

Strategy of School Principals in Creating Effective Learning During Pandemic

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Article History: Received on 2 June 2023, Revised on 29 July 2023,
Published on 8 August 2023

Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze: (1) Principal's strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic in realizing effective learning at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang; (2) Implementation of learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang; (3) Supervision of learning implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang. This is qualitative research with descriptive method. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies. The validity of the data was tested by triangulation. The results of the study show that the principal's strategy to realize effective learning is carried out by optimizing support facilities for online teaching and learning activities, and also increasing a sense of security and comfort for all school residents from the threat of the spread of the covid-19 virus by completing the facilities and infrastructure to prevent the transmission of the covid-19. Online learning still experiences many obstacles, such as when the lights go out, the internet signal is lost, the data quota is expensive, students spend a lot of their daily time playing instead of studying, the lack of interaction between teachers and students has an impact on the decline in the character values of students. To ensure the online learning process is carried out properly, the principal continues to directly supervise and evaluate any obstacles that occur.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Effective Learning, Principal's Strategy

A. Introduction

In March 2020 there was a change in life at all levels of Indonesian society. This change in life was caused by the emergence of a new type of virus, namely coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). This condition is caused because the process of spreading is very fast and massive which causes casualties.

In the graphic image above, it is clear how fast the spread of the Covid-19 virus is in several regions in Indonesia. The rapid spread was also caused by the negligence of

the Indonesian government and the people who initially thought that the virus was not that dangerous.

As a result of the process of spreading and its impact on life, the government issued a Circular Letter on March 18 2020 which contained an appeal for all indoor and outdoor activities in all sectors to be temporarily suspended in order to reduce the spread of Covid-19, especially in the education sector. On March 24, 2020 the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia issued Circular Number 4 of 2020 concerning the implementation of Education policies during the Covid-19 emergency, in the Circular Letter it was explained that the learning process was carried out at home through online learning or distance learning which was carried out to provide meaningful learning experiences for students.

Online learning is learning that uses an internet-based interactive model and a Learning Management System (LMS). Work From Home is a term used by educators and workers in carrying out online activities. According to (Fahrina, et al, 2020) work from home means working from home. The point here is to control online learning activities. There are no physical face-to-face activities like in a classroom, but learning activities take place from home. In the Circular of the Minister of Education No. 15 of 2020 it is explained that the purpose of learning from home is so that the rights of students are still fulfilled even in the Covid-19 pandemic and to prevent the spread and transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

The learning model from home using IT among students needs to be considered carefully because not all students are able to operate IT properly. Another obstacle comes from students who do not have learning tools through IT, such as cellphones or laptops at home. In addition, data quota is also a significant obstacle for underprivileged parents and students (Fahrina, et al, 2020).

Sari (2020) groups several obstacles that teachers are starting to experience related to learning during the Covid-19 pandemic: (1) Learning Applications are the main cause because there is no socialization and training by schools and the Education Office regarding applications that support online learning; (2) There are still many rural and even urban areas that are constrained by the internet network; (3) When learning is carried out online the teacher must have extra learning material so that there are no misunderstandings between the teacher and student or student guardians when studying the material; (4) Learning Assessment becomes ineffective because most student assignments are done by adults; (5) Lack of parental supervision and attention to children in participating in online learning due to busy parents, so that students sometimes use the data packages provided not for learning but for online games and social media.

The above description is very much felt by students at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang, where some of the students are less fortunate. Even some parents had complained about the condition of their children who had to take part in online learning activities while the costs of daily living were very difficult. The sadness of online learning in the Sukananti Village area where SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang was founded is also exacerbated by the lack of cell phone signal, so to get this signal, teachers and students have to travel to neighboring villages which can exacerbate the spread of the Covid-19 virus due to crowd when students are in a place that has a signal with good quality. In addition, after several months of running the online learning system, some students complained about their boredom in online learning.

According to Astono (2020) The various types of boredom felt by students include (1) Students miss playing with school friends, playing together at school, and studying with their teachers; (2) Parents are also impatient to accompany their children (play a role) as teachers for their children because their children are not obedient; (3) The teacher has to write and record messages and lessons for students which are monotonous activities; (4) The boredom of filling in credit packets for learning activities at home is significantly higher than the children's pocket money, because the impact of studying at home is also playing on cellphones which children see as a solution to overcoming boredom itself.

Learning carried out in the education unit is fully carried out by the teacher, but the important role in determining the direction of progress of the education unit itself cannot be separated from the important role of the school principal. According to Djafri, (2016) the school principal is the driving force that determines the direction of policy towards the success of schools and education in general. In carrying out its duties and functions, the principal must be able to face the changing times that continue to develop. Husin, et al, (2021) grouped the work of school principals in dealing with the times as follows (1) Educators, namely a leader must have a strategy in order to increase the professionalism of elements in education in schools; (2) Managers mean that they must have the right strategy in empowering education staff to support school programs; (3) Administrators liaise with school principals to ensure the implementation of administration in schools; (4) Supervisor, namely the school principal must be able to carry out supervision and control in order to improve the performance of existing resources, especially teaching staff; (5) Leader means that a school principal must be able to communicate well with everyone, be able to determine attitudes in making decisions and policies in order to achieve the school's vision and mission; (6) Innovators are the ability of school principals to look for new breakthroughs in implementing school activities or programs they lead; (7) The motivator is the ability of the principal to motivate staff and teaching staff in improving performance.

In other words, school principals must be able to strategize well in determining policy directions in order to achieve effective learning to advance schools in accordance with the direction of the times.

By looking at the problems that occur in the learning process at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang, on June 26 2020 the Principal invited the teacher council to hold a coaching meeting and evaluate learning and teaching results. During the meeting the school principal asked for opinions from the teacher council to evaluate learning problems that had been experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. This evaluation is considered very important by the principal and all teaching staff to be used as a guide in developing strategies to achieve learning effectiveness in the 2020-2021 school year.

At the end of the meeting, the school principal asked for solutions to what learning methods were good to use during the current pandemic. Ms. Leliana as the vice principal for the curriculum field explained that the offline learning method is very appropriate to be used to overcome learning problems for students who do not have learning facilities such as cellphones and cell phone signals. This opinion was immediately responded to by the school principal as the right solution even though some teachers did not agree due to fears it could exacerbate the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The school principal emphasized that currently the school has prepared all facilities to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 such as handwashing stations, body temperature measuring devices, and providing masks to anticipate students arriving without wearing masks.

In accordance with the SKB 4 of the ministers where schools are not allowed to force students into the teaching and learning process, the school principal continues to encourage the use of offline learning methods to be carried out in accordance with the wishes and needs of students. In addition, the school principal also conveyed media and learning resources that can be utilized in accordance with the Minister of Education Circular Letter number 15 of 2020 namely, television for example the Learning from Home Program through TVRI, radio, self-study modules and worksheets, printed teaching materials, and teaching aids in the form of learning media from objects and the surrounding environment.

Based on the results of analysis and temporary observations, the difficulty of realizing effective learning is due to several factors, namely the lack of signal, some students do not have mobile phones, it is difficult to buy quotas and the lack of ability in mastering IT. This problem is interesting to study more deeply, especially the role of the principal in developing strategies that are right on target to realize learning effectiveness.

The formulation of the problem in this research is 1) what is the strategy of the principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang in realizing effective learning during the Covid-19 pandemic? 2) how was the implementation of learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang? 3) how was the supervision of the teaching and learning process at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang during the Covid-19 pandemic?

B. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques in this study used observation, interviews and documentation. Qualitative research must uncover objective truths, therefore the validity of the data in qualitative research is very important through the validity of the data's reliability. In this study to obtain the validity of the data is done by triangulation. Data analysis in this study is inductive and continuous (Rukin, 2019). So that data analysis can form theories and values that are considered valid somewhere (Anggito & Setia, 2018). The stages of data analysis in this study include a brief breakdown of data, displaying data in the form of tables, figures, images or summaries, then explaining the conclusions from the data that can answer research questions (Manzilati, 2017).

C. Results and Discussion

The Strategy of the Principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang in Realizing Effective Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of the spread of the Covid-19 virus which required the learning system to be carried out from home, the state of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang at that time made it very impossible to start a learning system from home. There are many obstacles encountered such as the difficulty of internet signal at school and several villages around the school, there are still students who do not have mobile phones, and the lack of knowledge about using applications to support the learning process on smartphones by students and even most of the teacher council.

The initial step taken by the school principal was to install a cellphone signal amplifier to spread the Wi-Fi network so that they could access the internet, considering that SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang does not have internet network access. Internet access via the Wi-Fi network can be used as much by the entire board of teachers and students in order to carry out the teaching and learning process properly and effectively. The existence of the Wi-Fi Network makes it easier for teacher boards to carry out training on using learning applications as a means of supporting an effective and efficient online learning system (Selvaraj et al, 2021; Abdel-Basset et al, 2019; Febrianto et al, 2020).

Training the use of learning applications is not only carried out for the teacher council but also for students. With this training, the principal expects and believes there will be no more problems, especially regarding the use of IT as the main source of learning from home.

The principal also actively provides information related to the home learning system. Providing information is very important for teachers regarding changes in the learning system. The information provided is usually in the form of trainings held by the Department of Education and Culture and related institutions regarding learning. Not only that, the Principal at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang also provides more encouragement or motivation to teachers to continue to strive to improve the quality of learning by participating in all activities such as trainings held by the government both online such as training at SIMPKB, good webinars from government and private parties and offline trainings organized by the teacher community and the government.

The school principal also guarantees the safety and comfort of all school members from the threat of the spread of the Covid-19 virus by creating a source of clean water for school activities. The creation of a clean water source is accompanied by the installation of water installations including hand washing stations installed in all classrooms, offices, laboratory rooms and libraries. The hand washing area is also equipped with hand washing soap which is useful for killing germs that stick to hands. The source of clean water is also used for spraying schools as an anticipation if there are viruses attached to the school.

Installing a source of clean water has long been proposed by teachers and students because so far, the only source of clean water has been an ordinary well. To fetch water from an ordinary well, it is done manually so it is very inconvenient especially for class VII students and teachers who are not strong enough to draw the water. So far, ordinary wells that have existed cannot be installed with water machines because if they are installed, they will definitely disappear and last a maximum of one week.

Implementation of Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang

In discussions related to the implementation of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang, it is divided into three forms, namely:

Implementation of Learning

The implementation of learning at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang was initially carried out with a full online system and only through the Whatsapp platform. At

first, the learning system experienced many problems due to the difficulty of accessing the internet caused by a lack of internet signal. this is exacerbated by the difficulty of buying internet quota for students plus some students do not have cellphones. Not only that, the lack of knowledge about using online applications also adds to the problems in the learning system from home.

Looking at the situations and conditions that made it impossible to carry out a full online learning system, the principal through a meeting with all the stakeholders of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang as explained on the previous page implemented a combined learning system, namely students were given a schedule according to the day, hour and class. to come to school to take assignments that will later be given by their respective subject teachers, and for students who can study from home continue to carry out online learning. The learning system lasts for one semester, namely in the even semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

In the new school year 2020-2021 in the odd semester the learning system is carried out entirely online. Decision making by implementing the learning system is carried out entirely from home because the principal's belief in the readiness of teachers and students is mature enough because they have participated in various outreach and training in using online learning applications (Puspitasari, 2021; Syafnan et al, 2022).

Even though learning has been carried out fully online, the principal still urges students to keep coming to school for students who still have problems. In addition, students are still subject to school picket hours to keep the school environment clean and beautiful.

Factors Inhibiting Online Learning

Online learning, which lasted for two semesters in the 2020-2021 academic year, is still experiencing many problems even though students and teachers have been able to operate some learning applications. These constraints are: 1) When the lights go out, internet access outside of school only lasts a maximum of half an hour. these obstacles are not felt at school because the signal booster antenna picks up the signal directly from Prabumulih City. As a result of these problems teachers and students cannot continue learning any longer; 2) Lack of Wi-Fi capacity results in teachers having to take turns and carry out teaching and learning activities using face-to-face applications to be limited; 3) The internet quota provided by the government is still lacking so that the parents of students still have to buy more at a price that is not cheap; 4) Students spend a lot of their time in front of cellphones and laptops; 5) The decline in character values is also one of the impacts that is very common in SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang because the instilling of character values is lacking due to the lack of social contact between teachers and students; 6) Lack of interactive learning makes it difficult for students to understand the material presented by the

teacher; 7) Students spend more time playing than studying at home; 8) The lack of seriousness of students when studying is evidenced by the presence of students who close the camera when face to face.

Students' Ability to Use Online Learning Applications

The ability of students to use the WhatsApp application as an online learning tool is very good, namely 26 students or around 79% are in the very mastery category and 7 students are around 21% mastered and there are no students who lack mastery or don't even master. This is because the learning system implemented by teachers so far mostly uses the WhatsApp application. while for the zoom meeting application there were only 6 students (18%) students who took part in the zoom activity and these 6 people were only at the master level. Meanwhile, the other students could not take part in the activity due to the difficulty of the internet signal and some of the other students did not have an internet quota. For the Google Forms application, 22 students (67%) were highly proficient in the Google Forms application, 6 (18%) students were proficient and 5 (15%) students were less proficient. In the Quiziz application, there are 25 students (76%) who really master and 8 students (18%) master.

From all the data obtained it is clear that students as a whole can use the WhatsApp application, but there are still some students who cannot use it optimally. Whereas for the zoom meeting application there are only 6 students who can take part. This proves that online learning at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang cannot be carried out directly because most students cannot access the internet network. The quiziz application gets the highest score in scoring, so it can be concluded that all students are familiar with the application being tested, it is proven that many students can use the application with a little guidance during the Aptitude test, but for the use of learning applications directly such as zoom meeting cannot be used at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang because students have difficulty accessing the internet.

Supervision of the Teaching and Learning Process at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Learning from home which was held during the Covid-19 pandemic at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang had many obstacles as described on the previous page. Teaching and learning problems are the main task of subject teachers. However, school principals who work together with school superintendents both have an important role in supervising learning, namely by carrying out supervision. The purpose of educational supervision is to increase the main capacity of teachers and students to be effective, understand the main goals of education to achieve goals, make improvements, improve the quality of teacher services to the fullest, and develop a sense of unity between the principal and teachers (Utami et al, 2021).

Supervision of the Principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang

In carrying out the servicing, the Principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang divided it into 3 stages of assessment:

Academic Supervision on Learning Planning

Before starting the lesson, the teacher first prepares the administration of learning tools which consist of an understanding of the educational calendar, annual program, semester program, KKM, syllabus and lesson plan. Every learning process carried out by the teacher can be seen in the learning devices he makes. So, in this way the success or failure and the merits of the learning system that will be carried out by the teacher in giving lessons to students can be seen from the learning tools.

At this stage the Principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang looks at the learning tools that have been prepared by the teacher. The inspection stages carried out by the principal are usually carried out by checking the suitability of each learning device made by the teacher. By examining the teacher's learning tools, they can provide an overview to the school principal about the strategies used by the teacher whether they are in accordance with the development of learning in the era of digitalization education.

Academic Supervision on Implementation of Learning

The implementation of learning carried out by the teacher is also supervised by the principal to ensure the level of success of the teaching and learning system carried out by the teacher. In this stage the supervision is carried out by the principal directly by observing the teacher's activity during class hours in the WhatsApp group. In addition, the principal also took part in the zoom meeting class which was carried out by some of the teachers.

The Principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang usually gives a direct warning to teachers who are late and less active in carrying out learning via WhatsApp because the learning system via WhatsApp can be monitored directly at any time by the principal. whereas for face-to-face learning systems online, reprimands and directions are usually given after the teaching and learning activities have been carried out by the teacher. In addition, the principal usually asks for evidence of online learning carried out by teachers as school archive material.

Academic Supervision as Learning Evaluation Material

After observing the learning activities carried out by the teacher, the principal of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang usually calls the subject teacher to give directions

about the learning that has been carried out. The direction given by the principal is very important as material for improvement in improving the quality of learning.

In addition to the school principal, supervisors also supervise the teaching and learning activities of teachers. Supervision carried out by school superintendents is usually done by examining the teacher's learning tools one by one. After examining it, the supervising supervisor gave directions so that teachers always innovate following developments in the learning system in the digitalization era (Kang, 2021). In addition, the supervising supervisor also said that teachers must be creative in conveying learning material with varied and changing strategies so that students do not get bored in participating in the learning activities carried out by the teacher.

During the Covid-19 pandemic as it is now, supervision is not only carried out on academic learning activities, but also the problem of handling the transmission of Covid-19 is very important in order to maintain the safety and comfort of all school residents. As explained on the previous page, handling in preventing the transmission of the Covid-19 virus is carried out by forming a task force team for the vigilance and prevention of transmission of the Covid-19 virus. The task force team played an important role in finding data and information about the spread of the Covid-19 virus around the Rambang Kuang 8 Public Middle School environment. Besides that, the task force team must be able to ensure the safety and comfort of the school environment from the increasingly uncontrolled spread of the Covid-19 virus. The school principal is also trying to complete supporting facilities and infrastructure to prevent the transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

The active role of the government through the health service is very important for the security and safety of all school members from the spread of the Covid-19 virus (Adams & Walls, 2020). One of them is evidenced by giving vitamins once a month by the Rambang Kuang District Health Center and giving vaccination injections to all teaching and educational staff and all students at Rambang Kuang 8 Public Middle School.

The administration of the Covid-19 vaccine is expected to increase the immunity (Rogawski et al, 2018) of all residents of SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang. The vaccine injection is expected if there are school members who are suspected or positive for Covid-19 to survive considering that the body's immunity has increased because the vaccine injection has been given.

D. Conclusion

With the innovation of digitizing learning which is new at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang, the school principal is making full efforts to complete the facilities and infrastructure to support the digitization of learning. The goal is that teachers and students can carry out teaching and learning activities properly so that effective

learning is achieved. To increase the ability to master technology in online learning, the principal encourages and motivates teachers and students to continue to seek information about digital learning transformations so that they can be implemented at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang. In addition, the principal also provides learning facilities using learning applications at school. In order to improve the safety and comfort of all school residents, the principal, in accordance with the technical instructions for using School Operational Assistance funds, focuses on budgeting BOS funds to complete facilities for preventing the transmission of the Covid-19 Virus, such as making clean water sources equipped with an installation network and materials.

The implementation of learning at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang was initially carried out online, but many problems occurred that the learning system changed to a combined system (online and offline). only at the beginning of the 202/2021 school year all learning activities will be carried out in full online. Online learning still experiences many obstacles such as when the lights go out, the internet signal disappears, high data quota, students spend a lot of their daily time playing instead of studying, lack of interaction between teachers and students has an impact on reducing students' character values. From the results of the ability tests carried out, learning from home carried out at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang cannot be carried out directly but can only be carried out by giving assignments to students which are then understood and confirmed by the subject teacher at certain times.

To ensure the success of learning that takes place at SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang, the Principal continues to supervise by evaluating each obstacle that occurs as material for improvement to create effective learning, which is then reported to the Education Office through the school superintendent to get more direction and guidance. good in terms of learning in the era of digitalization.

E. Acknowledgement

We would like to express our acknowledgement to our respondents, colleagues from SMP Negeri 8 Rambang Kuang and Universitas PGRI Palembang who helped us in this valuable paper.

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