

# Impact Of A Covid-19 Pandemic Handling Policy In The Education Field

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## ABSTRACT

Since the outbreak of the Corona virus which shocked the world, numerous countries have enacted policies to restrict its spread. The Indonesian government has undertaken several initiatives, including the introduction of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). This policy resulted in the implementation of online learning. In case study research at UNISMA Bekasi, the evaluation of online learning results based on the experiences of researchers and data from several tenured lecturers revealed a decline in quality. This study employed a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological-participatory approach in which the researchers were also participants in online learning process. The findings show that the quality of responses to questions on the Mid-Semester Examination (UTS) and the Final Semester Examination (UAS) was deemed by some lecturers to be significantly dependent on the capacity of students to download and copy-paste from the internet. The researchers discovered some online responses to UTS and UAS questions that were irrelevant to the questions' intended purposes. This was also observed in students whose grades for a series of theoretical courses appeared to be good and whose total GPA was satisfactory, but somehow, they had difficulties answering examiners' questions during the oral defense of their undergraduate dissertation proposal. In conclusion, the GPA derived from online learning outputs cannot be considered as a measure of students' theoretical mastery. The issue demands a more inventive, communicative, and collaborative online learning system to address the shortcomings of the online learning process. It is anticipated that mastery of theory will enhance students' capacity to apply it in scientific and everyday settings

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## I. Introduction

As a result of the global outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, several countries attempted to control its spread by taking action. For more than two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected not only the health sector but also the social, economic, educational, and other spheres of life.

In Indonesia, the government's approach to the Covid-19 outbreak has generated much criticism. The Indonesian government's response to this problem includes the imposition of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). The policy is a metapolicy with far-reaching effects on many aspects of life. With this approach, it is believed that community interaction will be reduced, hence preventing the spread of virus transmission or infection from person to person.

In addition to shifting the education process online, the PSBB policy has numerous negative effects on a variety of economic sectors, such as resulting in layoffs. This paper is a further examination of the findings of a prior study titled Policygraphy: Policy Analysis of the Covid-19 Pandemic Handling in Indonesia on the Policy of Homecoming Banning for Eid National Holiday of 2021. This study, however, focuses solely on the impact of a Covid-19 Pandemic Handling policy in Indonesia on the quality of education, particularly in relation to the online learning process through case studies in Bekasi City using a qualitative method: a phenomenological-participative approach.

The unexpected implementation of the online learning policy was perceived as burdensome by some primary school children and their parents due to their unpreparedness in terms of educational

subjects, media, and learning methods for changing circumstances. This may not be felt strongly by secondary and higher education institutions (students and lecturers), but the consequences of the online learning process have a negative impact on the quality of education.

As the Covid-19 pandemic situation changes, at the university level, lecturers must implement multiple online learning strategies with student consent. At the beginning of the first year of online learning (2020), students provided both positive and negative feedback. Changes in student attitudes and interest in learning can be observed as a result of the process of online learning. Some active students prefer in-person instruction. Other students prefer online learning because it is more flexible, and they are not required to attend class on campus. They simply remain in their room, listening to their laptop in their casual clothes, and can join the lecturer's presentation via Zoom or Google Meet. However, the appearance of some students with limited media/online learning resources can also be noted during online lectures. Because of their locations, some of them were limited by the strength of their Internet network. Others were unable to enroll in online courses due to lack of data plan.

This study aims to investigate further, from a multidisciplinary standpoint, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic handling policy on online learning, in terms of advantages and disadvantages. Consideration is given to the significance of metapolicy analysis [17] as an evaluation of the implementation of online learning policy that alter the character of school and university students supported by online learning media. This is also consistent with the implementation of Pancasila and Citizenship Education as General Education in Higher Education, which aims to shape the character of students [18].

Several faculties at UNISMA Bekasi evaluated the impact of online learning on campus at the beginning of the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic by implementing in-person instruction in class with restrictions on the number of lecture participants and a hybrid system, in which some students attend lectures in class and others attend lectures via Zoom or Google Meet remotely/at home. Since the implementation of the PSBB policy, this condition persisted for approximately four semesters (2021-2022) until the online learning policy was revoked in the even semester of 2021/2022.

The results of the evaluation of online learning based on the grades of the courses taken by students during online learning indicate that students have, on average, earned good grades (A and B). Some students who actively participated in online lectures filed complaints and requested clarification from their instructors. They questioned why they were given C while their peers got A and B, despite participating online and submitting all assignments. There is a widespread perception that grades are merely a formality, and that the quality of the submitted assignment is irrelevant. Similarly, the quality of responses on the Midterm Examination and the Final Semester Examination was evaluated. This is a separate evaluation for both the student and the lecturer. The objective assessment of online learning becomes a new problem for lecturers. Even though most students have received good and excellent grades, some of them did not pass the oral examinations, resulting in disappointing assessment results (data taken from researchers as participants /lecturer).

## II. Methods

This research employs the constructivism paradigm, which is the antithesis of the notion that observation and objectivity are necessary to discover reality or science. This paradigm views social science as a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action based on direct and detailed observations of social behavior when individuals create, maintain, or manage their social world.

This research uses a qualitative participatory methodology. Qualitative research is a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human issue in order to understand them. In the qualitative approach, the researcher must paint a complete picture, scrutinize every word, report specific details from respondents' perspectives, and investigate actual situations.

The objective of qualitative research is to construct reality and examine its meaning. In qualitative research, process, event, and authenticity are of utmost importance. In qualitative research, the researcher's contribution is evident in limited situations involving a small sample size. Typically, qualitative researchers are intimately involved with the phenomenon under investigation [5].

Qualitative research emphasizes the use of inductive logic, in which the categorization is derived from the researcher's interactions with informants on the field or with the data collected. Qualitative research is characterized by data in the form of contextual connections that lead to patterns or theories that explain social phenomena [3].

The objectives of this research necessitate an in-depth examination of the natural setting or context of a data source. Because what is being studied is the natural background or context of a whole, it is deemed appropriate to employ a qualitative research method.

This study utilized a phenomenological and participatory research design. Phenomenology is a research method in which researchers investigate an event, activity, or process, as well as how individuals perceive and interpret these events. Cases have time and activity constraints. By using a variety of data collection methods and a predetermined timeline, researchers compile extensive and comprehensive data.

This research is novel in its use of participatory phenomenology, in which both the researchers and the participants attempted to explore objectively and comprehensively the meaning of the problem as the object of study. The participatory-phenomenological research design was employed because the researchers had a dual role as participants and informants regarding the impact of implementing Covid-19 handling policies in online education. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, researchers were permanent faculty members who instructed multiple courses. In order to more objectively draw conclusions based on the available data/facts, the researchers were, however, open to all information related to the problem of the research object.

#### A. *Research Design*

This research used a phenomenological methodology. Phenomenology is a research method in which researchers investigate an event, activity, or process, as well as how individuals perceive and interpret these occurrences. The cases were limited by time and activity, and the researchers concluded comprehensive information using various data collection techniques based on a predetermined time frame.

##### 1) *Research Informants*

Taking into account the four types of research informant categories, informants were selected based on a variety of categories. (1) students enrolled in Government Ethics course; (2) students enrolled in Philosophy of Science course; (3) students enrolled in *Pancasila* (Civics Ideology) Education course; (4) students enrolled in Education and Citizenship course; (5) students enrolled in the Fundamentals of Logic course.

##### 2) *Participatory Research Instruments*

In contrast to qualitative research in general, in which researchers conduct interviews with informants based on the interview guide, a list of questions compiled to be asked of informants, the researchers here were also research instruments in this study that sought to explore the meaning of the object of research.

##### 3) *Sources And Techniques Of Data Elicitation*

Secondary data are information gathered from secondhand or other sources that are accessible prior to the investigation (Uber Silalahi, 2010:291). Secondary data can be information gathered from a library. Secondary data in this study were obtained by:

##### 4) *In-Depth Interview*

The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with potential informants. Researchers anticipated receiving thorough information in the form of opinions/perceptions/evaluations of the Covid-19 handling policy, particularly the policy of implementing online learning.

##### a) *Literature Review*

Literature Review is a method for collecting information by examining the available literature for concepts and theories that are closely relevant to the subject at hand (Endaswara, 2006). According to Zed (2004), sources for literature review include reports, journals, books, newspapers, and other relevant documents.

*b) Documentation*

Documentation is the method of collecting information from textual sources, television news, and videos linked to the subject being investigated. Studies of documentation can be utilized to test, analyze, and even predict (Moleong, 2001:161).

*c) Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data collected from interviews, field notes, and other sources, so that they may be easily interpreted, and the findings can be shared with others. Data analysis involves organizing the data, dividing it into units, synthesizing it, arranging it in a pattern, selecting what is significant and will be analyzed, and drawing findings that can be disseminated to others (Sugiyono, 2007: 224).

Miles and Huberman (1984) propose that qualitative data analysis tasks are conducted interactively and continually until completion, so that the data are saturated. Data analysis tasks include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2007:246). In this study, the researchers applied three different data elicitation procedures.

*5) Research Period*

This study spanned two academic semesters, from August 2021 to August 2022. However, the data obtained consisted of evaluation findings from four semesters of online instruction.

### **III. Result and Discussion**

#### *A. Online Learning As A Policy During The Covid-19 Pandemic*

During the online learning process, researchers (as participants) and students encountered a variety of issues and challenges. The online learning policy was a policy in times of crisis, both in terms of economic factors and human resources. The Indonesian government adopted this policy based on various rational and pragmatic factors. The rationale for the policy was that the education process (teaching and learning) is a lifelong activity which must run continuously (lifelong education). The country was in a state of emergency as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, necessitating the implementation of online learning.

Online learning is the process of acquiring knowledge using learning applications and social networks. Online learning is conducted through online platforms rather than in-person. All types of content are distributed online. Communication and testing are also undertaken online. Online learning is assisted by several applications, such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Edmodo, and Zoom.

A condition is called online if it meets the following criteria:

- 1) Directly controlled by the other device
- 2) Directly controlled by a system
- 3) Available for real-time or immediate use
- 4) Connected to an operational system
- 5) Functional and ready to serve

#### *B. Advantages And Disadvantages Of Online Learning*

##### *1) Advantages Of Online Learning*

During the implementation of online learning, students had relative flexibility in terms of when and where they could study, unrestricted by location and time constraints. Students were also able to connect with instructors simultaneously, such as through video conferences or live chat.

At the higher institutions, online learning is perceived to be more effective and efficient in terms of cost, time, and effort for working students and instructors. This is advantageous considering the Covid-19 pandemic and the PSBB policy that restricted direct social interaction between teachers/lecturers and students.

##### *2) Disadvantages Of Online Learning*

The implementation of policies during times of crisis may contain dilemmatic problems that pose risks, regardless of whether the policies are successfully executed or not. However, the implementation of online learning policy is an investment whose value is measured not only for

temporary interests, but also for long-term benefits. Philosophically, online learning policy in times of crisis can nevertheless be viewed as an alternative solution to fulfill the needs of human life as monoplural beings (Notonagoro). Regardless, the policy may not be ideal. To begin with, educational values appear to rely solely on online materials and electronic learning media in the form of digital applications, such as Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, YouTube, etc. In addition, since no direct interaction between teachers and students in online learning takes place, there is a desire for a touch of human values; the values that the subject and object of education should experience. The close relationship between the subject and the object of education is replaced by digital applications used in the online learning process. Thus, it is possible that the results of online learning are modest in terms of character values needed to build a complete human personality. Such values can only be developed through in-person interactions between instructors and students. It could even be that the instructor does not know their own student, or the student does not know their own instructor.

Based on direct observation, in which the researchers as participants in online learning took sample of students' grades enrolled in required curriculum courses, namely Pancasila Education, Citizenship Education, Foundations of Logic, Government Ethics, and Philosophy of Science, the following conclusions are drawn:

- a. Students who took Government Ethics received relatively high grades.
- b. Students who took Philosophy of Science received satisfactory grades.
- c. The average grade of the students who took Pancasila Education and Citizenship Education was high.
- d. The group of students who took Fundamentals of Logic averaged a sufficient grade, with a few scoring lower. Fewer than 10% of students received As.

The problems that arise as a result of online learning can be summarized as follows:

- a. According to the evaluation of online learning results for groups of students enrolled in Government Ethics course with oral examination, students generally received high grades. However, some students were required to retake exams because their scores were deemed inadequate.
- b. As for the evaluation of online learning results for groups of students enrolled in Philosophy of Science course with written test, it indicates that, on average, students achieved satisfactory academic results.
- c. According to the evaluation of online learning results for groups of students enrolled in Pancasila (Civics Ideology) Education and Citizenship Education courses, when mid-semester exams were administered orally, students were unable to answer exam questions correctly and had difficulty to provide the right responses. However, when the final exams were in written, most students were able to provide correct responses. This is due to the fact that it was supported by online learning media such as the internet, where students could obtain answers from internet sources or learning materials kept in PowerPoint presentations distributed at each online lecture meeting.
- d. As for groups of students enrolled in Foundations of Logic course, the results were mostly unsatisfactory, although some students performed exceptionally well. This is because Foundations of Logic was taught in a hybrid fashion, with some students attending in-person and others attending remotely via Google Meet. This procedure occurred following a shift in policy from online to in person learning.

According to the evaluation of online learning results in students enrolled in Government Ethics course, most students have the potential for good moral value, making it the basic capital for understanding online lecture material more easily and accurately. Based on the results of the oral examination, in general students can still be regarded as earning good grades. This is because humans possess the nature of a good personality. However, if it is not optimally developed, it will not result in the best moral character with great personality and excellent performance [13].

Regarding the results of the written examination for the Philosophy of Science course, students mostly received satisfactory grades. This was because downloading power point slides of lecture materials distributed at each online lecture meeting made it easier for them to respond. This task

requires slight critical thinking and analysis. Therefore, if the exam is oral and in-person, as it typically was before the Covid-19 pandemic, students may only receive average grades.

The results of oral examination in Pancasila (Civics Ideology) Education course demonstrated diminished capacity to answer questions correctly. This was ultimately the driving force for modifying the course's learning method to be more communicative and collaborative, with an oral exam being administered in the first semester. In the second semester of 2022, the written examination for the Citizenship Education course was administered in-person, following the termination of the PSBB policy.

In a comparison of the average ability of students who master online lecture materials versus those who do not master lecture materials, the ability to respond to essay and multiple-choice questions indicated mastery, even though the material was delivered solely through PowerPoints during online learning. Students who mastered the online course material relatively received good and excellent grades.

The evaluation of online learning results in several other faculties, based on information provided by other faculty members, also revealed a decline in quality. Some lecturers believe that the quality of students' Mid-Semester Examination (UTS) and Final Semester (UAS) responses is highly dependent on their ability to download and copy-paste from the internet. The researchers discovered some online responses to UTS and UAS questions that were irrelevant to the questions' intended purposes. This was also observed in students whose grades for a series of theoretical courses appeared to be good and whose total GPA was satisfactory, but somehow, they had difficulties answering examiners' questions during the oral defense of their undergraduate dissertation proposal. In other words, the GPA derived from online learning outputs cannot be considered as a measure of students' theoretical mastery. The issue demands a more inventive, communicative, and collaborative online learning process to address the disadvantages of online learning.

#### IV. Conclusion

In light of the issues unveiled in the evaluation of online learning results, innovation is required to enhance the quality of online learning. This can be accomplished with a task assignment system that requires students to conduct a critical analysis of the lecture content, allowing them to better master the concepts/theories in their respective fields of study and apply them in the real world. In accordance with the new policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, learning Pancasila (Civics Ideology) and Citizenship Education in the future will be project-based, in the sense that it must be problem-solving for the country's problems. This policy is still in the socialization stage and has not yet been implemented. Online oral examination can be much more useful to evaluate the quality of online learning since it provides a more objective measure of the student's mastery of the content than online written examination. Because direct interaction between teachers and students in in-person learning creates an emotional bond, in-person instructions and lectures as well as in-person written examination are encouraged to instill a love of learning in students

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