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EVALUTING ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN GORONTALO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT : This research evaluates online learning applied during the COVID-19 pandemic at junior high schools in Gorontalo District. It takes perspectives from available resources, implementation processes, achievements, and the influences on student character, knowledge, and skill changes. This evaluative research was using the CIPPO (Context, Input, Process, Product, and Outcome) model. Research data were collected through interview, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method made up of five steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, triangulation, and conclusion verification. Online learning at junior high schools in Gorontalo District had adhered to the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education and culture of the Republic of Indonesia and Gorontalo Regent Regulation. Based on the input aspects, embracing human resources, facilities and infrastructures, and funding, all schools had adequate resources for online learning implementation. And yet, some factors came in the way of online learning. For example, as regards human resources, teachers did not understand how to use technology in online learning, and several teachers did not have smartphones or laptops. Attributed to students, students could not understand materials, and some could not afford required gadgets due to family economy condition. Additionally, some parents could not help students understand materials and assist them during learning processes. These problems led to declined online learning program products (student learning achievements). Student achievements were worse than that in previous years. However, student learning competencies developed significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: CIPPO Model, COVID-19 Pandemic, Online Learning

I.   INTRODUCTION

Online learning requires no face-to-face meeting. Instead, it uses platforms that enable teachers and students to have teaching-learning processes in a long distance. Online learning maintains a purpose, i.e., delivering quality learning services using massive and open networking that can reach more and broader users interested in a learning space (Sofyana & Abdul, 2019:82).

Among online learning challenges is the use of technology by either teachers or students. Individuals' different skills of using technology will likely cause different learning outcomes. In addition, student learning independence also generates different learning outcomes too.

My field observation indicated that several students and parents did not have communication tools supporting online learning. In response to the problem, schools arranged group learning. The problem was not only the learning media system but also the high-cost internet quota to facilitate online learning. Parents had to prepare higher budgets to meet this cost, and some of them could not afford it.

Those problems give off students that were uninterested in online learning. In addition, several teachers do not know how to use online platforms to sustain online learning activities. As a consequence, they hinge on conventional methods, i.e., giving students assignments, that soon bore and stress them.

The observation results indicated that schools had no online learning plan designs ideal to be applied in the COVID-19 pandemic. Online learning procedures for the COVID-19 pandemic still varied between schools, and schools could not plan an ideal online learning implementation. Additionally, some schools had no supporting resources for implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools had striven to realize quality online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, but no ideal outcomes were identified.

Further results pointed out that school activities, such as interacting with peers and teachers, were less effective due to school closing. With online learning, such interaction could only be carried out using online

platforms. Nevertheless, social competencies of students can still be established and developed at homes, facilitated by parents when they are interacting to finish school assignments delivered by teachers. This interaction is impossible if parents are too busy with their works. In addition, students' parents not understanding their learning materials and students' poor technology-related skills make them hesitant to ask help from their parents. As a result, students will be lazy to participate in online learning because of a lack of parents' motivations.

This research evaluates online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at junior high schools in Gorontalo District. It takes points of view from available resources, implementation process, achievements, and the effects on student character, knowledge, and skill changes.

II. METHOD

This evaluative research employed a case study method and adopted the CIPPO (Context, Input, Process, Product, and Outcome) model. Subjects were students, school heads, teachers, school committees, and parents. Data were collected through interview, observation, and documentation. Data collected were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative method composed of five steps, i.e., data collection, data reduction, data presentation, triangulation, and conclusion verification.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Context Evaluation Results

Context evaluations focused on the background and benefits of online learning programs. The background of the program implementation at schools was the government decision through the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia issuing online learning policies to prevent the COVID-19 transmission. In general, these programs emphasized teaching-learning from home or long-distance learning (online or offline).

The background of online learning program implementation in Gorontalo District referenced to:

1. Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4/2020 concerning Education Policy Implementation during the COVID-19 Transmission Emergency dated March 24th, 2020 and Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15/2020 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Learning from Home during the COVID-19 Transmission Emergency dated May 18th, 2020.

2. Gorontalo Regent Regulation Number 18/2020 concerning the Implementation of Large-Scale Social Restriction in Handling the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Gorontalo District Chapter II Article 3 Section A, scaffolded by Chapter IV Article 5 Paragraph 3.

3. Circular Letter of the Head of Education and Culture Office in Gorontalo District Number 240/Dikbud/2020/312 concerning Circular Letter of Learning Implementation during the COVID-19 Pandemic Era.

The three regulations required all education units to hold work-from-home learning to prevent the COVID-19 transmission due to educational activities.

Interviews with school heads, teachers, parents at each school, namely SMP Negeri 1 Limboto, SMP Negeri 1 Batudaa, SMP Negeri 1 Tibawa, SMP Negeri 2 TelagaBiru, and SMP Negeri 2 Telaga showed that the five schools, in implementing online learning, complied with the Ministry of Education and Culture instructions to ensure school member safety without neglecting the paramount importance of education sustainability. All parties understood that online learning was implemented as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as adherence to regulations concerning learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, that required online learning.

Essentially, online learning was not novel in educational implementation in Indonesia. It had been introduced since the opening of open universities or open schools (Mutaqinah& Hidayatullah, 2020). Long-distance learning implementation manifested flexibility, endurance, and progressiveness of educational culture in Indonesia to provide quality education without time and space limitation as conventional learning had (Tubagus, 2018).

The learn-from-home context called for school readiness to implement online learning. The results demonstrated that schools in rural areas were unprepared to move on from conventional to online learning. It was aligned with Choriroh (2020) that the society, especially those living in urban areas, could adjust to learning from home more easily. Meanwhile, schools in rural areas had to face off some parents not having gadgets, inaccessible internet, a lack of teachers' digital competencies, and so forth. Those issues were entailing solutions.

B. Input Evaluation Results

1. Human Resources

The observation results exhibited the information of different education levels of teachers at the schools. Several teachers were bachelor graduates, but others were senior high school graduates. Education levels

impacted their competencies and skills in using gadgets or technology-based devices, and thereby influencing teacher competencies in hosting online learning. Besides, teachers' ages also affected their competencies in implementing online learning. Bachelor graduate teachers were found to be more skillful in using technology-based devices compared to senior high school graduate ones and nearly pensioned teachers. Senior high school graduate teachers found operating computers as an overwhelming activity, leave alone distributing assignments via WA group and making learning videos delivered to students.

Relevant training was needed to make effective online learning and to escalate teacher competencies in implementing long-distance learning. Dormalinetal. (2020)remarked the significance of socialization and training for teachers to broaden their knowledge of how to implement long-distance learning. Furthermore, Masitah et al. (2002) stated that training could heighten teacher competencies in designing online learning media contributing to learning processes and making better and more attractive learning processes.

From this point of departure, school heads made strategies for improving teachers and staff's competencies, enabling them to operate computers. For example, bachelor graduate teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Limboto were instructed to give training to other teachers considered poor in technology. The same strategy was implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Batudaa, where training was delivered through peer tutoring called *Tutor Kasih*.

An interview with the school head of SMP Negeri 1 Tibawa indicated that the school's human resources, that were teachers, used technology poorly. The reason of the poor competency was education levels of the teachers and the difficulties of senior teachers to understand how to use technology in learning. Accordingly, the school head fostered junior teachers to participate in training to hone their skills in using technology yet did not compel the senior ones almost pensioned to participate.

Different results were found at SMP Negeri 2 TelagaBiru and SMP Negeri 2 Telaga. The two schools had human resources equipped with knowledge and skills of using technology, allowing a good online learning implementation process. The schools provided supporting facilities, e.g., internet networks, computers, and laptops, helping teachers to hold learning well.

2. Facilities and Infrastructures

Online learning implementation was highly associated with the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructures at schools. Facility and infrastructure provision would make teachers realize successful online learning together (Haryani, 2022). Facilities and infrastructures required in online learning were gadgets or laptops and smooth and equally distributed internet access.

Moreover, teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Limboto were provided with technology-based devices sustaining online learning. additionally, the school also provided internet access and endeavored to equip teachers with technology-based devices. And yet, the issues were found in students, some of whom had no gadgets to use in online learning because of family economy issues. SMP Negeri 1 Batudaa facilitated online teaching by providing smooth internet networks at the school. Parents of the students from the school could facilitate their children with gadgets needed in learning. However, some could not afford it.

The school head of SMP Negeri 1 Tibawa admitted that the school had not installed WiFi yet, resulting in accessing internet using personal data. In addition, several teachers had no smartphone, inhibiting efficient online learning. Teachers with no smartphone usually distributed assignments to students using their peers' gadgets. Besides, most of the parents had no smartphone or could not afford to buy internet credits due to economic restraint. As a result, these parents initiated to come to the school to pick their children's assignment.

3. Program Funding

Online programs were underpinned by funding. The five schools suggested that they were funded by BOS (School Operational Assistance) managed by them. The funds were leveraged to facilitate teachers in implementing online learning by providing free Wi-Fi at schools, monthly internet data package, credit funds, and sanitation facilities, such as free masks, face shields, hand-washing facilities, hand sanitizer, and partitioned desks for all classes. Kenedi (2022) suggested that head school capability in BOS management was needed in learning management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. Process Evaluation Results

Process evaluation aimed to analyze the compatibility between the implementation of the plan determined and field evidence. Three schools implemented both online and offline learning. Online learning required students to adapt to a new environment and learning methods. Online learning was undertaken using many different technology platforms, e.g., WhatsApp, Zoom Meeting, Google Classroom, and Google Meeting.

Observation at schools and interviews with parties concerned showed that online learning had been carried out since the beginning of the pandemic commensurate with the Ministry of Education and Culture instructions. Nevertheless, it took time to adapt to the platforms used. Besides online learning, schools also

implemented offline learning by engaging parents. Parents had to pick assignments and learning books provided by schools to underpin learning from home.

Nonetheless, in the process, some challenges were found in online learning. For instance, students were unable to understand learning materials, and parents could not explain materials to students clearly. Furthermore, unequally distributed internet network and family economy condition that made students unable to afford gadgets. Accordingly, through this evaluation, schools decided to change online into offline learning. Offline learning was conducted in some meeting points with strict concerns about health protocols, e.g., limiting the number of people in the meeting points, helping them keep distance.

Bearing on the challenges confronted, both schools and parents were complaining a lack of student understanding of the materials delivered by teachers, particularly math. Additionally, students found problems in doing their assignments. Students often relied on search engines, e.g., Google, and asked help from parents instead of doing assignments by themselves. Consequently, when schools implemented face-to-face learning at meeting points, students who used to be active in answering during online learning could not answer questions from teachers during offline one.

It comported with Rahmawati & Pratikno (2022) that online learning would likely be more effective in urban areas than that in rural ones. It was suggested by some challenges in online learning, such as error in internet networking, gadget ownership limitation due to economic constraints, students unable to understand materials from teachers, parents' limitation in assisting their children when learning, and a lack of teachers and students' competencies in using online learning media. It conformed to Dormalin et al. (2020) who performed research at SMTkManakelSe'I. According to their research, the school could not implement online learning by virtue of several challenges, e.g., limited internet networks, geographical conditions, and the absence of gadgets among many students. It yielded great losses to students living in rural areas.

Nonetheless, drawbacks notwithstanding, online learning had some positive values. For example, students were indirectly instructed to be independent and have self-preparation before learning. In addition, they could efficiently use time for learning, playing, and helping parents. Online learning made students creative and relaxed because learning from home needed no formal atmosphere. Besides, students had wider learning sources instead of using books only. Additionally, online learning gave students new experiences of learning and opportunities to solidify their relationship with parents. It impelled parents to assist their children when learning.

Effective online learning required supports from various parties. Puspaningtyas & Dewi (2020) elucidated that students required supports from various parties in addressing learning difficulties. Hence, parents' assistance during learning-from-home activities was needed to advocate learning. Dewi et al. (2020) argued that good parenting allowed children to be physically healthy and have psychical security. Psychical security referred to the state when parents monitored their children's outdoor activities during the pandemic, gave them understanding of the urgency of complying with health protocols by wearing masks and washing hands frequently. Psychical security encompassed verbal strengthening to children, enabling them to adapt to online learning regulations during the pandemic, do the assignments given, actively interact with teachers and peers in online learning, and communicate with teachers during material delivery.

Notwithstanding this, Sabiq (2020) disclosed that commonly, parents confronted challenges when assisting their children learning from home. The big challenge was parents' lack of time due to works and difficulties in making their children willing to learn (Mutaqinah&Hidayatullah, 2020). The challenges demanded schools to apply good management. Good management was determined by school head capability to manage learning during the pandemic. School heads should be able to make good plans, motivate teachers, monitor learning, build cooperation involving school stakeholders, especially the school committee and local government, and manage BOS to meet online learning requirements (Kenedi, 2022).

D. Product Evaluation Results

Product evaluation aimed to measure, interpret, and assess program achievements. Based on the results of interviews with school heads, online learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic was less inefficient relative to face-to-face learning. They foregrounded that student understanding levels were lower when learning online than that in previous years. The evidence, that was test results, suggested that many students did not understand the materials learned. Among factors causing declined learning products were limited direct interaction with teachers explaining learning materials, no assistance given to students during learning from home, teachers' lack of abilities to manage learning materials using online learning media, and student reliance on search engines and parents' help when doing assignments. Some students were bored of online learning due to many assignments that teachers gave.

It was congruent with Andriana (2022) that online learning declined student learning achievements, whereby 47% of students could not attain the set Minimum Completeness Criteria. The causes were no learning assistance from parents, the absence of student's understanding of materials, and internet procurement. Rahmawati & Pratikno (2022) explicated that decreases and increases in learning outcomes (products) during

online learning were impacted by internal and external factors. Factors triggering decreased learning outcomes were a lack of parents' roles in assisting their children when learning and providing learning facilities, children's difficulties to concentrate, declined learning motivation, network challenges, internet data package, and hard-to-understand materials.

Hence, schools had to seek to increase learning quality. Kurniasari etal. (2020) conveyed that promoting learning quality during the pandemic required strategies, e.g., delivering brief learning materials, avoiding long video learning materials, choosing brief videos using an understandable language, deescalating the number of assignments, making assignments containing various and attractive items, and providing clear and unambiguous instructions when delivering assignments.

E. Outcome Evaluation Results

Outcomes were performance or achievement levels achieved through activities and services delivered. Learning outcome evaluation focused on the influence of learning online on character, knowledge, and skill changes in junior high school students in Gorontalo District.

Moving offline to online learning affected learning processes, products, and outcomes or end results. Student competencies from the aspects of knowledge, characters, and skills developed although the process was dissimilar to online learning ones. Asmuni (2020) proposed several issues in online learning. To begin with, students might not understand material content delivered online. The content was presented in the forms of e-book delivered per chapter, PowerPoint, or learning videos. In so doing, students interpreted and understood it from their own standpoint. Additionally, teacher competency in using technology in online learning was limited. Some teachers could not operate computers or gadgets buoying face-to-face or online learning activities. Lastly, teachers could not control online learning. Among the causes was error in applications, preventing teachers from presenting the discussion forum menu to explain materials or ask relevant questions. Even though the menu was on display, many students did not use it well.

IV.   CONCLUSION

Online learning implementation in junior high schools in Gorontalo District had adhered to the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia and Gorontalo Regent Regulation. Concerning inputs, including human resources, facilities, infrastructures, and funding for online learning, all schools had adequate resources. Still, several factors retarded online learning. Among the retarding factors were human resources, e.g., teachers that lacked understanding of how to use technology in online learning and had no smartphone or laptop, students that were unable to understand material and had no gadget due to family economy conditions, and parents facing limitation in explaining materials and assisting their children when learning. These factors led to declined online learning program products (student learning achievements). Student achievements were considered worse compared to that in previous years. And yet, student learning competencies developed significantly even though they had to learn online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To scale up student learning outcomes, schools needed to make improvements, such as designing programs to augment teacher competencies in implementing long-distance learning, delivering brief learning materials to student, avoiding to deliver long video materials, and using shorter video media using an understandable language.

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