Non Formal Vocational School during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The existence of the covid-19 pandemic changed the learning system in schools. Teaching and learning activities in schools that were carried out directly or face to face turned into online, but Does University (DU), a non-formal vocational school that has an independent learning concept, continues to carry out its activities as usual. This study aimed to describe how DU can continue to carry out the teaching and learning process as usual during the pandemic. This research was conducted at the DU, which was founded by famous musicians from Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Data collection was done by observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies to obtain accurate data about how the school can still conduct learning activities directly or face-to-face during the pandemic. The results showed that 1) DU is a boarding school where the students have been quarantined before the pandemic; therefore, the school does not make policies to study at home; 2) The school is located on land that is relatively separated from residential areas, so social distancing has been carried out before the pandemic; 3) The application of independent learning made students accustomed to learning independently since before the pandemic; 4) There is a facilitator who can help students if they have difficulty finding learning resources.

Keywords: Non-formal education, vocational school, covid-19 pandemic.

1 Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019, or often abbreviated as COVID-19, was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. This outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. The outbreak has been categorized as an international disaster that has been affecting people's lives in the world. The community cannot carry out activities as usual due to government restrictions in all countries. The government's physical distancing policy to prevent transmission of the covid19 virus[1], [2]. The restrictions include eliminating teaching and learning activities in universities and schools, both non-formal and formal.

Dealing with a pandemic is not an easy thing. Through the Minister of Education and Culture, the Indonesian government itself has been supporting each region to issue policies related to temporarily dismissing teaching and learning activities to stem the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Conventional teaching and learning activities turn into online classes by utilizing available platforms. In Indonesia, full teaching and learning activities have been carried out online throughout this time when the outbreak of COVID-19 struck. This policy was taken to reduce the spread of the virus in the community.

As long as the learning at home policy applies, students are expected to be independent in learning and have a great sense of responsibility because there is no strict teacher supervision as in conventional teaching and learning activities. According to Ahmadi and Uhbiyati [1], independent learning is learning not to depend on others; this means students are required to be able to take the initiative and be active in learning. Brookfield says that independent learning is self-awareness, driven by oneself to achieve what it aims for [2]. For normally educated students with structured concepts, such as in formal schools, discipline is not something new. But how do students in non-formal schools deal with this extraordinary condition? Are they able to undergo online learning activities properly? And do they have good discipline in completing tasks given by the school? According to Sukarno [3], the characteristics of independent learning are as follows: 1) Students are able to plan and choose their own learning activities; 2) students take the initiative and encourage themselves to learn consistently; 3) Students are responsible for the learning; 4) Students have the confidence in learning.

Since the covid-19 pandemic, non-formal education in Yogyakarta has continued to carry out learning activities as usual. According to Nampota, Non-formal education programs must meet certain criteria to be effective [4]. Non-formal education programs must also be in accordance with the needs of students. In line with that, Waniha in Blaak [5] argues that non- formal education answers the needs of students and has a system that is connected to the real- life and the work field. Conen and Rutten in Blaak [5] also added that guidance and counseling are very important in supporting education, mental, physical, and career.

Does University (DU) as a talent school is a non-formal work education program founded by a musician from Yogyakarta and continues to carry out learning activities as usual in the pandemic. It applies the concept of independent learning, where students are allowed to explore the fields of their interest and talent. This school is free of charge, where students only pay for the meal. Although there are no daily teachers like in general schools, DU students are committed to learning and developing their abilities independently. In addition to independent learning, DU provides experts and facilitators twice a week to assist students in their daily learning.

Considering that 100% of DU graduates with the concept of independent learning are absorbed by domestic and foreign industries and can work independently, and still carry out learning activities as usual during the co-19 pandemic, it would be very useful if this could be possible be explored further. How non-formal education programs whose graduates have the competencies needed by today's industry can carry out their activities as usual during a pandemic.

2 Method

This research used a qualitative approach with explorative descriptive type. The research was conducted at DU, a free informal talent school founded by a musician from Yogyakarta. Observations were carried out directly before the pandemic and interviews were conducted online with the school's founder and facilitator, whose job was to accompany the students on a daily basis. From observations, researchers obtained data on students who had completed their education and got jobs. Photo documentation, literature studies, and videos were also conducted to support the research.

3 Results and discussion

According to Sen, education is a form of freedom, and the loss of educational opportunities means the loss of freedom. Sen also believes that education will stimulate a country's economic growth [6]. The purpose of education is to free people from restraints, limitations, ignorance, and dependence. Education should be able to increase the physical and mental freedom of humans so they can control themselves and their own lives [7].

Non-formal education has long existed. Besides Nyerere, Freire also believes that students should not be seen as a box that must always be filled as happened in conventional education systems. Pedagogy itself is defined as education that formulates real-life situations tested with critical thought and dialogue [8]. All children must be allowed to receive further education, especially for those who have dropped out of school and do not have the required life skills. There must be several choices to continue to pursue their study. Such learning must be relevant to their environment and needs, help shape their future and develop skills for useful work[9]. Blaak, Openjuru, and Zeelen [5] argue that the concept of human capability, self- reliance, and empowerment is an interpretation of the quality of life of each individual. Quality of life is not only able to make a living but also to critically reflect on life situations and make changes both in the social, political, and economic fields.

Non-formal education programs must prioritize flexible schedules, the lowest possible participation costs, and according to the needs of participants [10]. Reinhold also added that educational facilities and facilitators must be close to the community [11]. Non-formal education should be consistent with a variety of programs that build society as a whole so that people can choose programs that can benefit their lives [12]. Tohani argues that non-formal education is always associated with efforts to reduce poverty in rural areas [13], one of them is through life skills education or vocational education. According to the Ministry of National Education [14], the characteristics of life skills learning are 1) the process of identifying learning needs; 2) there is an awareness process to joint learning; 3) the alignment of learning activities to develop themselves; 4) the process of personal, vocational, social, academic, managerial and entrepreneurial mastery; 5) the process of providing experience in doing work properly and producing quality goods; 6) The process of interaction with experts; 7) the occurrence of an interaction evaluation process; 8) the existence of technical assistance to work and form joint ventures. DU already has seven generations with graduates from 5 to 100% absorbed by domestic and foreign industries also able to work independently. The natural uniqueness is also founded in DU.

Table 1. Does university graduates.

Generation	Majors	Total Students (2015 – 2019)	Accepted by Industry & Self-employed (%)
1	▪ 3D Animation	10	100
2	▪ 3D Animation ▪ Programming	40	100
3	▪ Programming	10	100
4	▪ 3D Animation ▪ 3D Modeling ▪ Compositing	51	100
5	▪ Programing	6	100

Table 2. The natural uniqueness of does university.

No	Uniqueness
1	Non-formal and non-commercial talent school that free their students to learn and explore their interests and talents.
2	Do not have structured learning rules, but students are disciplined in managing their learning time.
3	Students are free to design their study schedules and what they want to learn.
4	The materials by experts in their fields are only given twice a week. Furthermore, students explore knowledge independently from various sources.
5	The length of education is 1.5 years with a boarding system
6	There are no permanent teachers. Teachers are only mentors and facilitators in the learning process.
7	100% of graduates are absorbed by the industry and are able to work independently

DU held a selection to screen talented students in the admission of new students. The assessment focused on the talent they have and their interest in developing these talents, psychological assessment, and permission from parents. Students who passed the selection would occupy the dormitory that has been provided because DU is a talent school with a quarantine system, where students must live and study there for 1.5 years.

DU does not have a structured learning schedule like in formal schools. The schedule for studying with experts is a maximum of two times a week agreed upon with other students. Students learn every day independently from sources that they find by themselves and are accompanied by facilitators.

The results of the interview with the founder of DU, two facilitators, and direct observation can be concluded as follows: 1) There are no education and housing costs, students only bear the cost of their respective meals; 2) Schools bring experts in each field a maximum of twice a week; 3) students were accompanied every day by facilitators who live in DU; 4) Students were required to have a special Instagram account to showcase their learning results from time to time. The Instagram account is also a student portfolio that anyone can see. From this account, students can assess themselves, get ratings and input from other students and facilitators; 5) DU uses a quarantine system, where students learn and live in the same place as the facilities provided; 6) For budget reasons, the software used to study at DU is not the same as in industry, but DU uses free software that is almost the same as in industry so that students, when they enter the industry, can adapt quickly; 7) Students use the internet media during independent learning and are accompanied by a facilitator; 8) DU does not have discipline problems in learning, students tend to have good self-reliant, so they do not need a lot of instruction and supervision; 9) DU is dominated by the millennial generation, who are active users of technology; 10) Millennials need to be given trust, supervision and punishment are not relevant to current conditions.

In learning 3D modeling, DU uses Open Source-based tools. Open source is a code or application that can be used for free without asking permission from the creator or developer[15]–[17]. DU uses a Linux operating system computer, an open-source in a computer laboratory. Linux can be used without a license, and then users can freely install it on a computer device. DU uses Bender software in 3d modeling training, which can be used for free. Blender is an application used in the entertainment industry, such as MD Entertainment, which is a partner of DU.

Fig. 1. Learning atmosphere in DU.

Fig. 2. Self-directed learning environment in DU.

During the pandemic, the face-to-face teaching and learning system was eliminated and replaced with an online teaching and learning system to avoid the spread of viruses. This pandemic will be a great difficulty for schools that have never conducted an online teaching and learning system. But according to Simmons [18], although online learning systems are relatively expensive, teachers and students still benefit because they do not need to pay for transportation to go to school.

This pandemic has encouraged educational institutions to use technology to create distance learning content. Media and good distance learning methods can create positive routines for children and adolescents, and this ensures stability to face many changes [19]. This makes many schools have to adapt quickly, despite the fact that there are many obstacles due to distance learning. Technology requirements are unfamiliar for schools with structured learning schedules, face-to-face methods, and many disciplinary rules. In contrast to DU, there was no change in the learning system at DU during the co-19 pandemic. The quarantine system is why the learning system has nothing to change. DU implements synchronous learning accompanied by facilitators as they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. This learning model has been proven to effectively produce graduates who are 100% accepted by the industry. The DU environment, which is located far from the residential areas and quarantine system in learning, makes DU relatively safe from the threat of viruses. Students also do not experience shock in learning because they learn as before the pandemic. DU students have a huge interest in technology and are supported by technology facilities, creating the right combination to stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning.

4 Conclusion

From observations and various data obtained, it is known that non-formal work education programs, even during the pandemic, can participate in educating qualified generations needed by industry and able to work independently. DU has proven that 1) an independent learning system having not much supervision and regulation is very suitable for the millennial generation who are active users of technology, they are able to learn independently and improve their abilities; 2) The quarantine system implemented in DU makes DU relatively safe from the threat of viruses and DU does not need to enforce learning regulations at home as in other schools; 3) students need to be given the confidence to set their own learning schedule because supervision and punishment are no longer relevant to current conditions; 4) Students only need a facilitator in learning, because in this era knowledge can be accessed by anyone; 5) learning directly from the experts becomes very urgent for work education programs such as DU as a talent school whose graduates are 100% accepted to work in domestic and foreign industries and able to work independently. Covid-19 pandemic has shown the public that non-formal work education such as DU can produce reliable graduates and, with the concepts of independent and quarantine, learning can continue to carry out teaching and learning as usual. The concept of learning, which

very flexible, independent and free, can also be used as an alternative education concept in the future. Those can be suggestions to the communities and government that we have possibilities to educate the generation in every situation and condition. There are possibilities to continue this research in the future so that we can enrich learning innovation in the non-formal vocational school.

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