

The Implementation of Distance Learning Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The impact of the Pandemic Covid 19 is felt almost everywhere in the world, including Indonesia. Almost all sectors of life receive and feel the negative impact of the existence of this pandemic, not only the health sector but also the economic sector, education, even religion and worship activities. In the education sector, to break the chain of virus transmission, the Government imposes social restrictions including PJJ (Distance Learning) policy for all students at all levels of education from kindergarten to high school / vocational school. PJJ is conducted online at each home using computer facilities, laptops or smartphones with special applications. This policy is proof that the Government continues to fulfill children's education rights in the midst of a pandemic. In its implementation, PJJ invites various reactions especially from students. Various complaints began to emerge after PJJ was running for a week. Of the 213 complaints reports submitted to the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), the majority of complaints are related to the severity of the assignments given by teachers to students and regarding PJJ that drains energy and internet quota. In addition, the limitations of online learning facilities, become obstacles for students in joining PJJ. This complaint report was confirmed by a survey of 1700 students conducted by KPAI. In another survey conducted by KPAI with FSGI, it was found that the inability and unpreparedness of online teaching teachers was another problem in PJJ. Policy implementation is a crucial stage in the policy process. No matter how good a policy is, it will not succeed if it is not implemented according to plan. This research, which uses a qualitative approach and content analysis method, aims to analyze the implementation of PJJ policies for students during the Covid 19 pandemic. The research is expected to be able to define social reality and provide theory, data, and analysis that can be utilized by the Government in developing education policies in emergencies.

Keywords : *Policy implementation, children, Covid 19, education, PJJ.*

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INTRODUCTION

The corona virus which was appearing for the first time in China's Hubei province have spread throughout the world. Globally, this virus has infected people in more than 200 countries. This respiratory infection begins with fever and dry cough and after about one week, can cause shortness of breath. Since the beginning of March 2020, positive cases of Covid-19, the name of the disease caused by the corona virus, have increased rapidly in Indonesia. (Kompas, 2 April 2020).

According to the Covid 19 Handbook published by the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, one of the characteristics of the Covid 19 disease is that it is easily transmitted, so that it can quickly infect many people. This rapid distribution can be illustrated by the red curve in the graph below. The curve will reach its peak by exceeding the capacity of the health system to handle it. Experts say wrapping a curve or slowing the spread of the corona virus is the way to end the pandemic. According to them the point is to bend the curve, preventing the curve from forming sharp peaks. Sloping the curve can be achieved by slowing the spread so that the number of cases of infection at one time can still be handled by available health facilities. Thus, risk people who are prioritized can get adequate services.



The chart was shared by Drew Harris (a US population expert) and went viral. Source: CDC (Covid Manual 19 Ministry of Home Affairs)

To smooth the curve, the Government has implemented a social distancing policy since mid-March. Beginning with the policy of the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta which decided to close all schools for 2 weeks starting from March 16, 2020. Instead, teaching and learning activities are carried out through the remote method or learning from home online (Kompas, March 14, 2020). This was done to prevent the spread of the Covid 19 outbreak in Jakarta. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in Coronavirus Disease Emergencies (Covid-19), one of which was implementing distance learning (or in Bahasa Indonesia it is called 'Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh' or in short, PJJ). PJJ policy was then implemented in a number of other provinces such as West Java, East Java, Central Java, Banten and other regions in Indonesia. This policy applies to all students at all levels of education. Moreover, the Government also imposed a PSBB (Large-scale Social Limitation) policy in several Cities. DKI Jakarta PSBB was first decided by Minister of Health Terawan Agus Putranto. The decision was contained in the Decree of the Minister of Health No. HK.01.07 / Menkes /

239/2020 (News One, 7 April 2020). In the decree, the PSBB was carried out during the longest incubation period and could be extended if it was proven there was still a corona virus spread in Jakarta. Jakarta PSBB starts on April 10. Furthermore, 5 regions in West Java, namely Depok City, Bekasi City, Bekasi Regency, Bogor City and Bogor Regency, have implemented PSBB since April 15 (Kompas, 11 April 2020). During the PSBB, practically the PJJ policy was continued.

Policy implementation is a crucial stage in the public policy process. The main essence of policy implementation is understanding what should happen after a program is declared valid or formulated. This understanding includes efforts to administer it and have a real impact on the community or events (Mazmanian and Sabatier in Widodo, 2011: 87). The implementation of PJJ policies in a number of cities then causes mixed reactions. Many parents and students complain about the workload given by Teachers are too numerous and heavy, not to mention complaints about the swelling internet quota budget because PJJ is implemented online and requires a large internet quota. These complaints manifested by reports received by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in the form of 213 complaints about distance learning (PJJ) starting from March 16, 2020 (Kompas, April 13, 2020). Complaints are dominated by students regarding the various assignments given by teachers which are considered heavy and draining energy and internet quota. The weight of the workload given by teachers is felt by almost all students - as the complaints that are received by KPAI comes from students of all levels of education. Most complaints came from the provinces of DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java and East Java. This was confirmed by a survey conducted by KPAI and followed by 1700 students on 13 to 27 April 2020. The survey aimed to determine students' perceptions about the implementation of the PJJ results in the form of various complaints of students in carrying out this PJJ, among others the limitations of online learning facilities, the lack of teacher-student interaction, and too many tasks (Media Indonesia, 27 April 2020). The readiness of school infrastructure, the ability of teachers to teach online, and the availability of smart phones that are sufficient to run online learning applications, are also other issues in implementing PJJ. (Kompas, 2 May 2020). Furthermore, the KPAI and the Federation of Indonesian Teachers Unions (FSGI)'s survey showed that most teachers were still pursuing to meet a standard curriculum. Of the 602 teachers who were survey respondents, 53 percent of them will complete the curriculum targets according to plan (KPAI, Exposure to Teacher's Perception and Evaluation Survey). This survey results, deviate from the spirit of the Minister of Education and Culture policy which mentions that distance learning policy is to provide meaningful learning experiences for students without being burdened with the demands of completing curriculum target for grade promotion or graduation.

The survey results and complaint reports form the basis of this research. Therefore this research or study aims to analyze the implementation of PJJ policies. Research is expected to be able to define social reality and provide

theory, data and analysis that can be utilized by the Government in developing education policies in emergencies.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. In line with what Rubin & Babbie said (2008: 417-418), qualitative research provides a comprehensive perspective, a deep understanding of the social phenomena under study and can provide diverse nuances of the attitudes and behaviors being studied. Almost the same, Bryman (2008:367-368) said qualitative research uses more explanation in the form of description of words. In addition, qualitative research is interpretive in which qualitative research is made an interpretation of what is seen, heard and understood (Craswell, 2010:262). Explanation of Neuman (2006:159-160) regarding interpretive social science approaches shows the urgency of researchers in the research process. The role of researchers is not only important in analyzing various data obtained to filter the meaning that is in it. Efforts to raise the meaning behind abundant data require the creativity and interpretation of researchers. Based on the benefits, this research is a social policy research. Research is an important component in social policy. According to Jamrozik (2009: 55) the purpose of social policy research is to provide theories and data that can be utilized by the Government or non-Government institutions in developing policies and achieving desired results. By conducting research on a social policy, researchers are expected to be able to define social reality through the identification of relevant issues and based on interpretations of the findings in research (Jamrozik 2009:52). The knowledge gained as a result of a social research can be used for various purposes, and is especially beneficial for disadvantaged populations. In this study, what is meant by 'disadvantaged populations' are children. Based on the research objectives, this type of research is explanatory. Alston and Bowles (2003: 35) say "... the aim of explanatory research is to investigate the 'why' of social phenomena, and to answer their causes". This research will investigate the implementation of PJJ policies for students at elementary to senior high school level.

This research uses content analysis method. Weber (Satori and Komariah, 2013: 157) states that the content study is a methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to draw valid conclusions from a book or document. Furthermore, it was stated by Holsti (Satori and Komariah, 2013: 157) that the content study is a technique used to draw conclusions through efforts to find the characteristics of messages, and is carried out objectively and systematically. Guba and Lincoln (Satori and Komariah, 2013: 157) put forward five basic principles of content analysis. (1) The process of following rules. Each step is carried out on the basis of explicitly compiled rules and procedures. (2) Content analysis is a systematic process. This means that in the context of forming categories so that the inclusion and exclusion of categories is carried out on the basis of rules that adhere to the principle. (3) Content analysis is a process that is directed to generalize. (4) Content analysis questions the manifested content. So, if researchers will draw

conclusions must be based on the contents of a document that is manifested. (5) Content analysis can be analyzed quantitatively, but it can also be done with qualitative analysis. The steps or procedures for content analysis are also explained by Fraenkel and Wallen (2007: 485) as follows: (1) The researcher decides the specific objectives to be achieved. (2) Defining important terms must be explained in detail. (3) Specifies the unit to be analyzed (4) Finding relevant data (5) Establishing rational or conceptual relationships to explain how a data relates to objectives. (6) Planning for withdrawal of samples (7) Formulating category coding. After the researcher has determined as much detail as possible about the aspects of the content to be examined, he needs to formulate relevant categories for research.

This research lasted for one month from April 1st to May 1st 2020. In addition to analyzing news content from the mass media, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews online by telephone or through the Whatsapp application with a number of students from various levels of education consisting of 3 students Elementary School (SD), 3 students of junior high school (SMP) and 3 students of senior high school (SMA). All informants domiciled in Jakarta, Depok and Bekasi. Data collection techniques used in this study were in-depth interviews and participant observation, as well as documentation studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Distance Learning Policy During the Covid 19 Pandemic

Characteristic of policy implementation is the policy that has been formulated, implemented by administrative units that mobilize financial and human resources. (Dunn1994: 24). However, policy implementation is not easy, considering that the policy is implemented at the operative and administrative level, which allows the policy to be interpreted differently (Jamrozik, 2009: 66-69). The Government through the Minister of Education and Culture issued Circular Letter No.4 / 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policy in the Emergency of the Distribution of Covid 19 which aims to protect the health of students, teachers and all school residents. The Minister of Education and Culture stated that the Learning Process from Home was carried out with the following conditions: a) Online PJJ was implemented to provide a meaningful learning experience for students, without being burdened with the demands of completing all curriculum targets; b.) can be focused on life skills education including the Covid-19 pandemic; c.) PJJ activities and tasks can vary between students, according to their interests and conditions, including considering the gap of access/learning facilities at home; d.) Evidence or product of PJJ activities from the students should be given qualitative and useful feedback by the teacher, without being required to give quantitative scores. In its implementation, PJJ which has been going on for 7 weeks is not implemented according to the Minister of Education and Culture's policy and gets various negative responses from students and parents. In addition to negative responses, PJJ also experiences

various obstacles that make students unable to follow PJJ smoothly. PJJ is also implemented nonstandardly in all schools.

This study groups complaints based on: (a). results of in-depth interviews with informants, (b). complaints report received by KPAI, and (c) results of a survey conducted by KPAI. The four categories of grouping are: 1) too many and piled up tasks, 2) teacher and student interaction, 3) teacher unpreparedness, and 4) limited facilities. These four categories are factors that influence the implementation of PJJ policies.

a. Too many and piled up tasks

In interviews conducted with students, most of them answered that the assignments given by the teacher were too many and were piled up because assignments were given simultaneously for several subjects at the same time. The collection time requested by Teachers can also be very short. As a high school student said, "The subject ends at 9 am, then assignments are collected at 9 am, even though it is only given at 7 am" (Student 9, 2 May 2020). Other students who were still in elementary school said that "the assignments were too many and too fast in submitting" (Student 2, 1 May 2020). In a survey conducted by KPAI, the total respondents reached 1700 students from 54 cities / districts in 20 Provinces. The majority of respondents (73%) felt the difficulty doing the assignments from the teachers during PJJ. The time needed to complete heavy tasks is generally short, which is around 1-3 hours (44.1% of respondents); around 3- 6 hours (34.2%); and more than 6 hours to a day (21.6%). Meanwhile, from the complaint report received by KPAI, almost 70 percent of the complainants said that the assignments given by the teachers were very heavy. While the completing time is very short. Many high school students are given the task of writing essays in almost all subjects. In addition, there is a junior high student who on the second day PJJ has done 250 questions from his teacher. There are elementary school students in Bekasi who are asked to compose songs about Corona, to be sung with music instruments and must be videotaped.

b. Teacher and Student Interaction

In an interview, a high school student said that the majority of teachers only gave assignments without any process of explaining the subject (Student 7, May 1, 2020). The teacher only gives reading material to read without explaining how to do the tasks. For Mathematics and Physics, of course it is very hard for students to do assignments to answer questions from the teacher without understanding the subject. In a survey conducted by KPAI, as many as 79.9% of respondents stated that there was no interaction at all between the teacher and students except giving assignments and collecting assignments, without any learning interactions such as direct questioning or teacher activities explaining the subjects. The teacher only emphasizes in giving tasks only.

c. Teacher unpreparedness

In the KPAI and FSGI survey attended by 602 teachers, 77.6% tended to prepare learning by making assignment and evaluation materials. It could be interpreted that in PJJ implementation, the teacher more emphasized in the

assessment activities, rather than in giving a meaningful learning activities. This may be forced by the teacher due to the lack of mastery of online learning applications. It was proven that only 19.1% of respondents were accustomed to using online applications. This fact makes PJJ a learning mode that is not attractive to students. Another reality is that teachers tend to meet the curriculum target. This was conveyed by Student 8 who said that every time students complained about a lot of assignments, the Teacher answered: "I have to complete curriculum target" (Student 8, May 2, 2020). This illustrates the desire of the teacher to complete the achievement of a very strong curriculum while the ability of the teacher to use online applications is still low.

d. Limited facilities

Another problem complained of, is that not all students have enough internet quota to take part in online learning. In addition, there are also students who do not have laptops or computers so it is difficult for them to join PJJ. In the KPAI survey, 42.2% answered that they did not have internet quota. In addition to the internet quota, it turns out that 15.6% of respondents do not have adequate PJJ equipment such as laptops or mobile phones with special applications for online learning.

Van Meter and van Horn in Hamdi (2014: 99) developed a model of the policy implementation process known as "*A Model of the Policy Implementation*". This top-down implementation model emphasizes the imperfect links between established policies and actual implementation. According to Edwards III, (George, 1980) the success of policy implementation is influenced by four variables, namely: (1) communication, (2) resources, (3) disposition, and (4) bureaucratic structure. PJJ policies whose implementation is not in accordance with the Minister of Education and Culture policy, occur because the communication factor has gone through several levels of bureaucracy, so that the expected things are distorted in the middle of the implementation process. Besides that, according to Eugene Bardach in Hill and Hupe (2002), policy makers must estimate how the scenario of the implementation process along with the requirements needed for the policy to be implemented properly, because obstacles or disruptions that may be present in the implementation process have been anticipated and therefore will be easily overcome. Regarding the resource factor, PJJ implementers in this case the teacher did not receive prior training in online teaching. This causes the teacher to only give assignments without explaining the subject. It is feared that teachers only giving and collecting assignments as an obligation fulfillment. Assignments were also given without prior simulation about how long students can do them under such conditions. In addition, facility resources such as student and teacher internet quota are also an obstacle. Students who do not have adequate laptops or smartphones are also factors that influence the success of PJJ. Ideally, the Government will free the use of the internet for students and teachers, because after all, education is the right of students. Furthermore, the factor influencing the successful implementation of the policy is disposition, as defined by Edward III as the attitude of the implementer. In PJJ,

Teachers are still pursuing curriculum targets. This is very contradictory to the spirit and rules of the Minister of Education and Culture policy as stipulated in the Circulation Letter. The teacher also emphasizes more and is oriented towards assessment activities or 'aspects of standard assessment' in the implementation of PJJ, instead of meaningful learning activities (aspects of the process). This confirms that the attitude of the teacher as the implementer is not in line with the objectives of the policy. The last factor is the bureaucratic structure, where an important structural aspect of each organization is the existence of standard operating procedures (SOP). Eventhough the Minister of Education and Culture policy has been followed up with the Provincial Education Office's circulation letter, the implementation of PJJ in education units at all levels is not standard. This is due to the long organizational structure, which tends to weaken supervision and lead to red-tape, a complicated and complex bureaucratic procedure. The absence of a clear and detailed SOP on how PJJ should be implemented causes the implementers of policies in the education unit described as 'loss of direction', thus interpreting the policy differently. Therefore it can be said, the implementation of PJJ policy does not meet the 4 variables required by Edward III for the policy implementation to succeed.

In addition, from the discussion above it is known that students in this case have a weak position. They are conditioned to obey all the Teachers' instructions to carry out the assignments without fulfilling their right to obtain prior subjects' explanation. In fact, they are the next generation of the nation, and have a strategic position in the development and development of human civilization. Children are also the most valuable resource (Hoover in Wallace, 2001: 133). They will be the main source of the workforce which will affect the quality of life of the nation in the future. Therefore the Government must respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children (Freemantle, 2010: 2). PJJ policy is proof that the Government respects, protects and fulfills children's educational rights, even though the State is facing an emergency of the Covid 19 pandemic. However, in its implementation, the position of children is more as an 'disadvantaged group', which has no other choice but to carry out all the tasks given by teachers during PJJ. This is evident from the results of the survey. Of the 1700 survey respondents conducted by KPAI, 76% said they were not happy to run PJJ.

However, the Government should respond to complaints reports and the results of the KPAI survey, in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 2003), namely listening to children aspiration and respecting their views. However, all policies related to children should be designed with the aim of the best interests of children.

CONCLUSION

PJJ policy as outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture's Circulation Letter No.4 / 2020 is implemented differently at the education administrative level. Variables that influence the successful implementation of the policy are not fulfilled, so the Government in this case KPAI, receives many

reports of complaints from students regarding too many and piled up tasks from the teacher and the lack of interaction between teacher and students in explaining the subject matter. In addition, PJJ also experiences obstacles such as unpreparedness and the inability of teachers to implement PJJ and the limited facilities for online learning that students have. This fact makes PJJ a learning mode that is not attractive to students. The implementation of the PJJ policy also does not promote the principles of fulfilling children's rights, which are listening to children aspiration and respecting their views; and always prioritizing the best interests of children.

This research provides recommendations to the Government to (1) Establish curriculum in emergency situations; (2) Make PJJ standard operating procedures (SOP); (3) Provide online teaching training for Teachers; (4) Encourage teachers to be more creative in teaching and learning activities, both PJJ (or normal schools), not to focus solely on academic competence, but by recognizing and utilizing the interests and potential of children, so that the tasks given are carried out totally and passionately; (5) Encourage teachers to better respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children, as well as listen and respect the views of children and are always oriented to the best interests of children; (6) Evaluate teacher performance in implementing PJJ in the perspective of children's learning achievement; (7) Encourage the Government to prepare for entering a new era of Education by providing internet quotas and creating online learning platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses gratitude to Allah SWT for the blessings that enabled me to complete this Research Report in the midst of the Covid 19 outbreak. The author also thanks the family for their support. Also to the colleagues of the National University Community, specifically the Sociology Study Program and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

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