

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC ERA AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION LEVELS
IN SERANG REGENCY**

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>History: Submitted July 1th, 2021</p> <p>Revised August 9th, 2021</p> <p>Accepted September 13th, 2021</p>	<p>Education is a right for all citizens which is guaranteed through the law, not least during this pandemic where students must continue to receive a proper education. The purpose of this research is to know the management of distance learning for elementary school students in the regency of Serang. The research focus is to find out how the distance learning policies are implemented by elementary schools, with qualitative research method by applying case studies that sourced of collecting data from school principals, teachers, parents of students. The data collection techniques were obtained from non-participant observation, documentation, and interviews. The analysis includes data collection and reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions which are then triangulated. The results showed that each elementary school conducted the distance learning using various approaches through tools that were also prepared by the school itself and prepared by the Departement of Education and Culture of Serang Regency, one of which was the television media. The implementation of Distance Learning has experienced many obstacles in its implementation and is considered ineffective, so it must be evaluated.</p> <p>Keywords: Effectiveness; Elementary School; Distance Learning; Covid-19 Pandemic</p>

A. Introduction

Education is an important aspect in society and the state, because the level of education is a determinant of the quality of human resources of a nation. As we know today, humans are the greatest asset of a nation, the state's wealth is no longer the main benchmark for the strength of a state, but the strength and quality of human resources. The superiority of human resources can encourage the success of a state both economically, socially and politically (Suprihatmi, 2008).

The Covid-19 outbreak has hit since 2020. Due to the high mortality rate, causing this incident to be designated as a Pandemic by WHO. The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic in all fields has had a serious impact and undergone adjustments. This impact is increasingly felt in the fields of education, health, and the economy. The pandemic status seems to give the world a chance to take a short break from all activities, and pay attention to health (Mastur, 2020). But not on the education, where it is impossible to stop for a long time, because after all education is an absolute necessity for a nation to

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develop its human beings, without education the nation is referred as a country that is not domiciled anywhere.

On this basis, the government is trying various things to be able to carry out its obligations to provide education to its citizens, while still paying attention to security and WHO directives to implement a “lockdown” or activity restriction in order to prevent the spread of the virus that increasingly widespread.

Distance learning is an effort in implementing government regulations during a pandemic that adjusted to the government regulations related to curriculum implementation guidelines during special conditions education units. This will minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Teachers and also students conducted learning with online media in their homes. Of course, this is used as the best form of solution in education during the pandemic.

Implementation of distance learning is not an easy thing, especially when applied to elementary school students who are not mature enough to be able to use technology wisely. Another problem that appears is the

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availability of infrastructure needed in distance learning. As it is known that distance learning must be supported by devices connected to the internet network, which in fact has not been able to reach remote areas in Indonesia.

This obstacle occurs in almost all parts of Indonesia, wherein an area there are still areas that cannot reach the internet so it requires an extra strategy from policymakers, and the school itself, besides the learning motivation and collaboration from parents is absolutely necessary.

This research will take a locus in Serang Regency, by choosing a research unit at the basic education level, namely Elementary School. The consideration to take focus on Elementary School is because

Elementary School is an important level of education for students, where at this level, students take the longest time of 6 years, which means it has a high urgency to shape the child's character.

Serang Regency was chosen as the research locus because the position of Serang Regency as the capital city of Banten Province can be used as a barometer for the implementation of a policy. The focus of this research is the effectiveness of the distance learning program implemented by elementary schools.

So the title of this research is the effectiveness of the Distance Learning Program during the Pandemic era at the Elementary School Education Level in Serang Regency.

B. Research Methodology

The type of this research is desk research, the research with secondary data. The data sources in this article are the previous research studies, relevant-related articles, and online observations to obtain the validity of responsible information. The observation objects in

this article are students, teachers, and principals at elementary schools in the Serang Regency area, by choosing randomly with a purposive sample technique, to obtain the most relevant information.

C. Result and Discussion

Elementary school is a basic level in formal education in Indonesia, which is taken for 6 years starting from grades 1 to 6 and generally aged 6 to 12 years. Every citizen aged 6-12 years in Indonesia is required to attend the basic education of 6 years of elementary school and 3 years of junior high school.

The implementation of elementary schools from the government or the private sector began with the implementation of regional autonomy in 2001; the management of public elementary schools in Indonesia which was originally under the Ministry of National Education is now the responsibility of the regency or city. The Ministry of Education has a role in the regulation of education standards. As structurally, Elementary School is a technical management unit located in the regency or city service.

In Serang Regency the number of Elementary Schools registered in the Education Reference data of Kemdikbud.co.id is 735 units, consisting of 707 State Elementary

Schools and 28 Private Elementary Schools. The distribution of elementary schools in districts based on sub-district areas is as follows:

Table 1
Elementary Schools Distribution of Serang Regency

No	Sub-District	State	Private
1	Kragilan	31	1
2	Kramatwatu	28	5
3	Cikeusal	44	0
4	Cikande	32	2
5	Ciruas	32	2
6	Cinangka	35	1
7	Petir	24	0
8	Padarincang	38	0
9	Tanjung Teja	23	0
10	Kopo	20	4
11	Anyar	26	1
12	Mancak	28	0
13	Baros	24	1
14	Pontang	26	0
15	Tirtayasa	24	2
16	Ciomas	28	0
17	Jawilan	17	0
18	Pamarayan	25	0
19	Waringinkurung	22	2
20	Kibin	20	3
21	Pabuaran	19	0
22	Carenang	16	1
23	Binuang	11	1
24	Bojonegara	22	0
25	Lebak Wangi	20	1
26	Bandung	18	1
27	Pulo Ampel	20	0
28	Tanara	21	0
29	Gunung Sari	13	0
	Total	707	28

Source: dapok.kemdikbud.go.id

The table explains that the elementary schools in the regency of Serang have been spread fairly evenly in almost all areas of Serang Regency, both in urban areas and in remote areas.

The number of elementary schools in Serang Regency is much higher than the Junior High School and Senior High School, thus showing the age of students/citizens at the Elementary School level in Serang Regency is higher than other levels of education.

Distance Learning (PJJ) can be defined as online learning/e-learning. Online is learning related to the application of the internet and its connectivity and the ability in various types of interactions in the learning process (Wilson, 2011)

Generally, distance education is classified into the overall learning that is formal and takes place when the teachers and students are not in the same location. This process also requires quick preparation, “The condition shifted the class from classroom to distance learning” Apriyanti (2020: 16). The use of facilities is no longer applied to

classrooms but also the availability of internet access and tools such as phones, laptops, quotas, etc., “learning activities were delivered in full distance learning employing various online meeting platforms” Amir et al. (2020: 7). The development of technology is used as a solution for proper learning during the pandemic, as confirmed by Syakdiyah et al. (2019: 2) that “the rapid development of digital era requires people to be competitive and productive subjects in response to it.” So, it is necessary to have facilities in the process of supporting learning during this pandemic where the main priority in this case is the availability of the internet to connect the learning materials from teachers to students at home.

In the normal learning process, there is interaction and reciprocity from teachers and students in the conducive situation. In fact, due to the conditions during the Pandemic, the learning process inevitably has to be adapted to the demands of the conditions, which is conducted without face-to-face and direct physical interaction in one place

at the same time, or is called as the distance learning. Then whether this learning process will provide effective results as face-to-face learning that usually conducted?

Wardani, et al. (2012) state that, “learning outcomes must be identified through the information on measuring materials mastery and behavior aspects both through test and non-test techniques”. The mastered material is the achievement degree of learning outcomes competence based on the will to process which includes behavior and divided into cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

Entering this pandemic period, the government advises all students to study at home. For its implementation, the government issued a policy through the Circular of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) of the Directorate of Higher Education Number 1 of 2020 regarding the prevention of the spread of covid-19 in the education world.

To follow up on that Circular, the Government of Serang Regency through the Department of Education and Culture of Serang Regency issued

a circular letter from the Department of Education and Culture of Serang Regency numbered: 420/465, Following up on the Ministry of Education and Culture's Circular Letter, Number: 0093/J3/TU/2020 of March 18, 2020.

The implementation of Learning from Home in Serang City has been implemented since 2020 and was extended by following the direction of the Governor of Banten Province and by considering the condition of the spread of the Covid-19 virus that has not been fully controlled. According to the results of the research, both educators and students in their elementary schools are considered ready. But many are “forced” to prepare for this learning transition. Schools that are used to implementing technological devices in their learning certainly do not experience many obstacles, but those that have not implemented will be an obstacle in areas that have limited facilities on the network or their devices.

In the implementation of online learning, the subject teachers use hardware devices such as smartphones

and how to prepare the teaching and learning activities. Based on the research conducted, it was found that the elementary school teachers in Serang Regency in general already know the purpose and model of learning as well as preparing the teaching and learning activities.

During this pandemic, elementary school teachers conducted learning by applying models and online drivers model, using various platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Googlemeet. Flek model is the use of internet media in delivering the learning, then the online driver model is the learning that gives teachers access to upload material on the internet so it can be reached remotely.

The teacher's limited of technology understanding is a separate obstacle in distance learning. Especially because there are still many elementary school educators from Generation X who are not very familiar with the technology. In line with Dewi's research (2020) that a variety of senior teachers, not all of them can apply the tools and facilities to support

online activities and special training is required beforehand. Most of the solutions taken by schools are by using the easiest technology that is generally used by senior teachers, Whatsapp.

To facilitate communication and coordination, this learning process is still implementing the WhatsApp group facility and assigning tasks in the group through the WA group of students' parents. Some elementary schools also apply a combination of online and offline (outside the network) or offline learning, by submitting notebooks that includes the given assignments for a week which are collected by teachers every week. For areas that have not been reached by the network, learning is also conducted using the door-to-door method, where the teacher delivering the tasks directly to the house or there are also parents who pick up their children from school. The door-to-door method can also help the school to directly monitor the student's participation in learning. The choice of this media is based on the agreement of teachers and parents. Moreover, the Serang Regency government has also innovated by preparing a learning

program through the television as an alternative to learning from home, but its implementation has not been maximized.

The implementation of distance learning in elementary schools has consequences for all parties including parents. The teacher as a presenter and the collecting of assignments by students must be collected as attractively and creatively as possible so they can be accepted by parents who accompany them.

According to the research results, elementary school teachers in Serang Regency were quite good at the preparation, delivery, and evaluation of learning that distributed to students, besides to the video call activities as an effort to build interactive communication with their students. That research results do not confirm Rigianti's research (2020) regarding the obstacles in online learning for elementary school teachers in Banjarnegara regency, which shows, "the change from face-to-face learning to online learning provides various kinds of obstacles in education, especially for teachers who are the

spearhead in the learning implementation". In this case, it can be interpreted that the teaching resources of Elementary Schools in Serang Regency are much more prepared compared to other region.

Students that are positioned as presenters must be able to learn to the maximum even though there are many limitations of interaction with teachers who provide learning. The rest of the Elementary Schools should have high motivation because the learning is conducted virtually which requires more concentration than the direct learning as usual.

As a parent, should be able to manage time, energy, thoughts, emotions and costs in assisting their child's learning. Because for elementary school students, parents become the direct supervisors and directly involved in student's learning activities.

The role of parents is really crucial in the online teaching and learning process in elementary schools, this is because elementary school age is still at the age that cannot use gadgets optimally. This has recently attracted a

lot of objections from the parents. Because, the parents who previously hand over almost 100% of formal education to schools, now have to be involved almost 100% with their children's assignments and learning processes at home. This complaint comes especially from parents, both of whom still have to work despite the pandemic conditions.

Distance learning in Serang Regency, especially in elementary schools, has caused a lot of complaints. This is understandable, because its process has the different characteristics on the face-to-face so it takes effort to get maximum results at the end. According to the research, elementary school students in Serang Regency felt bored studying at home and wanted to go back to school. A number of children say that studying at school can increase their happiness because they can meet and play together. Parents also complain about their children's eye health conditions, which are always in contact with gadgets that make them dependent.

Parents also complain that there is no quota subsidy that runs regularly, so

parents have a double burden of internet quotas and paying their children's tuition fees, this is in line with Syaharudin's assumption (Handayani et al., 2020) which states that, "The impacts that appear during the online learning are related to the technical problems and the learning process itself, including the high price of internet quota, poor signal access, lack of knowledge in operating online learning applications, to the lack of student's participation during online learning when the learning takes place".

Complaints were also felt about the limited time in obtaining the material explanations from the teacher because students were only able to make video calls with a duration of less than 1 hour, and the learning videos with an average duration of 5-10 minutes.

These obstacles do not include the students who are not covered by the internet at their home or are included in the blankspot area. So the citizens have to work hard to find a location far from where they live to get the internet

signal. One of them is in the Mancak area, Serang Regency.

This must be a concern for the government, because until now there has been no ending sign of the pandemic period, although in entering the middle of 2021 the government has begun to allow hybrid learning, where

the learning is conducted online and face-to-face alternately. This is a policy must be addressed wisely, because the danger of virus spreading is still lurking in the midst of administering vaccines that have not been fully accepted by all students and teachers.

D. Conclusion

Learning from home (online) is said to be less effective in various aspects, but this is considered an effective solution during this pandemic era.

At the elementary school level in Serang Regency, distance learning has been implemented in all school units, both state and private elementary schools, using various platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Google meet. In its implementation, distance learning in Serang Regency on the elementary schools has encountered various obstacles such as limited network facilities, the capability of teaching

resources, especially in the field of understanding technology, and technical and environmental constraints, but until now this method is considered quite helpful even though its effectiveness is not optimal yet.

The government must find a maximum and comprehensive solution to face the pandemic situation that may still take place in the future, one of them is by implementing the Learning Management System in Elementary Schools evenly and centrally in management; including thinking about financing that does not burden the students.

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