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# The Invisible Education: Politics of Face-to-Face Learning in Post-PPKM Emergency

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## ABSTRACT

Face-to-face learning for students and college students have started after the implementation of the Emergency PPKM and Various Level PPKM policies. Based on media reports, the policy received various responses from various provincial and district/city governments, namely some have implemented it in schools or campuses, some have not. The purpose of this study is to find out the differences between local governments in taking the policy of face-to-face meetings in the post-PPKM learning and teaching process. The researcher uses the mix method between with discourse analysis in the implementation of this research. The theory of rationality is used to analyse the policies of the regional government and the leadership of educational institutions, why there are differences in face-to-face decision making. The results of this study explain that the differences in policies applied due to the translation of the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic are very varied, this is influenced by the understanding of policy makers regarding the threat of Covid-19.

**Keywords:** *politics of education, face to face, school learning*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All this time, educational institutions become objective institutions that socialize and transmit various aspects of knowledge. In reality, educational institutions have never been neutral from the ideological interests of the ruling regime. Every education policy implemented has the political, economic, and cultural contents of the ruling elite. Educational curriculum designed to design the performance of educational institutions, for example, are always loaded with covert curricula, such as the dominance of positivism, capitalism hegemony, and social class biased learning or tend to domination of educational actors. This is what is referred to as educational bias or invisible education. In fact, in crisis situations, education becomes a major part of crisis problem solving institutions because being a professional institution of educational actors turns out to be controlled almost absolutely by the political regime. Thus, there is a suspicious impression that crisis situations, such as facing a health pandemic, become an opportunity for the ruling political regime to stabilize the ideological, economic, and cultural orientation of its class.

Starting this September, most schools in Indonesia have implemented limited face-to-face learning (PTM) as the Covid-19 pandemic in the country has slowed.

Limited PTM is permitted for areas with PPKM level 1 to 3 status.[1] In September 2021, it is the beginning of the semester for students taking odd semester lectures. This month is an attraction for good students because they experience the world of higher education for the first time, which is different from the pattern of education in high school. For senior students, it becomes a pleasant lecture after moving up the semester, so that new knowledge is obtained to increase the provision for the future. This is also felt by senior high school students.

The government asked universities in the area of the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) level 1-3 to immediately hold limited face-to-face lectures.[2] In East Java, 100 per cent face-to-face learning. [3]

The implementation of PTM is limited to following the arrangements contained in the 4 Ministerial Decree concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period. The SKB lists things that must be done by all citizens of the education unit while implementing limited PTM, especially health protocols. Some of these include: always wearing a mask while in the education unit, washing hands with soap and running water or hand sanitizer, maintaining distance, and applying coughing and sneezing etiquette.[4]

Students are pleased to respond to educational policies with face-to-face meetings. Previously they used lectures or online or online learning. However, some students and students are not ready to conduct face-to-face lectures for various reasons. It has become controversial the pros and cons of implementing the face-to-face policy.

The media delivers news about government policies; namely, it is allowed to carry out direct learning in several areas that have made it possible to implement them. On the other hand, the government's policy still prohibits direct learning for regions that do not allow direct learning. The media also reported that new clusters were exposed to COVID-19 in schools because of the continuity of face-to-face learning because students gathered at schools despite using the health protocol.

Several previous studies have explained the importance of face-to-face learning [5], [6], [7], [8] because it is easier to communicate between teachers and students, or lecturers and students, but learning patterns have changed due to the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely by prioritizing online learning.[9] [10]

The novelty in this study is the finding that there are things that are different compared to previous studies, namely the subject and object of the study occurred in the education policy that allowed face-to-face meetings. The policy is running but not all educational institutions carry out the instructions, on the contrary there are still those who do not heed the instructions at all.

## 2. METHODS

This research was carried out during September 2021, more specifically after there was a green light for face-to-face meetings from the central government and followed up by local governments, and technically presented technical regulations in their respective educational institutions.

The method used for this research is a mixed method,[11], [12], [13], namely between qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative methods are used to conduct cursory research on public opinion by involving students, teachers, and lecturers as respondents. The process is by distributing questionnaires to 242 respondents with questions that have prepared multiple choice answers.

Whereas, the qualitative method is used to deepen the various deep questions in the questionnaire. Informants were given the freedom to answer questions in depth as well as their understanding and knowledge of the rationality of the policy of face-to-face meetings for students after Emergency PPKM and PPKM Level in Indonesia. This qualitative method is the application of case study methods. Case studies as qualitative methods require the limitations of specific cases or situation [14],

rely on multi-data collection techniques to explore the situation as the main subject [15], and provide valuable lessons for researchers, readers, and informants as a result of interactive research work [16].

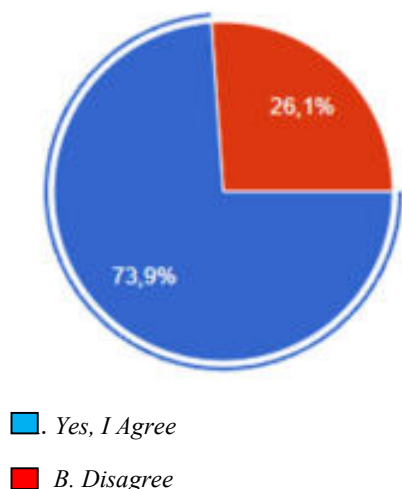
Rational theory is used to analyze political data on face-to-face learning[17], [18], either from quantitative data or qualitative data obtained during the research process. This theory was chosen to facilitate the results of a sharp analysis because people's information and knowledge are based on a rational mindset.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community gave various assessments of the policy of face-to-face meetings in learning for students and students after Emergency PPKM and PPKM at various levels in Indonesia. This is the first policy for students after more than a year of online lectures since the Covid-19 pandemic, in contrast to students who have experienced some of the educational policies that allow face-to-face meetings.[19], [20], [21], [22], [23]. Educational phenomena in these emergency situations will be analyzed based on a macro-micro sociological perspective. Coleman and Fararo propose two basic assumptions of macro-micro sociological theory as rational choice theory. First, each series of phenomena can be explained through behavior based on the influence of social systems, both large and small scale. Second, the behavior of this social system involves the rationality of actors and individual psychology [24]. Based on rational choice theory, individuals maximize utility and minimize costs, however, consider also institutional optimization. Although institutions try to work optimally so that individual rationality and disappointment can be accommodated, in some parts there are system failures that require extra time to fix it. For example, in a democratic political system that provides breadth of participation and criticism, it turns out that there are always social classes outside the political elite that are not heard, thus creating the failure of democracy and political deliberation [25]. As part of the social system, educational institutions can fail in some cases because different groups of students of their family, community, history, and community backgrounds are often controlled in the standardization of education policy [26].

Therefore, this paper seeks to hear the rationality and psychological of educational actors in response to policies to deal with the Covid-19 virus pandemic that has an impact on educational institutions. To answer the pros and cons, the researcher has conducted research by asking 245 respondents, consisting of students, students, teachers, and lecturers, by asking questions related to face-to-face meetings.

Do you agree with the face-to-face meeting for students and students since September 2021?



**Figure. 1.** Questionnaire results about face-to-face learning

The majority of respondents agree with the amount 73.9%, while those disagree with 28.1%. Respondents' responses indicate their independent attitude, not influenced by the existence of policies that have been decided by the government, campuses, and schools—those who agreed based on their diverse desires for face-to-face meetings.

Researchers asked in-depth related to these questions with a qualitative approach. To present various information, for example, learning between teachers and students, or between lecturers and students, can be in-depth in the informant's effective language. The word effective at a glance is a word in a quantitative approach, changing to a qualitative approach because the informant explained in-depth the effectiveness.

One of the informants said that because sometimes the online learning system causes students not to understand the material presented if there is an opportunity to meet face-to-face, he agrees as long as there is a strict health protocol. The difficulty of students and students receiving online learning meeting materials from teachers or lecturers is rational because so far, the learning process is face-to-face, there is a friction of knowledge without distance.

Difficulties in absorbing online learning are also felt for those who major in practical. Some students have difficulty receiving learning materials, and it is more difficult for practicum lectures because it requires practical implementation, it is not enough just to convey knowledge through zoom meetings.

Some students feel more optimal in the implementation of face-to-face learning. Studying in front of a laptop gets tired faster for the face because you have to look at the camera or light, which does not happen when learning is face-to-face. Online learning looks

relaxed at first glance; there is no need to go anywhere, but the energy expended is not inferior to face-to-face.

The student who became the informant explained that direct face-to-face learning facilitates communication between students and lecturers. Perhaps, some students are not used to receiving lectures online and lecturers so far doing lessons by directly greeting students. Greetings and direct communication are the motivation for students to receive lecture material.

Students admit that some feel happy in face-to-face meetings because teachers find it easier to control students in the learning process and deliver subject matter. It happens because students need more control than students.

Economic calculations and face-to-face learning meetings save more money because they do not require online credit meetings. It also saves for students or teachers, let alone those preparing for the national exams—no more stuck signal.

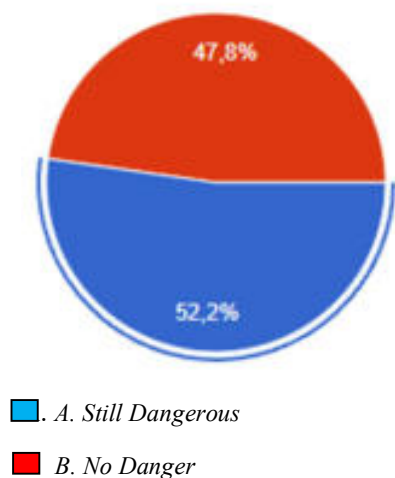
New students and students expect face-to-face lectures because students need to socialize with friends for real. As for those who agree that online lectures are due to the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still a severe threat to life, apart from the opinion of lecturers who feel that there is no difference between online and face-to-face learning, everything can go well, and it is just a matter of how it is managed.

Some teachers or lecturers want to immediately see the faces of students or students because it has been more than a year that they have not met their students. The feeling of longing to meet face-to-face lectures is a profound compliment to the answers from the informants.

The question to the respondents was continued by asking the public's perception, namely whether the face-to-face meeting in September was no longer dangerous related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This question is used to ensure the safety of students, students, teachers and lecturers when face-to-face learning takes place.

Respondents gave answers with greater results of 52.2% stating "it is still dangerous" if learning with face-to-face meetings is carried out. Meanwhile, those who stated "no cost" were smaller with the actual percentage of 47.8%. There were two groups of different responses from respondents.

In your opinion, is the face-to-face learning in September no longer dangerous related to the covid-19 pandemic?



**Figure. 2.** Questionnaire results about face-to-face learning, is it still dangerous or not

The researcher deepens the community's response; the explanation is because not all students, students, teachers and lecturers have been vaccinated. Even those who say "it is no longer dangerous" because many have been vaccinated. It is an explanation that face-to-face learning is still dangerous. According to epidemiologists, society is not dangerous to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic if it has heard immunity. It can happen if 75% of the people who have been vaccinated in an area or country have been vaccinated.

The new school cluster is a threat to students, teachers, and lecturers because of direct meetings. New clusters often occur when there is a meeting between parties that it is not yet known whether they are in a safe condition.

Compliance with health protocols is an explanation so that no one plays with the covid-19 pandemic. Obedience is the keyword; if neglected, it will open the door for the virus to spread. The virus has not entirely disappeared, so this is endangering the future of the new generation.

Referring to the informant's explanation is that the covid-19 pandemic is not over yet. The covid-19 case is still a chance to jump again. Differences in understanding and perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic are opportunities for repatriation because some are serious about dealing with health protocols, some are arbitrarily. Based on the initial experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesians were severe about implementing health protocols, but in its development, they began to ignore, sometimes even deliberately not to guard against the threat of the virus.

The experience in some blood groups who do face-to-face by presenting a new cluster becomes the reason for the informant not to do face-to-face. However, other informants remain optimistic regarding the safety of face-

to-face learning after emergency PPKM and PPKM at various levels.

Respondents and informants seem inconsistent in providing information between the two questions mentioned above. Why is this different from the initial choice, namely agreeing to the implementation of face-to-face learning with a percentage of 73.9%, while the next question is related to whether face-to-face meetings are not harmful to the lives of students, (university) students, teachers and lecturers. At first glance they are inconsistent.

Respondents and informants become understandable regarding the answer, when they are aware of their reasonable explanation. Approval shows enthusiasm for carrying out high-level face-to-face learning processes, as well as daring to do things that are dangerous to their lives. According to them, strict health protocols that are adhered to by all parties are the keywords for face-to-face meetings where there is still a chance for the spread of COVID-19, for example because of the possibility of a new cluster day.

Various news in the media become information and public understanding related to face-to-face learning. The teachers, lecturers and students became more confident in carrying out the face-to-face learning, although at first glance, if seen from their opinion in the survey, there was an inconsistency in their answers between the desire to conduct face-to-face learning compared to their perception that it was still likely to happen—new clusters or presenting things that endanger the covid-19 pandemic.

People's perceptions and knowledge were answered after the face-to-face learning implementation took place. For example, at the State University of Surabaya, it is translated with the implementation of a hybrid model, namely 30 percent of students are allowed to enter if they live in Surabaya, Gresik and Sidoarjo by showing their KTP (Kartu Identity). It is a solution to different desires, expectations and perceptions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

During the Covid-19 pandemic that hit many countries, the world of education in Indonesia including institutions was affected by restrictions on social activities. Sociologically, Covid-19 has also shown that there are invisible forces that operate in educational activities and make educational actors controlled and restricted in handling education in pandemic times. The political rationality of the policy of face-to-face meetings for students, teachers and lecturers can occur when they carry out all health protocols. They are aware that COVID-19 is not over yet, and even has the opportunity to develop again. However, students and students who need practicum agree to face-to-face learning because it is a place to practice theory obtained from the study

process. While learning that does not require practicum, for example those who study social sciences, which becomes a rationality for face-to-face learning because there are things that cannot be solved using online lectures, for example related to character or communication between students-teachers, or students-lecturers, and communication between them.

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