

Online Learning on the Covid-19 Pandemic to Create Educational Access Inequality

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Abstract

Education is the right of every student, therefore access to education is a necessity. Education during a pandemic is carried out through online learning as an alternative. The goal is to ensure continuity of education for students. With online learning, it is hoped that students can still learn optimally because it is supported by more practical and efficient facilities so that they can learn without having to go to school. In online learning, various difficulties are faced by students. Students from underprivileged circles feel the most difficulty in this online learning. This paper focuses on research on the experiences of students from economically disadvantaged families in accessing education. The research objective was to analyze inequality in access to education, including its factors and implications. Sources of data in this study were elementary school teachers in the district Kedungbanteng and students who do not have online learning tools. This research uses descriptive-qualitative-phenomenological research with data collection through field observations and open interviews with informants. The collected data were analyzed through reduction, display and verification of data / conclusions. The results showed that the difficulty of access felt by students from economically weak circles in the form of (1) online learning activities were given in the form of giving assignments using the WhatsApp group application which was considered the easiest application, (2) student participation in online learning activities was low because students must borrow a cellphone belonging to a relative or friend, (3) students have difficulty accessing learning resources from the internet, (4) most parents are unable to provide regular assistance or help complete their child's assignments, because of the time available more used to earn a living, so that children's difficulties are not resolved properly, (5) the learning conditions of students at home have the initiative to learn independently, but there are those who do not have the initiative to learn so that time is used a lot to play, (6) motivation student learning decreased by *curry na* there is no interaction with teachers or friends, while parents are less accustomed to encouraging learning, even though they are with children at home and (7) the teacher's assessment of students who cannot afford it is based on work results which are then compared with the results of pre-term assignments pandemic.

Keywords: *Access to Education, Inequality in Education, Online Learning, Pandemic Period.*

Introduction

Education is a basic necessity for every child's life prospects. Every child, regardless of social status, has the right to receive an education even in difficult situations, so nothing should hinder a child's right to receive an education (Tareen & Haand, 2020). The government is also obliged to provide facilities to support a smooth and successful education. Through its various agencies, the

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Indonesian Government has made efforts to improve educational resources, systems, and facilities. However, considering the vast territories of Indonesia and its very diverse culture, not all these improvements could be realized quickly (Budiharso & Tarman 2020). Adequate education provision has therefore not happened in all Indonesia's regions. Many children still cannot study because they live in remote areas with no access to digital communication, and poverty is also a factor (Hoe et al., 2021).

Education during the Covid-19 pandemic happened through online systems to avoid contact and the associated spread of disease. The goal was to continue the acquisition of knowledge, values, and skills going forward (Salehudin, et al., 2020). In theory, online learning has various advantages (e.g., it is practical, efficient, modern) because it is supported by digital technology. It is also an indicator of progress in society (van Deursen, 2020). At the same time, however, online learning is a source of contention in the world of education due to several technical problems in terms of the necessary supporting facilities, such as access to devices and internet connectivity. This presented an additional burden for students, teachers, and parents. Students from underprivileged families felt this limitation the most. Some teachers and parents also had problems adapting, so such problems need to be resolved quickly, so learning can take place smoothly (Lubkov et al., 2020).

Online learning studies were unthinkable at one time. Knowledge and values are generally passed on when learning is carried out through direct, in-person interactions between individuals. Indeed, education is generally more complete when conducted face to face, but the Covid-19 pandemic forced education to move online (Naziaha, et al., 2020). Online learning became an attractive option for continuing access to education, but it required the existence of hardware, connection signals, data quotas, prepared content and learning programs, and student participation. There is a growing belief that online learning will be used in the future, even though it has had an impact in terms of student access inequalities that were not anticipated (Jones & Sharma, 2020).

This paper conveys the specific experiences of students from economically disadvantaged families when participating in online learning activities. These relate to accessing learning and adapting to overcome the problems. Online learning is indeed a new alternative, but it created a number of access problems for students from economically disadvantaged circles (Kim et al., 2021). However, something new can generally be accepted once the various teaching troubles have been addressed.

Research (e.g., Evans-Amalu & Claravall, 2021; Nur'Aini, 2021; Purwanto et. al, 2020) into online learning experiences during the Covid-19 period has been mostly carried out by academics, observers, and education practitioners. These studies indicated that in addition to the convenience of online learning, there were also many obstacles for teachers, students, and supporting systems, because it was new and largely unfamiliar. The research revealed the various experiences and responses of teachers, students, and parents to online learning at various levels of education and their implications for the wider community. The studies focused on students from economically disadvantaged families and their inequality in accessing education through online learning. This inequality is based on students' ability to participate in online learning, opportunities for connecting to the internet, and an inability to prepare learning tools. Other factors relate to the state of the online learning infrastructure, the digital literacy of students, and the abilities of their parents, as well as the implications for standardized evaluations, descriptions of students' competencies, and experiences in determining a mastery of technology. Thus, this study focuses on the causes of, and the implications of, unequal access to education.

This paper departs from the assumption that online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has been a perfect solution for students to continue learning. It instead visits the differences in access to learning for students with various socioeconomic backgrounds. While online learning provides convenience, because it can be done in a practical and efficient way, even during a pandemic, there are differences in the ability to access it. Students who can access it effectively tend to do well, while those who cannot due to financial reasons tend to perform poorly. Indeed, some students' families can afford the necessary tools, while others cannot. Thus, online learning presents problems for both the students and parents of poorer families, and it also requires adapted behaviors (Zhang et al., 2020). This study therefore sought to determine (1) the barriers to students accessing education, (2) the factors limiting their access to education, and (3) the implications that this limited access has for students' education.

Research Questions

This paper posits that transitioning to online learning during this pandemic was a necessary step, but it has led to many fundamental problems, especially for students from poorer backgrounds, so the study discusses how to solve them. From this theme, three research questions were formulated:

- 1) How does unequal access to education for poorer students during covid-19 pandemic occur in Indonesia?
- 2) What factors lead to this unequal access for poorer students during covid-19 pandemic occur in Indonesia?
- 3) What implications does this inequality have for poorer students during covid-19 pandemic occur in Indonesia?

Literature Review

Online Learning

Online learning is generally defined as a form of learning that delivers learning content through digital communication, usually using the internet as the main medium for interaction between students and teachers (Tareen & Haand, 2020). Online learning can involve various technologies such as the World Wide Web, email, chat applications, SMS messages, and audio and video conferencing through computer networks (Ez-zaouia et al., 2020). According to Wang et al. (2018), online learning (e-learning) is positioned as allowing people to study anytime and anywhere without the need to leave their homes. In addition, online learning practices can have many positive impacts on the learning process, with the teacher being a facilitator. Indeed, many universities and colleges have long used online learning as an alternative main method for learning (King & Boyatt, 2015). However, in the current situation, online learning was implemented quickly as an alternative to the usual learning process by schools and colleges around the world in order to continue learning during the Covid-19 pandemic despite lockdowns in various regions (Salleh et al., 2020).

In general, online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has faced many challenges, such as problems with students, educators, and learning content. It has been challenging for institutions to engage students and encourage them to participate in the online teaching and learning process. In addition, teachers have also had to adapt and change their teaching methodologies and effectively manage learning time. Content development is also a crucial challenge that not only includes the curriculum but also involves students (Dhawan, 2020). In the opinion of Patricia Aguilera-Hermida (2020), online learning has produced various reactions because of the rapid transition triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, so many students report that online learning experiences are unpleasant and there is a lack of supporting resources, such as access to learning centers, libraries, and interaction with teachers. This has become an important challenge during the transition to

online learning, because direct interaction is usually a motivating factor for students to engage in learning (Olawale et al., 2021). This opinion was also supported by Adnan (2020), who posited that conventional learning in the classroom through face-to-face interactions is more motivating than when distance learning. There therefore needs to be considerable evaluation of the implementation of online learning, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hodges et al., 2020; Wolhuter & Jacobs, 2021).

Inequality in Access to Education

Education inequality has escalated due to the digital divide and Covid-19-related lockdowns in various countries (Tarman, 2020). More specifically, internet access is not evenly distributed among the population, so the use of the internet for online learning has not produced a consistent effect (van Deursen, 2020). The digital divide relates to an imbalance in students having access to the internet and the related computers and tablets, especially as there have been decreases in people's incomes since the start of the pandemic (Odriozola-Chéné et al., 2020). This gap in online education is felt deeply in rural communities, who generally need additional support to address the educational challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore need policies from school leaders and policymakers to prioritize computer and internet access for rural communities (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021). According to Azubuike et al. (2020), the relationship between socioeconomic status and school type can validate Bourdieu's theory of sociocultural reproduction by considering that digital and education inequality are related to classical inequalities in urban sociocultural forms. In addition, it is not just about access, because many may lack the digital skills needed to participate in online learning.

The difference in accessing online learning implementations is directly proportional to the clear socioeconomic stratification that exists in the community in terms of a lack of internet infrastructure, equipment, and training, which are major obstacles for the lower socioeconomic classes (Carter et al., 2020). In addition, the difficulties resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic have caused suffering, so many are more resistant to online learning, children lack adequate knowledge, and parents lack the time, facilities, and professional knowledge to support online learning (Dong et al., 2020). In addition to the specific effects of Covid-19, developing countries often have a background of educational problems due to high poverty rates, and distance education solutions are particularly difficult to implement due to inadequate access to electricity and

telecommunications. This is indeed the case in many regions of Indonesia (Bottrell & Armstrong, 2007). The inequality problem is a major challenge for all elements of the country to address in order to advance education in future. Covid-19 therefore provides the momentum for the government to improve the education system, especially for online education.

Student Competence

Competence is an important part of measuring students' development. According to Baartman & De Bruijn (2011), student competence is an individual's ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes when engaging in learning, be it cognitive, affective, or psychomotor learning. According to Nellitawati (2017), meanwhile, student competence does not only include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies but is also related to spiritual competence by understanding spiritual values and norms. This assessment is also based on the suitability and effectiveness of student learning performance (McNamara, 2013). In general, increased student competence can be achieved with a learning project model that is conducted in groups (Usmeldi, 2019). The teacher is a very important component in evaluating and assessing the competence of students with the same characteristics and regulatory variables. This can be implemented by giving exams at the end of a set learning period (Stupans, 2017). Student competence positively correlates with the ability to practice for a longer time (Hart, 2014). The evaluations of competence can be documented, classified, and compared with other students to guide changes toward better learning (Ilyasin, 2019).

Ideally, online learning has many advantages for helping the learning process and improving student competence. Indeed, the use of features in some software can accelerate learning, and even online learning with an e-learning system can be adapted to the learning style of each student (Abdulmajid et al., 2017). However, the current online learning that is being applied all over the world has come about due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Online learning is heavily dependent on technology and the internet, so it has a major impact on students with poor connectivity and/or no access to digital devices for online learning. Many students find that they simply cannot participate in online learning due to limited ICT resources, and if they only have access to older equipment, it may cause difficulties in terms of accessing assignments and learning materials (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Thus, the achievement of student competencies through online learning must be accompanied with supporting factors, such as having adequate tools, the ability to access

information, good internet connectivity, and a home environment that is conducive to the learning process (Beaunoyer et al., 2020)

Methods

Design

This study is a phenomenological design that aims to investigate and uncover human life experiences (Caelli, 2001; Groenewald, 2004). Doing phenomenology, as defined by Bentz and Shapiro (1998) and Kensit (2000), requires capturing detailed descriptions of experiences and their contexts. It attempts to understand the subjects from their own perspective to describe human experience to give an account of what a person actually feels and thinks (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) and to allow the essence to emerge (Cameron et al., 2001). As subjects, students and teachers partaking in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic are the focus here (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Greene, 1997). Between November 2020 and February 2021, this study was conducted in the northern Banyumas Regency. There are mountains and valleys in this area, making it difficult for many kids to participate in online learning activities because of the severe economic and topographical conditions there.

Participants

The study included 33 people: 21 primary school teachers and 12 pupils (5 in grade V and 7 in grade VI). The teachers taught at North Banyumas. An informant's secrecy is maintained by using the abbreviation "I." followed by a number (Groenewald, 2004; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). The teachers were chosen based on their suburban assignments and their pupils' knowledge. Students were chosen based on their financial circumstances, such as not having a smartphone for online study, and information from their teachers (Groenewald, 2004). But not all pupils who couldn't access online learning were taken because their issues were similar. Table 1.

Table 1

Demography of the participants

No	Participants	Grade 5		Grade 6		Total
		F	%	F	%	
A	Teacher = 21	10	30.3	11	33.3	21
1	Male	4	12.1	5	15.2	9
2	Female	6	18.1	6	18.2	12
B	Students =12	5	15.2	7	21.2	12
1	Male	2	6.1	3	9.1	5
2	Female	3	9.1	4	12.1	7
		15	45.5	18	54.5	N=33
						F=100

Instruments

This study used a five-item interview guide as its primary tool. Interview questions covered topics such as barriers to online learning, students' digital literacy and parental support, and the implications for standardized assessment measurement tools, such as student participation in online learning and opportunities for internet access. The interview guide also included information about advantages and disadvantages related to student participation in online learning (Caelli, 2001; Groenewald, 2004; Bentz and Shapiro 1998). An expert reviewed the interview guide to ensure the items were valid before data collection began. Wording was changed and our inquiries as the introduction before collecting the substance data were stressed to initiate the conversation, as a consequence of expert opinion. After that, the guide's suggested questions were asked in their entirety.

Data Collection

In the most direct manner possible, information was gathered regarding how the individuals think and feel (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). It was the researcher's goal to understand what was going on inside the participants' heads, and he asked them to express their lived experience in a language that was free from intellectual and social conceptions as much as possible (Vandenberg, 1997). The data collecting process consisted of interviews, which were conducted either through the WhatsApp chat app or in-person meetings, which were supplemented with field notes. Because of the pandemic scenario, interviews with instructors were conducted via WhatsApp, while interviews with kids were conducted face-to-face in person. The interviews with students were primarily intended to gain an understanding of their perceptions on online learning. When conducting interviews, informants were asked a series of questions utilizing the instruments that had been developed in advance of the interview.

All interviews were taped, with the permission of the interviewees, and utilized in this way (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996). It was allocated an interview code, like "Participant, 21 May 2002," for each interview. In cases where more than one interview was conducted on the same day, each interview was given a unique alphabet character. Each interview was recorded on a separate cassette by the researcher. Each interview tape had a label on it with the code assigned to it. After each interview, the researcher listened to the audio and took notes as quickly as possible. Research

participants/informants' voices were allowed to be heard by the researcher who recorded significant words, phrases and utterances.

Qualitative research uses field notes as a secondary data storage strategy to collect and organize information. Taking field notes by the researcher is essential in qualitative research because the human mind has a tendency to forget information rapidly (Lofland & Lofland, 1999). Thus, following each interview, the researcher must discipline himself or herself to record as completely as possible without passing judgment, such as "What happened and who was involved?" Who was involved in this? What location did the activities take place? "What caused an incident to occur, and how did it occur?" says the author. Lofland and Lofland (1999) also stressed that field notes "should be written no later than the morning after" they were taken. Aside from discipline, field notes also incorporate "luck, feelings, timing, playfulness, and art" into their composition (Bailey, 1996: 13).

Data analysis

According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), analysis is defined as the methodical process of identifying fundamental aspects and interactions between those features and their surroundings. The data analysis include (1) bracketing and reduction, (2) delineation of units of meaning, (3) clustering of units of meaning, (4) summarization of each interview, and (5) the extraction of general and unique themes from all interviews. The procedure is broken down into five phases:

1. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction

The researcher's personal opinions or preconceptions are represented by bracketing (Miller & Crabtree, 1992). Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) urge that the researcher listen to the audio recording of each interview several times in order to become familiar with the words of the interviewee/informant in order to generate a holistic sense. Zinker (1978) notes that the term phenomenology refers to a procedure that places an emphasis on the individual experiences of participants in a study. The fact that those personal experiences took place in the present moment lends them an existential sense of immediacy. In this research, the researcher listened frequently the record on interview to find themes appropriate to the research questions and listed the themes as the data.

2. Delineating units of meaning

The next step of analysis in this study is delineating units of meaning. The researcher worked based on the results of themes listed. From each interview, a list of relevant meaning units is

compiled, and those that appear to be redundant are deleted (Moustakas, 1994). So the researcher takes into account all of these factors, as well as any non-verbal or para-linguistic cues that may have been used to convey a meaning. The real meaning of two seemingly comparable units of meaning may differ based on the weight or the chronology of the events that make up those units (Hycner, 1999).

3. Clustering of units of meaning to form themes

The third step of analysis is clustering units of meaning to form themes. In this regards, the researcher must again bracket their presuppositions after compiling a list of non-redundant meaning units. The researcher attempts to elicit the essence of meaning of units in a holistic context by meticulously studying the list of meaning units. By grouping together units of meaning (Creswell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994) and identifying major subjects, the researcher creates a cluster of themes (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). In both Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999), the necessity of returning to the recorded interview and returning to the list of non-redundant units of meaning is emphasized. The clusters are often overlapped, which is to be expected given the nature of human activities. "which expresses the essence of these clusters" are found by examining the meaning of each cluster (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

4. Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it

The outcomes of the interview were validated and adjusted in the next analysis session. The researcher then returns to the informant to confirm that the essence of the interview has been appropriately captured (Hycner, 1999). This validity check emphasizes the truth-value of qualitative research and lists a number of ways to reach truth. The phenomenological research design aided truth in this study. The researcher bracketed himself purposefully to comprehend the phenomenon that the focus was on an insider perspective. The audio recordings of each interview and the bracketing during transcription contributed to the truth. Then each got a copy of the text to make sure it matched their views on the phenomenon. Next is a summary of the study's findings.

5. Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary

As soon as the entire interview procedure has been completed, the researcher will seek for themes and variants that appear in many, if not all, of the interviews (Hycner, 1999:154). If there are major variances, it is important to avoid grouping similar subjects together. There are essential counterpoints to the phenomenon being examined in the form of unique or minority viewpoints. It

is imperative that researchers write a composite summary that reflects the environment or horizon where the themes were first discovered (Hycner, 1999; Moustakas, 1994). At this moment, the researcher changes the participants' daily expressions into expressions relevant to the scientific discourse supporting the investigation (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Coffey & Atkinson (1996) emphasize that effective research is not generated by rigorous data alone but by going beyond the facts to generate new ideas.

Results

Through observations and interviews, data were obtained for online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, with it being regarded differently from one student to another, from one place to another. Some students experienced challenges in engaging with the online learning process, especially those from disadvantaged socioeconomic groups.

Unequal Access to Education During Covid-19 Outbreak

In order to respond to research question 1, the testimony of one instructor and seven pupils is presented. The following hurdles to obtaining higher education were discovered, notably poor economic conditions and the implications of these conditions for students' learning results. The issues that have evolved in relation to uneven access can be divided into three categories.

- *Student Participation Rate during the Covid-19 Pandemic*
- *Level of Ability for Accessing Online Sources of Knowledge (e.g., YouTube, Google, etc.)*
- *Did not Possess a Supported Device*

According to the findings of this study, low-income students face particularly severe smartphone ownership issues. Because pupils aren't allowed to use cellphones in class, teachers believe, they are less motivated to learn and participate in class activities. Students who solely complete paper-based assignments are showing signs of learning loss, as are those who are unable to participate in class discussions because they lack a cell phone and those who have never completed an online project. See (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5).

Teacher (I.1) expressed the following:

- (1) *“Student participation in online learning was classified as low and not timely, because it was awkward and decreased learning motivation. During the Covid-*

19 period, students could not study as they had done face-to-face. They could only study in the form of doing assignments, and if they did not understand, by sending questions via WhatsApp. It could not follow a written schedule due to the absence of smartphones, with students using them alternately with siblings who go to different schools or borrowing a friend's phone because their houses are close to each other. During the Covid-19 era, there was one child who could not participate in learning at all because he did not have a cellphone. His father had died and his mother was insane. As a solution, children were given Student Worksheets (LKS) to help study at home”.

Aditia Ramdani, a fifth grade student at SD Kbaseh I, said:

- (2) *“I never studied at home and never did my assignments because I didn't have a cellphone and my parents (mother) died and my father worked in the river breaking stones to sell, so he left early in the morning and came home late in the evening. That is when he comes home looking tired and needing rest, so there is no time to help me study.”*

There was also Bintang Andika, a grade 6 child, who said:

- (3) *I never attended lessons and did not collect the assignments given by the school because I didn't have a cellphone and didn't have time to do my assignments because I lived with my elderly grandmother, while my mother was paralyzed. Every day, I often take care of my mother, who can't do anything. My friends also did not come to the house because it was forbidden to gather together.*

Another student, Radila, said,

- (4) *“I'm not studying at home. I'm mostly doing my assignments, but because I don't have a cellphone, I go to my friends place to ask about school assignments.”*

Meanwhile, Muhammad Feri Riyanto, a grade 6 student, said:

- (5) *I don't study because I don't have a cellphone, and I can't gather [with other students]. I want to study, so I feel lazy. I like to help my father break river stones to sell so we can get money to live, even if I have to study at night. I think it's about an hour, and that is also not routine, because sometimes it is night when we finish breaking stones.*

Statements of students that have no handphone that affect students did not study at school is extracted based on data (6), (7), and (8). The testimony show that the students did not work their assignment, joint with a friend who has a handphone, and do not involve in the classroom at all.

Ulfatun Azizah said:

- (6) *I don't have a cellphone, so I can't learn much. At least if I have a new school assignment, I go to a friend [Winda, who has a cellphone] whose house is less than a kilometer away to ask for assignments given by school. I write it out and I do it at home, and then I take it to school. If I don't have school assignments, to*

fill my spare time, I work on the questions in the book because this also increases my knowledge.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Rizal said:

- (7) *At home, I never studied at home. I only collected assignments given by the teacher through a borrowed Vivo cellphone from my uncle, because my parents didn't have a cellphone. I borrowed my uncle's cell phone at seven in the morning because the cellphone would be taken to his work as a ngglondong (a laborer cutting and transporting wood). I can't do my assignments smoothly because there is no one to help if I have difficulty with hard questions.*

Teguh Waluyo also said:

- (8) *While I was at home, I studied. Most of all, I did the assignments given by the teacher at school. If there was an assignment from the teacher, I went to my friend Alfa's place to ask about the assignment given by the school. I am sad that I cannot study at school. At home, Lilik Sarinah helps sometimes at night.*

Level of Ability for Accessing Online Sources of Knowledge (e.g., YouTube, Google, etc.)

Regarding the ability to access online sources, the evidence show five sorts of preblems, as indicated below:

- Did not Possess a Supported Device
- Technological Literacy
- Mobile Networks
- Technological Literacy
- Parental Support

Did not Possess a Supported Device

Ulfatun Azizah/Alfin) said,

- (9) *"I've never accessed the internet because I don't have a cellphone, even though I really want to be like my other friends." Bintang Andika, meanwhile, said, "I don't have a cellphone, but I can open YouTube, because I learned to use Bulik Khulaifia's cellphone when I had nothing to do."*

Aditia Ramdani said,

- (10) *"I don't have a cellphone, but I can use it because I sometimes borrow my cousin Huda's. I used to use a smartphone, but now I have forgot it again because I don't have a cellphone."*

Did not Possess a Supported Device

The prohibition of gatherings and frequent interactions due to the emergence of Covid-19 caused decreases in incomes in developing economies, and other issues deriving from economic problems also manifested (Dewi, 2020). Several children (Muhammad Rizal, Ramdani, Naefa Rahmania, Ulfatun Azizah, Muhammad Feri Riyanto, Bintang Andika, Aditia, and Teguh Waluyo) explained that they did not have cellphones, and while some of them had cellphone signals at home, they often couldn't connect because of the valley's location.

Factors Limiting Access to Education for Students

Research question 2 regards with access factors to access online facilities. Factors that limited the access to education for students include:

- Mobile networks
- Technological Literacy
- Parental Support

Mobile Networks

Muhammad Rizal said,

- (11) *“The only network is Telkomsel, because here the place is low. At home, this signal is actually comfortable, but there is no cellphone for studying, and I go to a friend who has a cellphone but no signal, so in the end, it is difficult to learn. The only network is Telkomsel, that's all, and if there is no signal in the valley, my friends who have cellphones have to run upstairs first.”*

Teacher (I.3) expressed:

- (12) *In online learning, teachers are not required to use certain applications or websites (e.g., Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom, etc.), so it is up to each teacher to use the application that is considered easiest for students, because in principle this can help students to study at home.*

Technological Literacy

The level of technological literacy among poorer students was illustrated by the following data:

- (13) *“I don't have a cellphone, but I have been taught by a friend to be able to open YouTube and find additional study material,”* said Ulfatun Azizah.

According to Miskatin Irma:

- (14) *“Children now adapt quickly, even though they are not very skilled. Children who do not have cellphones can operate them even though they are limited to WhatsApp and the internet. Usually, when they meet friends at school, they borrow their cellphones for a while if they happen to be not using them, and that’s where the children seem to have learned to open WhatsApp and access the internet.*
- (15) *“Students’ ability to operate devices is still weak, especially for students who cannot afford cellphones, and they cannot operate cellphones by themselves,”* said teacher (I.1).

Parental Support

The level of parental support, in supplementing the teacher’s role, for children can be seen in the following statement of Ulfatun Azizah:

- (16) *“My mother works to find cardamom in the garden to sell. She never helps with my assignments, because if she reads an assignment and doesn’t understand it, she gets dizzy. In the opposite, Radila said: “My parents never pay attention to me because they go with my old grandmother, so they can’t teach me. Yes, I never study, sometimes at night, sometimes. My parents never helped me study because they cannot read.”*

The parents of the students are generally laborers working in areas like construction and domestic help, so they leave early in the morning and come home late. Some also care for elderly relatives, so they cannot help them to study. What is more, many parents do not understand the digital world, as expressed by Istianah (I.3):

- (17) *On average, the guardians of students work from morning to evening with heavy physical labor, so in the end, they can only see their children after sunset. Even then, they are very tired, so they prefer to take a break, resulting in them not paying much attention to their children’s lessons, which should be accompanying learning. There are three kinds of attitudes for parents toward children at home: just advise their children to study, accompany their children in studying and help with assignments, and accompany their children but not be able to help with assignments.*

Furthermore, teacher (I.1), said,

- (18) *On average, parents cannot replace the teacher. In addition to many who are busy with work and have not engaged with the subject matter being studied by children for a long time, they mostly find it difficult to explain the subject matter to children because the current curriculum is difficult, and it is very different to the curriculum used when parents used to study, so they often don’t connect with it.*

Implications of Limited Access to Education for Students

Finally, research question 3 answers the implication of limited access for student performance. The implications of limited access for poorer students consist of three themes below.

- Evaluating Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Students' Competence
- Technology's Role

Evaluating Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Teachers claim to employ a comparable criterion of evaluation to determine student success during the pandemic era of the pandemic. Prior to the epidemic era, the fundamental rules to be followed included questions, assignments, attendance in class, and participation. As part of the Covid-19 era, the indicators have been lowered and are now based solely on paper-based assignments and Google form examinations. Students who do not have access to a smartphone are given a paper-based exam, which they must complete and submit manually to the instructors.

Teacher (I.2) said:

- (19) *To determine student achievement, I basically do an assessment using the usual norms (e.g., questions, assignments, attendance, activeness). But during the Covid-19 pandemic, the measuring tool I often used was assignments that I conveyed to students, and after the assignments were returned, I then corrected them one by one. Even then, sometimes there were those who turned in too late, but I understand. In the past, I used the results of tests that were done in school.*

Something somewhat different was conveyed by (I.4):

- (20) *I assess student achievement not solely based on the level of truth of the student in doing assignments or answering questions, but also based on the speed at which students submit the assignment sheet or question answers to me, because if it was based on the correctness of the answers to the questions, I would not know exactly how students did the questions or whether they did them with their own abilities or with the help of others. But previously I said that students who are quicker to return assignments will have it considered in their grades.*

Teacher (1.3) said:

- (21) *In determining student achievement in class, I first check the assignments done by students to see what is right and wrong, and after that, I compare it with the assignments the students did before Covid. I compare the forms of writing style and the language used. I compare the students' abilities with the work that was deposited, and sometimes the tasks that were done before and after Covid were*

completely different. Most were better work after Covid, so teachers indeed often have difficulty determining grades for students.

Teacher (I.1), meanwhile, said:

- (22) *I judge students in this pandemic era first by using Google Forms to fill in the students, and I also make a short video about the assignment I have given, but because it is very hard for students, especially for children who don't have cellphones, they are sorry that they can't do it at all. In the end, I replaced this by giving assignments to be done at home and then submitted to the school. Even then, they were often not on time for various reasons. That's all the tools I used to assess students.*

Students' Competence

Teacher (I.4) said about this:

- (23) *Student competence varies because it is influenced by differences in their ability to access learning resources and the learning process. Student competence has decreased when compared to before Covid-19, because enrichment cannot be done online with elementary-level students who still like to play a lot. Most teachers give assignments to do at home, but even then, many students have difficulty. If they have cellphones, students can ask the teacher something via WhatsApp, but students with cellphones are often silent. Because they don't know what to do, they sometimes ask friends who have cellphones, but in the end, they still lag behind their friends.*

Meanwhile, teacher (I.2) said:

- (24) *The competence of students varies because they study at home without being accompanied by a teacher and only accompanied by parents, but not all parents do this regularly, and even then, many parents complain because even though they can accompany the children, they cannot teach them, especially for the Javanese language.*

Next, (I.3) said:

- (25) *The competence of students clearly differs. There are children who are enthusiastic, but there are children who are ignorant of the assignments given by the school, and this shows when submitting their assignments. Some are late and some are carelessly done. Of course, the attitude of these students determines their competence.*

Finally, teacher (I.1) said:

- (26) *The subject matter delivered by the teacher to students does not happen at the same time and place, and only through the form of a definite assignment can we understand the students' abilities in a variety of ways. The ability to work is also different, so their understanding will automatically differ. Online problems also have various impacts on capabilities.*

Technology's Role

Student achievement is determined not only by the availability of technology but also the mastery of it. This can be seen in the following statement of Munjidah:

- (27) *The teacher, in determining the final achievement, still dominantly sees aspects of the ability and cleverness of students in doing assignments, but if you measure their ability to use digital means, it feels like students in the village are not quite right, because some have cellphones and some don't. There are those who can use cellphones and those who can't. If this is used, it feels unfair.*

Teacher (I.3) said about this:

- (28) *Even though many children have cellphones and some don't, in determining the final score for learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, the teacher, in particular, uses the same student ability standards as was used before the Covid-19 pandemic. In my opinion, the essence of learning before and after Covid-19 is the same, so basic competency indicators are also the same, and the only difference is the technical implementation through online means and replacing enrichment activities with doing assignments.*

Discussion

For impoverished students in Indonesia, the covid-19 epidemic was a major component in the uneven characteristics of online learning, according to this study. Problems stem from the fact that disadvantaged children can't afford to get a phone, which has been a primary instrument for fundamental learning. These students not only are unable to participate in the learning process, but they also completely cease to participate other than in the form of completing assignments and exams on paper. Another set of studies shows that impoverished Indonesian university students in higher education level are affected by five variables, including (1) Did not Possess a Supported Device, (2) Technology Literacy and (3) Mobile Networks, and (4) Technology Literacy. As a result, students lose learning and their overall competency is reduced when their performance is judged using the same criteria.

There are three ways in which the findings are relevant to discussion. When it comes to the Covid-19 epidemic, the use of online learning was not a choice but rather a requirement because of government policy. The community (i.e., teachers, students, and students' parents) faced both psychological and technical challenges as a result of this new online learning experience. As a result of having to engage in online learning, which had never been considered before, let alone planned for, people experienced psychological issues (soft skills). All found the same thing (Zhang

et al., 2020; Naziaha, et. al., 2020; Adnan, 2020) and Isidro & Teichert, 2020). Furthermore, technological obstacles (hard skills) arose because of the meticulous preparation required for the execution of online learning. It's also essential to have access to the internet on a laptop, tablet, smartphone or other mobile device. In addition, preparing for all of this in a short period of time is difficult (Evans-Amalu & Claravall, 2021; Shabalina et al., 2021).

Students, teachers, and parents said that they were unable to participate in online learning activities because of a lack of technological proficiency, additional fees for mobile internet use, and their regular occupations. Even though, in practice, adaptations occurred in a variety of ways depending on the individual's abilities (Azubuike et al., 2020; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021; Odriozola-Chéné et al., 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020).

Online learning provides several benefits for students and teachers. Some software features can speed up learning, and online learning can be tailored to each student's learning style (Abdulmajid et al., 2017; Azubuike et al. 2020; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021). However, the global adoption of online learning is owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Online learning is primarily reliant on technology and the internet, thus students with bad connectivity or no access to digital devices will be negatively impacted. Many students are unable to participate in online learning due to a lack of ICT resources, which makes accessing assignments and learning materials problematic (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, achieving student competences through online learning requires supporting variables such as proper tools, information availability, strong internet connectivity, and a learning-friendly home environment (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

It is also common for students and teachers to engage intensively in the same location at the same time in order to learn. Enrichment and transmission of values and skills are intense in this kind of environment. Face-to-face instruction can cultivate educational values and inspire pupils to learn more readily (Azubuike et al., 2020; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021; Odriozola-Chéné et al., 2020; Salehudin et al., 2020). Because of this, it's easy for students who are having difficulty understanding the material or completing assignments to seek help from their teachers. Teachers and students develop a natural social tie, and students also form emotional bonds with each other and with their teachers. Students' motivation, interest, and excitement for learning improves as a result of greater psychological development. All of these activities had to be moved to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a significantly different character from what

was used before the pandemic (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Salehudin et al., 2020). Despite the promise of online learning, students actually find it to be less flexible than face-to-face classes. As a result, online education continues to be plagued with issues that severely limit students' ability to obtain an education (Insiyroh et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

However, because online learning provides no content enrichment for pupils, learning objectives cannot be reached in terms of measures of learning activeness (Abdulmajid et al., 2017). Assignments can only be given to students as a substitute for enrichment in online learning, even though this is not the goal. Neither do students want to learn from the teacher. In a Covid-19 epidemic, students, parents, and other close relatives must work together to complete homework (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). Collaboration is also required because telephones and hence WhatsApp access must be shared. They found that 31 students owned cellphones whereas 94 had to borrow one from a parent or sibling (Salehudin et al., 2020). This type of cooperation is not always viable due to time constraints. However, teamwork is required because materials can be challenging to work on. However, willing siblings or parents may not understand the subject matter because it has changed after a parent studied it. Narrative content is prevalent and demands close attention (Azubuike et al., 2020; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021; Odriozola-Chéné et al., 2020).

This research fills in the gaps left by prior studies that did not analyze students' income and socioeconomic position during the course of their learning process through online learning, which had serious consequences for their learning. In addition, past research have not yet specified the technical supports that cause impoverished students to become completely disengaged from the learning process altogether. As a result, the current study presents a methodological innovation in that it uses a phenomenological design to investigate the learning loss of poor pupils throughout the pandemic era, which provides compelling evidence. This paper adds a theoretical framework that recognizes that while addressing learning in the context of a pandemic epidemic, it is critical to include the determinant element that has an economic impact on the situation being discussed.

Conclusion

For the sake of conclusion, online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in the North Banyumas region has an impact on educational disparity in the region. The negative consequences arose when pupils continued to learn by making a variety of modifications, which were, of course, unsatisfactory in terms of learning outcomes. Pupils who did not have access to a cellphone

attempted to join in activities by borrowing one from friends and neighbors, and even students from less affluent homes were able to use smartphones during activities. Although digital technological capabilities were a hindrance to the evaluation of learning outcomes, the difficulties associated with evaluating basic competencies and accomplishment markers in a remote-learning system were significant as well. Nonetheless, certain steps may be done to improve students' access to learning in the scenarios outlined above, if the appropriate resources were made available. Teachers, for example, can better fulfill their tasks and responsibilities by meeting with parents and students on a more frequent basis, despite the fact that the health program continues to have constraints.

To keep students motivated and excited about learning, teachers may meet with students once a week, even if it's just for five minutes, to offer advise and encouragement, because students typically value guidance from their teachers. Teachers can also provide parents guidance on how to encourage their children to continue their education at home by visiting with them at school. Alternatively, teachers could hand out worksheets to pupils in order to assist them keep up with their studies. Methodological and theoretical innovations are highlighted in this work, which uses a phenomenology approach to better uncover teaching problems in the pandemic era and the socioeconomic position of disadvantaged students.

Considering that it is limited to the Kedungbanteng sub-district of the Banyumas Regency, this research provides a limited insight into the experience of unequal access to educational opportunities in Indonesia. As a result, it is not indicative of the experiences in other locations with various features, and as a result, no generalizations can be drawn from it. Similarly, because this research is limited to kids at an early stage of learning, it is unable to provide a comprehensive picture of the status of more advanced pupils. While this research focuses on students from lower socioeconomic origins, there is a need for more extensive research into the particular issues that prevent students from accessing higher education online from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

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