Management of Distance Learning in Rural Areas in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract—**The purpose of this study was to explain the management of distance learning in rural areas during the Covid-19 pandemic which consisted of (1) long-distance learning planning in rural areas, (2) implementation of learning and (3) assessment of learning. The type of research used is qualitative exploratory with an inductive approach. The Source of data in this study was the informer made up of the principal of the secondary school, the elementary school teacher, junior high school teacher, the secondary student up to junior high school student and guardians of students in rural areas. The results of this study indicate three indicators. First, the learning planning for the evaluation goes according to the condition that occurs. Second, the implementation of learning in rural areas should be created between the material and the media so that the purpose of study can be achieved. Third, the learning assessment is done by continually adjusting the material with the learning evaluation (daily test) so that the analysis of learning results can be summarized correctly.**

Keywords—COVID-19, distance learning, management

I. INTRODUCTION

With the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, all life activities, whether individuals, groups, or government agencies are affected, including in the world of education. All levels of education are affected, starting from elementary level education units to higher education, including pre-school education, which have also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic [1]. For the sake of continuing educational activities, the teaching and learning process for students must continue, for this reason, learning adjustments must be made to the situation and conditions. Responding to this, the central and regional governments issued a policy not to carry out face-to-face learning but with distance learning.

The implementation of online learning is not limited to crisis situations such as the current pandemic, online learning has been suggested as a substitute for face-to-face learning [2]. Video-based online education, which is recognized as an online education method, is suitable for the 21st century educational environment to facilitate two-way interaction, participation in learning, classroom achievement, and levels of satisfaction similar to face-to-face classes. Emergency online teaching is an alternative, temporary teaching method in response to crisis situations [3].

Online learning that was carried out suddenly created many challenges, such as mastery of technology by teachers, availability of facilities and infrastructure, internet access and budget readiness [4]. In carrying out this policy which certainly brings a new face to Indonesian education, especially in rural areas, there are many obstacles in its implementation because not all schools have ever implemented this online learning system. So it is natural that both teachers, students and parents / guardians / students have problems in dealing with this new system, especially schools in villages that lack facilities in the form of integrated technology to support the online learning process. Lack of adequate facilities and costs between teachers and students makes the online learning process not as effective as expected.

Below will be described several previous studies that are relevant to research on distance learning. Research that has been done regarding distance learning, namely the first research conducted by Anggy Giri Prawiyogi entitled "The Effectiveness of Distance Learning Against Student Learning at SDIT Cendekia Purwakarta" [5]. The results of research conducted by researchers on the effectiveness of distance learning, it can be concluded that distance learning carried out at SDIT Cendekia Purwakarta with several methods is quite effective to do because SDIT Cendekia is one of the swift private schools and is ready to apply distance learning to the participants. students.

What this research has in common with the research I did is both distance learning that was carried out during Covid-19. The difference is that this research was conducted in schools that were ready for distance learning so that the learning outcomes were quite effective, while the research I conducted was located in rural schools which were not ready for distance learning so the results were not optimal.

The two studies that are relevant to this research are those conducted by Effendi Gazali entitled "Obstacles to Using the Internet as a Distance Learning Media (Community Phenomenology Homeschooling E-hugeschooling)" [6]. The results of this research show that the use of the internet as a medium for distance learning for students in E-hugschooling is used as an addition to learning material, as the main source in the distance learning process, material storage and making learning time more flexible.

The equation carried out with this research is to both study the existence of constraints in the use of the internet as a media for distance learning and the difference is that the teaching and learning process in homeschooling ehugheschooling uses multimedia media, whereas the research that I did only used radio and WhatsApp.

The third research conducted by Kharisma Danang Yuangga entitled "Media Development and Learning Strategies to Overcome Distance Learning Problems in the Covid-19 Pandemic" [7]. The results of this study explain the media development and strategies given by the teacher to get good learning.

The similarity in this study is to discuss the problems of online distance learning, while the difference lies in the content of different discussions. If this previous research describes the development of media and strategies provided by the teacher, the research carried out in this study is a description of planning, implementation and evaluation in distance learning.

The four studies conducted by Widyasari entitled "Analysis of Educational Policies Related to the implementation of Distance Learning in the Emergency COVID-19" [8]. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of distance learning still has many obstacles such as inadequate equipment and poor internet connection, besides that the increase in learning success is still small and ineffective.

The similarity in this research is to examine related distance learning. The difference in the research studied in Widyasari's research is a general description, while the research conducted in this study was only in remote villages.

Fifth, research conducted by Sri Yunita Simanjuntak entitled "Basic Education Response to Distance Learning Policies During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Central Java" [9]. The results of this study are firstly from the school side as much as 99.40% of the schools have implemented the Distance Learning program, second from the teacher's side the learning method that is mostly applied by teachers is 42.86%, namely by reading methods then summarizing the material, third from the student's side 45 , 81% of students stated that they really enjoyed distance learning activities while 54.19% did not like them.

The similarity in this study with the research being researched is that in the distance learning process, both teachers and students have problems in its application. While the difference in the research studied by Sri Yunita Simanjuntak is generally located in Central Java, while the research that is currently being carried out is in remote rural areas.

From the presentation of the results of previous research, it can be concluded that the importance of this study is to provide an overview of distance learning management during the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred in rural areas. So far what has happened is that many students or parents have difficulty understanding the meaning of learning and accessing remote learning due to the large number of underprivileged families and the lack of access to technology in it. Furthermore, this research can serve as an illustration for policy makers or the government to reconsider distance learning policies in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because not all regions can access lessons with technological limitations. Therefore, MoRA and MOHA need to develop the required distance learning framework. One of them is the need for technology in all regions to be able to access learning activities. The element of supervision in the distribution and use of the budget is mandatory to ensure that it is right on target. Good oversight not only helps ensure that budgets are distributed but also evaluates the feasibility of public-private partnerships with technology service providers in the provision of infrastructure to support online or distance learning.

So, learning management will not run well if there are still obstacles in learning, which should be accompanied by good management or management so that educational goals can be achieved by educational institutions.

Based on the above, the writing of this article is very important so that we can find out how distance learning is actually managed for teachers, parents and the readiness of rural students in undergoing the online learning system.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study using a qualitative research type. The purpose of this research is to examine, describe, and explain comprehensively the management of distance learning in rural areas. This study uses a qualitative exploratory method with an inductive approach. This method was used to obtain distance learning management information in the rural areas of the Merbabu highlands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this study, Spradley did not use the term population but in Sugiyono called it a social situation which consists of three elements, namely: place, actor and activity. In social situations or the object of this research, the researcher can observe in depth the activities of the people who are in a certain place.

Sources of data in this study were informants consisting of the principal of Kuncup Mekar PAUD school, elementary school teachers, junior high school teachers, students from kindergarten and junior high schools, and guardians of students in the countryside at the foot of Mount Merapi.

Data collection techniques in this study were interviews, observation and documentation. The collected data were analyzed in this study through three stages recommended by

Milles and Hubberman namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [10].

III. Research Discussion

IT-based learning is learning for the future of the millennial generation. Many universities have made plans in order to realize this learning system. Unexpectedly, world change as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic came so fast, forcing the world of education to do online learning, ready or not ready, able or unable. A change, especially in an emergency situation, will certainly cause a complicated reaction.

The topography of Indonesia which is in the form of islands and mountains requires the provision of internet and cellular telecommunications. However, 4G coverage is mostly concentrated on the island of Java because cellular telecommunication service providers, which are highly market dependent, naturally prioritize urban areas over rural areas with smaller populations [11]. Due to the inadequate reach of internet network facilities, the level of understanding of students and the community is still low about the use of online applications. The majority of students in remote areas use the WhatsApp application because it is considered easier in learning activities, does not need other integrated applications so its use is quite easy. Students only need to listen carefully to the messages or assignments given through WhatsApp group messages, either in the form of direct writing from the teacher, soft Microsoft word files or soft pdf files, then carry out them. Another thing is WhatsApp does not require too much quota, so it is considered the most likely to be used.

The majority of rural communities, in the area around the foot of Mount Merbabu, can be categorized as middle to lower class. The elderly people living in this area are primary school graduates. Of course, in this case, it is possible if sometimes you don't understand the tasks given by the teacher to your child. In addition, the process of mentoring parents is not running properly due to their busy work. Moreover, the current season is the season for land preparation for planting so that a lot of time is spent in the fields to work on the agricultural land.

In rural areas, the capacity is minimal for the implementation of distance learning, as stated by the principal of this Early Childhood Education school due to several things as follows: 1) limited educational technology facilities and infrastructure such as mobile androids, quotas and internet, 2) limited competence of people parents in child assistance, 3) lack of Indonesian vocabulary due to always using Javanese language, 4) difficulty in focusing attention and learning focus on students, 5) parents and students who are not committed.

In distance learning planning, schools carry out the agreement process in advance by discussing, consulting, sharing tasks with parents through the WhatsApp group, where in the WhatsApp group there are student guardians. One problem that has been complained about during distance learning is that there is no clarity on the distance learning curriculum used during the pandemic.

In terms of implementation, students study the material being taught, do daily questions and assignments, along with the exams that are scheduled either through the WhatsApp group or radio. The communication that exists between students, parents and teachers is not only through WhatsApp groups but also offline. The offline is done through a meeting that is scheduled once a week to minimize the occurrence of misunderstanding of parents with the assignment given.

In the case of offline learning activities using radio media, books and modules as media are the most likely choices for rural schools. For this rural area with limited resources, offline learning using books and modules is still very problematic. The first problem is that students are still not able to learn fully independently. This is because students are still used to solving problems with the help of guidance from their teachers in learning activities at school. Students actually can still study with the guidance of their parents, but parental guidance is still far from expectations because both parents are busy in the fields.

On the other hand, parents also play a very important role as a guide as well as a motivator for their children while studying at home. The constraints felt by the parents of students are as experienced by Marmi (39), one of the parents in the village at the foot of Mount Merbabu, she has several obstacles in accompanying her child to study besides a lack of knowledge because only elementary school graduates are also strategies in teaching material in School. The learning of first grade elementary school children is carried out via radio, where children do not focus on listening and do not understand what is being discussed because of the lack of vocabulary in Indonesian. Why parents find it difficult to change the role of teachers because the teaching profession requires special skills and cannot be done by just anyone whose basics are not from the field of teacher education [12].

In face-to-face learning, teachers are more freer to deliver teaching materials, look for the right media so that what is given can be well received, and provide learning motivation to their students. During the pandemic, parental assistance is needed to increase children's motivation to learn. Because like now face-to-face meetings are clearly not allowed. For this reason, adjustments are made by the teacher in teaching, such as being more creative and innovative in finding media according to circumstances and stealing attention so that the interest in learning and the enthusiasm for learning of students is maintained. For example, for elementary school children, the teacher provides interesting videos so that children can be interested in learning.

Such as research conducted by Anggi Giri Prawiyogi from Buana Perjuangan Karawang University at SDIT Cendekia Purwakarta that students feel attracted to the media used because it is in accordance with the students' interests. This is supported by the results of the questionnaire given to 535 respondents which obtained the results of respondents with the answer "YES" 355 respondents, the answer "ENOUGH" 163

respondents and the answer "NO" 17 respondents who feel less familiar with the method given by the teacher [5].

The teacher can also introduce students to the culture or local wisdom in their area so that students know more about and can take the existing noble values and be proud of the products of their own culture. Taking an example, for example students are given teaching material about the habit of disposing of garbage in its place, maintaining environmental cleanliness, planting and caring for plants, interacting with each other by mutual cooperation, fostering character by incorporating values of social manners, exploring talents and interests with singing, drawing, dancing and being creative by using used items such as recycling garbage in Bangsal village. The point is that the teacher must really innovate in making or finding learning resources for students [13].

In this case, the teacher Arri (37) carried out a visit to the student's house which was divided into several groups. However, as time goes by, one resident has been affected by the corona virus, activities like this have also decreased in quality and quantity. Apart from the threat of the spread of the corona virus, service and parental care are also the cause. So that there are almost no meaningful learning activities for the past few weeks.

The perceived advantage of distance learning is that it saves travel costs so that it can reduce transportation costs [14]. While the disadvantages are the delivery of material that is not clear, the assignments given are more than offline learning and the lack of interaction between students and teachers.

This opinion is also as stated in the research conducted by Priarti Megawanti who said that some respondents answered that they were not happy with the extension of study time from home, it was difficult for them to understand and master the subject matter because the teacher did not explain or the teacher was not clear about the explanation [15].

In addition, the lecture material, which was mostly reading material, could not be comprehensively understood by students [14]. Students assume that reading material and doing assignments is not enough, they need direct verbal explanation from the lecturer regarding some complex material [14].

Remote learning supervision is carried out to monitor and oversee the implementation of learning activities properly. Supervision from schools through daily journals that must be filled in every day and reported. While supervision by parents is carried out daily by monitoring every child's learning activity because learning is done remotely.

According to Ari Erma (36), his students only send pictures such as brushing their teeth, cutting nails because of their parents' coercion, not to set an example so that children are accustomed to keeping themselves clean but only for the assessment given by the teacher.

Evaluation of learning outcomes is carried out in the form of giving daily assignments, then student learning outcomes are recapitulated in the form of values contained in report cards.

Rohman (28) as one of the teachers also said that in terms of evaluation, Rohman was afraid to make mistakes in giving grades because he did not know whether the students had understood the teaching material and most of the assessments were based on the attitudes and activeness of students when learning.

Then, the thing that needs to be considered is that teachers and parents can work together to maintain learning motivation and minimize learning stress on students. How to reduce stress is usually by cooking children's favorite foods so they can study hard or providing education through interesting videos to attract students' interest and motivation to learn. This can be done by giving assignments that are in accordance with the level of education and can be understood by students and the management of a good learning environment. Therefore, both teachers and parents play a very important role in distance learning in this pandemic.

The expectation of teachers, parents and students in distance learning is that things return to normal, so that learning can be carried out face-to-face. As for now, if distance learning is still being applied, the difficulties related to internet quota can be given facilities or given free quota because the people's economic sector is currently having a difficult time. In the future, access to technology, either in the form of internet signals or school facilities, is equipped and communicated with related parties so that if distance learning is implemented, it can run well.

IV. CONCLUSION

Distance learning management during this pandemic is a challenge in the world of education. However, challenges should not be an obstacle. Education must bring changes to create a generation with dignity to live more prosperously. Efforts to answer this challenge must also be supported by various parties, including the government, teachers and parents.

From the results of research conducted by researchers on distance learning management in rural areas it can be concluded that distance learning is not yet effective because there are still many obstacles that are experienced in this village. One of them is the limitations of educational technology facilities and infrastructure such as android cellphones, quotas and internet, limited competence of parents in assisting children, the lack of Indonesian vocabulary for elementary school children because they always use Javanese, the difficulty of focusing attention and focus on learning students, and non-committed parents and students.

Apart from that, there are three indicators. First, learning planning requires an ongoing evaluation according to the conditions that occur. Second, the implementation of learning in rural areas should be created between the material and the media used so that the learning objectives can be achieved. Third, the learning assessment is carried out by adjusting the material with the learning evaluation (daily exams) so that the analysis of learning outcomes can be concluded accurately.

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