

Student Well-Being in the Learning Process During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the educational systems of Indonesia and other countries. Distance learning and limited face-to-face learning educational methods must be adapted to be successful. Students experience internal and external effects from this online learning process. The influence of this pandemic learning was experienced at all educational levels. The study aims to examine the experiences of primary school students and determine their degree of wellbeing throughout the learning process during the pandemic. As part of positive psychology, student wellbeing focuses on students' positive thinking skills, which correspond to the PROSPER dimension (Positiveness, Relationships, Outcomes, Strengths, Purpose, Engagement, and Resilience). Five respondents participated in in-depth interviews conducted using a qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design. Respondents for this study were primary school students in grades 2 through 6 who were randomly sampled at each grade level. The findings of the study indicate that students' online learning experiences include 1) parental assistance in the form of mentorship and other learning facilities. 2) There is a wellbeing in online learning, with the most influential dimensions of resilience manifesting as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems.

1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the structure of the education system in Indonesia. This was stated in the Joint Decree (SKB) of 4 Ministers in March 2021 which regulates the implementation of the education system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from Indonesia, distance learning systems are also being implemented in many schools in the United States (Morgan, 2020) and in most other countries (Fullan, 2020; Di Pietro et al., 2020). Even though distance learning was considered effective during the COVID-19 pandemic by using technology as a change in the learning process (Herliandry et al., 2020; Efriana, 2021). However, there needs to be complete readiness and provision in carrying out the distance

learning process. According to Francom et al., (2021) stated that in addition to providing academic continuity applications for the learning process, parental involvement, school guidelines, and internet access create challenges in implementing distance learning.

Apart from these external impacts, the internal impact experienced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic was the mental health crisis (Schwartz et al., 2021). This is supported by data from research conducted by Tanga et al., (2021) in Shanghai China stating that this pandemic has affected 87% of students in the world in physical, social, and psychological aspects so that it has had an impact on elementary to middle school students, which made students experience psychological pressures such as depression (19.7%), anxiety (24.9%), and

stress (15.2%) during school closures during a pandemic.

Learning loss is very common in education at the elementary school level (Liao et al., 2021). Donnelly & Anthony, (2021) stated that 7 out of 8 students lost learning, while one benefited from school closures, and the other experienced losses and inequality in the learning process. This causes discontinuity in students in the learning process that they feel is different from previous experiences. Loss of learning in the long term may have an impact on student self-efficacy. This is reinforced by several studies which state that elementary school (SD) students have the greatest impact on academic skills, namely math and reading skills (Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Betebenner et al., 2021; Tommaso et al., 2021). Based on this research, it states that learning loss greatly impacts students' cognitive ability with a decrease in academic skills. Therefore, it is necessary to create student wellbeing in schools in the learning process.

Student wellbeing encompasses a wide range of physical, social, emotional and mental health issues which all impact student learning outcomes and school retention. According to Seligman (2018) states that school closures have a negative impact on student wellbeing. This was reinforced according to the World Health Organization (WHO) that the COVID-19 pandemic has become an international concern because it causes stress in the entire population, mental and psychological health disorders, as well as mental and psychosocial well-being disorders due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of context in the social environment influences the basis of student learning and development (Hayes et al., 2017). In addition, the role of the teacher (Yi et al., 2020), parents (Fu & Zhu, 2020), family (Nayana, 2013), and peers (Khatimah, 2015) as well as the state of the facilities and student learning environment have a large and positive influence on in the learning process during this pandemic.

Preliminary study conducted by researchers on April 26 2021 by conducting interviews with school principals regarding the learning process carried out during the pandemic at the school. Based on the results of the interviews, information was obtained

that the Integrated Islamic Elementary School as a learning environment that has Islamic-based characteristics, during the online learning process uses Google Classroom as the platform used in the Learning Management System (LMS) in pandemic learning. The use of technology as a learning medium used by teachers as a form of service facility in providing maximum learning. However, that alone is not enough to support the maximum learning process. The role of parents is very much needed in implementing online learning. The principal stated that there was a gap in students based on economic background, education, and parents' work. This happened because parents who experienced the economic impact during the pandemic had an impact on the student learning process which was not optimal, as well as parents who had low education needed time to be able to adapt to the technology used in the learning process, and parents who were busy working sometimes only entrusting their children to caregivers to monitor the virtual learning process during a pandemic. So it can be said that the involvement of parents and the surrounding environment has an important role in shaping student wellbeing during a pandemic.

The application of student wellbeing as an educational goal has already been implemented in several developed countries such as Japan, Singapore, Taiwan (Lau & Bradshaw, 2010), and Pakistan (Zulfiqar et al., 2019). Indonesia is one of the countries with the lowest level of student wellbeing (Lau & Bradshaw, 2010), one of which is on education indicators (Cho, 2014). The data is shown by the lack of implementing student wellbeing at the education level.

This is evidenced by a literature survey conducted by Thoybah & Aulia, (2020) showing that there is still limited research that examines student wellbeing, especially at the elementary school (SD) level in Indonesia. In addition, there are some limitations from previous research, including most of the studies examining student wellbeing during the pandemic focused on students aged over 14 who were affected by the pandemic (Cahyono et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), however the impact of the pandemic was felt by all students at every level of education. Therefore, the researcher

focused this research on exploring student wellbeing in the learning process in elementary schools.

In this study, researchers used a qualitative phenomenological research approach, where researchers will focus on exploring what is based on phenomena and student experiences during the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic, both distance learning and face-to-face learning are limited to indicators of student wellbeing, namely in terms of the formation of positive moods and attitudes, positive relationships, resilience, optimality which is the basis of satisfaction in the learning environment (Noble et al., 2008).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory as a research framework that focuses on the development and learning environment of students during the learning process. Because the influence of the environment in the development of each individual is the result of interaction. Therefore, mental and psychological health is the basis for creating student wellbeing so that student resilience during this pandemic needs to be explored more deeply, especially in the learning process.

2 METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design. It aims to explore students' experiences in the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic on student wellbeing and develop it in the form of a description of the essence of that experience. Respondents in the study were students at the elementary school level (SD) consisting of grades II, III, IV, V, and VI who were selected heterogeneously with male and female gender with an age range of 8-12 years.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Learning Experiences During a Pandemic.

The pandemic has made a special impression on students in carrying out learning, especially at the elementary school level. Based on a circular letter

from the Sukabumi Regency Regent Regulation Number 55 of 2020 concerning guidelines for implementing face-to-face learning during the COVID-19 pandemic which was carried out through an online learning process. The process of adapting to new habits (IMR) during this pandemic was carried out so that students continued to carry out the learning process and develop their potential even though learning was carried out from home. The learning process is an activity carried out by students and teachers to achieve a learning goal. Even though this online learning experience is nothing new in the world of education, for the elementary school level this online learning is something new. This is a new challenge and experience for teachers and students in implementing online learning during a pandemic.

Learning experience as part of student learning activities to achieve learning outcomes and goals. According to the British Cohort Study, the best indicator for a child to become a satisfied and happy adult is not his or her academic achievements, but emotional health in childhood (Helliwell et al., 2015). So schools need to encourage teachers to be able to provide opportunities to develop the emotional health of their students, for example allowing students to experience and strengthen positive emotions such as feeling connected, feeling safe, and feeling comfortable. Therefore, students at school can describe satisfaction with the quality of learning, the relevance of learning experiences at school, and the level of student involvement in learning.

Based on students' learning experiences during this pandemic, students must adapt to new habits in the online learning process. This is done because the learning method used by teachers in online learning is different from normal learning. During online learning the dominant teacher uses the Zoom learning method, Google Classroom, learning videos, WhatsApp, and games that support the achievement of learning objectives through the formation of fun learning experiences. However, this experience creates positive and negative emotions towards the learning process. According to the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1998, in Hayes et al., 2017) states that the concepts and criteria that distinguish the existence of an environment form negative emotions and positive emotions. So that the student's main environment is the microsystem where student competence and character are formed as in the family, through the upbringing of parents, school, peers, and the surrounding community. These

microsystems form a reciprocal relationship as an ecosystem that can affect student wellbeing in the learning process.

3.2 The Role of the Environment in Learning During a Pandemic

Teaching and education influence each category of well-being and their relationship to learning. Home and community environment as part of the macrosystem that impacts students and schools. Therefore, the level of education in elementary schools is based on students. Students learn in the context of space, place, and people with whom they are attached and have a major influence on student development.

Several supporting factors, such as teachers, parents, and peers, have scenarios and their respective roles as part of the student experience in the learning process. They collaborate beautifully to create learning and shape student well-being.

Based on the findings it was explained that in the online learning process it is hoped that students regarding the learning system can be carried out as before, namely by studying with friends and teachers at school. The pandemic situation is able to make students survive to stay involved in the learning process properly with all perceived obstacles such as negative emotions and the absence of peers. This shows the role of the microsystem and the expectations of its supporters in the future regarding the learning process. Based on the perspective of ecological theory, the process of interaction between student characteristics and their experiences is an internalization of personal characteristics that shape experience (Hayes et al., 2017).

The role of parents, teachers and peers as social support for students in carrying out the online learning process. It can be seen that the environment around students as a microsystem that is involved during the student learning process has a positive and negative impact on the learning process. So the role of the learning environment as part of the microsystem, namely the immediate environment of students, has had a lot of impact on the learning process during a pandemic. The role of parents who help assist, facilitate and motivate students in the learning process so as to help foster a positive attitude. In addition, the teacher's role is very important in planning the learning process. Therefore, teachers must be creative and innovative in the learning process during this pandemic so that students are able to understand the learning process

well and can create interactive learning between teachers and students in accordance with the times. The role of peers in the learning process provides encouragement in the form of motivation for students to increase enthusiasm for learning. Based on the perspective of ecological theory, the relationship between students' attachment to parenting as the basis for this relationship shapes the future and psychological well-being of students. As the teacher's role, effective learning comes from materials and environments that are simple but can be used to broaden students' imaginations and can be adapted to the learning needs and level of understanding of students (French, 2007, in Hayes et al., 2017).

3.3 Student Involvement in the Online Learning Process

Obedient behavior and responsibility towards assignments are part of a disciplined attitude to maintain strength in the learning process. Discipline is a part of the mesosystem that is grown by schools and homes which has an impact on the student learning process. The relationship between the two microsystems results in an experience in defense of well-being. This can happen because of the habit patterns that shape students in carrying out the learning process during this pandemic or vice versa. According to ecological theory, discipline and support for emotional expression are not seen as contradictory to one another, but rather as equally important aspects of parenting good children (Hayes et al., 2017). Therefore, the family environment as a microsystem or part of the first stage in ecological theory, where students spend a lot of time during the online learning process at home. The comfort that students feel during online learning is formed from the family at home through the role of parents in the form of guidance and supportive learning facilities. This becomes a positive emotional stimulus for students so as to foster the well-being felt by students during online learning and limited face-to-face learning during the online period during the pandemic.

3.4 Student Wellbeing in Learning During a Pandemic

Through this research, it is known that students' experience in the learning process during a pandemic forms resilience. This happens because of the role of parents, the use of various learning

methods by teachers, and relationships with peers that foster hope for normal learning again. So that it results in the emergence of positive emotions in students through discipline in following the learning process during the pandemic. This can be used as a source of student wellbeing in the learning process during the pandemic because it has a positive impact on online learning.

Resilience in question is a process of adaptation to survive with the changes that occur in the learning process. Noble & McGrath, (2016) stated that resilience refers to the importance of students having the skills and support to rise emotionally when things are not going well at school. Students with positive mental well-being tend to have coping skills that allow them to adapt to new environments (Mander et al., 2014), such as transitions in the learning process into distance learning or limited face-to-face learning.

Based on the discussion above, it is explained that resilience that is built in families and very supportive learning facilities can foster motivation to learn during a pandemic, and peer relationships so as to create positive emotions that lead students to shape well-being in the learning process (Suprihatin et al., 2022).

In the developmental psychological theory of Ecological Theory pioneered by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989 in Shelton, 2018) as a concept of reciprocal relationships between individuals who are active and growing and developing are influenced by environmental relations. Therefore the environment and society provide a role in the formation of student resilience in the learning process. Permatasari et al., (2021) stated that individual perceptions of peers, family, and teachers who can provide assistance, support, and attention when students experience difficulties in the academic field can increase academic resilience.

4 CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that the wellbeing of students in the learning process during a pandemic was dominated by the dimensions of resilience. This is because there is support from the role of parents as the closest microsystem to students during the online learning process. This resilience arises from the role of parents who accompany students in online learning to help students to facilitate students

with gadgets, provide internet access to support the learning process and motivate students in learning. So that students are able to take part in virtual zoom activities and collect assignments during the online learning process.

The student learning process during a pandemic can run well because of the resilience of students during learning during a pandemic caused by microsystems, namely the role of parents, teachers and peers. In other words, the happiness and satisfaction that students get during pandemic learning is obtained through the student's closest microsystem during online learning which shapes student wellbeing.

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