

Communication Strategy for Learning Process Based on Information Technology at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation

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Abstract

Government regulations of the Republic of Indonesia stated that the learning process can be carried out online. On-site communication between educators and students that turns into virtual communication created obstacles and changes in communication interactions. This study is focused on communication strategies in the learning process based on the reality of communication in the field of education which was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to examine the communication interaction activities in the learning process and communication strategies that were applied by educators in the learning process during the Covid 19 pandemic at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation, South Tangerang. We applied a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out using survey methods, Forum Group Discussion and interviews. The results showed that, communication interactions in the classroom can take place online, on-site and a blended online and on-site combination. The teachers and students are able to communicate with the help of technology. The communication strategy implemented is related to the teacher's social competence factors, the preparation of innovative messages, the selection of social media platforms, teacher's understanding of student communication behaviour and management of student feedback in interactions.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy, Education, Communication Interaction, Learning Process, Technology.*



A. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a reduction in community interaction and mobility in Indonesia. Community activities are limited in order to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19 virus, such as in office areas, industry, education, trade, health and so on. The learning process at the kindergarten, elementary, junior high, high school and university levels in Indonesia has experienced changes in communication patterns due to the reduction in face-to-face communication activities and the implementation of online learning processes.

Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation was established in 1998 in South Tangerang. This foundation houses educational institutions at the level of Kindergarten (TK), Elementary School (SD), Junior High School (SMP) and Vocational High School (SMK) in the South Tangerang area. Putra Pertiwi educational institution has carried out the function of teaching and serving in the field of education for more than two decades. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia establishes policies regarding the implementation of the learning process in various parts of Indonesia where interactions between teachers and students take place online and in blended online and on-site combination.

Putra Pertiwi School has been carrying out limited on-site learning since September 2021 (Putra Pertiwi, 2021). The distance learning interpersonal communication strategy applied by teachers to early childhood in Tegaljadi Village, Bali is carried out by a combination of one-way communication and two-way communication. (Purandina, 2021).

Effective communication in education must consider students, classrooms, methods and materials delivered. (Wisma, 2017). Social presence theory reveals that online learning can fill social presence though the interaction is conducted with technology and the internet, online learning in Indonesia into three dimensions, namely social context, online communication, and interactivity (Rahmawati, Kurniawan Sujono. 2021). Educational communication is said to be effective if the subject matter delivered by educators can be received and understood well and generates positive feedback from students (Mahadi, 2021). Johnson, Sutton and Harris (2001) show ways that effective communication in learning activities can be achieved, namely with the support of role-playing activities, discussions, small group activities and relevant teaching materials.

In line with the government's policy on learning during the pandemic, Putra Pertiwi Foundation set policies for online learning and blended online and on-site combination. Educators are required to use digital technologies to deliver material to students. The form of flexibility in the learning process in the classroom is manifested in the use of alternative applications such as Zoom Cloud Meetings, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Skype and Google Classroom.

Ideally, the online learning process applies virtual communication interactions with digital technologies. The implementation of online communication patterns turned out to be experiencing several obstacles and obstacles in delivering material to students. Each level of education has a different atmosphere of communication interaction because educators have students of varying ages.

Based on the background described, we can formulate the problems as follows: (1) How are the communication interaction activities in the learning process at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation, South Tangerang?. (2) How are the communication strategies implemented by educators in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The learning process in schools requires an assertive communication process. The ability of educators to convey subject matter assertively is a determining factor in order to understand the material and to interact with students. Assertive communication will work effectively with the support of the social competencies of educators. Social competence is the ability of educators when communicating with students, fellow educators and the community (Pearl, 2021).

During the pandemic, the world of education experienced a period of new media development where communication interaction patterns were related to the application of communication and information technology. Griffin (2019), explains

that Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has a hyper-personality impact where CMC users do not have physical proximity. Hyper-personality will occur among communicators, message recipients, use of communication media and communication feedback.

The learning process that takes place in the online room and the online-offline combination has the characteristics of different communication strategies during the pandemic. Communication strategy is a combination of communication planning and communication management to achieve communication goals (Effendy, 2017). The communication strategy has several aspects to consider, namely: determining communicators, determining target recipients of messages, compiling messages, selecting communication media, preparing communication materials and media production, disseminating messages and reviewing the effects of communication.

Grunic (2013) explains that the two-way symmetrical communication model has relevance to the phenomenon of communication and the use of digital communication media. Social media users and information technology users can communicate without being limited by time and space.

C. METHOD

This study applies a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a type of research that explores data and understands the meaning of several individuals or groups of people originating from a problem. Cases in this qualitative approach can be in the form of an event, activity, process, or even program (Creswell, 2017). Descriptive method is applied to provide a description or description of the phenomenon in research. This is as explained by Neumann: "descriptive research present a picture of the specific details of situation, social setting, or relationship. The outcome of a descriptive study is a detailed picture of the subject" (Neuman, 2014).

Here, we aim to determine the communication strategy of educators with aspects of communicators, information/messages, communication media, communicants and the impact of communication as a reference for data exploration. The patter of communication in schools under Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation underwent changes during the Covid-19 pandemic and the transformation of forms of communication interaction.

Data collection was carried out from December 2021 until January 2022 at Putra Pertiwi School at the Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High and Vocational High School levels. The data collection techniques implemented are as follows:

1. Interview

Interview processes were done both online and on-site with the teachers from Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High and Vocational High School levels as interviewee.

2. Focus Group Discussion

FGDs are done with the teachers from Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High and Vocational High School levels as participants and were carried out at 22 and 23 December 2021.

3. Survey

The survey was conducted to determine the understanding, attitudes and behavior changes of teachers in the online learning process and both online and on-site combination January 4, 2021

4. Documentation

The data collected are photo documents, videos and survey results to educators.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Learning Process with Online System and Blended Online and On-site Combination System

For this research to be more comprehensive, data collection techniques through Focus Group Discussion were used (Kruger R and Casey, M. 2015). The participants of the FGD consist of 24 teachers who represented each school level and were selected purposively so that the research focuses more on the representation of each social phenomena studied (Bungin, 2008). The participants were divided into 3 groups, in each group were asked to discuss the opening questions which became the topic of discussion (Nagle Williams 2015) as follows: Group (1) discussed the activities of communication interactions in the learning process at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation. Group (2) discussed the question of how the communication strategies applied by educators in the learning process during the covid pandemic. Group (3) discussed questions about what obstacles were found when learning through online media during the pandemic. Each group is guided by a moderator and a note taker. The results of the FGD notes and recordings were then transcribed into written form. Then an analysis of the results of the FGD was carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusions (Satori & Komariah, 2012).

The results of each group's discussion are as follows: (1) *Communication interaction activities in the learning process at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation. Currently schools still apply learning methods by referring to the rules for adapting new habits, where schools use hybrid methods, namely methods that combine distance learning with on-site learning. Teachers as communicators in teaching and learning activities convey messages clearly to students or communicants so that teaching materials can be absorbed properly. After that the teacher must also determine the channel to communicate either directly (face to face) or online by determining the communication media to be used. Therefore, in addition to the teacher must prepare teaching materials, they also need pack the material creatively so that the material is interesting, and that also have to use appropriate media so that messages can be conveyed to students and the impact of changes on students is in accordance with learning objectives.*

For the effectiveness of communication interactions to run well, Ms. Rani, an elementary school teacher, said: *“Stimulation and motivation at the beginning of starting learning must be done by the teacher, using simple and easy-to-understand language so that students have no difficulty in understanding the material provided by the teacher”*.

This is also supported by the opinion of Ms. Lina, a kindergarten teacher, who said: *“In addition to communicating with students, teachers must also communicate to parents, if children are moody and don't want to take lessons through zoom media, for example, they must communicate and ask for support from students' parents so that parents can accompany their children from home to enter class and participate in activities. In addition, if you are a kindergarten teacher, you have to be cheerful, your voice must be loud, your teaching must include interesting videos, that invites the student to sing and play and also reading and counting. Therefore, online activities still use an interesting method of playing while learning to avoid the students getting bored”*. (2) *Communication strategies applied by teachers in the learning process during the covid pandemic. Educators choose the optimal media in the distance learning process, for example reminding students to do assignments or communicating with parents about the condition of their students using the WhatsApp group communication media. For teaching and learning activities, teachers use various distance learning applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube or other applications. The choice of applications used is in accordance with the needs of educators and students according to school level and suitability of the material. Teachers have to try to innovate in designing, and preparing learning materials, and choosing what applications that are suitable with the learning materials to be taught, so that there is enthusiasm from students or students in participating in learning.*

The educators have implemented interesting learning methods at every grade level by utilizing various platforms and various learning technologies that can be used by students and teachers according to their learning needs. Digital technology-based learning resources that are already available as well as those developed by schools specifically, such as making learning videos made by teachers are made as attractive as possible so that students are interested in participating in the online learning process. For this reason, teachers are trained to make learning videos by the school IT team. The video is then uploaded to YouTube so that students can access learning easily at any time.

In addition, there are several other strategies that teachers use such as Ms. Yuni, a junior high school math teacher, explained: *“At the beginning of the math lesson, I gave motivation and stimulus before discussing the material that had been told at the previous meeting, an example of a stimulus is to provide an overview of the material to be taught by providing several examples that could build and foster the imagination of students, usually in the form of an interesting video. so that students are enthusiastic and ready to learn”*. (3) *There is another problem in order to carry out learning activities through online methods, namely the presence of educators who initially did not master online learning technology and therefore adding the fact that it is more difficult to adjust how to make creative, interesting and interactive teaching materials. The obstacle faced by students is that not all students can fulfill the facilities for online learning facilities, such as communication tools in the form of laptops*

or cellphones that do not support, some even do not have communication devices or do not have internet access. There are other obstacles in subjects that require practical works such as science subjects that need laboratory works, physical education and sports that should be carried out in the sports field, as well as skill competency subjects for Vocational Schools such as Culinary Art and Multimedia which cannot be optimally implemented because it requires a lot on-site practical activities.

Ms. Purwi, teacher at Vocational High School, Culinary Art Program, who taught food processing and presentation subjects as well as pastry and bakery product subjects said: *"There are obstacles in using online learning methods, especially when teaching practical subjects, because the material I teach is more practical than theory, therefore during the pandemic the practice is still carried out on-site but was limited to 7 students and of course by complying with health protocol"*.

Mr. Derry, teacher at Vocational High School, Multimedia study program, who teaches the subjects of Interactive Media Design and Audio Video Processing Techniques, also gave a similar argument: "Guiding students working from home to work on Media Design projects or editing videos, is not optimal when using distance learning even though I have made a video tutorial, this happens because there are many students' computers/laptops that don't support it, some even don't have at all. Therefore, during the pandemic practical works are still carried out in the school's computer laboratory room, with a limited number of students. This was done because this practical activity must be carried out to help vocational students strengthen their aspects of soft skills, hard skills and character according to industry needs."

Discipline training for students was also experiencing problems because there was no direct, firm correction of disciplinary violations. Distance learning also limited the space for teachers to enforce discipline.

2. Educators' Opinion Survey about the Learning Process

The educator opinion survey involved 53 respondents who are educators (Teachers) at Putra Pertiwi School. The survey results provide a description of the understanding of communication interactions, the online learning process, the communication media used, and the obstacles during the communication process.

With total of 66.75% of educator respondents stated that the communication process was useful for achieving an understanding, 16.7% of respondents had the purpose of communication interaction focusing on the interests of educators in delivering messages (communicators) and the rest focused on the communication process to meet the knowledge needs of students.

Communication media in online learning is understood to convey the learning materials to students. Most educators choose to use the Zoom Cloud Meetings platform compares to several alternative platforms. 41.7% of respondents considered that the effective and assertive communication process was understood by respondents as a form of social competence, 22.2% considered it an educator's expertise, 22% considered it the implementation of teacher duties and the rest considered it a form of teacher service. 78.8% of respondents agreed that effective

communication in the online learning process is dominantly determined by communicators who understand communication strategies, 9.2% considered that it is determined by the ability to accommodate stories/discussions, and the rest considered that it is determined by forum mastery and appearance.

3. Technology-Based Communication Strategy

The online learning process at Putra Pertiwi Education Foundation during the pandemic has been done using the Zoom Cloud Meetings platform. Kindergarten teachers deliver subject matter with more attractive communication techniques to students at an early age. Assertive communication and social competence of kindergarten teachers determines the communication effectiveness. The learning process in Putra Pertiwi Kindergarten class does not only convey the mission of early childhood education such as character building, religious/cultural values teaching, and so on. The teachers innovatively formulate messages that are easy to understand by audio-visual students, namely: a series of interesting morning greetings, creating messages that are easy for children to understand and delivering material through songs and movements on the zoom screen. The decoding and encoding processes are part of the interaction in online classes where teachers and students have a dialogue with each other.

Putra Pertiwi Elementary and Middle School teachers carry out the learning process using blended online and on-site combination blended online and on-site combination. In practice, in addition to using the online platform using Zoom Cloud Meeting or Google Meet to interact with students, teachers always provide stimulus to students during the online learning process, by presenting interactive teaching videos so that the material presented is interesting and not boring. Teachers develop learning media in the form of learning videos, either making their own using the Kinemaster application, VN Video Editor Maker, Toontastic, Filmorago, or using video applications that are available on the learning site link from the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the learning video from Ruang Guru learning online platform.

Vocational schoolteachers did carry out online learning by using practical video tutorials to students, even though this method is not optimal. The cause of this is that 70% of the study materials of the vocational school are practical based. Therefore, using video tutorials or guides are not optimal. However, it is observed that at least can help students to have a big picture about the study materials. Therefore, Vocational High Schools still carry out limited on-site learning for the practical-based material.

E. CONCLUSION

Communication interactions between teachers and students in Putra Pertiwi Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle, and Vocational High School are dialogical and interactive. The two-way communication process has always been applied by the teacher to deliver material online and offline. The limitations of communication

interactions during the pandemic must be overcome by teacher innovation. Teachers as communicators in teaching and learning activities, must convey messages in the form of teaching materials to students or communicants and determine the channel for the media that are used. Teachers must adjust the material and media according to the educational level of the communicant, so that the message conveyed can be well received by students. In addition, creativity and communication interactions between teachers and students are also one of the supporting factors for the success of online and on-site learning activities. Strategy communication that has been applied in both learning process online and on-site in Putra Pertiwi emphasizes several aspects such as teacher social competence, creativity, and innovation in message preparation, selection of effective information-communication technology platforms, mapping student character in communication interactions, response to feedback in the learning process.

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