

# Higher Education Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Strategies for Implementing and Adapting Educational Policies Through Online Learning

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## Higher Education Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Strategies for Implementing and Adapting Educational Policies Through Online Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Various sectors of life were directly and indirectly affected by the emergence of Covid-19 in December 2019 in Wuhan (Huang, 2020). Capano (2020) declared Covid-19 to be a real tsunami that most countries were not ready to handle. Education was the main sector affected (Adedoyin and Emrah Soykan, 2020; Leonie Roy and Parlo Singh, 2020), in addition to health (Capano, 2020), the economy, and various other sectors. In Indonesia, the first Covid-19 case spread widely on March 2, 2020, which immediately spread throughout Indonesia. In understanding the global pandemic, universities in all countries are rapidly rethinking and overhauling their education policies (Clarke, 2020). Understanding the importance of the education sector, especially with the influence of the emergence of Covid-19, the Indonesian government responds quickly to policy strategies in the education sector. The online learning policy became the main adaptation strategy which was then implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. This article discusses how online learning policies as strategies for adaptation and implementation of learning in higher education. This policy was not only seen as a responsive step but also adaptive and strategic in dealing with the learning process in higher education during the pandemic. The implementation of this policy strategy was also the responsibility of the government (Ansell, 2020) to ensure that the service process in the education sector continues. Most of the research focuses on policy innovations in the education sector that are currently underway, implemented, and developed at the Faculty of Social Science and Law, Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

**Keywords:** Education Policy, Online, Pandemic Covid-19, Implementing, Adapting

### 20 I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 pandemic, whose first case appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, was not expected to have an impact on the collapse of various sectors of life. It takes collective efforts to block and eliminate Covid-19, which is called the invisible enemy, [1]. Although many sectors were affected, [2] however education as one of the main sectors directly affected by Covid-19 must receive serious attention, [3]. The government needs to prepare policy tools in an effort to control the spread. Because it was clear that with this pandemic, education, which has tended to take place face-to-face, has practically stopped. So, it was necessary to change the learning mechanism. No exception to education at the university. Given that students usually come from various regions throughout the region. With such geographical conditions, the

government was faced with formulating educational policy formulas that can be accessed by all students.

Moreover, during a pandemic, the university has even become one of the foundations to produce excellent research about preventing and controlling it. This means that higher education is increasingly occupying an important position during a pandemic, [4].

The government needs to take a quick and appropriate response in crisis conditions, [5]. Various educational policy instruments need to be adopted to ensure that basic services in the form of education can still be accepted by the public. This was a form of government responsibility as emphasized, [6]. Moreover, in an uncertain pandemic situation, it becomes an opportunity for public organizations to establish cooperation with various

parties to jointly realize public values that must be served.

In Indonesia, pandemic conditions have also forced stakeholders in the education sector to be able to complete the learning process. Even a pandemic according to the Directorate General of Higher Education is a challenge in developing creativity. The use of technology was imperative, not only the transmission of knowledge, but also how to ensure that learning is conveyed properly, [7]. What is interesting is that many policy innovations in the education sector were born during this pandemic. Application platform-based learning models are increasing. Something that was rare or never happened before.

Unesa, as part of the higher education providers, has also responded quickly to the impact of the pandemic. Various policies to ensure the functioning of education runs. Unesa implemented an online learning policy, through the Chancellor's Decree as a guideline for implementing education during a pandemic.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The trend of using technology for online learning in higher education is increasing and becoming a necessity, [8] explains how technology can be used for pedagogical purposes, not just as providing a virtual space that can unite students. However, technology is able to show the movement of students within it and the entire learning community which can also be captured and analysed to implement learning strategies.

Moreover, in the educational literature, there is a growing recognition of the importance of social networks or students' peers for learning, and more specifically for learning performance, [9]. In Dawson's research, it was shown that online technology provides unprecedented opportunities for educators to visualize changes and student behaviour and learning networks including how educators intervene in learning. Previously, Collins and Berge (1997) have acknowledged that online discussion has been widely used in both mixed courses and online courses. This online class serves as a platform to exchange information, communicate, and support learning. Online discussions that are part of the design and development of learning activities present new challenges. Instructors were previously more accustomed to getting feedback via audio, visual, and contextual requirements in face-to-face classrooms, [10]. reported in his research that online learning was able to increase student participation and discussion. In addition, ownership of student content is also increasing.

When the Covid-19 pandemic emerges and stops educational activities, it must be admitted that online classes ensure that educational services can continue. In many ways, the Covid-19 pandemic has proven to have affected education at all levels Carmen

Carrillo, Carmen and Maria Assunção, [11]. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven to have affected education. Due to the closure of universities and schools due to high health risks, [12]. In these conditions teachers and students are required have to quickly adapt to long distances. The need for is no exception creating a learning environment for students and teachers. How to prepare can be seen from the decisions and policy choices that are not only fulfilling the needs of students but also requirements for teachers as well as operational conditions universities and schools must prepare, [11].

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Australia is also radically reassessing the configuration of education. Understood education as a student service organization. So, it requires a distance learning design quickly. Even Covid-19 according to, [13] has a big impact on higher education around the world. In particular, [13] linked him to universities in China that were very proactive in preventing the spread of the coronavirus. A fast and effective response is well-deserved international recognition. That way everyone can learn from experience. Covid-19 stated by Rui Yang did not touch the aspects of higher education. And this becomes very surprising the analysts had previously thought about the possible impact on higher education. All because it has e-learning.

Various policies in higher education in all countries during the Covid-19 pandemic have become a determinant of education sustainability. Due to the spread of Covid-19 around the world, and many universities have to close the campus. So, the policies to maintain the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, universities have been misleading model build online [1]. It is the government's responsibility to respond quickly and effectively in designing learning policies at this critical time to reduce the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the education sector.

And online learning policies are a strategic choice in this situation [14]. In the UK, although teachers have been accustomed to policies that use high technology in learning, the presence of a crisis due to Covid-19 in education has gone extraordinary to adapt quickly, [15] Likewise with other countries, including Indonesia (Sparrow, Robert, [8]. The handling of these crisis conditions is in the understanding of public administration, government decision-making, and appropriate public management, [5] How to implement and organize policies appropriately in difficult conditions and situations, [16]. This difficult challenge must be responded to by the government [6].

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study examines online learning policies that are adopted and implemented as a strategy for implementing learning during a pandemic. The research was directed at

how this online learning policy is implemented at FISH Unesa. The research explores student responses after implementing online learning. A total of 200 samples were taken from students.

4. DISCUSSION

Referring to the policies set by the Minister of Education and Culture, namely SE Mendikbud Nomor 3 Tahun 2020 tentang Pencegahan COVID-19 pada Satuan Pendidikan dan Nomor 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020 tentang Pembelajaran secara Daring dan Bekerja dari Rumah dalam Rangka Pencegahan Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), [7] and SE Mendikbud SE Nomor 4 Tahun 2020 tentang Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), Unesa Chancellor appointed SE Rektor Universitas Negeri Surabaya Nomor: B/15254/UN38/TU.00.02/2020 Tentang Tindakan Pencegahan Penyebaran Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19) Di Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

The results showed that FISH UNESA was very committed to carrying out its educational functions, especially during a pandemic. Various policies have been established to make it easier for students who have been faced with difficult times.

Convenience was not only about the learning process adopted. However, it also fulfils the need for quotas as the main source for accessing the adopted online learning. As with government policy, budget refocusing was carried out to support online learning. Fulfilling online quotas for students becomes the main refocusing list before the central government online quota is given. Of the 200 samples taken, there were 42 male students and most of them were female, namely 158 students as in the following table:

Table 1. Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	42	21	21	21
Female	158	79.0	79.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The number of students comes from 3 batches, namely 2017, 2018, 2019 as in the following table:

Table 2. Student Year

	Year	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2017	56	28.0	28.0	28.0
	2018	81	40.5	40.5	68.5
	2019	63	31.5	31.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

From this number, the results of the study indicate that even though the quota policy for access to online learning has been provided, there are still students who have not received a quota, as in the following table:

Table 3. Online Quota Policy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Have got quota	163	81.5	81.5	81.5
Not yet	37	18.5	18.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

After cross-checking the data, information was obtained that there were still students who had not received subsidized quotas for online learning. This was because these students have not registered their cell phone numbers, as announced. Data about student information who has registered is as in the following table:

Table 4. Registration of Online Quota Policy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid registered	165	82.5	82.5	82.5
not registered	35	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Background Quota Policy Yet

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid registered	166	83.0	83.0	83.0
not yet registered with Unesa's Telegram	5	2.5	2.5	85.5
not yet active cellphone registration	28	14.0	14.0	99.5
other	1	.5	.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

As a learning policy that is relatively new to be implemented, it is also possible to find many problems in the initial process, especially related to network stability.

**Table 6.** Disruption of online policy access

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid never been a distraction	3	1.5	1.5
often but continued	15	7.5	7.5
every online learning but continuing	50	25.0	25.0
not often	132	66.0	66.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0

Regarding the platform chosen by the students, according to the stability condition of the network in which they live. Research results from this indicator indicate that the google classroom platform has become the learning platform chosen by many students as an effective medium for learning during the pandemic.

Zoom and meetings in this study are indeed an alternative to online learning. However, the geographic conditions of different students, including those in areas with internet network coverage, resulted in this platform being unable to be followed by all students.

Although many supports for the implementation of online learning have been provided by UNESA, problems with their implementation are still being found. The results also showed that students experienced connection problems. The results also showed that the students who experienced the most connection problems were as in the following table.

**Table 7.** Student Year Disruption of online policy access Crosstabulation

	Disruption of online policy access				Total
	never been a distraction	often but continued	every online learning but continuing	not often	
Student 2017	2	9	11	34	56
2018	0	3	20	58	81
2019	1	3	19	40	63
Total	3	15	50	132	200

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