The Suitability of Distance Education for Students With Mental Health Issues and Economically Disadvantaged Students in East Java

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Abstract.

Distance learning is not the only effective way to achieve the goals of education in the post-pandemic era, and it is not suitable for some students, in part because of the implications on mental health of following distance learning implementation. This research used qualitative methods together with a case study approach and it took place in East Java. The results showed that distance learning was not as effective with the students with mental health issues who were studied in this research. This was due in part to the lack of internet access in certain facilities. Students also experienced stress due to distance learning, especially sociology students. Most assignments which students were asked to do via distance learning were categorized as projects. Such projects forced students to think critically, while distance learning conditions rendered critical thinking more difficult. Another case study showed that economically disadvantaged students were not favored through distance learning. Many students were disturbed by the fact that their parents had become unemployed, and many students’ needs could not be fulfilled by their parents because of this economic problem.

Keywords: remote learning, mental health students

1. Introduction

The increasing cases of COVID-19, which began in 2020 until now, encourage students to carry out school at home. Therefore, the education office provides a policy that must be applied to all schools to implement education in the form of distance learning as a means of educational communication between teachers and students[1]. From this case, the role of technology in learning is very important. Initially, before the pandemic, learning was carried out through face-to-face learning, now learning has turned into asynchronous and synchronous activities[2].

Synchronous learning is “live” (e.g. audio conferencing, video conferencing and chat via the web), while asynchronous learning is seen from a significant difference in the
time between instructions given by the teacher to students (e.g., email, video recording before carrying out discussions to students). Online learning is an effective and efficient means of delivering material to students for the delivery of distance learning as long as teachers and students still have limited communication non-verbally[3]. Here, the forms of knowledge and materials that need to be prepared by the teacher are transferred via the internet, all materials and assignments are given online[4]. According to Marshall McLuhan[5], in the theory of determination the role of technology and media in online learning is very important, as a form of media tool used by teachers in delivering learning to students. Initially technology was considered a very expensive means of education and only the children of the rich could get an education online. But in times of pandemic like this everything is using distance learning which depends on technology. This means that the mindset of students, teachers and parents in following the course of education carried out by children during distance education changes in line with the needs and conditions of the education system[6]. Equalizing perceptions and changing students’ thinking patterns are needed during online education. In addition, changing students’ thinking patterns must also pay attention to mental health to carry out education during the pandemic. Mental health is needed by students, teachers and parents as a form of maintaining health during a pandemic with the aim of carrying out the educational process.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The process of obtaining data was carried out in several stages, called the determination of the study area, interviews, discussions with informants, observations and literature studies. The interview process was carried out in depth and semi-structured to several informants including sociology teachers in public and private high schools and high school students in grades X, XI and XII. Interviews were conducted in person and through google form, considering the limited access to some areas. Several informants were interviewed about the application of distance learning and students’ mental health in participating in learning during the pandemic. The data analysis instrument was adapted to the qualitative method which found findings or facts about complex phenomena in the application of distance learning and mental health. In the implementation of distance education, many estimates and problems are studied so that they can provide health services in carrying out learning activities.
3. Result and Discussion

The results proved that during the implementation of distance learning, the findings of the researchers showed that the relationship between distance education and mental health showed that students experienced anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders experienced by students are caused by the many tasks that sociology students have given by the teacher, where the comparison between sociology subjects with other students is different. Sociology material delivered by the assignment teacher tends to be problem and project based caused the students have difficulty in understanding the material presented by the teacher.

In distance learning, the thing that students need to pay attention is mental health during a pandemic. Problems experienced by students while doing assignments, students experience which have many complaints in doing assignments. This causes students’ feelings to become anxious and limbs become tense when doing assignments while studying at home [7]. If the mental disorders experienced by these students are excessive, such as fear and distrust in completing the tasks given by the teacher, it cannot be completed properly, the students will experience a decrease in body condition [8]. In addition, in the book the American Psychiatric Association [9], explained that humans experience increased anxiety caused by COVID-19 and the surrounding environment can cause mental health problems in students [10]. This is evidenced by the condition of students in participating in learning where the facilities owned by students to carry out distance education are very limited, especially students in East Java in terms of limited internet access and relying on internet quotas sometimes signals in accessing learning are difficult to obtain. Moreover, in each region, implementing what is called physical distancing causes students’ parents become unemployed, making it difficult to meet their daily needs. From this problem, it causes students’ fear to arise when students cannot follow learning optimally. Students doing school assignments are depressed and feel excessive fear caused by the many tasks that must be done by students and the condition of the home environment also does not support distance learning. If the fear experienced by students continues to be experienced and is not addressed, it causes the student’s condition to decline and it is difficult to concentrate on the tasks given by the teacher [11]. From this case, the teacher needs to do to students by providing online guidance in addition to giving assignments. Just as the teacher asks the news and conditions of each student with the aim of creating good communication conditions between teachers and students, so that students can carry out learning more focused on learning objectives.
Forcing students to do online learning due to COVID-19, with limited facilities in learning is indeed very difficult, especially when there is no internet access available in learning, let alone the learning process is available in the application [12]. This means that students in participating in learning during the pandemic change, student learning styles also change rapidly where learning that was initially carried out face-to-face is now changing to online learning [13]. This means that students in participating in learning during the pandemic change, student learning styles also change rapidly where learning that was initially carried out face-to-face is now changing to online learning [14]. One of the most important ways in online learning is for teachers to master technology-based communication and learning media, as well as media that can be used by teachers in delivering material for example learning videos made on YouTube, screen o’matic, zoom, google meet, google classroom, and WhatsApp. By mastering online-based learning media. Then learning can be delivered with learning objectives. The most important thing that the teacher pays attention to is time management in the delivery of material so that students are no longer bored and bored during learning. Why do teachers need to do time management in making videos as a form of effectiveness and efficiency in delivering material during online learning activities [15].

4. Conclusion

The application of distance learning in East Java still tends to be different from other regions. Because the facilities in participating in distance learning that students have are very limited and far from existing expectations. Therefore, building a mindset and providing distance education facilities during a pandemic is very important. Moreover, the role of the government in providing internet access quotas to students must be properly considered because not all areas are reached internet access properly. The most important role in distance learning is the teacher and parental assistance in supervising children during the learning process at home. In addition, the readiness of teachers to provide guidance and take time for students to create conditions that do not put pressure on students is very important, with the aim of maintaining communication between students and teachers.

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