Utilization Of E-Learning In Facing Learning Loss In The New Normal Era: A Study On Islamic Religious Education (PAI) In Junior High School In Malang City

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ABSTRACT

The current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has entered the New Normal Era, has harmed education in the form of learning loss. This research examines e-learning in dealing with learning loss in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Al-Irsyad Junior High School (SMP-AI) in Malang City. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study, whereas analyzes data through the interactive technique of Miles, Hubermann, and Saldana. The conclusion of this research states that e-learning at SMP AI Malang focuses on two things in dealing with learning loss. They are: First, upgrading learning technology, which is centered on maximizing the role of the web academic.alirsyadmalang.org. Second, increasing the aspect of students' learning motivation in following the e-learning process implemented by SMP AI Malang. Efforts to use e-learning can be considered as one of the solution options that educational institutions can carry out in dealing with the phenomenon of learning loss during the New Normal Era.

Keywords: e-learning, Learning loss, New Normal Era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

A. INTRODUCTION

This article wants to analyze the use of e-learning in dealing with learning loss conditions with the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at Al-Irsyad Girls Junior High School, Malang -referred to as SMP-AI from now on. The phenomenon of learning loss today has attracted the attention of academics to be studied empirically-academic, starting from the impact of learning loss at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels. The fundamental perspective for studying these various researches lies in the axiological dimension of education

during the COVID-19 pandemic. The empirical reality in the form of online application during the pandemic is one of the main factors causing learning loss which is currently a global concern, especially for teachers and education policymakers, as found in Rhamdan’s research, Pratiwi, or Nurhidayati.

Learning loss has become a topic of concern for researchers, leaders of educational institutions, and policymakers, especially to measure how much learning has been missed by students since the pandemic hit in early 2020. Haelermans stated that the significant implication of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector is the decline in the quality of formal education, which stems from the low quality of external support for students, leading to a widening gap in learning loss at the student level.

Conditions of learning loss that occur during the current New Normal Era trigger the emergence of various academic solutions offered through scientific research, such as Okoye’s research, which offers solutions to the problem of learning loss through the implementation of technology-based learning media. Okoye's research is a logical scientific finding, especially considering the current reality that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought consequences on the design of delivering learning messages from teachers to students who rely heavily on e-learning based on the use of information technology and the internet. Although in other research, it was found that e-learning is not the only factor that triggers learning loss but is more triggered by the interruption of the educational process due to discontinuity of learning instructions, as the results of Skar’s research.

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B. FOCUS AND RESEARCH METHOD

This descriptive explanation focuses on how to use e-learning to deal with learning loss at SMP-AI Malang, especially on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as one of the compulsory subjects in these educational institutions. Therefore, this research uses a qualitative approach to examine, understand, interpret, and give meaning to the reality of the education system at SMP-AI, based on the application of e-learning and its utilization efforts in responding to learning loss in the current New Normal era. Therefore, in this context, the researcher uses the type of case study research intending to be able to describe and analyze the phenomenon in more detail. The data collection process was carried out using in-depth interviews (online interviews) and documentation studies. While in the data analysis section, the author uses an interactive cycle model as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana with a series of processes starting from data collection, condensation, presentation, and data verification.

The phenomenon of Learning Loss in the New Normal Era

Learning loss can interpret as a state of loss of knowledge and skills, both in general and specifically. In other words, learning loss is a setback in academic progress caused by a gap or discontinuity in the educational process. The solution to the effects caused by the academic setback is urgently needed so that the more significant negative impact due to learning loss can be suppressed. Moreover, when reviewing the research design regarding the development outcomes and the potential learning loss released by UNESCO in early 2021. In this design, UNESCO research through the MILO (Monitoring Impacts on Learning Outcomes) presents the facts of learning discontinuities due to the revolutionary shift from face-to-face design in the physical classroom to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the UNESCO MILO project also presented a design for measuring the percentage of learning loss in students after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world. UNESCO indicated that COVID-19 had reduced the progress of student progress and had an impact on outcomes carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research scheme learning loss released by UNESCO as follows.

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10 Pratiwi, “Dinamika Learning Loss: Guru Dan Orang Tua.”
In line with the UNESCO research design, the Strumpf Associates research report also responds to the sustainability of learning in the COVID-19 pandemic era by bringing out four design patterns that can be done to reduce the impact of learning loss. The research also maps out learning pattern scenarios that are significantly capable of overcoming the impact of learning loss.\(^{12}\)

On the other hand, academics continue to conduct empirical studies of the factors that cause learning loss nowadays. Among the research findings that have been carried out, it is known that the contributing factors to the emergence of learning loss are: This is due to the withdrawal of education programs carried out by the central government as a formal-institutional policy, as Turner's research.\(^{13}\) This phenomenon means that the government issues policies in the field of education, which impact the postponement of the learning schedule that should have been able to be done earlier. This finding is essential to pay attention to because learning loss causes a domino effect on the development of student learning in the pandemic period of the last few years. Apart from the various triggering factors behind learning loss, a solution effort to solve the problem of learning loss remains a sure thing.

Another analysis put forward by the researchers revealed that several indicators cause learning loss, including: (1). Lack of interaction between teachers and students in online learning; (2). The low quality of students’ absorption of learning materials during the pandemic; (3). The limited duration of learning time and students' learning time during the online learning process.\(^{14}\)


\(^{14}\) Wiwin Andriani et al., “Learning Loss Dalam Pembelajaran Daring Di Masa Pandemi Corona,” in Prosiding Seminar Nasional Teknologi Pembelajaran Universitas Negeri Malang, vol. 1 (Malang:
This theoretical description shows that learning loss leads to a decrease in student's academic abilities and skills caused by the discontinuity of the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning loss is an unavoidable impact of the enactment of an online education system that has reduced the quality of learning values from what students could previously obtain through face-to-face learning directly in class.\textsuperscript{15}

The New Normal Era and Readiness of E-learning Design at SMP-AI Malang City

Like other countries globally, Indonesia is facing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in various aspects of state life. On the educational aspect, COVID-19 has changed the academic atmosphere of students in a completely different way. According to UNESCO data, more than 186 countries have closed schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This phenomenon impacts 73.8\% of the world's student population. The latest data from UNESCO (1/12/2021) states that 2,292,378,969 people with student status have become affected due to the regional closure policy implemented by each local government head. Indonesia itself includes the "country-wide closures," with 43,247,703 students affected.\textsuperscript{16}

The numerical data will indirectly bring about changes that are not only felt by teachers\textsuperscript{17} and students\textsuperscript{18} at certain levels and types of learning but also at the culmination point of the progress that students have achieved before the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who experience a migration phase from one level of education to the next, such as those transitioning from high school (SMA) to higher education or higher education to employment expansion, will face specific challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic happened. These students will not be able to complete their education and school assessment processes in the usual way. In other words, changes in the pattern of academic policies applied by most educational institutions force students to adapt to concrete, creative, and massive thinking patterns.

The dramatic exponential spread of COVID-19 has also made SMP-AI change its students' technical learning patterns. The rapid spread of the pandemic is accompanied by the need for a fast response on all fronts, making this educational institution only have very little time to prepare for distance learning. Researchers...
Utilization Of E-Learning In Facing Learning

generally indicate several points of preparation made by SPM-AI in managing its education system during the COVID-19 crisis.

First, technically, SMP-AI ensures that its students have references and other support that can still be used when carrying out the learning process at home. Second, administratively, SMP-AI "tied the loose ends" by encouraging its teachers to complete the design of learning tools early. So, this is where the critical role of teachers in educational institutions-especially SMP-AI- in predicting and preparing exam formats to be submitted through applications used by students during the learning process from home. Third, the preparation and training of education staff at SMP-AI. This factor is essential to be carried out by the educational institution in the division of labor between administrative divisions so that the connectivity mechanism for teachers can remain connected collectively.

According to these context, the simultaneous and applicable updating of learning technology is also an important consideration factor for SMP-AI. Such an option certainly requires the institution's readiness as the person in charge of the education provider. It is undeniable that the spread of COVID-19 has led to such rigidness at the technical-implementation level in the field. Adaptation of learning patterns during the pandemic must still be carried out as well as possible by prioritizing the variants of student needs that differ from one another.

On the other hand, the education system built at SMP-AI must consider special efforts to help students whose parents are not fully supportive or whose home environment is not conducive to learning. When students have a living environment that limits their learning activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents certainly have their level of anxiety about the family's economic future, so studying at home is not easy, especially for students with low motivation. Learning conditions in such a home environment do not have the equipment and connectivity that supports the smooth running of their children's learning activities, which can add to new problems. Therefore, a learning approach that can use as a solution option for distance teaching is to use asynchronous learning, either through Edmodo, Schoology, or e-modules based on Android applications.

Like other educational institutions in Indonesia, SMP-AI Malang City is also taking preventive steps against the spread of COVID-19 through efforts to inform, convince and maintain contact with students and parents of students. In addition,
the school, which is specifically designated for female students, also continues to improve school capability in conducting distance learning processes. So it is common for SMP-AI to refer to UNESCO's policies regarding the implementation of distance learning which emphasizes more comprehensive strategic planning guided by mitigation needs and long-term goals.22

In the education system designed by SMP-AI, there is an educational stake to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which refers to guidelines on massive and active mitigation from the government23 through socialization in various online media. Moreover, this educational institution already has internal school information media that can trace through the web akademik.aliwsadmalang.org, thus enabling the academicians of the institution to access information more easily and quickly. This online media is a passive mitigation step and concrete evidence of the readiness of e-learning designs implemented by SMP-AI educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the active academic mitigation efforts carried out by SMP-AI during the COVID-19 pandemic have not subsided, namely by implementing standard health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the momentum for registration and acceptance of new students (PPDB) for the 2022/2023 academic year. Technically, this academically active mitigation step can be seen as a strategic effort made by SMP-AI in dealing with fluctuating educational situations such as in the current New Normal Era.

On the other hand, education regulations issued by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic have provided separate opportunities for SMP-AI academic activities. The most important adjustment for teachers at the school is the pattern of pedagogical adaptation in digital learning. Teachers at these educational institutions are accustomed to teaching in real-time; in fact, they may have to make changes in teaching patterns to adapt to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic that is still happening. The teachers at SMP-AI expect to be able to take advantage of asynchronous learning. One of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers said that:

“The coronavirus pandemic that is currently engulfing the world has undoubtedly brought significant changes to the education system implemented in our schools. However, Alhamdulillah, the school web facility that we currently have, is beneficial in the learning patterns that we do for our students who are required to study from home temporarily. The learning that we do with routine meetings in class can facilitate web learning through our school's home portal”.

For most aspects of learning and teaching, students at SMP-AI do not have to communicate through distance learning simultaneously. Asynchronous working

gives teachers flexibility in preparing learning materials and allows students to fulfill their learning assignments from home. Asynchronous learning works best in digital formats, as implemented at SMP-AI Malang City. Through akademik.alirsyadmalang.org, teachers do not need to send materials or assignments at a fixed time. Learning activities in teaching materials and assignments can be posted online and accessed on request. Interestingly, students can carry out distance learning according to their schedules. As an evaluation material, teachers at SMP-AI can check their students' participation and make online appointments for students with a certain level of need or question. Thus, e-learning through asynchronous digital class activities such as those held at SMP-AI can provide more space for creativity, both for teachers and students.

Likewise, video-based learning is a concrete step if the COVID-19 pandemic has not subsided. This choice aligns with various educational policies issued by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) of the Republic of Indonesia. Epistemologically, video-based learning is a practical step for students to acquire new knowledge in a fun way. Of course, the video-based learning design cannot leave the critical role of technology and the internet, whose implementation pattern on the side of students still requires guidance from professional teachers. In this context, the role of teachers is expected to be able to have competence in the field of using information technology\(^2^4\) so that they can transfer digital knowledge properly to their students.

Another essential thing that SMP-AI prepared in carrying out the pattern of education during the New Normal Era was the mechanism for adjusting the curriculum used. In general, the question will arise: what curriculum can be used as a reference for teachers implementing distance learning during the New Normal Era? Responses to these questions will vary by jurisdiction. The curriculum applied by this educational institution refers to the prescriptive national curriculum combined with the school's internal curriculum, which gives teachers broad flexibility to choose the content of learning materials that suit the character and needs of their students.

Therefore, it can be understood that SMP-AI teachers carry out their learning obligations based on two main objectives. First, maintaining the continuity of student learning direction so that it does not go out of the corridor of the school's curriculum goals, including, in this case, the assessments or tests prepared by the teachers during e-learning. Second, it is also essential to keep students interested in learning by giving them tasks that are not monotonous - at least - with learning activities that arouse their curiosity about new things. One teacher revealed these activities:

“One of the learning priorities that we carried out during this pandemic was

online learning media. Besides using the school web, we also use other applications such as *Whatsapp* and *Google Classroom*.

The ease of access to communication and the emergence of various variants of online learning media has become a separate supplement for the academic community of SMP-AI. The freedom to explore learning materials obtained by students through cyberlearning media can stimulate their curiosity for new knowledge outside the context of learning received at school. In another room, SMP-AI teachers use cyberlearning media to strengthen the e-learning process, which has been the leading learning media at the school, as shown in the following figure:

![Figure 2. E-learning Design at SMP-AI Malang City](web page akademik.alirsyadmalang.org)

With the synergy of online-based learning through this page, it is possible for cyberlearning media that students have explored to get a meeting point. School websites that provide knowledge, materials, and enrichment based on the institution's curriculum, can be explored into new knowledge by maximizing cyberlearning media in its various variants. Moreover, the momentum of the New Normal Era, which conditions students to learn from home, provides more time and opportunities to do assignments and other learning patterns. This chance ultimately spurs the spirit of learning for generations of students and reduces the negative potential for learning loss during the learning process.

**SMP-AI e-learning amid Learning Loss Phenomenon in the New Normal Era: An Effort of Synergy**

Analysis of the education implementation of e-learning in the New Normal Era, which is now a global issue, has opened up opportunities for learning loss in the middle of the learning process. This phenomenon has led to the point of view for educational institutions -including SMP-AI- to constantly upgrade learning designs and accompanying curriculum tools to realize learning goals and produce students who are creative, innovative, and adaptive to the dynamics of the progressivity era.
The description leads to the point of consideration regarding the possibility of SMP-AI. It was previously accustomed to the rhythm of face-to-face classroom teaching to adapt to the teaching model by taking advantage of some assistance and special arrangements made by the institution during the COVID-19 crisis. In this space of consideration, educational policy using e-learning as a strategy for delivering learning messages to students will see its progress as the New Normal Era emerges. The renewal of digital-based teaching media is increasingly accelerating, and educational institutions will systematically organize their schools to pursue aspects of technology-based learning, which are currently the primary option.

Therefore, the role of e-learning in the vortex of the New Normal Era learning situation is a vital element that should consider in its optimization aspect. Moreover, the current condition of the New Normal Era has presented logical academic implications in the form of learning loss for the students themselves. SMP-AI, which focuses on e-learning in the educational process implemented so far, has special efforts in responding to fluctuations in the central government's curriculum policy and efforts to mitigate the negative impact of learning loss that emerged along with the learning process of the New Normal Era.

Uniquely, e-learning for PAI subjects has been implemented by SMP-AI through akademik.alirsyadmalang.org, has an upgrading phase as an adaptive effort to the potential presence of learning loss in students. The two efforts - upgrading and adaptive response - SMP-AI rely on the development of students through the synergy between SMP-AI learning technology and increasing student motivation. The researcher analyzes the interactive relationship through two aspects.

First, the learning technology used by SMP-AI is constantly developing features and content in it. This technology is done by the SMP-AI IT team continuously and gradually. The researcher indicated that the efforts to develop - read: upgrading- SMP-AI had a practical purpose of facilitating the institution's academics in carrying out academic-administrative activities during the learning period of the New Normal Era.Implicitly, upgrading SMP-AI learning technology can also be an institutional promotional effort to the broader community. Thus, efforts to develop the dimensions of the SMP-AI learning technology have a double benefit that generates resonance for the SMP-AI academic community and the wider community.

Second, the adaptive response of SMP-AI through upgrading its technology is also adjusted to efforts to increase students' learning motivation in undergoing the e-learning process during the New Normal Era. The researcher examines based on the classification of specializations made by the educational institution for its students. In other words, access to the use of learning technology through akademik.alirsyadmalang.org does not necessarily ignore the motivation and passion of students in participating in the e-learning at SMP-AI. One concrete example that can be seen from this effort is the differentiation of learning features processed on the web akademik.alirsyadmalang.org. By presenting web content and
delivering teaching materials that are not monotonous, SMP-AI seeks to increase students' motivation to follow the learning process better. Therefore, SMP-AI students can adjust their learning interests to the differentiation pattern presented by the educational institution so that it is following the motivation and direction passion of each student's.

The two efforts made by SMP-AI, as the researcher described, in reality, it has provided a solution to the learning loss problem that was happening in the educational institution. Of course, the efforts of SMP-AI in synergizing its learning technology with the development of the interests of its students are still the first step that needs to be developed further in its aim to produce an output of quality education.

C. CONCLUSION

Based on the description, learning loss has become a phenomenon that cannot be avoided from learning in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, learning loss is downstream of the decline in students' academic abilities and skill levels due to the discontinuity of the learning process.

The use of e-learning for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at SMP-AI found its implementation synergy during the current pandemic of the New Normal Era. The SMP-AI response that is strung together in two adaptive efforts to use e-learning is an essential element that can be considered in dealing with learning loss.

References


