Strategic Issues of National Education Post Covid-19

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Abstract. The current uncertain global condition is a challenge for the world of education. Advances in technology and the COVID-19 pandemic have caused tremendous disruption in almost all aspects of life, including education. This article analyzes various strategic national education issues after the Covid-19 pandemic. The method used in this article uses a literature review approach. The study results show that many strategic issues in education must be the attention of stakeholders to improve the quality of education. These issues include equal distribution of education, social change, the quality of human resources, and the demands of society for quality education.

Keywords: Education-1; strategic issues-2; national education-3, post covid-19-4

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently sweeping the world; all areas of life are changing; in the economic, social, political, religious, and educational fields. The policy issued by the ministry of education and culture regarding learning from home resulted in changes to the education system [1]. Although the world has entered the industrial era 4.0, technology in education in Indonesia is still very rare. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the change in the education system from conventional to digitalized education [2]. The purpose of this drastic change is to continue education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. As the policymaker in this country, the government tries its best to anticipate the emergence of a lost generation at school age [3].

Based on the results of a survey conducted by UNICEF, about a third or around 463 million students have difficulty accessing distance learning from their respective regions [4]. This incident became one of the triggers of a lost generation. On the other hand, educators also need to improve digital literacy skills, which are part of the skills needed in the industrial era 4.0 [5]. The way of learning carried out by schools has changed from face-to-face learning to distance learning. The characteristics of distance learning are that educators and students do not meet each other but use technology media in learning [6]. The learning system encourages educators to upgrade their digital skills to survive. If the world of education is not able to upgrade all its aspects. Then the results of the quality of the educational process will be low.

Education during the COVID-19 pandemic poses considerable challenges for policymakers, stakeholders, educators, students, and parents [7]. The Indonesian government seeks to achieve herd immunity throughout the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. After being hit by the first and second waves of COVID-19, the government began to make all Indonesians vaccinated as an initial step to achieve herd immunity.

Based on data released by the Ministry of Health on August 31, 2021, that the Covid-19 vaccine injection has reached 100 million injections with details of 63,265,720 (30.49%) for the first dose; 36,050,866 (17.31%) for the total second dose, and approximately 640,532 (43.61%) for the third dose (booster) for health workers [8]. Sloping Covid-19 cases and a significant increase in vaccination rates have prompted policymakers to call for the implementation of limited face-to-face learning (PTMT) to continue. This activity follows the rules of the health protocol and is based on the Joint Decree (SKB) of the four ministers. The implementation of limited face-to-face learning is allowed with a zoning system and the level of application of community activity restrictions (PPKM). Decisions taken by the Indonesian government carry a high level of risk. The safety of the souls of students and educators also needs to be considered in limited face-to-face learning.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges in all sectors, including the academic and research sectors [9]. The researchers could not make direct observations at the study locus to reduce the intensity of mobility. In line with Rafaela Vasiliadou, UNESCO explained that the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant challenge for the education system [10]. Learning is done through a virtual room to prevent the spread of the covid-19 virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on education systems worldwide. According to a document released by the United Nations in August 2020, the pandemic has created the most disruption to the education system in history, with nearly 1.6 billion students in 190 countries worldwide affected [11]. It is because the pandemic has become a global problem all over the world at the same time.

The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic shows that significant changes have occurred in every line of people's lives [12]. Changes in these conditions include disrupted world economic conditions, social changes that have never been thought of before, and in the field of education. We are currently experiencing lost learning which is almost happening worldwide due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As USAID states, there is a need to build multi-stakeholder collaboration to reduce the learning conditions that are currently declining [13]. Then the issues of world megatrends that will occur in the following years, such as geopolitics, demography, technology, will add to the long list of impacts of social change [14]. The government needs to anticipate it, apart from the COVID-19 pandemic. The government needs to be prepared to face conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic, in which world megatrend issues await in the future.

Based on the explanation above, researchers will discuss strategic national education issues in the post-covid-19 era through several literature studies. So that policymakers and stakeholders can take preventive action in this regard. Concrete steps are needed to improve the quality of education in Indonesia entering the post-covid-19 period. The analytical method used in this article uses a literature review approach. The literature review is defined as a systematic method for identifying and synthesizing existing research studies [15]. Then the purpose of the literature review is to synthesize and analyze previous studies.

The stages that will be carried out in the literature review, according to Amin & Ramdhani (2014), consist of several parts, namely as follows: [16]

1. The topic to be reviewed is selected first.
2. Selecting and sorting articles according to the topic.
3. The selected literature is then analyzed and synthesized.
4. Organizing the results of the review.

2 Research Results and Discussion

2.1 Global conditions and educational challenges

Globalization is defined as the intensification of social interactions throughout the world [17]. The current uncertain global condition is a challenge for the world of education. Advances in technology and conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic caused tremendous disruption in almost all aspects of life, including the field of education. Where there has been a shift in learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic [18]. Rapid technological developments have limited outside activities, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic. So, they turn to the use of technology, although not entirely; it turns out that current technology is very much needed during this pandemic.

The implementation of education was initially carried out face-to-face; now, it is done virtually at home. Studying at home or remotely is a form of learning that is currently being carried out worldwide to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak. Another policy is to create new rules for human activities. Implementing Lockdown or Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) and similar policies then impact community activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global megatrend is a challenge that will occur post-pandemic, so it needs to be anticipated by improving the quality of human resources. The UK Ministry of Defense says that our lives and the world we live in will almost certainly change over the next 30 years, impacting everyone [19]. On the one hand, global megatrends can lead to competition between countries, which will impact the development of human life. Therefore, innovation development must always be done as a form of response to changes. Several megatrend conditions are likely to occur, including demographic, social, economic, technological, climate change [20]. The challenges of today's global education include new educational management, new teaching methods, future quality development, student needs, relevant academic research, sustainability and social responsibility, stakeholder participation, globalization, technology, growing competition, and the need to expand into new markets [21].

The government needs to respond to the emergence of educational challenges, both global and national, positively. Several things that need to be done by policymakers are facilitating and increasing access to educational institutions to support the transformation of changes that occur.

Fig. 1. Global Education Challenge

2.2 National Education Strategic Issues in the Covid-19 Pandemic

The National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 3 states that the purpose of education is "to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic citizens. Moreover, take responsibility." Based on this point of view, education is a vital requirement for building human beings who have faith, character, and responsibility. This law should be a spirit for education providers in Indonesia. Here are some strategic issues of national education that need our attention, especially the government in implementing national education.

Changes in learning models during the covid-19 pandemic

Since the emergence of the Covid-19 virus in the Wuhan area, it has brought about fundamental changes to society in all aspects, including education. The effect of implementing Covid-19 education has given rise to new perspectives in the process from offline to online, and perhaps in the future, blended learning-based learning models can be carried out. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of education forced the government to change teaching and learning activities in schools to learning at home, called distance learning [22].

This condition requires the government to act quickly in responding to these changes. How teachers and students can continue to learn optimally during the pandemic is an issue that arises and what students use to access and facilitate learning. Changes in the learning system during the COVID-19 pandemic have indirectly forced parents, students, and educators to adapt to various digital technology-based learning models. It gives the impression that digital literacy skills are the main thing for educators and students, and it is possible to develop digital literacy in the post-covid-19 can lead to variations in learning models at all levels of education.

Equitable quality of education

The quality of Indonesian education is seen as not showing good quality coupled with the uneven distribution of education which is one of the strategic issues in education. The National Development Planning Agency (2014) explains that there are still many inequalities in access to education services, especially in remote areas, making it one of the obstacles in education services [23]. Some of these factors include the lack of educational facilities and the quality of teachers who are still lacking because they are still not professional in carrying out their obligations, which impact student achievement. The condition of education in 3T areas (underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost) is still a national problem because access to reach these areas is still relatively complex. School graduates are less qualified to meet the needs of the world of work.

Fig 2. Quick Survey Analysis Learning from Home in COVID-19 Prevention Period

The school curriculum is still considered inadequate for the needs of the world of work. Limited student fees are also one of the triggers for the uneven distribution of education. There is a growing image in a society that quality schools are expensive. This view makes only children from the upper class can get a quality education. The priority of equity and improvement of the quality of education must make the government's program improve the quality of education equally. The ongoing covid-19 pandemic demonstrates the inequality of education in Indonesia

Quality of human resources

The quality of Indonesian human resources has always been an exciting topic to discuss. Although this term seems a bit classic, talking about the quality of human resources will always be the concern of every country's leader. The quality of a nation's human resources is one of the keys to becoming a developed country. The Ministry of Education and Culture promotes character education in educational institutions that aim to create Pancasila students. Efforts to improve the quality of Indonesia's human resources to achieve the targets of the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2020-2024.

There are six main characteristics in Pancasila students, namely (1) Faith, Fear of God Almighty and noble character, (2) global diversity, (3) cooperation, (4) Independent, (5) critical reasoning, (6) creative. Then the Ministry of Education and Culture describes the profile of Pancasila students as follows:[25].

Fig 3. Pancasila Student profile

Community demands

Along with the increasingly rapid flow of globalization and increasingly high competition, people's demands for quality education are increasingly vital as a form of better education reform. As time goes by, society's demands for quality education are getting higher and higher. For this reason, through education, the Indonesian nation must immediately improve its human resources, namely Indonesian quality, personality, democracy, and open people [26].

Social transformation

The pandemic has changed the way people live. Society seems to be "forced" to change and instantly follow the flow of social change [27]. In addition to the pandemic, technological advances also add to social change. How not? Almost all of our activities today use technology. Social changes during the COVID-19 pandemic have indirectly caused the loss of face-to-face interaction or communication in many educational and social processes, and interactions have changed from face-to-face to face-to-face (online). Therefore, the government needs to respond to the changes to realize better and quality education.

2.3 Educational policies during the pandemic as education reform

The Ministry of Education and Culture, Research, and Technology have issued various policies during the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods related to the development of education in Indonesia. Of course, the policy is seen as a reform of education in Indonesia. The following are some policies in the field of education, among others:

Merdeka belajar

About policy Merdeka Belajar, there are four central policies: USBN, where USBN will be replaced with a school-only exam, which can be done by assessing written tests or portfolios and assignments. Second, the implementation of the National Examination is abolished and replaced with a national assessment which includes a minimum competency assessment, a character survey, and a study environment survey. Third, regarding the preparation of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), the RPP is made only to fulfill three components, namely learning objectives, learning activities, and other assessments, as a compliment so that the RPP can be as effective as possible. The four zoning systems are used in student admissions with the proportion of zoning 50%, affirmation 15%, transfer 5%, and achievement 30%, but the region can determine the final proportion in determining the zoning area [28].

Sekolah penggerak

Sekolah penggerak defines a school that focuses on holistically developing student learning outcomes by realizing a Pancasila student profile that includes cognitive (literacy and numeracy) and non-cognitive (character) competencies starting with superior human resources principals and teachers [29].

Kampus Merdeka

Kampus Merdeka is a series of independent learning policies at the university level. Kampus Merdeka provides opportunities for students and students to seek experience and hone their skills in the world of work directly [30]. Kampus Merdeka programs include autonomy for public and private universities, automatic re-accreditation programs, freedom for state universities and work units to become legal entities, and the right to study for three semesters outside the study program.

Assessment Nasional

The Merdeka Belajar policy program is related to the national assessment of primary and secondary education, consisting of a minimum competency assessment, a character survey, and a learning environment survey. The National Assessment is an effort by the government to take a comprehensive picture of the implementation of education in Indonesia [31].

KIP Kuliah

The following policies in education issued by the government are KIP lectures. KIP lectures are given to people who cannot afford to get access to higher education services [32].

3   Conclusion

Policies made by the government in education aim to improve the quality of education itself to lead to a better direction. Because quality education is expected to improve the quality of human resources and society. It is also hoped that this nation and country will progress better. However, the many challenges that policymakers must face are challenges that they must go through in realizing quality education. The strategic issues of education today include the quality of education, equitable access, learning during a pandemic, community demands, global competition, social transformation, and others. Educational strategic issues are issuing that policymaker must resolve. The emergence of the current independent learning policy is one of

the policies expected to bring about changes in the implementation of education in this country for the better.

The policy, starting from minimum competency assessment, simplification of lesson plans (RPP), independent campuses, and driving schools, is expected to impact education in this republic positively. Thus, Indonesia's hope for gold in the coming year can be realized. In the end, the issue of education is limited to educators and students about digitalization and covers various aspects from Sabang to Merauke. This condition then becomes our shared responsibility in maintaining the quality of education in creating Indonesian people who have faith, character, noble character, and democracy as mandated by law.

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