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STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING LEARNING ACTIVITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC AND NEW NORMAL

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the government's and parents' strategies for optimizing learning activities during the pandemic and the new normal in Langsa City, Indonesia, after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country. Using a structural-functionalist methodology It was assumed that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered change in society as a whole — change in one part would affect other parts — and that in order for education to operate smoothly in society, the government and parents must adapt to the necessary change. To provide empirical data for the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with the head of the educational and cultural office, the head of the religious department, elementary through secondary school teachers, and parents. The government implemented strategies such as school closures and the introduction of online learning, internet quotas for students and teachers, home visits to areas with poor internet signals, and time shifting classes to prevent overcrowding. The government instituted competitions for best school, best teacher, best staff, and best student awards during the new normal in an effort to rekindle students' interest in learning and teachers' participation in class. Nonetheless, the pandemic had a positive effect on students' attitudes toward online learning and parents' attitudes toward their children's education. The study concluded that, in the face of a pandemic, government, teacher, and parent cooperation, as well as the ability to adapt to change, were the keys to the success of children's education under any circumstance.

Keywords: Education, Covid 19, Optimization, Learning, and Student.

31 Introduction

The covid 19 outbreak had affected all aspect of society life around the world, educational life with no exception (Hennilawati, 2020). Almost overnight, schools across the globe were closed as countries went into lockdown due to the pandemic (Fray et. al., 2022). At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, more than 190 countries closed the schools, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1.6 billion children and youth have been affected (UNESCO, 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted education systems around the world, hitting the most vulnerable learners. The hardest, it has widened inequality and exacerbated the existing education crisis. The United Nations International Children`s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2021) warns that Covid-19 may have long-term mental health effects on children and young people.

Prolonged school closures not only lead to learning losses in the short term but also reduce economic opportunities for children and young people's human capital in the long term. Furthermore, it disproportionately harms vulnerable and disadvantaged students who depend on schools for social services (Orville, 2020). The learning process must adapt to new situations in which teaching and learning methods have changed or changed significantly during school closures. As a result of these circumstances, a shift from face-to-face education to so-called emergency distance learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Modes included "technology-free" options (such as the distribution of printed materials) and the use of various types of established digital technologies (Aurini and Davies, 2021).

Following the pandemic lockdown, the teacher-student relationship that was becoming the cornerstone of student-teacher growth and well-being had been severely disrupted (Collie et al., 2015), and normal student-teacher interactions are disrupted and became impossible. These had serious consequences and certainly caused significant learning loss, especially during the emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Engzell et al., 2020). In addition to impacting student health (Patrick et al., 2020), teachers experience high levels of mental fatigue, stress, and ambiguity in the workplace (chan et al., 2021). The pandemic has indeed disrupted teaching and learning processes across the globe and Indonesia with no exception (Hennilawati et al., 2020).

On March 2nd 2020, President Joko Widodo announced the first case of COVID-19 in Indonesia. It automatically makes Indonesia to be one of the affected countries by the Corona virus in the region following the Malaysia and Thailand. The government immediately took several precaution steps to stop the widespread of pandemic in the country. The country introduced several policies such as social distance regulation that limit people social gathering in order to break the chain of transmission of Covid-19. As the emergency policies took effect, the Minister of Education and Culture circultaed the Letter Number 3 of 2020 concerning Prevention of Covid-19 in Education Units, and Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020, that instructed that the teaching and learning activities have to be carried out online in order to prevent the spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). In overingth, all schools in Indonesia were closed. The Aceh Education Council has fully supported the policy for the sake of protecting the health and safety of students, it order all schools and *madrasah* (Islamic school) follow the guidelines provided by the government through a Joint Decree of four ministers which regulates the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic, learning on line from Home (Abidah et al., 2020).

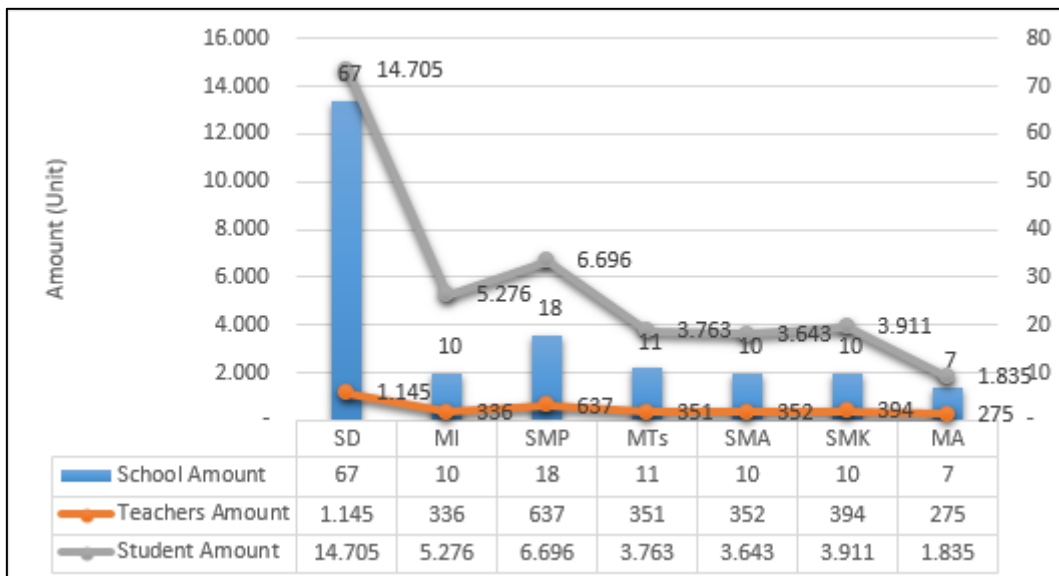
The closing of school and *madrasah*, and ERT in the form of online learning from home received indifferent responses in the society. Obviously, the pandemic has change the society way of conducting their affairs, including the children educational sphere. It posed challenge not only to the teachers but also parent and children at home. They have to learn to adapt to a necessary change that caused by the pandemic so that society could function naturally. As the basic premise of structural-functionalist theory is that society is a social system made up of interconnected and balanced parts or elements. Changes that occur in one part lead to changes in other parts (Ritzer, 2004). In the time of Covid 19, social institutions have undergone various changes in society, including educational institutions as a result of Covid 19. Society is a system of interconnected parts. Of course, if there is a problem in one part, it affects the other parts as well.

A condition as such, was axactly what people experience in Langsa City, the eastern gate of Aceh province in Indonesia. It is a city which rapridly developed in terms

of its tourism industry: the mangrove and the city parks. It makes langsa to be the centre place for natural touris attraction. Its open and heterogeneous population and the front entry gate to Aceh, makes it interesting to be studied especially related to the question how the government in Langsa maintain the function of educational system during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Langsa City has 133 schools that are registered under respectively the Department of Education and Culture and the Department of Religious Affairs, with a total 3,490 teachers and 38,829 students. The schools are divided into 3 levels. Elementary Schools (*Sekolah Dasar [SD]* & *Madarasah Ibtidaiyyah [MI]*), Junior High Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama [SMP]* & *Madarasah Tsanawiyah [MTS]*), Senior High Schools, Senior Vocational High School (*Sekolah Memenegah Atas [SMA]*, *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan [SMK]* & *Madarasah Aliyah [MA]*). Detailed are described in the following figure.

Figure 1: Number of Schools, Teachers and Students According to the Types of School



Source: Langsa Municipality in Figures, 2022

Departing from this fact about Langsa and its population, it is important to conduct a serious research on the experience of the Langsa’s government and society in coping with the changes in educational system following the out break of Covid 19 virus in the region. There are two important research questions to be addressed by this research, firstly, what are strategies that the government develop and implement to optimize the learning activities during the pandemic?, and finally, what are the parent’s roles in optimizing learning activities through online learning at home?. The finding of this research would be a noble contribution to the developement of literature on educational strategies during the pandemic from the remote area. The experience of the parent in Langsa city and the role that they play in enhacing their children learning activities at home could be a lesson for parent in other part of the world. To put this research with in academic perspective, a review of literatures would be presented in the next part of this article.

Literature Review

Since its outbreak, research on Covid-19 has become abundance, many experts across disciplines have tried to explain the pandemic and changes it caused in the society life; and this study had benefited much from those literatures interms of the nature of the pandemic, the impact of it on the society life and responses of government in the form of policies to cope with the pandemic around the globe. In this section, the study highlights several works on Covid 19 from a cross the world. The article that is written by Coccia (2021), entitled Preparedness of countries to face Covid-19 pandemic crisis: Strategic positioning and factors supporting effective strategies of prevention of pandemic threats is an interesting piece of work that analyzes the preparedness of countries to face Covid 19 pandemic crisis. This study concluded that all countries are vulnerable and no country is prepared to deal with large-scale outbreaks or pandemics. The results show that the countries most effective at containing the Covid-19 pandemic have the smallest populations. Better public services can be achieved by setting a larger budget for the health sector. This indicator helps policymakers develop effective strategies to improve preparedness and prevention in these countries. We are facing the threat of future pandemics.

Coccia (2021) further explains on the pandemic prevention in his other article, Pandemic Prevention: Lessons from Covid-19, wehe he recommended that the crisis management strategies to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic and similar epidemics should be supranational, national and national in order to improve timely policy responses to health security to enable societies. It is based on effective multi-level governance that combines regional and city strategies. Pandemic threat strategies must increasingly be based on efficiency, flexibility, responsiveness and resilience to mitigate the negative impacts of infectious diseases that are prevalent in society.

Another interesting survey work by Coccia (2022) entitled Improving preparedness for next pandemics: Max level of Covid-19 vaccinations without social impositions to design effective health policy and avoid flawed democracies is worth cited. Based on data from 150 countries surveyed, we found that vaccination increased per capita income by up to 70% in the general population. Vaccination is optional. However, taking measures to reach 90% will reduce the quality of democracy and create socio-economic problems greater than the crisis (pandemic). This information can provide new insights into how vaccination campaigns and public health responses can be implemented to manage the impact of future pandemics. These three articles provide strategies for the government of any countries on how to effectively cope with the Covid19 pandemic or any pandemic similar to it that would be faced in the future. However, he did not analyze the impact of pandemic on children education specifically. The pandemic impact on eduction is obvious and requires prompt action from the government to find better solution and strategies to ensure the children education disrupted. About 1.6 billion children and youth have been affected by the pandemic according to UNESCO's report in 2022.

To put the issue in perspective, the study of Jayasekaran et al (2021) on Relationship of Students' Engagement with Learning Management System and their Performance- an Undergraduate Programming Course Perspective, is worth to be reviewed. The findings conclude that emergency distance learning, online learning, and learning in hybrid and flexible contexts using technology (HyFlex) will be the trends for

2020-2021. Some overtime hours have been improved to support and improve student learning. The move to online modalities (emergency or otherwise) was new, but the infrastructure provided greater flexibility and better tools to support students through breakout rooms, annotations, and more personalized online help provided. This study provides valuable insight comparing these modalities and provides evidence for the effectiveness of hybrid classrooms.

Similar view also presented by Potyrała et al (2021) in their article entitled "Head teachers' opinions on the future of school education conditioned by emergency remote teaching." Research results have shown that communication is the most important factor for school functioning for efficient emergency distance learning. This item includes: the functioning of schools in mutual internal and external cooperation networks, the spread of IT communication among school administrators, and the expansion of communication areas, including the use of IT in relation to school management and the community environment. Overall, it impacted the enhancement of network communication IT defined as the second component of sustainable functioning of schools during Covid lockdowns.

Pance et al (2022) "Educational learning as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. What role should the school play in the new world stage?" This study concludes the need to guarantee the right to education for all students regardless of ability, needs, or socioeconomic status. Education policy and practice are implemented to reduce inequalities and learning gaps and promote equal opportunity. End the stiffness of the system and of the curriculum that emphasizes memorization and emphasizes exams. Rethinking and rethinking how we teach and learn takes into account neuro pedagogy and positive teaching suggestions. And finally, the need to develop resilient tutors who can help with this. In addition to strengthening this capacity within the education community itself, we will overcome the impact of Covid-19.

Alshahrias (2022) "Research on psychological and educational learning strategies and models during the Covid-19 pandemic." The results of this study conclude that the psychological impact and potential stress on students should be closely monitored and assessed in order to plan effective strategies while adopting these educational approaches. Benati and Coccia, (2022) "Good governance to support timely Covid-19 vaccinations to face next pandemic crises." Findings suggest that high levels of governance can support better health system functioning in adopting immunizations to address the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The study supports the government's long-term policy of improving the country's good governance and health care system to strengthen preparedness for the threat of the next pandemic and, in general, to strengthen future crisis management in society.

Pance et al (2022) "Educational Learning as a Consequence of the COVID-19 Pandemic. What Role Should the School Play in the New World Stage." The findings of this study are that the pandemic situation and school closures are having a significant impact on teachers and students. The bottom line is that every student must have the right to an effective education. Educational policies and practices need to be implemented to reduce inequalities and learning gaps and promote equal opportunity. We also need to develop resilient tutors to help overcome the impact of Covid-19 and the capacity to strengthen the educational community itself.

Similar concern is also shown by local researcher. Mariyudi (2021; 2022), in his article entitled "ICT adaptation in ERL-based learning during the Covid-19 pandemic," argued that the Covid-19 pandemic has no significant impediments on teaching and

learning processes, for Learning Based ERLs has substituted the face-face class learning. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected family economies, that simultaneously affecting children's education.

Haykal, et al., (2022), in their analysis on Covid-19 Impact on Micro and Small-Medium Enterprises Operating and Analysis of Government Stimulus Packages, also concluded that Covid-19 has a significant impact on Aceh's small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, especially the tourism and event management industries. The lock down policy makes their business at halt, and their worker are left unpaid; and that ultimately affect their children education. The IMF and World Bank claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a global recession. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected more than 8.9 billion people in Asia, America, Europe, Australia, Africa and Antarctica. Some of them are forced to keep safe distances, stay at home, work at home, study at home, and pray at home for months (Dedi, et al., 2020).

In Indonesia in general, schools plays central role in providing general and specific education for the children and youth from primary to tertiary levels (Sunarto, 2004). The obvious functions of educational institutions include preparing members of society for a livelihood, developing talents for personal satisfaction and the benefit of society, preserving culture, and participating in democracy (read also Kung, 2011). The closing of school during the lockdown enforcement, leave teachers and student with no choice other than to conduct teaching from from and so does student. The whole teaching process has been transformed from class face to face to remote teaching process that solely depend on information technology (IT). Like it or not, online learning is the alternative for education to function during the pandemic.

Andri (2020) conducted a survey titled "Barriers, Solutions, Expectations", Online learning by an elementary school teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic concluded that 100% of her teachers were doing online learning. More than 9 media used by primary school teachers in Bantul district during the pandemic i.e. WhatsApps, WhatsApp Web, Google Classroom, Google Group, TeamLink, Microsoft Teams, Kaizala Microsoft, Zoom Meeting & Webinar, Youtube, Google Hangouts etc. provided. Additionally, a study related to this study was conducted by Briliannur et al. The results of this study leave open the following: Inefficiencies in online learning are due to lack of facilities and infrastructure, and poor preparation of technical classes.

The same study was also conducted by Murfi (2020) entitled School Leadership in Covid-19 Crisis in Indonesia. Results indicated that the 'pre-crisis' phase was implemented through the implementation of the Covid-19 prevention skills policy. During the crisis, it will be implemented with (a) health talks, (b) learning from home policies, and (c) video and podcast challenges. In the post-crisis phase, school leaders develop collaborative leadership approaches to assess and control the various impacts of crises to prevent future crises.

Muspida et al, (2021) examined the effectiveness of learning according to parents in educational units during the Covid-19 pandemic in Darul Imarah and Darusalam Aceh Besar Districts. The study found that parent claim that children did not understand the teaching method used by teachers during the Covid 19 period. Parents hoped that there would be easy learning materials for children and assistance with facilities for parents in their children's learning during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as health protocols implemented in every school.

Crisis management is necessary to enable schools to enhance crisis preparedness and mitigate its impact so that learning processes and administrative activities remain

productive. Amin, (2020) examines student propensity to use applications during the online learning phase. Results showed that each application used during the pandemic had strengths and weaknesses. Mahyiddin and M. Amin (2022) conclude that student can integrate technology into education. Amin and Zulfitri (2022) also concluded that although the shift from traditional to online learning was abrupt, student participation in online learning was gradually improving.

Accordingly, an issue of inequality in education is unavoidable, not all children could afford to buy android or lap-top, devices for online learning process. As argued by early research that pandemic has caused economic hardship within the society (see Maryudi 2021, 2022 and Haikal et.al, 2022). As the learning activities has been shifted to home online schooling, parent has to take the responsibility to provide facilities for their children education. Not only providing facilities, but they have also provide their time to control and to maximize the learning process of their children at home. It is this experience of the role that parent play that become the focus of this study, couple with the strategies of local Educational and Cultural office and Religion Department in providing education service for the children at home during the pandemic and the new normal period.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses structural-functionalist theory developed by Talcott Parsons as the grand theory. The development of functionalism is based on the developmental model of organizational systems contained in biology, and the basic premise of this theory is that all elements must function in order for a society to properly perform its functions. Communities are viewed as functionally balanced integrated systems because they are united by consensus rather than by members of particular social values who have the ability to overcome differences. A major problem of functionalism is how to motivate and position individuals (Ritzer, 2004).

Parsons spent much of his time analyzing the components of an actor's subjective process. In the structural-functionalist theory developed by Talcott Parsons, there is the concept of AGIL. His system works only if the requirements are met. "Damsar, 2011" He has four functional requirements that the system should meet.

Adaptive (A), i.e. the system should adapt to the environment to which it is exposed. The environment can be both social and non-physical/physical. Customization allows the system to take sources what it needs from its environment and distribute those sources throughout the system. Goal achievement (G), that is, the functional prerequisites that determine the purpose and priority of existing goals. Everyone is always guided by the achievement of their goals. The main focus is not on the individual goals, but on the common goals of the members of the social system. There must be at least some degree of solidarity between individuals. The issue of integration demonstrates the need to ensure that sufficient emotional bonds are formed and maintained to create solidarity and a willingness to work together.

Latent Pattern Maintenance (L) is a functional requirement necessary for the system to ensure continuity of actions within the system according to some rules and norms. This functional requirement is necessary because there are hidden patterns of maintenance that can integrate or sustain social systems when they face potential collapse or fragmentation. School plays a role in implementing the teaching and learning process. Under various circumstances, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the teaching and

learning process must continue. If the Covid-19 pandemic hits, it will no doubt affect the functioning of the education system. How individuals motivate students and assign them correct positions is the main problem of functionalism. Based on this, this research was analyzed using the theory of structural functionalism.

There are two important concepts need to be explained: role and learning. A role is a dynamic aspect of a person's position that carries out a set of rights and duties that person has (Soekanto, 2013). In a social context, a role is defined as the function that a person performs while occupying a position in the social structure. There are several roles that governments or teachers must play in the learning process (Flewelling dan Higginson, 2003). First, to motivate students by providing well-designed learning tasks to improve their intellectual, emotional, mental, and social development. Second, interact with students to encourage, inspire, challenge, discuss, share, explain, validate, reflect, evaluate, and celebrate their development, growth, and success. Third, it shows the benefits that can be gained from studying the subject. Fourth, someone plays an informational role. Roles are the qualities a person has to fulfill their rights and duties in the social life of a community. In the process of educating children, besides teachers, parents play important role also. The parent's role in parenting includes the acquisition of skills and basic skills, de-motivation of all, and shaping discipline (Lilawati, 2020).

Learning, furthermore, is an attempt to modify behavior through a range of mind-body activities, leading to individual development with respect to elements in the creative, gustatory, khalsa, cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains (Suryabrata, 1997). Learn refers to changes in an individual's practice to a particular situation caused by repeated experiences (Purwanto, 2001). Teaching is defined as the transmission of culture in the form of experience and skills to students, of the effort to transmit the culture of a community to the next generation (Suryasubrata, 1997). Thus, teaching and learning is a process that involves a series of interrelated actions taken by teachers and students in educational settings to achieve specific goals. Interaction between teachers and students is a major requirement of the teaching and learning process, because learning has broader implications in the form of pedagogical interactions, not just teacher-student relationships (Darsono, 2000). Due to that, the teacher's role is to guide students and provide learning opportunities to help them achieve their goals. Teachers have a responsibility to see everything that happens in the classroom to support the developmental process of their students (Djamarah, 2002; Suryosabrata, 1997).

However, the lockdown and closing of school make teachers-students interaction in the class become impossible. Government has to design a better strategies that could facilitate the implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching by teachers. At the same time encourage parents to participate in the ERT during the pandemic. In order for the educational system to function effectively and the learning out-come of teaching process could be achieved, this study proposes that the government, teachers, students and parents have to change their behavior and adapt necessary change in teaching- learning process that has been cuased by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Langsa City, Aceh Province, Indonesia. This study uses qualitative methods (Nauman, 2007). Data collected in this study are derived from primary and secondary data (Moleong, 2002, Sugiono, 2013). Primary data obtained by non-participant observation and in-depth interviews. Even though this study uses non-

participant observation, researchers remain at the research location until the necessary data is collected completely.

The sample in this study was purposively determined with certain considerations. In-depth interviews were conducted with a number of informants, namely the Head of Aceh Education Board, Head of the Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Langsa City in charge of Religious schools, and Head of the Langsa City Education Office in charge of Junior High Schools (SLTP) and Elementary Schools (SD), Elementary School Teachers, Junior High School Teachers and Teachers Senior High School and parents of students at each level. Secondary data, on the other hand, is data derived from recorded data relevant to this study.

The Data was analyzed by an interactive model that consists of three main components (Milles and Huberman, 2004). Firstly, data reduction; it is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data into themes and memos. Secondly, data display; and at this point the themes are organized to form a structured of information upon which the conclusion could be drawn. Finally, drawing conclusion and verification; that is a verification of the finding and the conclusion has validly answer the research questions.

Findings and Discussions

Strategy essentially is a process of planning and managing to achieve goals (Affendy, 1999). It is the way to deploy available means, forces and energies in response to the demands of environmental change (Dwiyanto, 2009), or it could be a decision that can establish a unified relationship between decisions made by individuals or organizations, and as a means of coordination and communication to provide a common direction for a business or organization (Grant, 2019). Finally, Supriyanto (2005), quoting Chandler, defines that strategy is the fundamental determination of long-term goals and community empowerment goals, as well as the use of behavioral modalities and the allocation of resources needed to achieve goals (see also Partanto and Barry, 2004; Allison and Kaye, 2004; and Jatmiko, 2003).

Based on the above discussion, strategy determines the attainment of goals, it is evolving and adapting to changes that occurred in the environment. Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted children education in the country; and therefore a better and well planed strategies is need to ensure the adaption to new method of learning activities during the pandemic and new normal, so that children education in Langsa City could be carried on.

It is in line with the functionalist theory, education by connecting schools to the needs of society. For a society to function, it needs a way to meet all its needs, and education plays a role. According to functional theory, all parts of society are interconnected and these aspects work together as a holistic system to sustain society. Social institutions determine the smoothness of travel and social harmony. Knowing how far the social system's path leads to harmony is a condition for maintaining community ties. In order to act according to functionalist thinking in observing social phenomena, we must first identify social institutions, then recognize the role they play, and learn how social systems function and function. We must be aware of the rules that govern their progress.

It is really a new experience for the local government in Langsa in general and specifically to the Educational Bureaus, be it under the Ministry of Education and Culture or Ministry of Religion of Indonesia. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the functioning of the education system. The teaching and learning process has been disrupted by prolonged school closures. In any case, the teaching and learning process must be carried out and strategies must be considered. Our learning policy during the pandemic is based on online learning, which requires the use of the internet. Governments are providing internet quotas to students and teachers to support online learning. Meanwhile, the government's strategy to motivate students to learn during the new normal period is to reward students, teachers, teaching staff and schools for excellence (the so-called Madrasa Award Programme).

Hasanuddin, the Head of the Ministry of Religious Department of Republic of Indonesia of the Langsa City, described his experience that:

The impact of Covid 19 on the educational is real, teachers, students and parents feel the effects. When the lockdown policy was enforced and all school has to be closed, we received complain from the school, students and parent, because none of the stakeholders in city were trained for oline learning or the so called remote teaching process. Teachers were complaining for having no idea how to conduct teaching online. Parent complained of the expenses for the internet and devices and being unable to allocate time to monitor their children during the teaching process. However, being responsible for student education, teachers and parent agreed to conduct class with all limitation, using whatsapp application as the only alternative they have. Thence, the government began to subsidize internet quotas for students and teachers, it had eased and relieved the expense burden of the teachers and parent. Since, it was new to them, students in particular, did not follow it seriously; and many of them unable to participate seriously in class. This is due to the lack of teacher's control on students as they did in the class room. What is more, some parent were unable to provide enough parental supervision on the children during the online class. Based on this fact, we can conclude that student were unable to participate in learning effectively. In the new normal period, the government began to open the school, but the class should be conducted in shift to avoid overcrowded class. Accordingly, we conducted an interview with student at school, and it was found that they preferred face-to-face in class learning than the online one. They said that when we go to class, we can directly interact with our teachers and friends, talk, do assignments together, and play together. Today, the teaching and learning process is back to normal (Interview, July 5, 2022).

Based on Hasanuddin explanation, the pandemic also affects the education in Langsa City, Indonesia. The government has provided internet quota to both students and teachers to support online learning process in the country. However, the change of teaching-learning mode from class room direct interaction to remote teaching due to the pandemic has change the mode of teacher student interaction and parent felt over burdence by change. The online learning actitivites is found not effective, and student prefer learning in class room. However, the Hasanuddin also highlighted that, the remote

teaching activities has negative impact on student learning motivation. Pandemic has kill teaching spirit of the teachers and learning spirit of the student. Hasanudin further explained:

When the Covid 19 outbreak subsided and social conditions returned to normal, we found that teachers and students experience degradation of their teaching and learning spirit; and it becomes another problem to be solved by the local government in Langsa City. We took several steps to restore the motivation of our students and teachers. The program consists of awards competition for outstanding students, teachers, teaching staff, cleanest schools, outstanding principals, and outstanding librarians on charity days that is celebrated annually by the Ministry of Region of Indonesia. In addition to that we continue to have a program to reward every good performance teachers and staff to increase their motivation and morale. (Interview, July 5, 2022).

Furthermore, Hamza, Head of Quality Development for Teachers and Educational Staff, Aceh Department of Education Langsa Branch, shared his experience during the lockdown period, he said:

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we closed all schools in Langsa, as it was instructed by The National and Local Covid-19 Task Forces. The teaching learning activities were conducted online. When online learning is implemented, not all teachers are tech-literate and not all schools have facilities to support online learning. The problem arises, for example, not available internet quotas, limited internet access or no signal, to the worst, there teacher who do not know IT. The solution to these, are village visits by teachers to the village and remote area of limited internet accessed, the class is conducted in the *Meunasah* or public multipurpose hall in the village. (Interview, July 5, 2022).

This data explains that as soon as the pandemic hit the city, the Mayor as the chairman of local Covid-handling Task Forces ordered all school to be closed overnight. The online learning activities faced the unavoidable problems, such as cell phones out dated, no internet credit, weak internet signals, and the worse is teacher who do not know how to use IT. To ensure optimize the teaching-learning activities, teachers adapt to change and make sacrifice to conduct village visit and students' homes or gather the students in the village multipurpose halls to learn. Teaching-learning activities were difficult during the pandemic and that affected the motivation of the students, Hamzah then expressed relieved when the Lockdown was terminated and the new normal was enforced, he further explained:

Schools have reopened after the government enforces the New Normal policy and allows teaching-learning activities in the class room, provided health protocols were required. To follow up on this policy, the Ministry of Education has conditionally ordered all schools to reopen. Sanitizers have been provided to all schools, school cafeterias cannot be opened, there are

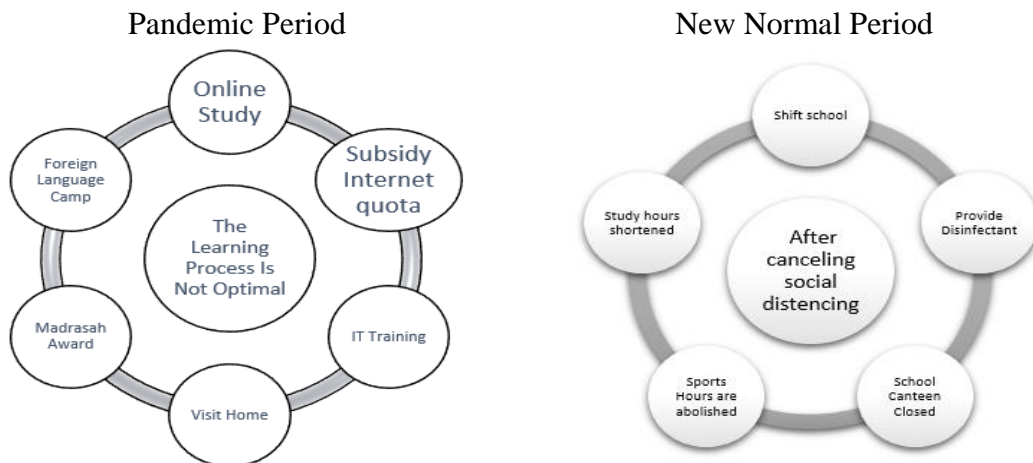
no sports facilities and study hours are shortened as to avoid crowded in the school (Interview July 5, 2022).

Hamzah further explained that government has adopted several strategies to revive the teaching-learning activities while remaining cautious to the virus during the new normal included:

During the new normal, the government's strategy to make learning more efficient is to provide education and training to enhance teachers' information technology (IT) skills. The work hours are back to normal. The problem is with students who to school late and fall asleep in the class, as they are allowed to move freely after long period of social lockdown. (Interview July 5, 2022).

Accordingly, the government, for optimizing learning in the new normal, provides education and training to enhance teachers' skill to use technology (IT), and flexible classroom teaching-learning activities in the school. The following diagram summarized the government's strategies for optimizing learning during the pandemic and New Normal period in Langsa City are:

Figure 2: Government Strategies to Optimize Learning in Langsa City.



Sauce: Field Research, 2022

A system according to Structural Functionalist Parsons theory works only if the requirements are met. The first requirement, adaptation (A), is that the system must adapt to the environment to which it is exposed. During the pandemic, teachers and students have adapted well to the new situations they are facing and previously had to move from face-to-face classes to online to use applications. The success of the adaptation process can be seen in the implementation of education even in the context of the pandemic. The second is goal achievement (G). This is a functional requirement that prioritizes the goals and the size of the goals. All those who act in educational institutions, both during the pandemic and during the new normal, are united in achieving the common goals of the

members of the social system. The common goal to be achieved is the proper implementation of the educational process for the quality of the next generation of nations. To maximize the goal achievement, teachers play crucial role in optimizing teaching-learning activities during the pandemic and the new normal. For instance, Ruhamah, who is ready to share her adaptive experience, as follows:

Since all schools were completely closed at the beginning of the pandemic, the strategy that teachers implemented were providing counseling online counseling for student and parent, on how the online learning to be conducted. Secondly, to keep students engaged in learning process, students are required to do daily assignments that should be submitted via whatsapp group or google classroom for each class everyday. When the new normal is enforced, we discover that the pandemic has affected student motivation, which become our primary concerned. So we have to motivate them and stimulate their passion to learning, in or out class activities (Interview, July 6, 2022).

From the data above, both in the pandemic and the new normal, teachers are always available for students to consult about teaching-learning activities. To increase student motivation to learn has become primary concerned of all teachers in the school. Similar remarks are also conveyed by Mrs. Mukarramah, who is an elementary school teachers in Langsa, she said that:

“I has developed her own strategy to maximize the teaching-learning activities during the pandemic. I have to prepare a PowerPoint presentation with animation a week before class. After that, I present the lesson plan regularly in online lessons, and I find the children are very enthusiastic. However, gradually children are tired of online learning and they want to go to school, where they can play with their teachers and friends. So when the new normal is enforced, and schools are now operating as normal, children are very happy.” (Interview, July 7, 2022).

According to this study found that teachers are gradually adaptive to the change and develop their own strategy to optimize teaching-learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. They have used various tool from Power Point to properly prepare materials to Whats App, Google Classroom, Cisco WebEx Meetings, and Zoom. However, all of them agreed that children are easily tired of the online learning. They want school to be open, the want to go to school where they can play and interact freely with their teachers and friend. Children are very happy when the new normal is back.

As it is proposed by the theory above, that an integrated systems (I) work effectively if there is some degree of solidarity between them. Emotional connection and responsibility in ensuring the implementation of the learning process lead to solidarity between individuals within the institution. This point is reflected in teacher-parent collaboration, such as home visit programs, and online counseling where both involve in intense communication through whatsapp group.

This study also find that the pandemic makes Parents aware of their responsibility in maximizing their children learning activities. Some of them develop their own strategies for optimizing their children's learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the new normal, for instance, Fakrurrazi, a father with three girls, shared his encouraging experience, as follows.

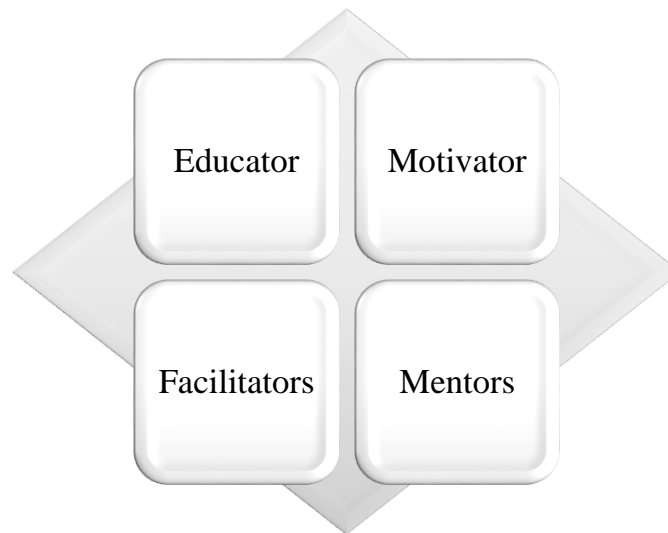
In fact, online learning had many positive effects during the pandemic. Kids today are already used to technology. During homeschooling, children complete assignments and answer questions on their mobile phones. This allows us, parents, to always accompany our children during the pandemic to study and meet their learning needs, such as internet quota to support online learning. Strategies we are pursuing to optimize children's learning by ensuring that they accompany and ensure that they use mobile phones for learning during the new normal (Interview, July 8, 2022).

From the above data, both during the pandemic and the new normal, during the lockdown, parents are working from home. It gave them opportunity to be always with their children, fulfilling what their needs, and helping in browsing the internet for additional learning materials. He suggested that parent should be monitor their children usage of mobile phones for study, teach them to organized their usage of mobile phone proportionately, they should be reminded of the time when it used for study and playing game or other entertainment. Similar view was also shared by Mrs. Husna, a mother of an elementary student in Langsa City.

A strategy we used to optimize children's learning during the pandemic is to strictly give the children a mobile phone just for completing a school task and we accompany them in study process. Yes, cell phones were confiscated once the children finished school. After the lockdown over, now children can go to school as normal, so, they no longer need mobile phones, for they can use exercise books, to do assignments, and learn as normal (Interview, July 9, 2022)

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that a parent played four very important role in maximizing children teaching learning activities. Firstly, as motivator, parent's companion has boosted student motivation in joining online class, secondly, as mentor, they are mentoring student in completing learning task. Thirdly, as facilitator, parent always there to facilitate student such as providing mobile phone or lap top and access to internet. Finally, as educator, being always at home, parent playes a substituted role to the teacher. In sum, through the role they have actively played, parent has become good collaborator in optimizing teaching-learning during the Pandemic at home. The positive impact of pandemic, this role has been contenoues played by parent even after the New Normal in Lansga City is:

Figure 3: Role of Parents in Optimizing Learning during Pandemic and New Normal in Langa City



Sauce: Field Research, 2022

This study found that the continuous collaborative role that parents and teachers played has reaffirmed the fourth proposition of the theory that is maintaining latent patterns (L) as a functional requirement necessary for the system to ensure continuity of actions within the system according to multiple rules and norms. A functional premise is that the education system would continue to function effectively, despite whatever pandemic would break in the future, as long as the whole element of the society: government, teachers, and parents, are ready to change their behavior and adapt to necessary change in the form of collaborative action, toward the future pandemic.

Conclusion

To conclude that, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the educational system in Langa City and Indonesia as a whole was very positive. According to structural-functional theory, one problem affects the other part. The pandemic conditions that have occurred in various parts of the world, including Indonesia, have also disrupted the education and learning process in Langa. At the beginning of the pandemic, schools were closed and learning took place online. As the pandemic slowed, schools reopened and health protocols were mandated. This attitude certainly affects students' motivation to learn when learning in the new normal. However, the negative impact of the pandemic on the education system was temporary, because the government, teachers, and parents gradually changed their behavior and adapted to a necessary change that was caused by the pandemic on the educational system.

Several policies have been implemented by the government, such as online learning. To support that program, the government provides internet quotas to students and teachers. The former also has provided IT training for teachers to enhance their

knowledge on IT usage for educational purposes. The positive impacts of the pandemic on the educational system as discussed above are clearly seen in the implementation of online learning that widely accepted by the teachers, parents and student, as they become use to the IT educational applications. Such as positive development would prepared the society to face future pandemic implication on their educational system. Covid-19 pandemic has also strengthened the collaboration between government and parent in optimizing teaching-learning activities of the student, during the pandemic, as well as after the new normal.

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