Students' Psychological Problems Towards Online Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic:
A Literature Review Study

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ABSTRACT

This literature review study highlights the current issues about online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which focused on students' psychological problems. This critical review presents any relevant studies about the pandemic effect on the educational field, which shifted the conventional learning model into online learning. The related studies approved several topics related to the impact of online learning implementation during a pandemic, which includes students' psychological problems. In this literature review, the researcher also provided a theoretical framework of online learning and the kinds of online learning the g. Types of students' psychological problems and the causes also presented to explain how students' behaviors respond to online learning systems. Hopefully, that study contributes to finding progressive steps in providing psychological welfare and solution for students and educational stakeholders during COVID-19 pandemic. The following topics present in order; an overview of COVID-19 pandemic effect on education, theoretical framework other of online learning, and kinds of online learning. This study also includes the description of online learning impacts on students' psychological problems during the COVID-19 pandemic, its causes, and other related aspects in the learning process, conclusion, and suggestion.

Keywords: *Online learning, students' psychological problems, COVID-19 pandemic.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19, the 2019 coronavirus outbreak, was considered the primary concern of many countries since it massively spread throughout the world. According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), the first case of the Covid-19 infection report in Wuhan, China, is on December 31st, 2019. Unexpectedly, the spread of Covid-19 rapidly increased, with many instances over 278 per January 20th, 2020 in China, and began to spread in almost 200 countries in the world [1]. In Indonesia, the first case of Covid-19 confirms in early March 2020. Therefore, the government set a large-scale policy include social distancing, Work from Home (WFH), wearing a mask, and other campaigns related to preventing Covid-19 spread. Alike Indonesia, the countries which had active cases of Covid-19 also took many prevention actions. Hence, millions of people from any profession, including researchers and students, were forced by the government to isolate themselves and respond to the lockdown globally [2].

Furthermore, the available facts revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic affects all life sectors for millions of people globally, including the educational field. According to [3] found that Covid-19 is the greatest challenge that education systems have ever faced. The learning and teaching process that required the classroom activities should change into another learning system that provides less physical contact and is suitable for Covid-19 prevention procedures. In this case, government and educational stakeholders' fast response need to make emergency educational policies that enable implementation during the emergency condition of COVID-19. Therefore, this literature review study presented several related tasks in several countries that described online learning performance during the COVID-19 pandemic as the central learning system.

However, the implementation of an online learning system brought challenges for both teachers and students. The factors such as inadequate technology facilities and Internet connectivity became

the main challenges when the learning process shifts into the online learning model. Moreover, according to [4] stated, teachers' and students' challenges and difficulties include psychological problems. Those problems can disrupt the learning process and students' achievement. There was a correlation between students' mental health and academic achievement. The study revealed that students' psychological conditions could significantly affect students' achievement, leading to learning failure. Psychological problems can conduct research that could sign in their academic achievement. To find out what kind of psychological issues students face towards online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and other related aspects. This literature review study presents and reviews several relevant topics that would help educational stakeholders provide psychological welfare for students, teachers, and the parties concerned in the academic field.

Research Questions

1. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on the educational field?
2. How do the implementations of online learning during COVID-19?
3. What are students' psychological problems toward online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATIONAL FIELD

COVID-19 Pandemic was a tremendous challenge for educational systems all over the world. In most countries, forced learning activities in institutions such as schools, universities, and other educational institutions to be close for reducing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with this, in his research, Sahu (2020) presented several challenges for academic institutions, especially universities, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first is the shifting from face-to-face to online class systems. An online learning system is a choice to be implemented in the learning process to reduce virus spread. Therefore, some faculties and lecturers were not techno-savvy for this learning system. Besides, the technology resources at home became the students' need that parents should provide; meanwhile, not all parents are from high-income families. Auxier & Anderson stated that almost 25% of low-income students did not have a computer at home. Those barriers then affect the learning activities that cannot deliver as well as the traditional classroom system.

The second challenge is the evaluation and assessment system that cannot carry out as usual. The learning process held in an online course also influences the implementation of assessment and evaluation. Meanwhile, measuring evaluation and assessment using technology has its own risk. It is uncertain how to measure students' projects and assignments, especially for lab tests, practical and performance tests that cannot hold using online systems. As [5] argued, one of the technology risks in assessment for educational purposes is the underdeveloped assessment.

Another challenge is the needs of non-national students or non-local students. Almost all universities have international students or non-local students who left their homes to study. In this pandemic, universities' closure may affect their learning activities since they did not get the accommodation facilities such as internet connection, books, and so forth. Besides, another challenge faced by administrators, staff, or educational stakeholders in a university which should reschedule their plan when they want to travel overseas or go to some places due to educational purposes.

Besides, mental health problems consider as one of the challenges in the educational field. The impact of COVID-19 spread brought the risk of death from infection and unbearable psychological pressure for many people, especially students. In line with this, [6] researched the psychological impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on college students in China. They found that students felt anxiety with several causes, such as concern about virus infections and their effect on their studies and their future employment, the signs of lack of stock of masks and disinfectants, overwhelming fake news, and anxiety about the source of parental incomes.

To sum up, the Covid-19 pandemic significantly changed any educational sector, especially in the learning and teaching process. The relevant study showed challenges when educational institutions such as universities and schools forces to be close and online learning is implemented.

3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

Online learning refers to the learning and teaching process that carries out through technology

devices and web-based learning. According to Zhou *et al* [7], E-learning, distance education, or online learning refer to the method of dissemination and rapid learning through the application of information technology and Internet technology. Auxier and Anderson [8] stated that had different terminologies used for online learning include e-learning, Internet learning, distributed learning, networked learning, e-learning, virtual learning, computer-assisted learning, web-based learning, and distance learning. In this context, online learning and distance education have the same meaning that there is no face-to-face contact between teachers and students in the learning process. Anderson [9] revealed that all terms related to online learning imply the learning process without face-to-face communication between students and instructors or teachers. Students use technology devices to access learning materials and interact with instructors or teachers.

Besides, online learning divides into two types, namely synchronously and asynchronously. In line with this, Rasmitadila *et al* [10] defined synchronously as a form of learning with direct interaction between student and teacher using online forms such as video conferences like Skype, Zoom, Webex online chat. On the contrary, asynchronous refers to online learning with indirect interaction using various Web-based learning platforms such as Google Docs, email, blogs, Moodle, Wikipedia, Powerpoint, articles, and other media. In synchronous, the learning process coincided for both student and teacher. There is real-time interaction between them, whereas asynchronous means that online learning indirectly uses learning media or Web that enable students to access learning materials anytime.

Nevertheless, both synchronous and asynchronous modes have advantages that can utilize according to the learning situation and students' needs, as Hrastinski [11] revealed that synchronous was useful to support learners in developing learning communities. It also potential to avoid frustration for students and teachers in asking and answering questions in real-time. Hrastinski [11] added that asynchronous was a flexible learning model that allows students to log on anytime, download documents, or send messages to teachers and peers anytime they want.

In Indonesia, the government decided to implement learning from the home campaign through various kinds of online learning media and television broadcasts on TVRI channels [12]. The implementation of online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic is considered the solution during a pandemic to ensure the learning and teaching process can still carry out. In March 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, issued Circular Number 4 of 2020 concerning implementing educational policies in the emergency period of the COVID-19 virus. This regulation contained the policies about eliminating National Examination (UN) for 2020 and guidelines for implementing online learning.

Besides, as the country where the virus spread started, China implemented the action to reduce the impact of the epidemic on education with the campaign "School's out, but Class's On." This campaign intends to apply online learning at home, which means school is closed, but students' learning is continuing online [7]. Regarding the implementation of online learning, The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China set some guidelines for teachers and educational stakeholders. The Ministry of Education of China pointed out online learning, which combines the conventional learning classroom and online learning system. Its form to strengthen home-based study guidance and focus on developing students' autonomous learning ability. The online learning guidelines set with some critical points, namely:

- Maximizing the use of television and network resources that students in rural areas can access
- Designing curriculum and learning content focused on epidemic prevention knowledge, life education, public safety education, and mental health education.
- Adhering to the five cores of education, which include morality, intelligence, sports aesthetic, and labor
- Making time regulation for the teaching process. At the elementary level, each lesson's teaching process for about 20 minutes and secondary level for 30 minutes.
- Coordinating the characteristics of online learning and students' needs. The learning and teaching process also emphasize not force students to make assignments and upload learning videos every day. That expects to reduce the risk

of a financial burden on students' families and the rise of academic pressure for students.

4. STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS TOWARDS ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In general, the psychological problem is part of individuals' lives as Kapur [13] stated that individuals' most common psychological issues are depression, stress, and anxiety. The factors such as the particular condition in health problems, workload, family problems, and so forth become the causes of psychological issues. In an educational context, students also experienced psychological problems. The factors of psychological problems students face, such as exam stress, academic pressure, and financial issues, can affect their learning process and academic performance [13].

Regarding the current issue, the COVID-19 pandemic had huge impacts on many people physically and mentally; as Sahu [14] revealed, the rapid worldwide increase of infected cases has created uncertainty and anxiety about what is going to happen and when this outbreak will end. The feeling of dread mentally attacked many people, not only for infected communities but also for people worldwide, since it is public health emergency of international concern. A related study conducted by Wang, et al [15] pointed out the psychological impact of COVID-19 in China's general population. The study measured three kinds of psychological problems include depression, anxiety, and stress. Besides that, more than half of the respondents experienced the psychological impact, rated from moderate to severe in each psychological type. Another finding revealed that female gender, students' status, and specific physical symptoms experienced more significant psychological impact. Students experience higher psychological implications than the lockdown effect caused by another employment status in all schools. The uncertainty and negative impact on the academic progression leads them to mental health issues.

In the student context, recent studies reveal some psychological issues students face as the impact of online learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey conducted by Hasan and Bao [16] highlighted psychological distress among college students in Bangladesh. The study found that psychological distress has a relationship with the barriers in the implementation of online learning. Due to the pandemic, the sudden change in an educational system that shifted from traditional to online learning system considered less optimal. In some cases, government and educational institutions' readiness to implement online learning became the primary consideration. As Tongsri [17] approved, some developing countries do not fully support online learning systems. Besides, the nature of the online learning system itself brought many challenges for both teachers and students; in line with this, Al-araibi, Mahrin & Yusoff [18] proved that most online learning difficulties are technologically based. Besides, students' low economic status makes them suffer in accessing learning tools as Wong et al. (2015) reveal that students from lower-income lower-income families have limited access to online classes. The high internet cost when accessing online courses also became the obstacle of online learning classes. Those barriers of online learning implementation make students experienced some psychological distress such as depression and anxiety. Based on the research from Hasan and Bao [16], students felt frustrated to complete the online class successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic because of several factors:

- Lower-income families lead to the lack of technology resources and internet access.
- The nature of online learning, such as limited time of learning and assessment methods
- Lack of technical support from learning institutions and teachers

Furthermore, another study conducted by Irawan *et al* [12] investigated students' psychological impacts on online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlighted some psychological issues students face: First, saturated with online education, which leads to irritability condition. Students start to complain about the learning system that suddenly changed from a traditional classroom into an online learning system. Besides, they are accessible to angry when there is intervention during classroom or error internet connection. Second, they felt anxiety because of a lack of interpersonal communication during a lockdown and social distancing. The government initiated the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the spread of the virus. Students forces to stay at home, meet their friends, and lack outdoor activities.

In line with this, Galea *et al* [19] stated that anxiety would worsen because there is no interpersonal communication. Another finding indicated that students felt pressure due to the lower economic status of the parent. The student felt anxious because online learning classes forced them to provide internet costs to access their online learning, and they also should prepare their technology devices.

Meanwhile, most of their parent cannot work as usual because of the lockdown effect. This family condition leads a student to feel anxious, as Jiang [20] has proven a significant relationship between poverty and psychological distress. Besides, the finding revealed that the psychological impact of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was emotional disorders. Students experienced emotional disorders such as mood swings. It happens because of academic pressure and too many assignments given by teachers.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This literature review study presented three main topics: the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational field, the implementation of online learning, and students' psychological problems toward online learning. The related study found that the coronavirus outbreak brought some significant changes to the educational field, such as educational institutions' closure and online learning implementation in all education levels. Those changes brought some challenges for educational stakeholders, teachers, and students. In implementing online learning during a pandemic, several researchers found some psychological impacts on students. The study showed psychological problems that students felt, such as irritability, anxiety, emotional disorders, and others. Moreover, several causes that lead students to experience psychological issues elaborately.

Lastly, the study revealed that students' mental health was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning. When the outbreak ends, uncertainty may increase the risk of students' psychological problems and its effect on their learning process and achievement. Therefore, this study expects to give some consideration to government and educational stakeholders to be aware of students' psychological problems and find the solution to provide psychological welfare for them.

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