

Implementation of Blended Learning to Improve Learning Quality during Pandemic

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Received 18 January 2022; Accepted 7 June 2022; Published 30 June 2022

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the efforts to improve the learning quality during the pandemic through the blended learning method at SD Muhammadiyah Prambanan. The research method used in this research was descriptive qualitative with a case study. Researchers conducted interviews with teachers regarding implementing blended learning during the pandemic. The results of this study are as follows. (1) Schools use various learning platforms such as: Zoom Meeting, WA, video, Youtube, Google Form, Google Classroom, Quizizz, and teacher-made modules; (2) In order to improve communication with parents, schools program home-visit activities to identify and provide solutions to distance learning problems; (3) In monitoring the implementation of character education, students fill out "*Tabungan Kebajikan*" book which is monitored every day; (4) The implementation of blended learning can reduce learning loss during the pandemic, students are not bored in learning, and encourage teachers to improve technological competence; (5) The obstacles faced by schools in the implementation of blended learning are the level of student participation, the affordability of internet access, and the facilities of electronic devices they have; (6) The solutions that schools have taken to overcome the obstacles are conducting intensive communication with parents and home-visit activities, providing quota subsidies to students, making modules by teachers; (7) The application of blended learning has a positive impact on students are not getting bored due to variations of learning methods, being able to learn independently through various online applications and learning modules, as well as improving digital literacy skills.

Keywords: blended learning; online and offline learning; pandemic.

A. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all sectors, including education as a human resource development institution. One of them is the disruption of learning activities at all levels. Students cannot do face-to-face learning at school as usual. They are required to study at home with direct assistance from their parents. It is an emergency response action taken by the government to prevent the spread of the virus. On March

24, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia issued Circular Letter 4 of 2020 concerning implementing Education Policies in the Emergency Period of the Spread of Covid. It explains that the learning process should be carried out at home through online or distance learning. Distance Learning (*Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh*, abbreviated as *PJJ* in Indonesia) is an alternative solution from the government in the learning process, with the technical implementation according to each education unit.

It is undeniable that distance learning is a dramatic situation for teachers because it encourages rapid changes in the learning system during a pandemic. Teachers carry out distance learning according to their knowledge and abilities, some give students homework in the textbook, some give assignments taken by the students' parents at school, or some provide assignments by sending photos to students. There are many other phenomena teachers do during the transformation of face-to-face learning to distance learning. They try to deliver the best learning services they can. The main priority for teachers during the pandemic is no longer oriented to learning outcomes but how students can continue to study according to the circumstances.

Most teachers still relied on traditional learning without using technology at the pandemic's beginning. The teachers only rely on textbooks provided by the government. These devices did not support learning applications related to distance learning, both teachers and parents. Students are only asked to work on the questions in the textbooks borrowed from the school without any meaningful knowledge. In addition to such learning methods, some teachers also created exercises that consist of some questions, and then the students are asked to take the questions and submit them back to school. Students experience learning loss in this kind of learning process because they only do assignments without being given meaningful material explanations.

Research conducted by [Fikri et al. \(2021\)](#) argued that the obstacles in distance learning varied for teachers and students. The main problem in distance learning is inadequate technology literacy and the usage of internet networks. Especially if the teacher and students live in remote areas where internet access is still unreachable, neither technology nor the internet can contribute enough to support distance learning. To overcome this situation, some teachers conduct home visits individually to provide learning services.

The problems in distance learning during the pandemic must get the solution immediately so that it does not impact student learning. According to [Maullyda et al. \(2021\)](#), there was a drastic decrease of up to 50% in student learning outcomes during the pandemic. It is compared to the learning outcomes before the pandemic. It will undoubtedly impact the quality of human resources and education in Indonesia because students will experience learning loss.

According to [\(Fikri et al., 2021\)](#), distance learning or online learning must be supported by an internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to create various learning interactions. Distance learning requires multiple technological devices and good internet networks to support face-to-face online

between teachers and students. However, looking at the condition of schools, teachers, and students in Indonesia, not all of them can fulfil these requirements due to various obstacles. Thus, finding solutions to the challenges in implementing distance learning is necessary.

Even though there was various obstacle during the pandemic, schools still have to focus on improving the student learning quality because it will have implications for the quality of national education. The learning quality can be measured based on the quality of the input, process, and output (Suhadi et al., 2014). Quality learning will produce quality students. The quality of knowledge is a combination of the process and learning outcomes achieved by students with the support of educators and other education personnel (Suhadi et al., 2014). In this case, the educator or teacher becomes the focal point in realizing the quality of effective learning.

One alternative method school can use to realize the quality of learning during the pandemic is implementing blended learning, combining face-to-face or offline learning with online learning. Blended learning can use various applications such as Google Meet, Google Classroom Whatsapp, and many other social media. In essence, these media can increase students' motivation and learning outcomes in distance learning (Abroto et al., 2021). The implementation of blended learning during the pandemic period is 50:50, meaning that the time allocation for face-to-face learning activities is 50% and 50% for online learning. Some teachers implement 75:25 composition with 75% face-to-face learning and 25% of online learning. In addition, some teachers use the composition of 25:75, meaning that 25% face-to-face and 75% online learning (Sufia & Lestari, 2020).

Based on the problem description, the purpose of this study is to reveal the implementation of the application of blended learning to realize the quality of learning during the pandemic. Researchers try to show the creativity and innovation in the performance of blended learning, the factors that influence the success of its application, how to overcome the obstacles during the implementation, and the implications of its application to the learning quality, especially student learning outcomes.

B. Method

This research is descriptive qualitative research with a case study. Researchers conducted interviews with teachers regarding implementing blended learning during the pandemic. The subjects of this study were the principal and six classroom teachers who teach grades 1-6. The research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Prambanan, Sleman, Special Region of Yogyakarta, for five days on 27 to December 31, 2021. The data collection technique in this study was by using interviews. Researchers made interview guidelines with key informants and participants containing basic questions about the research problem.

The data analysis technique in this descriptive qualitative research used the software application Atlas. ti version 8. This application used data analysis to organize,

categorize, and classify data. Ultimately, the theme is in conceptual maps, and hypotheses can be formulated as the data suggests.

To ensure the validity of the data, the researchers used triangulation (methods, data sources, and data collection tools). The data was examined by comparing the data from different sources to anticipate missing data. The validity of the information was done by checking with peers through discussion, then analyzed by comparing theories from several expert opinions as references. With this technique, the data's validity, transferability, dependence and certainty can be presented objectively and accounted for.

C. Result and Discussion

Blended learning is a learning strategy combining online and offline (face-to-face meetings) during a pandemic. Blended learning integrates face-to-face and computer-based learning (offline and online) that teachers and students can use. Blended learning is the ease of learning during the pandemic, which combines various teaching methods and online and offline learning styles by introducing different choices of interaction media between teacher and student facilitators. Blended learning facilitates a learning process during the pandemic, which combines various teaching methods and learning styles online and offline by using mixed interaction media between teacher as facilitator and student ([Fadhilaturrahmi et al., 2021](#); [Ferdiansyah et al., 2021](#); [Magdalena et al., 2020](#)).

Schools appropriately apply the strategy for implementing blended learning during the current pandemic. This strategy facilitates the conditions and backgrounds of all parents because not all parents are "technology literate". In online learning, students learn online with various learning platforms. While offline learning, students can meet face to face with a limited number of students at school. This opinion aligns with research journals ([Handika et al., 2021](#)) that blended learning at SD Negeri 02 Kendalsari Pematang by class IV teachers corresponds with Driscoll's theory. It states that blended learning combines many formats of learning media technology with face-to-face learning and learning at home.

1. Blended Learning Implementation Strategy

Implementing blended learning strategies at schools uses various online learning platforms, especially those with online schedules. In offline learning, the number of students attending school is minimal, and the students are divided into small groups. The students are divided into two shifts, with two hours of study at school. Offline learning conveys more basic concepts, while development can be done through assignments at home to encourage students to learn independently. [Figure 1](#) shows offline learning activities with limited students for two hours at school.



Figure 1. Limited face-to-face learning in schools

Platforms used by schools in implementing blended learning are Zoom, videos, Youtube, Google Form, Google Classroom, Whatsapp groups for parents, "Sembada Belajar" channel, Quizizz, e-books, and teacher-made modules. Research journals (Magdalena et al., 2020) said that blended learning allows virtual face-to-face between teachers and students who may be in two different places but can give each other feedback, ask questions, or answer so that everything is in real-time. Based on (Abroto et al., 2021; Aini, 2021; Kutsiyyah, 2021) said that the virtual blended learning platform could use various supporting applications such as Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Whatsapp groups, Synchronous and Asynchronous, Flipped classroom, and many other social media. The teachers could utilize those media, which leads to increased students' learning outcomes and motivation in distance learning during the pandemic. One of the student activities using one of the online learning platforms by utilizing Zoom Meeting is in Figure 2. Zoom Meeting is constructive for teachers in the online learning process, especially during the pandemic (Utama & Orbaningsih, 2020).



Figure 2. The use of Zoom Meeting in blended learning

2. Factors that Influence the Implementation of Blended Learning

The implementation of blended learning has various advantages and disadvantages. The benefits include learning process can be continuously conducted by using multiple online and offline learning platforms, reducing learning loss, more effective and efficient learning activities, time flexibility, fostering variations of exciting and fun learning methods, reducing mobility at school, facilitating access to learning

materials from various sources, and improving technology literacy more quickly. Implementing blended learning can lead to the development of mixed digital-based learning media, making it easier for students to learn independently to maximize online and offline learning (Abdullah, 2018).

Factors that can support implementing blended learning during the pandemic include various training. To increase teacher competence in using different online and offline learning platforms, providing zoom facilities and equipment at every grade level for financially capable schools, utilizing teachers-made nodules, providing quota subsidies to students and teachers, facilities and infrastructure for washing hands and adequate toilets in schools. According to (Borba et al., 2016), blended learning has many advantages, such as monitoring and controlling students in education, reducing distractions that usually occur in class, facilitating task management, and increasing student independence.

Based on the results of interviews with several teachers, some factors influence the success of implementing blended learning during the pandemic. They are communication and parental support for school programs, school readiness to provide facilities and infrastructure, creativity and innovation in education, student and teacher learning motivation, maximizing student learning assistance at home, mastering technology skills, and utilizing various learning resources at home with technology. A blended learning strategy allows teachers to create a flexible learning environment based on the individual needs of each student (Rachmah, 2019). The factors that support the application of blended learning during the pandemic need to be considered so that its implementation can optimize the student learning process

In addition, there are also some shortcomings in implementing blended learning in schools. It includes character education is not optimal, meeting times at school are short and limited, learning materials cannot be delivered in-depth, and it depends on the readiness of the facilities and infrastructure used by students at home, still rely on internet signals. So that if the power is off, learning is disrupted, and not all students can join face-to-face at school or in online learning. Teachers must be more prepared in advance (preparing materials, videos, PPT, and Google Forms as media to convey practices and homework). Research (Maskar & Wulantina, 2019) states that the disadvantage of implementing blended learning is that students feel the learning process is less efficient because it requires devices and data packages that are large enough to access the internet.

3. Strengthening Student Character During the Pandemic

The implementation of student character education during the pandemic is carried out using a daily watch book in *Buku Tabungan Kebajikan* (kindness passbook). This book was filled out daily by students, signed by parents, then collected at school and checked by class teachers on limited face-to-face schedules at school. Student character education during the pandemic is essential because the school must monitor children's activities at home. Thus, unified communication between parents and school is needed (Mumtazah & Sutama, 2021). Home visit activities will significantly help

unified communication between schools and parents. Figure 3 is the example of *Buku Tabungan Kebaikan* that students fill out every day to monitor the implementation of character education at home during the pandemic and at the same time as a guide for filling it out.

PETUNJUK PENGISIAN
BUKU TABUNGAN KEBAIKANKU

- Kolom *shalat fardhu* dan *dhuha* dituliskan waktu/jam shalatnya
- Kolom *tadarus* dan *tahfidz* ditulis nama surat dan ayatnya
- Kolom *belajar* ditulis nama mata pelajarannya
- Kolom *ibadah sunnah* ditulis kegiatannya misalnya, tahajjud, puasa sunnah, dll
- Kolom *kebaikanku hari ini* ditulis kegiatan kebaikan yang dilakukan sendiri misalnya : merapikan tempat tidur, menyiapkan buku pelajaran sendiri, mencuci sepatu, mencuci piring, membantu ibu memasak, bershadaqah/infaq, dll
- Kolom *poinku* ditulis total poin, setiap kegiatan poinnya 1, khusus *shalat fardhu* poinnya 5
- Jangan lupa untuk meminta paraf dan catatan dari ayah/bunda dan gurunya nak.

Semoga anak-anakku selalu istiqomah berbuat kebaikan dan menjadi teladan di manapun berada. Amin.

BUKU TABUNGAN KEBAIKANKU
Hari, tanggal: Senin, 03-01-2021

No	Jenis Kegiatan	Rincian	Catatan Orang Tua
1	Shalat Fardhu	Isya = 19:19 Dhuha = 11:46 Subuh = 05:40 Ashar = 16:00 Maghrib = 18:03	
2	Shalat Dhuha	07:00	
3	Tadarus	Q.S. YUSUF : 4	
4	Tahfidz	Menulis cerita sebelum tidur	
5	Belajar		
6	Ibadah Sunnah Lainnya		
7	Kebaikanku hari ini	Mencuci piring bersih di malam hari. Catatan Guru: Alhamdulillah, hebat mas Azam.	Rewardku: <input type="checkbox"/> poinku: <input type="checkbox"/>

Paraf Orang Tua: ☐ Paraf Guru: ☐

Hari, tanggal: Selasa, 04-01-2021

No	Jenis Kegiatan	Rincian	Catatan Orang Tua
1	Shalat Fardhu	Isya = 19:19 Dhuha = 11:46 Subuh = 05:30 Ashar = 15:12 Maghrib = 18:03	
2	Shalat Dhuha	07:00	
3	Tadarus	Q.S. AL-BAHRUYYAH : 1-4	
4	Tahfidz	Matematika dan Tahfidz	
5	Belajar		
6	Ibadah Sunnah Lainnya		
7	Kebaikanku hari ini	Menulis cerita sebelum tidur. Catatan Guru: Amn Sholeh, Good job	Rewardku: <input type="checkbox"/> poinku: <input type="checkbox"/>

Paraf Orang Tua: ☐ Paraf Guru: ☐

Bangga Sekolah di SD Muhammadiyah Prambanan
Islami, Cerdas, Berbudaya

Figure 3. Example of how to fill the *Buku Tabungan Kebaikan* (strengthening student character education)

4. Obstacles in Implementing Blended Learning

During the pandemic, there were many obstacles to implementing blended learning. Based on interviews with several teachers, the block they experienced during the implementation of blended learning during the pandemic in schools includes: not all students can 100% collect assignments and participate in online or offline learning, each student has different facilities, electricity is sometimes less stable and can interfere with the availability of internet signals for Zoom, the technological abilities of teachers and students are different, and parental assistance is not optimal due to work. Research results (Rachmah, 2019) revealed that some teachers find it challenging to implement blended learning, but some feel happy because of the convenient use of technology in online learning. They can learn the usage of technology and the latest applications in education. The activities carried out by the school in supporting distance learning are by bringing resource persons to assist the use of the application.

5. Efforts to Improve the Quality of Blended Learning

According to Nursita (2021) and Sari (2013), a blended learning strategy can improve students' independent learning, critical thinking skills and achievement. Therefore, each school has various designs for overcoming the problem of implementing blended learning. There are some solutions which schools deal with the problems.

First, communicate with parents intensively or home visit activities, and provide adequate school electricity sources in collaboration with PLN. Then developing teacher

self-competence is the next solution. Then the schools hold online consultations via Whatsapp groups for parents and direct message, motivating online and offline characters education. Next, they deliver material through Google Classroom and WA groups so the students can access it anytime. The last is providing learning opportunities at school. It is for those with problems with their device and learning assistance at home.

Home visit activities carried out by teachers are considered very effective regarding the obstacles faced by the students. Class teachers can establish intensive communication with parents at home. The class teacher carries out home visit activities at each student's home. This activity was carried out when the teacher did not have a class schedule. Home visit activities are beneficial for teachers in identifying student and parent problems during online learning (Kutsiyyah, 2021; Sholeh, 2021). Parents can provide advice and suggestions to schools regarding the learning process during the pandemic.

Figure 4 shows home visit activities carried out by schools to the students' homes to build intense communication with their parents during the pandemic.



Figure 4. Home visit activities to students' homes by the homeroom teacher

Parents play a vital role in blended learning assistance, requiring them to monitor and lead the students to do all learning activities at home (Muawanah & Muhid, 2021). Parents should communicate intensively with schools regarding blended learning. The obstacles faced by students at home need to be conveyed to the teacher so that problem solving can be given. The facilities required for blended learning need to be provided by parents to facilitate learning. It involves collaboration and unified communication between teachers and parents in maximizing blended learning during the pandemic (Nursita, 2021).

The parents' roles in implementing the blended learning include: parents respond well and agree with the efforts made by the school, parents act as mentors at home in assisting student learning, parents must seek internet quotas for students at home, and parents are actively communicating the problem they faced to the schools, parents are expected to check students' participation in online learning, parents provide constructive input in education, and there are regular class community parent

meetings. The role of parents during the pandemic is crucial. Parents play the primary role as teachers while the students study at home (Lilawati, 2021; Lubis, 2020).

The following is an excerpt from one of the interviews related to the role of parents during the pandemic.

Peran orangtua sangat berpengaruh karena orang tua yang selalu mendampingi siswa di rumah. Serta banyak masukan yang diberikan kepada sekolah untuk keberhasilan proses pembelajaran siswa. Akan tetapi, pada masa pandemi ini orangtua kadang kurang tanggap dengan partisipasi anaknya selama pembelajaran daring di rumah. Mereka tidak segera menanyakan tugas yang belum dikerjakan anaknya (L. S, personal communication, December 28, 2021).

[The role of parents is very influential because parents always accompany students' home. As well as a lot of input given to schools for the success of the student learning process. However, during this pandemic, parents are sometimes less responsive to their children's participation in online learning at home. They do not immediately ask or confirm the tasks or assignments that have not been finished by their children]

6. Positive Impact and Improvement of Blended Learning Implementation

The application of blended learning positively impacts distance learning during the pandemic (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020). The influence of the blended learning strategy on student learning outcomes perceived by the teacher includes: the results are better than full online at home, students do not feel bored because of the combination of online and offline, student learning outcomes vary in online and offline (there are increasing and decreasing), student learning independence is better because there is direct assistance at home. Teachers feel that the application of blended learning has bridged the barriers between online and offline (Pakpahan & Fitriani, 2020). Teachers can also have the opportunity to improve technological competence, which so far was lacking in the pre-pandemic period. As stated by one of the following participants.

Blended learning sangat bagus dipakai pada masa pandemi dan dapat memotivasi saya dalam belajar IT. Dapat belajar Zoom, membuat video pembelajaran, kuis dengan Quizizz, PPT dengan Canva, dan masih banyak lagi. Saya merasakan kok masa pandemi ini membawa kemajuan berpikir guru terutama dalam teknologi, sangat beda sebelum masa pandemi. Alhamdulillah pokoknya (D. N, personal communication, December 28, 2021).

[Blended learning is excellent to be used during a pandemic and can motivate me to learn IT. You can learn Zoom, create learning videos, create quizzes with Quizizz, PPT with Canva, and much more. I feel that this pandemic period has brought progress in teacher thinking, especially in technology, which was very different before the pandemic. Alhamdulillah anyway]

Based on the results of interviews with teachers regarding things that need improvement to implement blended learning during the pandemic successfully. There are variations of interesting online and offline learning methods, increasing student activity in learning, expanding internet networks in Indonesia to make it easier for

students to learn, longer offline meeting duration, and more effective scheduling. Blended learning has advantages in preparing the material and the relevance of the material given to the students. Still, of course, it must always be evaluated for its implementation and achievement for students (Setiawan et al., 2019). The following is the interview result with one of the participants regarding the input in implementing blended learning during the pandemic.

Selama pandemi belum berakhir maka sebaiknya blended learning tetap dilaksanakan oleh sekolah, tetapi yang perlu diperhatikan juga oleh pemerintah adalah terkait perluasan jaringan internet di Indonesia yang lebih terjangkau semua daerah. Selain itu, guru sangat perlu meningkatkan variasi metode pembelajaran yang interaktif dan menarik sehingga siswa tidak bosan dalam pembelajaran. Pemakaian elektronik juga perlu diatur oleh orang tua agar kecanduan terhadap hp dan sebagainya bisa dikurangi. Ya, serba dilematis memang, di sisi lain pembelajaran harus menggunakan alat elektronik, di sisi lain juga membawa dampak yang negatif juga (F. R, personal communication, December 28, 2021).

[As long as the pandemic is not over, schools should continue to carry out blended learning. However, the government also needs to pay attention to expanding the internet network in Indonesia, which is more affordable to all regions. In addition, teachers need to increase the variety of interactive and interesting learning methods, so students do not get bored with learning. The use of electronics also needs to be regulated by parents so that addiction to cell phones can be reduced. Yes, it's a dilemma; on the one hand, learning must use electronic devices; on the other, it also has a negative impact.]

The results of this study can be further developed to enrich theoretical and practical knowledge about implementing blended learning during the pandemic. There need to be measurement results that can compare student learning outcomes during the pandemic with student learning outcomes before and after the pandemic period ends.

D. Conclusion

Blended learning is one of the learning strategies implemented at schools during the pandemic. This strategy combines limited face-to-face (offline) and online meetings. The school's strategy in implementing blended learning was to use various technology-based learning platforms such as Zoom, Whatsapp, video, Youtube, Google Form, Google Classroom, Quizizz, and teacher-made modules. In addition, schools conducted home visits to the students' homes for direct communication with parents regarding problems and obstacles while studying at home. The intensity of communication between parents and schools is crucial because it will increase the success of student learning online and offline. Character education for students during the pandemic uses Buku Tabungan Kebaikan (kindness passbook), filled in every day by students and checked by parents and class teachers in the limited face-to-face schedules at school. The obstacles often faced during blended learning are internet networks or data packages and the intensity of communication with parents. In

addition, teachers must continuously improve their self-competence in creating exciting learning methods and activate student participation in distance learning during the pandemic.

Blended learning positively impacts students, teachers, and parents, especially in mastering digital literacy. Therefore, researchers must develop further research on blended learning, innovations and development in education. Moreover, homeschooling is very popular in big cities. The government also needs to make various developments to improve the learning quality.

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