

Ringkar Situmorang_Student Perspective on Practical Learning Method in Pandemic of COVID-19

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**Student Perspective on Practical Learning Method in
Pandemic of COVID-19**

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has a wide and deep impact that has changed patterns of life and behavior both in the business sector and in daily human activities. One of the changing patterns of activity is in the education industry, many educational institutions across the world have closed due to this pandemic²⁴ and it could jeopardize the academic calendar. Most educational institutes have shifted to online learning platforms to keep academic activities going. However, the question about the preparedness, designing, and effectiveness of e-learning is still not clearly understood, particularly in Indonesia where the technical constraints like suitability of devices and bandwidth availability pose a serious challenge. This issue is even more challenging in the hospitality vocational education. This paper aims to dig deeper the online learning patterns in the perspective of the students in vocational education as the impact of the pandemic. This study uses a qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews of 15 participants with the expected result to provide information that can help various parties, such as vocational institutions, teachers, and the hotel industry.

¹²Keywords: hospitality education; learning patterns; online learning; vocational education; COVID-19 pandemic.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many changes in various industrial and life sectors. The tourism industry is the most affected sector [1],[2],[3] as well as the world of education, especially vocational education. As we know, one of the goals of vocational education is an answer to economic challenges. National education, teaching competency, or competency-based education, are usually carried out face to face [3]. During the pandemic, it must be conducted using a distance learning method with various ways of delivery, where teachers are required to

be as creative as possible in order to avoid boredom environment during the class, even though students still experience obstacles. The impact was not only affecting the educational sector, the industry has also experienced difficult situation [4]. Hospitality and tourism business players have to face revenue cut down while the sustainability of the business is in needs to be maintained [4]. It does require strategic actions, but convincing their guests to stay and consume with trust in hygiene, safety, and cleanliness is still a big question mark [4].

Vocational Education is identical to the direct practice learning with the aim of being proficient in the field of skills. During a pandemic, the learning process with a direct practicum pattern is difficult to be conducted because all learning processes must be carried out using online learning means. Various studies have been conducted about the impact of pandemic Covid -19 on vocational education, implications of the covid-19 pandemic for Vocational Education and Training institutions remain affected by partial or full closures, and in a few countries, remedial activities for VET students were put in place. Vocational education and training is an engine for economic growth and a vehicle for social inclusion [5]. One of the most important means through which education facilitates social inclusion is through socialization, that is, preparing pupils and students for participation in society as adults [5]. Another equally important and associated aspect is that VET could be particularly efficient in the transition from school to work to counteract youth unemployment [5].

Considering its ultimate purpose, hospitality and tourism higher education is to provide professionally trained talents to the tourism industry, the design of its curriculum and the teaching paradigm that are different from traditional courses. Emphasized by several academics, hospitality and tourism education should not only focus on theoretical curriculums but also provide opportunities for practice at local and global levels [6]; diversified learning scenarios have resulted in greater crises in hospitality and tourism education than in traditional higher education courses during the pandemic. Given that hospitality and tourism education needs active interactions with close communication among educators, industry practitioners, and students, a high risk of infection may arise when they have to travel between schools and industrial places (e.g., hotels, restaurants).

The lockdowns in response to Covid-19 have interrupted conventional teaching and learning practices. Many methods of learning process for vocational education and training has been used. Comparative education provides an opportunity to explore foreign cultures and their educational systems; it can also provide a refreshed capacity to appraise an own personal culture and educational values; comparative education also helps educators decide what issues are most important and what factors should be considered to improve education practice. While remote learning has offered some educational continuity, when it comes to academic learning, vocational education and training is particularly affected by the crisis.

Following to the background stated, this research was found its urgency to be conducted. The purpose of this study is to discover the challenges faced by vocational higher education students during the crisis of Covid-19 and to identify emerging innovation implemented in order to facilitate the sharing of information among vocation education universities. The research questions are (i) how does the COVID-19 pandemic impact the vocation learning process? And (ii) how do the students respond to the online system on vocation learning? This research focuses on three cities in three different provinces in Indonesia which are the Greater Jakarta, Bali, and West Java, that could represent learning ambience and characteristic of hospitality education more particularly at the skill level.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Covid 19 Impact in Education Industry

Educational institution in almost every country has been interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It has exposed the inadequacies in the systems and created new conditions. Schools in Indonesia and a few other affected countries were closed due to proliferating contamination. By mid-march 2020, nearly 75 countries announced the closure of educational institutions. And soon after in April 2020, it was announced by UNESCO that almost all countries in the world have implemented nationwide closures, affecting about 73.8% of total enrolled learners closure of an educational institutional that affected large number of students [7]. Indonesia, as of August 2021, was still fighting with Covid-19 pandemic situation and reported with cases and deaths in total up to 3.5 million and 100.636 death [8]. It showed how significant the number of the pandemic outbreak in the country is.

2.2 Vocational Education in Pandemic Covid-19

Educational institutions in Indonesia also made a transition during pandemic covid 19. As the colleges and schools are shut for an undefined period, both educational institutions and students are experimenting many ways to complete prescribe syllabi in the stipulated time frame in line with the academic calendar. Soon after Indonesian government announced the implementation of multitiered public activity restriction known as *Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat or PPKM*, all education institutions encountered difficult times in preparing to shift majority of the course content to e-learning platforms and modify the course structure suitably. Various studies have investigated the effect of pandemic COVID-19 in vocational education area where most of universities have shifted to online mode [9]. The investigation was conducted and the finding was although online learning can improve the student performance but it is no less

9 important to think about ways students and teachers can get to know each other and stay connected [10].

2.3 Online learning in Vocation Education

In an unprecedented education crisis like this, it is difficult to gain insights from the past, but it can help to look outwards to how other education systems are responding to similar challenges. It is important for educational institutions especially vocational education that the practicum online course experience helped the student performance [9], and this must be in line with quality of connectivity, data speed, convenience and comfortable environment [10]. Therefore, to explore the challenges of online learning on vocational education, Rowntree' Model (1994) shall be adopted as the following figure shows.

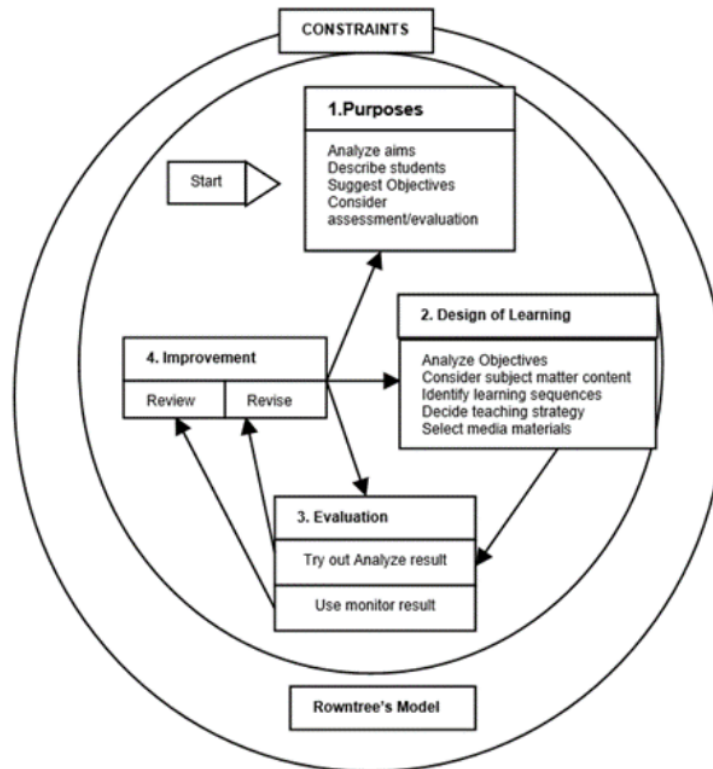


Figure 2.1. Rowntree's Model (1994)

III. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Design and Participant

To understand the repercussions of the pandemic COVID-19 onto the education vocation, the research method adopted is a case study approach to obtain unique insight from the specific context from the in-depth interviews with the participants [11]. Higher education students are chosen to share their insights for this study. They are selected based on their year of study and their prominence. Sampling was selected to ensure the participant can provide valid responses to the intended question [12]. The participants have been contacted through the network of hospitality schools and resulted to gather 15 participants from vocational higher education institutions located in Greater Jakarta, Bali, and West Java.

Table 3.1 Participant list

No	Name	Gender	Year of Study	Location
1	RCN	M	Sophomore	Jakarta
2	FRJ	F	Sophomore	Jakarta
3	CDM	F	Sophomore	Jakarta
4	RBN	F	Sophomore	Jakarta
5	FLC	F	Freshman	Jakarta
6	AHR	M	Freshman	Bali
7	GVY	M	Freshman	Bali
8	SRS	F	Freshman	Bali
9	RND	M	Freshman	Bali
10	KLA	F	Freshman	Bali
11	SNL	F	Freshman	Jakarta
12	JHS	F	Senior	Jakarta
13	JCB	F	Senior	Jakarta
14	FGD	F	Senior	Jakarta
15	ADT	F	Junior	Jakarta

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3.2. Data Collection

Semi-structured interview was conducted using online video conference (zoom) within 4 months, from June to September 2021. Each interview took 45 minutes to one hour and recorded

digitally within the zoom platform. The in-depth interview method was selected to obtain a deeper understanding of the personal views and the participant's insights [10].

The questions were prepared based on the Rowntree's Model [13] including the probe questions that depended on what topics were raised during the interviews. The researchers focused some questions that are related to the research questions about the challenges and the online learning experience during the pandemic of COVID-19 [14]. The questions began with the student's purpose in joining the hospitality and tourism, then it continued with the learning design of the course subject. Following to that, the interview proceed with how the evaluation given during this pandemic and finally, the students were asked about the improvement needed in delivering the course subjects. The conversation discussed the challenges and the experience of the students in online vocational learning at their respective colleges.

3.3. Data Analysis

Our digital video recording was transcribed individually into a manuscript in Indonesian language, then it was translated to English. Data analysis began with recognizing the relevant extensive classifications and themes [15]. We started analyzing the data by establishing patterns, familirizing, ordering and reordering, as well as recognizing thematic matrices from the conversation with the students [16]. Furthermore, initial coding was created through grouping and classifications, which can bring different meanings from the researcher's interpretations. After that, the data was encoded into categories and themes based on a couple of words or sentences. Data then input digitally and coded using Nvivo. Several types and classifications emerged, such as, motivation, cooking, practicum, food and beverage, and learning variation.

IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1. The Impact of the Pandemic COVID-19 on the Vocational Education

The finding was that the pandemic Covid -19 has disrupted education, like most aspects of our lives. It has exposed the inadequacies in our education systems, and created new conditions to which, it became quickly clear, education systems are poorly adapted. One of the participants has revealed about how practical session is preferred.

"As I said first to you, indeed I prefer practice I prefer to go directly and for practice when I learn too much to be honest I am not very strong in theory I prefer practice and I am also faster when shown and given examples like that Sir, and yes, I'm always involved. In terms of cooking, videos, and I have always been involved by the campus" (GVY)

Another student expressed her feelings,

"The difference is a lot when I was in high school I only watch the teacher in class talking constantly but here I have to make my own product here, it's even better for me because I'm a frequent person, especially if the class is boring or often dumb, right? I really like it so overall it was a good choice I moved to a college that was more practical".(SNL)

Most students do not agree if the practicum process brought through on line or remote system. One of the vocational student who study in Bali said that she almost got or learn nothing when her instructor ask to learn by watching videos. Another student has a different experience, from fourteen time class meeting, the class is divided into four groups and each student has the opportunity to experience direct practicum class in the lab only in four class meetings. They said that this arrangement is better than fourteen time of remote or online meeting.

4.2. The Handicap of Online Learning Process in Practicum Activities

Online classes bring a new perspective in the teaching and learning process, especially during the pandemic. Many things are gained by students in the online learning process. The findings show that the participants' opinions in general strongly agree with the online learning but this process can only be done for theoretical subject. The practicum learning process is considered ineffective, where direct communication, instruction and evaluation with the instructor is strongly needed. Lack of traditional way of direct interactional in classrooms is also a major concern along with those mentioned above in conducting online,

"It's better offline, it's better to go straight to the cooking class, because if you go online, you can turn off the camera, you can mute, you can not to pay attention and hear, you can do other things, and there's a lot more especially for people at my age. I don't care if online, I just turn off the camera. Practical class is a way to test whether a student is committed with the field of hospitality chosen"
(Participant #2, freshman, vocational institution in Bali)

Another student expressed her opinion,

"And if the vocational school is supposed to practice, right on campus, it can't be done online." (Participant#3, freshman, vocational institution in Bali)

Most of the students show their concerns regarding this matter, especially in regards to online learning process in practicum activates,

"It's hard to go online, because we can really feel the ambience if we learn offline and it really takes place. In an offline class, if there is something that we do wrong, the lecturer can remind us how to do it right. If the class is online, the student can just look at the screen and see how it is taught. In an online class, the emotion of the lecturer cannot be felt by the student. The feel of being in a real practice situation becomes less, no excitement or panic situation is experienced by the student. When the class is offline, we will surely feel the ambience, the motivation, the excitement, and the under pressure sensation, especially when the lecturer gives firm instructions, the students become more serious in executing the tasks because they are more afraid of being left behind".
(Participant#14, senior, Vocational Institution Jakarta)

4.3. Student point of view of the vocation learning process during pandemic COVID-19

Qualitative analysis from the open-ended questions indicates that the majority of the participants recognize the following components in conducting online classes successfully such as nature of content, infrastructure, competency of the instructor, student readiness and follow up and various subcomponents were discussed. Result of the study indicates that mix method (hybrid), schedule, and convenience place were chosen as the major benefits of the online learning method in pandemic situation. Online education offers the students the opportunity to study at their own place, even though interruptions of their internet connection occurred many times and influence the learning process quality and it is proving to be a hassle to many students. Majority of the participants speak out that online classes are effective when well structured and interactively designed with flexible curriculum supported with uninterrupted internet connectivity and competent instructor,

"For me, the most important thing is that the lecturer wants to share ideas and commit with two-way communication. Please note that for me, I prefer open discussions, but not boring ones. Maybe the learning process can be using role-play or playing games or quizzes using kahoot or something that is more fun but we can still learn from it"
(participant#13, senior, vocational institution Jakarta)

The students understood that in pandemic COVID-19 situation there are not many choices to do in the learning process that has been designed for maximizing result and effectiveness objective, pandemic situation bring us to many obstacle,

“To be honest, but in my opinion online is really boring, If you really want to learn, even though the information is good but the students don't want to apply it, the information conveyed to us is almost useless. So, I think it's better to go offline, especially vocational, right, vocational is identical to practicum, and if the students are instructed to make videos, lecturers cannot monitor what the students have done. So, in my opinion, because of this pandemic, it's better not to having practical course class. (Participant#1, sophomore, vocational institution Jakarta)

V. DISCUSSION

This study examines how vocational students can coop with pandemic COVID-19 situation especially in their learning process. Pandemic situations make us to rethink on how to provide interesting and effective learning process, as to sustain the interest of learner, it is also important to provide the comfortable feeling using a computer and navigating in the internet [10]. In order to enhance the productivity of the learners, the long duration classes should be avoided and sufficient break time should be given between two consecutive classes. It will not only avoid cognitive load but also take care of physical strain caused due to prolonged use of electronic gadget [10].

The student perspectives remain important to be considered in the learning process. It shows the success of the process that is expected to bring the students into a different level of their life stage. Besides the online teaching knowledge of the teachers, the learning process also depends on the infrastructure that requires a preparation. Moreover, the timing of the teaching-learning processes while online should be well understood by both teachers and students, that give different impacts comparing to offline class. For instance, the discussion on a theoretical class is more effective in an online class because the focus is only to one person at a time, while in an offline class any students are having the same opportunity to talk. However, an uninspiring situation might lead to the students to lose concentration in the discussion and to stay away from their gadget.

Different from theoretical class, practical class is preferred by the students to be held offline. The students need to get the feeling on how the practice is being performed in a real situation which is not the same as in a different context of situation. The feelings include the rushes of the process when the tasks are related to the guests needs or requirements which cannot be felt when the situation is not present. Fun moments are important in the learning process for the student to understand the nuances of all tasks learned. It also helps the students to understand clearly the tasks given, the whys, and the outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSION

The finding of this study indicate that majority of the students is expecting that practical learning is to be done in real activity in the lab to optimize the learning experience. The vocational education system which learning process is focused on practical, is one of the sectors that need to adapt to this pandemic situation. Shifting to online platform in learning process is a situation that could not be avoided, but the quality of the student ability is to be prioritized and considered [9]. It may be too early to say how students and teachers will cope with online learning but with the electiveness and communication technology, the learning process could be effective and productive [5]. It is possible that once the pandemic COVID-19 settles down, we may predict continued improvements in vocation education system using hybrid and offline-online platform combination may be run together in regular classes. Hence, this study provide evidence and useful for reimagining and redesigning the vocational education with components involving online- onsite (hybrid) mode.

VII. LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study has few limitations like other research. First, this study is based on vocational education in hospitality program, this type of research may give a different kind of result in on other education program. Second, this research has been conducted in one country, which is Indonesia, thus other countries may give different results and insights which might not generate the same outcome. In addition, different vocational program such as animation, film, music, technique, etc., may also generate different findings.

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