f) Campuses must prepare sufficient infrastructure and bandwidth.

**Keywords:** Implication, Education and Learning, Higher Education, Covid-19

### INTRODUCTION

Ahli filsafat Yunani Kuno yang bernama Aristoteles (384-322 SM) memberi pengertian tentang manusia, yaitu manusia adalah zoon politicon yaitu makhluk yang memiliki sifat ingin melakukan interaksi di dalam lingkungan masyarakat dan bersosialisasi.

It has been more than two years since the countries of the world have been battling an outbreak known as Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). This outbreak began in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China (Qadafi, 2020), which then spread rapidly to almost all countries. This virus is a new type of disease that has never been identified before. Common

signs and symptoms of Covid-19 infection include symptoms of acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. The average incubation period is between 5-6 days with the longest incubation period being 14 days (Dewi, 2020).

This epidemic is a tragedy that grieves the entire population of the earth and all aspects of human life are disrupted. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very broad impact in various fields of human life, not only health problems but also had an impact on social, economic, educational and so on. The Covid-19 pandemic has shattered the joints of dignified human life, starting from health, education, socio-communication and socio-economics, even touching the dimensions of religious implementation.

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, the government has taken many steps to prevent its spread. Starting from the order to use masks, the habit of washing hands and social/physical distancing. The application of social/physical distancing is one approach that can break the chain of the spread of the virus. Regarding social/physical distancing, based on research conducted in America, it can save more than 1 million lives (Nigam, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has an impact not only on people's economic activities, but also on education in Indonesia. The Covid-19 pandemic situation affects the education system and management. The most obvious change is in learning activities that were originally carried out face-to-face to virtual or online where there are various obstacles experienced by students/students and educators/lecturers. Teaching and learning activities are communication between teachers/lecturers and students/students. When face to face, the material will be received directly. The high risk of spreading in classrooms during the normal teaching and learning process has forced educational institutions to close and the normal teaching and learning process has been shifted to learning from home (BDR).

Various challenges faced by online learning systems, such as difficulties in participating in online learning due to internet connectivity constraints, information technology infrastructure support is also quite varied. During the pandemic, the curriculum applied did not change during the current pandemic, but only the learning and teaching methods changed. Then, what about after or after the pandemic? In general, the implementation of online learning in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic is still far from ideal and it is feared that it will c

This paper will examine the challenges of higher education institutions after the Covid-19 pandemic and how the strategic policies of higher education institutions in the implementation of education and learning are post-covid-19 pandemic.

## **METHOD**

Based on the problem, this research is classified as qualitative research, meaning that this research seeks to describe, record, analyze and interpret what is being studied, through observation, interviews and studying documentation (Mardalis, 2014); (Newman, 1997).

Sources of data used are primary data (primary data) and secondary data (secondary data). Primary data obtained through direct interviews, field observations (observation). While

secondary data was obtained from various sources such as books, scientific articles, journals, internet and other data as a complement to the suitability of the research focus.

The data collection techniques carried out consisted of: (1) library research, namely by conducting searches on various literary sources or written documentation such as books written by experts, scientific articles, journals, internet and other data. as a complement to the suitability of the research focus; (2) Field research (field research), namely data collection techniques by conducting research directly on the research object

The data analysis technique used is a qualitative descriptive technique, which is in the form of words, pictures and not in the form of numbers (Moleong, 1997, 6), following the pattern of Miles and Huberman (Upe 2010) starting with the collection of relevant data. With the focus of research (collection), then conducted the selection and simplification of data (reduction) focused on the research problem, then draw conclusions (verification) from the data that has been found in the field. All data obtained in the field were collected and analyzed systematically in depth in the form of narratives or sentences.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Challenges of Higher Education Institutions After the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Changes in learning methods were only carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, causing the readiness for implementation in higher education to be limited and varied. This creates a gap in terms of facility support, human resources, and the process of implementing online learning. Gaps in terms of access, academic achievement, and completion of higher education are also potential (UNESCO IESALC, 2020).

Groups of students with low-income family economic backgrounds are the most vulnerable in the midst of the current pandemic situation. Another impact that is also significant and will be felt in the long term is the decline in the competence and skills of future graduates, due to a lack of hands-on skills learning experience (World Bank, 2020).

At the institutional or higher education level, the impact of Covid-19 which is not followed by corrective measures and new innovative approaches will also cause many universities to experience a decline in institutional capacity and quality.

Although the pandemic has not yet been declared over, which is full of challenges, the post-pandemic is still accompanied by various challenges, including the world of higher education. As with the pandemic period, the learning system is carried out online, so post-pandemic this policy will still be pursued and difficult to avoid considering that this system has become increasingly embedded in our education world.

Some of the challenges of higher education institutions after the Covid-19 pandemic include:

#### **1. Closure of educational institutions**

At the higher education level, the prolonged closure of academic and vocational-based educational institutions can also lead to loss of learning in the short term, even loss of human resources and reduced economic opportunities in the long term.

After the pandemic, it is feared that the toughest challenge is the existence of higher education institutions that are unable to survive due to being abandoned by students. This is because there are no new students who register due to economic difficulties.

2. Creation of learning materials or content that encourages active and meaningful learning

The creation of learning materials or content that encourages active and meaningful learning is one of the challenges faced in the online lecture process, including post-pandemic.

Preparation of learning content was recorded as one of the five obstacles faced by lecturers in implementing virtual learning, which was 31.7%. The readiness and creativity of lecturers in higher education still varies in terms of modifying the plans and learning materials. From the student perspective, the quality of online lecture material presentation, such as infographics, images, video animations, is considered good. However, it was noted that there were still assessments in the category of moderate, poor, and even very poor quality. To design online learning, there are at least 3 main things that need to be considered by the teaching staff, as stated by the President of I-TELL. First, it is necessary to re-examine face-to-face activities before the pandemic, which in principle can support student learning and collaboration, and learning to solve problems. Second, lecturers need to consider the needs and interests of students such as time allocation and choice of activities. Third, the selection of types or effective communication tools in delivering online lectures (Ministry of National Development Planning / National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), 2021:179).

3. The level of achievement of certain learning targets or competencies is not optimal

At the higher education level, considering that almost the entire learning process is carried out using an online approach, the level of achievement of certain learning targets or competencies is not optimal. Cognitive competencies that emphasize aspects of knowledge or theory basically can be implemented through distance learning in full. Another thing that is recognized as much more important by universities is regarding the fulfillment of the target of technical competence or expertise of each engineering and vocational science study program. Admittedly, the target will be difficult to achieve if the learning method is only online-based. Students' understanding of technical matters from lecture material, which generally relies on the implementation of practical methods, is a challenge in itself during this pandemic. The Ministry of Education and Culture's survey results show that one of the main obstacles to online lectures is that it is difficult for lecturers to ensure that the material delivered is in accordance with the learning outcome target, which is 38.4%. This of course cannot be separated from aspects of content and teaching strategies or output delivery (Ministry of National Development Planning / National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), 2021:180).

4. The online lecture system has not been fully followed by adequate lecturer capacity

The online lecture system, which is still ongoing until now, has not been fully followed by adequate lecturer capacities. The competence of lecturers between universities in the implementation of online-based academic processes is still diverse. For some universities

that have implemented blended learning before the pandemic, human resource educators are relatively ready to carry out online learning. However, this is not the case for universities that have just undergone a transformation during the pandemic. The stuttering of lecturers is one of the obstacles in the online-based teaching and learning process. This is in line with the results of a study by the Ministry of Education and Culture that the interaction process in online classes that are not boring has only reached 57.17% (Ministry of National Development Planning / National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), 2021:181).

5. The transformation of digital learning also has the impact of fatigue conditions and increased stress

At the higher education level, the transformation of digital learning also has the impact of fatigue conditions and increased stress, especially for senior lecturers. The digital learning process not only requires that lecturers be competent in mastering and delivering online material, but also physically and mentally ready to manage virtual face-to-face processes with students. So far, the implementation of synchronous online lectures has become the most chosen form of learning activity. The interaction of lecturers as facilitators needs to be built not only on the learning materials delivered, but also interactions with students so as to create an interesting, active, and not boring learning experience. This condition requires lecturers to remain active and creative even though they have to sit in front of a virtual screen.

### **Strategic Policies that Must be Carried Out in Anticipating the Challenges of Higher Education Institutions after the Covid-19 Pandemic**

What kind of educational models need to be offered in the future, which can prevent and or overcome these challenges? Management of higher education in Indonesia after Covid-19 must be more effective and efficient. Cooperation between stakeholders must continue to be improved.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) through Circular Letter (SE) Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Covid-19 mandates higher education institutions to conduct Long Distance Learning (PJJ) or online learning. Including after the pandemic was declared over. It's just that not all universities in Indonesia are ready to do so. This is due to poor infrastructure, especially unequal internet access, online learning which is still considered new for lecturers and students and others. Unlike public higher education institutions, the management of private higher education is almost the same as managing the business sector. They earn income from student tuition, paid executive training programs and research. They have to pay the salaries of lecturers and employees as well as other operational costs such as building maintenance costs, electricity, and others. Like other business sectors, private educational institutions have also become victims of Covid-19.

The decline in the number of new student enrollment rates as well as paid short courses has a direct impact on the sustainability of higher education operations. In addition, unlike other

business sectors which can exploit the weekly and monthly cycles of running a business, higher education relies on only one variable for survival, namely the rate of acceptance of new students and payments in each semester. Cash flow will depend on one variable, namely the time of each semester. If the shock occurs in one semester, it can affect cash flow in the next several semesters. Moreover, the higher education sector has never faced anything like this before. They have minimal experience and resilience to deal with a crisis like this.

Some might argue that higher education is a defensive sector: students still need education and its demand appears inelastic. However, for developing countries like Indonesia, higher education has not been seen as a primary need; although the higher education market has grown significantly over the last decade.

The World Bank report (2018) shows that the number of university registrants calculated as the ratio of the productive age group is only 36%. In the absence of a credit market for higher education in Indonesia, it is almost predictable that college enrollment is strongly related to family income. While many universities have been doing online learning, few have been able to solve the problem. With tuition fees unchanged, many prospective students or parents think that it is unfair that they have to pay the same fees as face-to-face learning. This impact is especially felt for the Postgraduate level which is usually relatively more expensive and is seen as an additional requirement.

There are several efforts that higher education management in Indonesia can take to survive after Covid-19. First, the change in their business model in which all stakeholders must transform towards digital. This approach will strengthen the college business in the medium to long term. But the level of resilience in the short term remains an issue as the digital transition will require cultural adjustments from the demand side.

Second, in terms of costs, some universities are advised to lower their tuition fees or provide scholarships. This, of course, had never been imagined in the history of universities in Indonesia before because almost no institution has ever lowered tuition fees.

The current trend is that some of the costs at private colleges are rising rapidly and even the costs are almost similar to the cost of studying abroad. Consequently, studying abroad will become more and more attractive as a substitute for domestic education.

Third, universities must continue to increase cooperation with other parties. For example, joint activities such as research collaborations with the private and public sectors, employee development and training, or collaboration in future career fields.

Fourth, as with any business, there is no effective solution to this problem. Government support, especially in the financing of several higher education institutions and the implementation of new policies, especially for the process of facilitating online learning licensing, is very much needed at this time.

The new normal for learning methods is not the same as the new normal in business. In the future, higher education institutions must create better access for prospective students where the results of the learning process do not only focus on certificates or diplomas. College administrators must be able to market or adjust market needs as required by prospective students.



In the end, a serious discussion is needed between stakeholders in the field of higher education that post-pandemic is not the same as business as usual.

Furthermore, the discussion on campus policies and strategic steps in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic is important to discuss considering that the world of education is like the life of a country. All universities in Indonesia and even the world will definitely experience the impact of Covid-19 and then they must have had a mature plan to face the new school year. However, of course, the plan that will be taken by the university must take a sharp turn from the previous situation. Such as plans for the stages of the accreditation process, KKN and Community Service plans, plans for new student admissions (Maba), UTS/UAS plans, online teaching/e-learning process plans, and others, so that previous habits are all delayed and not optimal.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, education that has begun should be continued and refined until it meets the concept of blended learning, which is an educational concept that combines face-to-face lecture methods in the classroom with e-learning, and in turn, the world of education will truly be in an era of education 4.0. Regarding e-learning in universities, if the measurement is "can be done", then it cannot be denied that all campuses can do it. However, can the quality of the e-learning be fulfilled as desired? Of course it will be difficult to answer because this case involves many factors, requires the involvement of various parties, and must be prepared as well as possible.

In this condition, the author argues, there are at least six important things that should be a concern of a university in preparing e-learning in the post-pandemic period, namely:

1. Lecturers and students must improve their internet and computer literacy skills

At the very least, lecturers must be able to take advantage of available channels, such as the Learning Management System, audio-video-based communication media, social media and data storage media that can be used to assist quality teaching and learning activities. In general, students' internet and computer literacy skills are better than those of lecturers, so that what is taken into consideration from the student's side is internet connection, especially in remote, leading and disadvantaged areas, and some students may be burdened by using data packages.

2. Redefine learning achievement

Lecturers must carry out constructive alignment again to the alignment of the three Outcome Based Education (OBE) components, namely (1) learning outcomes, (2) learning activities, and (3) assessment methods that have been prepared in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS). . The RPS does not need to be changed completely, but it is enough to re-determine which learning outcomes can be delivered by e-learning and which ones cannot, because not all learning outcomes can be met by implementing e-learning, such as hands-on skills, especially in the program. -vocational study program. Next, remapping learning outcomes to learning activities, including determining the appropriate assessment method for each learning achievement.

3. Lecturers must ensure the readiness (readiness) of lecture materials with perspective

Self-study” in a digital format in such a way that students can easily understand the course material, especially if it is given offline (offline). For general courses, basic skills and applied knowledge, the delivery of lecture material in the form of lecture summaries should be avoided, it would be more appropriate if the lecturer provided lecture notes, using open source simulation software, or audio-video recordings. Practical lecture materials using the toolbox, lecturers are expected to prepare tutorial recordings, for students to study independently.

4. Determine the duration of each learning unit

The duration of learning is closely related to the student's learning load (Student Learning Time/SLT) which is determined by the number of credit units taken by students. For online learning, pay attention to coherent time according to the student's level of self-regulation and metacognitive abilities. Determining the duration of each learning unit is very important, especially in giving assignments to students. Time-consuming assignments can make the student's study load much higher than the credit load he takes.

5. Assessment in the form of quizzes and independent assignments must be ready

Assessment in the form of quizzes and other independent assignments must be planned in such a way, so that the quality of the questions still meets the taxonomy level in accordance with the level of the study program. Formative and summative exams should still be carried out directly and on a scheduled basis as is the conventional method that has been practiced so far.

6. Campuses must prepare sufficient infrastructure and bandwidth

Campuses must prepare sufficient infrastructure and bandwidth if using the campus network. A sudden surge in users and simultaneous usage will cause the server to bottleneck, hang, and down. In addition, the campus must determine the application or platform used to prevent students from downloading and trying too many applications or platforms. Of course, universities are not solely focused on the six things described above. However, at least it can be a first step for universities when compiling e-learning in implementing Blended Learning in order to realize Education 4.0 which will become the New Normal in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era after the Covid-19 pandemic later with the application (<https://padek.jawapos.com/opin/08/05/2020/new-normal-learning-post-pandemic-19>).

Several things need to be followed up both to strengthen services during the pandemic and post-pandemic, including:

1. Cross-sectoral coordination and synergy

Cross-sectoral coordination and synergy to improve the coverage and quality of ICT access and minimize disparities in educational facilities, infrastructure and technology. To improve access to ICT, it is necessary to cooperate with other technical ministries in strengthening the main infrastructure to ensure that Indonesia has a reliable ICT system and can reach a wide area of Indonesia. In addition, efforts are needed to encourage service



quality by providers, in increasing the coverage and quality of digital access in order to improve distance education services in the future.

2. Improving the ability of educators and education personnel to improve adaptation to digital and distance learning technologies

Long Distance Learning (PJJ) components, including the ability to use ICT, need to be part of the education curriculum for prospective educators, and be included in the aspect of teacher certification assessment. Increasing digital competence and skills through training for teachers, lecturers, and education staff is very much needed, especially in terms of finding learning resources, creating innovative learning content, and effective distance learning methods in improving students' understanding.

3. Preparation of operational standards for the implementation of Long Distance Learning (PJJ)

In maintaining the quality of education services, operational standards for the implementation of PJJ are required at all levels of education. This guide includes various basic information related to learning content, learning methods that can be used, utilization of online learning resources, decomposition of skills, knowledge, and attitude (SKA) materials for PJJ, as well as an assessment and evaluation system during the implementation of PJJ.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the description in the discussion above, the following results are obtained: First, the challenges of higher education institutions after the Covid 19 pandemic are: (a) the challenges of closing educational institutions; (b) Creation of learning materials or content that encourages active and meaningful learning; (c) The level of achievement of certain learning targets or competencies is not optimal; (d) The online lecture system has not been fully followed by adequate lecturer capacity; and (e) The transformation of digital learning also has the effect of fatigue or fatigue conditions and increased stress. Second, the various challenges of educational institutions after the Covid-19 pandemic are: (a) Lecturers and students must improve internet and computer literacy skills; (b) Redefining learning outcomes: (c) Lecturers must ensure the readiness of lecture materials with perspective; (d) Determine the duration of each learning unit: (e) Assessment in the form of quizzes and independent assignments must be ready; and (f) Campuses must prepare sufficient infrastructure and bandwidth.

Several things need to be followed up, both to strengthen services during the pandemic and post-pandemic, including: (a) Cross-sectoral coordination and synergy to improve the coverage and quality of ICT access and minimize disparities in educational facilities, infrastructure, and technology; (b) Improving the ability of educators and education personnel to improve adaptation to digital and distance learning technologies; and (c) Preparation of operational standards for the implementation of PJJ.

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