



# How the Distance Learning can be a Solution during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the implemented distance learning system from home as the Indonesian government's policy slogans during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of various distance learning system platforms currently available adjusted to the learning process's needs to carry out provides a solution to break the chain of spreading COVID-19 in Indonesia. The research using a literature review that consists of four stages, namely (1) Identification of research topic keywords, (2) identification of abstracts from various literature sources, (3) making notes of identification results, and (4) link notes periodically. Based on the results and discussion, distance learning is an effective solution to continuing the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it does not allow direct learning in the classroom. However, to increase distance learning success, various considerations are needed, such as infrastructure, teacher and student readiness, and expected learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers as an essential factor in the achievement of the learning process, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, must be able to create and provide usefully and not dull learning conditions, one of which is by trying to use various learning models platforms such as Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Forms, Jitsi Meet App, Whatsapp Groups and more.*

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is an outbreak that is currently a topic of conversation in most countries in the world. According to Gunawan et al. (2020), Corona Virus Disease, commonly known as COVID-19, was declared a pandemic in Indonesia on March 11, 2020. The thing which is very fearful about COVID-19 is its character that is quickly transmitting between humans. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020), on July 5, 2020, there 11.125.245 people have tested positive for COVID-19 from 216 countries. Indonesia is one of the Southeast Asian countries with the highest number of positive patients, as many as 63.749 people. It certainly makes the Indonesian government implement various policies that can minimize the spread of COVID-19. According to Lee (2020), this pandemic's final condition determining by the government's policy and responsiveness in assessing the problem.

The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact in almost all fields, including education. Almost all countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have implemented policies by closing schools to universities. It is required to reduce the level of activity and contact that occurs during the learning process. This policy is called Physical Distancing. Several countries enforce a Lock-Down policy, where everyone is not allowed to move outside the home during a period determined by the government in that country (Alvarez et al. 2020). The Physical Distancing Policy recommended by WHO also enforced

in Indonesia referred to as "Keeping Distance" by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Decree No. 3/2020 on the prevention of COVID-19 in the Education Unit No. 36926 / MPK.A / HK/2020 on online learning (Sari et al., 2020). The same thing applies to the university level by implementing distance learning from campus (Efendi et al., 2020).

The implementation of the guarding distance policy certainly requires a learning process from home. Learning, usually done face-to-face, then changes suddenly, of course, provides the latest challenges for educational institutions, teachers, students, and parents. These parties must start and use technology to ensure that the teaching and learning process continues as it should. Learning from home is one of the policy slogans suggested by the Indonesian government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning from home can be implemented using a Distance Learning system. According to Munir, distance learning is a learning system whose implementation or interaction is indirect or in one room between teachers and students (in Latip, 2020). Distance Learning aims to continue to meet the educational process standards by utilizing Information Technology development in computers or gadgets connected between teachers and students (Ahmad, 2020; Bali, 2019; Pakpahan and Fitriani, 2020). The implementation of learning from home is facilitated by various platforms, both video conferencing (such as Zoom Cloud Meeting and Google Meet), learning management systems (Google Classroom, and E-Learning), and WhatsApp Group (WAG).

The use of various platforms currently available adjusted to the learning process needs to carry out. If the desired learning wants delivery of information in the form of presentations, teachers and students can use the Zoom Cloud Meeting application and Google Meet (Ihsan et al. 2019; Suhada et al. 2020). Apart from using these various platforms, one of the government's policies is to broadcast various educational content nationally through the TVRI channel (Herliandry et al., 2020). The success or failure of the learning process from home is very dependent on all parties, which means that parents are currently also participating in supervising and guiding their children in participating in distance learning provided by the school.

The current condition of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused various parties to make significant changes in learning patterns, from face-to-face learning in the same classroom to learning to use technology. Various terms of conditions also appear one of which provides a picture that there is a massive migration in the world of education globally (Roy et al., 2020; Kong, 2020). In Indonesians conditions today, the teacher needs to prepare various new strategies to create an attractive learning condition by applying the learning process from home. Based on this description, an article review is carrying out to provide an overview of the learning process from home as one of the solutions applied to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia.

## **METHODS**

The method used in writing this article is a review of the literature. This method is carrying out by discussing and evaluating the research results or previous articles about distance learning systems, mainly when applied during the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature used is sourced from various international, national, and other accredited and accountable journals. According to Ary and Creswell in Prastowo (2012) and Ramdhani et al. (2014), several steps are in conducting a literature review.

1. Identify keywords in research topics to find related references.
2. Identify by reading abstracts related to previous research to obtain an overview of the topics to be developed.
3. Make notes on the identification results in the form of a writing framework that will be carrying out.
4. Linking notes from various sources arrange thematically based on essential theories and concepts related to research topics and variables.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Definition of Distance Learning***

Distance learning is a learning process when there is no face-to-face contact between teachers and students. Simonson and Seepersaud (2019) define distance learning as "Institute-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where an interactive telecommunications system is using to connect learners, resources, and instructors." It is reinforced by Hanurani (2019) that distance learning is a pursuit method without face-to-face contact between the teacher and learning.

When the learning process takes place, an interactive telecommunication system connects teachers and learners. The telecommunications system utilizes computers, television, radio, telephone, internet, video, and many more. The teacher will evaluate material and detailed instructions specifically sent or provided for students who carry out tasks. In this case, the teacher and students will be separated not only geographically but also time. Distance learning allows students to learn anytime and anywhere systematically, according to teacher instructions (Pratiwi and Chasanah, 2018). It allows students to adapt education with other responsibilities and commitments, such as reducing the habit of playing at home and doing other work that can hinder the learning system, which is, of course, under the supervision of a responsible parent or guardian.

Distance learning does not have time limitations because it is conditional and is accomplished between teachers and students, and peers. Distance learning emphasizes that distance education will help students feel more comfortable and motivated to learn with communication (Caroline et al., 2004). Without reciprocal communication, learning will become passive; learning is not a fun activity but becomes a heavy burden. So, in distance learning, the teacher not only gives notes and assignments, but there is a discussion of either light or more than motivating students to learn, and the material provided is attractively packaged by providing material in the form of PPT or video, especially those in elementary and junior high schools, because children of their age prefer something. It is different for high school students and university students, where they are more aware of the responsibilities given in the form of materials and tasks that must do.

Distance education is a learning method that uses correspondence as a means of communicating between students and teachers. According to Stewart et al., there are three main theories about distance learning: autonomy and independent learning, the industrialization of education, and interactive communication (Agustini, 2019). The descriptions of the three theories are as follows

1. Self-study is affected by the belief that every citizen has the right to equal opportunities in education.
2. The industrialization of education illustrates that distance learners are a form of teaching and learning activity characterized by a mass division of labor and learning materials.
3. Interactive communication illustrates that the notion of independent learning does not mean learning to do learning on their own, but with teacher guidance through a telecommunications medium, later learners can work independently from home.

### ***Characteristics of Distance Learning***

There are several forms of distance learning, including (1) independent Education program; (2) Face-to-face programs are held in several places at predetermined times and educational information is still conveyed, with/without interaction from students; (3) The software is not connecting to a schedule of meetings in one location. ; (4) Distance learning with e-learning, namely online learning based on information technology via the internet and this learning system can equipping with complementary modules or books. Distance learning characteristics are an organization that regulates independent learning, learning material is conveying through the media, and there is no direct contact between teachers and students.

The distance learning process's characteristics are that the teacher and students learn separately, but both are uniting by correspondence. Correspondence is necessary for interaction between teachers and students. There needs to be an interaction between teachers and students. Distance education is a form of education that provides opportunities for students to learn separately from the teacher. According to Keegan (1980), the distance learning system has characteristics, namely (1) separation between teacher and learner; (2) the influence of educational institutions/organizations; (3) the use of media that connects teachers and learners; (4) two-way communication takes place; (5) pay attention to learners as individuals who learn; and (6) education as an industry.

Based on these characteristics, distance learning is design to continue to facilitate so that the learning process's implementation can still occur in any condition, including during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Because face-to-face learning is very unlikely under current conditions, one alternative is distance learning. It is also in line with the government's recommendation to keep a distance from the spread of the COVID-19 virus chain, especially in schools and colleges across Indonesia.

### ***Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning***

Every learning model or system has advantages and disadvantages during the implementation process in real life. Many factors are considered, such as conditions, characteristics of learners, characteristics of the material's depth and breadth, and other factors. Through knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of the learning distance, the process is hoping that every teacher will find solutions or alternatives that can be applied so that the learning process can be more meaningful and certainly not burden the students. According to Anderson (2008), there are several advantages of the distance learning process, among others:

1. This learning can be applied to any situation and condition as long as there is an internet network.
2. Students can access online teaching materials without any particular restrictions.
3. If students need additional knowledge on the content studied, they can easily access the internet.
4. Students can study or review lesson materials at any time and anywhere if needed.
5. Both teachers and students can conduct discussions via the internet that can be followed by many participants, thereby increasing knowledge and broader insights.

Meanwhile, Rusman (2011) explains that there are several weaknesses of the distance learning process, including

1. Lack of interaction between teachers and students or even among students can slow down the formation of values in the learning process.
2. The tendency to ignore academic or social aspects and vice versa encourage business/commercial aspects.
3. The learning process tends toward training rather than education.
4. Students who do not have high learning motivation tend to be left behind.
5. Administrative support for the distance learning process is needed to serve a vast number of students.

### ***Distance Learning Syntax***

Teachers in implementing online-based distance learning systems need to pay attention to the system's steps or syntax to facilitate effective learning procedures and are readily accepted by students. In general, distance learning syntax often used today only focuses on providing teaching materials and doing assignments. The teacher unconsciously forgets the most important part of the student's process in obtaining, analyzing, and evaluating the teaching materials provided to be understood by students. The following is a distance learning syntax adapted from several articles according to Hasanudin (2020) and Kamalasari et al. (2019), among others

#### **1. Orientation Stage**

The teacher needs to provide information about the learning process that will carry out using learning applications, the discussion process during learning, and the assessment process procedures. These need to be done because not all students already have the same technological literacy skills.

#### **2. Interpretation Stage**

Teachers need to provide information to download teaching materials used during the learning process through the application system used. The teacher then asks students to properly study the teaching material to develop existing concepts and form new knowledge.

#### **3. Planning Stage**

Students have asking to start identifying problems and various questions related to the teaching materials obtained previously.

#### **4. Exploration Stage**

According to the application used, the teacher facilitates students to carry out the problem-solving process through discussion forums or other features.

#### **5. Explanation Stage**

Students submit and inform the results of solving problems that have been done verbally or in writing through a note, summary, or report.

#### **6. Reflection Stage**

The teacher offers students the opportunity to study the previously completed learning process. This review can be in the form of new concepts or knowledge gained, advantages and disadvantages in

the learning process, and other technical matters. The teacher then provides feedback by responding and giving students an appreciation for having followed the learning process well.

## **DISCUSSION**

Law No. 20/2003 states that distance learning is an education in which students were separating from teachers and learning use various learning sources through communication technology, information, and other media. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of learning required schools to conduct distance learning. According to the government stated in the circular on March 18, 2020, all indoor and outdoor activities postponed are reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Mufarikhah and Nursalim, 2020). The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia also issued Circular No. 4/2020 concerning Implementation of Education Policies in an Emergency for the Spread of COVID-19, which explains that the learning process is carrying out home through distance learning. According to the learning schedule, when the pandemic situation, implementation in the learning system must be using easy remote access, all the components must be ready, and the technology easy to use in the distance learning process.

The concept applied in the implementation of distance learning, which is digital-based and differentiated by education level, namely Elementary School, which is dividing into two categories, namely classes 1,2, 3, and 4; learning is carrying out with an online application system through applications made by guardians class with the parents of each student that had to simulated before. At this level, parents' role in accompanying students is one of the keys to success so that the learning process delivered online can be well and maximally accepted (Purwanto et al. 2020). The distance learning method is delivered directly by the teacher and the learning system because it needs adjustments (Astini, 2020). The online application also opens a discussion space for students who want to ask questions simultaneously. For Grade 5 and Grade 6 categories, learning is carried out with a focused discussion system through applications one level above the lower class made by the teacher and monitored directly by the parents. Especially for grade 6 who will face the final school exam, the online application is designed by subject teachers to make it easy to communicate with the subject teacher concerned.

Of course, it still requires extra energy from both teachers and parents in implementing the learning process at the primary school level. However, with the implementation of distance learning, each parent provides a candid picture regarding their children's learning process before learning is still carried out face-to-face at school. According to Astini (2020), parents' role in the online learning process at the elementary school level is very influential in students' learning outcomes. With these conditions, parents must use various technologies, especially those used by their children, to carry out the online learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cahyati & Kusumah, 2020). Based on the fact that students at the elementary school level still cannot think at the level of thinking of learning independently (Widodo & Supriyono, 2008). In addition to assisting children in completing various school obligations, parents and teachers also emphasize character education by the curriculum's demands. In the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning activities are not focused on achieving all subjects but can instill disciplinary values and be responsible for responding to the problems that are currently happening. In addition to carrying out two-way learning to use various available applications, at the elementary school level, the teacher also asks parents and students to participate in learning broadcast by several television stations, one of which is TVRI, which facilitates student learning (Astini, 2020). It is a form of government participation supporting the learning process at the elementary school level by following policies related to social distancing slogans during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to research conducted by Hamdani & Priatna (2020) at the elementary school level learning in Subang Regency, there are several important factors in the success of the distance learning process at the primary school level, including 1). The facts of learning during a pandemic; 2). Teacher digital literacy skills; 3). The degree of student adaptation to learning; 4). Adequacy of the device; 5). Internet connection; 6). Online learning costs; 7). Application comfort level, and 8). Post pandemic learning commitment

Students are inviting to explore learning resources from the internet site at the junior high school and senior high school level with an assessment system that can monitor directly, interactively, measured, and fun to implement independent, regular or self-regulated learning. It aims at students at

the middle school level, both junior high and high school, considering to think symbolically and understand something meaningfully without the need for concrete objects or even visual objects (Rizaldi et al. 2019). It means that teachers only need to provide an overview of a problem but are not fully active regarding the process carried out by students in finding ways to solve the problems given. According to Handayani (2020), distance learning at the secondary school level emphasizes students' ability to independently develop various learning skills. Students will be facilitating topics that can use to investigate during the learning process from home. Getting used to such a pattern is hoping that students will support the government's physical distancing program and practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students' thinking abilities will increase if students are accustomed to solving various problems, especially those in their own lives (Rizaldi et al. 2019).

At the university level, college students are categorizing as an independent. It means that students do not need too much information about learning during distance learning. The lecturers must be considering using some learning method applied to the students such that they do not have issues integrating distance learning. Distance learning is not new at the university level because several universities in Indonesia have implemented a blended learning system. The blended learning system is a learning system that combines distance learning with conventional or face-to-face learning (Alwan, 2017). According to research conducted by Gunawan et al. (2020) regarding the variety of platforms or applications used in the distance learning process, at the University of Mataram that four applications usually use, namely Google Classroom, Whatsapp, Email, and Zoom Cloud Meeting.

The implementation of distance learning will use several digital applications or platforms such as Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Classroom, Jitsi Meet App, E-learning Kemenag, and other media that can support the learning system amid the current COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to using the application above, every teacher will usually create a WhatsApp group to make the communication process more comfortable. It is because WhatsApp is an application that is definitely on almost every Android smartphone. These various applications certainly cannot be applied at all levels of education. It is necessary to have a needs analysis according to the students or their learning so that the learning process can run optimally. Analysis of teacher needs, among others

1. Prepare several alternative applications that can be used by students in carrying out the distance learning process.
2. Educators and students' ability skills to use a framework or program for the Learning Management System (LMS).
3. Manage the schedule adequately related to the provision of teaching materials, discussion process, and task deadlines.
4. Using an approach that can be integrating with the application used. These need to be considered because not all applications have the same features. The teacher needs to adjust to the learning objectives and the material presented.
5. Provide material files, instructional videos, and various other relevant learning resources that can be accessed anytime and anywhere by students

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion, distance learning is an effective solution in continuing the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic, which does not allow direct learning in the classroom. However, to increase distance learning success, various considerations are needed, such as infrastructure, teacher and student readiness, and expected learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers as an essential factor in the achievement of the learning process, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, must be able to create and provide usefully and not dull learning conditions, one of which is by trying to use various learning models platforms such as Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Forms, Jitsi Meet App, Whatsapp Groups and more.

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