

EMERGENCE CURRICULUM TO MITIGATE LITERACY LOSS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the literacy skills of elementary school students in Indonesia. The technical and non-technical constraints during distance learning result in literacy loss, which should be minimized as early as possible. Adjustment of learning systems and policies helps prevent the potential for literacy loss, one of which is implementing emergency curriculum policies issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The emergency curriculum policy was created to reduce learning obstacles students, teachers, and parents face due to the suboptimal implementation of Distance Learning. This study utilized a literature review method by providing an emergency curriculum policy to mitigate literacy loss in elementary school students. This policy contains several modules for children, teachers, and parents whose material focuses on basic literacy and numeracy needs, focusing on essential competencies and prerequisite competencies to support continuous learning. Thus, the emergency curriculum policy can be one of the ways to overcome disparities in human development and one of the ways to overcome current social development problems.

Keywords: literacy loss; educational policy; emergency curriculum; social development

I. INTRODUCTION

The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 has been plaguing since the end of 2019. WHO classified this outbreak as a new type of infectious disease that attacks the respiratory system (World Health Organization [1]). Globally as of November 11, 2021, there were 251,266,207 confirmed cases, including the deaths of 5,070,244 people worldwide due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 4,249,758 confirmed cases in Indonesia alone from January 3, 2020, to November 11, 2021, with a total death of 143,608 people (World Health Organization [2]). The social life conditions of the people due to the Covid-19 pandemic open up the potential to create a new routine, such as the need to maintain a safe distance from each other and avoid crowds. Regional quarantine is the leading choice at the macro level to prevent virus transmission. For example, the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions/PSBB in Indonesia is applied as a form of the blockade imposed in each region, both at the central and regional levels. PSBB decision is implemented based on the severity of the outbreak and supported by the approval of the Ministry of Health (Muhyiddin [3]). Not only that, Presidential Decree (Keppres) Number 11 of the year 2020 concerning the Stipulation of Public Health Emergency and Government Regulation (PP) Number 21 of the year 2020 concerning the Implementation of PSBB technically supports the implementation of the social restrictions. The implementation is through Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of the year 2020 concerning restrictions on activities that trigger crowds, such as in the education field (temporary closure of schools) and workplaces, restrictions on religious activities, restrictions on activities in public places, social restrictions on

cultural activities, restrictions of passengers on means of transportation, as well as special activities related to sustainability and security. Temporary school closures complicate educational activities and the fulfillment of children's right to education. Based on the UNICEF article entitled "Indonesia: Children Need to Safely Resume Face to Face Learning as soon as possible after 18 months of school closure-UNICEF / WHO", in March 2020, temporary school closures in all regions affected the learning abilities of more than 60 million children in Indonesia (UNICEF [4]). Quoting a World Bank source from katadata.co.id, it also predicted that Indonesian children would lose about 0.9 years of learning time (Jayani [5]).

Another effect of suboptimal distance learning is learning loss and literacy loss (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia [6]; ACAPS [7]; Bao [8]). This problem has already occurred in Indonesia, but it worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic. Larasati [9] stated that 124 million children lost literacy skills to read during the Covid-19 pandemic. The loss of student interest in learning affected children's basic literacy skills, hurting the quality of students' competencies in the future (Napitupulu [10]).

According to Harris and Hodges [11], literacy has various definitions, one of which is the ability to recognize, understand, interpret, communicate, and count, which aims to be able to understand context, reflect knowledge to support life skills, and enables conveying meaning orally and in writing (UNESCO [12]; Presidential Decree Number 18, of the year 2020 [13]). Literacy within education is an essential basic ability that humans must possess. It supports social development as the primary human capital to play an active role and participate in their environment. Literacy as a

prerequisite to life skills is crucial for humans to survive, especially in the middle of global competition. Literacy is a provision of life preparedness essential for humans to think cooperatively, critically, creatively, and communicate.

Literacy is considered a process and cultural habituation, which is essential in national development. Literacy has a role in improving the quality of human life. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey stated that in the last 10-15 years, the literacy skills of Indonesian children tended to stagnate. It is evident from the results of Indonesia's position, which ranked 72 out of 77 countries for reading competency, 72 out of 78 countries for mathematics competency, and 70th out of 78 countries for science scores (Kasih [14]). The 3-yearly survey of the Indonesian Statistics Bureau also recorded that the level of interest in reading in Indonesian children was in the range of 17.66%.

Not only that [15], the average reading time for Indonesians per day is only 30-59 minutes, less than an hour. That number is far from the UNESCO average standard of 4-6 hours per day. Furthermore, the low literacy rate in Indonesia is also evident from the average National Alibaca Index, which was at 37.32 with a cumulative index of the skills dimension (illiteracy free and average years of schooling) of 75.92, the access dimension (utilization of regional libraries, public libraries, community libraries, and school libraries) of 23.09, the alternative dimension (conventional and internet use, online reading, and online media) of 40.49, and the cultural dimension (reading habits) of 28.50 (Ministry of Education and Culture Research and Development, [16]). Therefore, it is necessary to make improvements in mitigating the decline in literacy skills and interest in reading, especially children nowadays, one of which is through the development and adjustment of the curriculum [17].

From a pedagogical perspective, literacy is a subject entity and is an indicator of the success of curriculum implementation. Curriculum development in improving literacy is the basis for students' habituation of literacy-friendly educational activities. Especially when distance learning is applied. The development and adjustment of the curriculum should be carried out to mitigate the deteriorating condition of literacy. In this study, the assessment of curriculum development was used to analyze the emergency curriculum in supporting national development in the field of education, particularly in overcoming literacy loss, which was worsening at the time being. According to Sofie Dewayani's statement in the article "The Level of Literacy Loss is Worrying During the Pandemic," which stated that specifically, the Covid-19 pandemic had reduced the reading ability of Indonesian children, especially in the fourth grade of elementary school, due to many factors, such as limited access towards technical aspects of learning (Tempo [18]).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is the literature review. According to Fink [19], the literature review is a

precise and systematic research method in identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research sources. According to Syder [20], this method integrates several perspectives of empirical findings from several findings to support new statements through summaries and synthesis. Research begins with a brief description of the problem, provides an overview of the relevant literature and is appropriate to the research needed, shows how current studies will advance the knowledge in the area, and describes the specific research question [20].

The research sources in this study are scientific articles obtained through search engines of scientific journals that focus on the following keywords: implementation of education policies, national development policies in education, and adjustment of education policies during the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, literature sources such as books used in this study are related to social policy theories about development practice in the education field. Other criteria include sources with pdf access and published within the last ten years. However, the results and discussion analysis of the literature focus in this study was strengthened by actual and fact-based information derived from several news article and reports on program implementation related to the adjustment of education policies due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current policies contribute to the context of regulation. Jamrozik in Adi [21] stated that social policy is an effort that is applied to regulate relations between groups in society through regulation to improve the community's quality of life. Concerning the pandemic, policies are meant to regulate public relations, as it is known that high communal mobility is the biggest threat to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, policies through regulations are published to maintain the health and welfare of the people during the Covid-19 pandemic. Education policies can also be presented as a form of the cornerstone of options for learning activities during a pandemic.

In Tuwu's [22] research, it is elaborated that policy during a pandemic is a form of the government's attempt to protect people whose welfare level is categorized as lower middle class, especially the people who require Social Welfare Service (Pemerlu Pelayanan Kesejahteraan Sosial-PPKS) group. He stated that the policies made by the government in preparing policy schemes could mitigate the impact caused by Covid-19 in the community. The policy is a tool for the government to build good governance in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Supported by Arifa's [23] statement in her journal that policies in the field of education were made to protect members of the school from exposure towards Covid-19. The stipulation of this policy targets all levels of education. The learning from home policy is implemented while still involving educators and students through Distance Learning (PJJ). The Distance Learning Policy is a solution to overcome the difficulties of implementing face-to-face learning; even though it was stopped, compulsory learning is still carried out to overcome the issue of students' delay in acquiring knowledge. Learning is carried out according to the needs of

students and innovating towards the use of technology (Arifa [23]; Sari [24]; Herliandry [25]; Ahmed [26]).

Regarding the emergency curriculum policy, Jusuf et al. [27] explained the implementation of the Covid-19 emergency curriculum in Kotamobagu, which was carried out continuously through the online learning process. In the learning process, the materials presented were only the essential material of the entire subject matter. Teachers were given the authority to choose essential materials to be taught back to students. The duration of learning was also arranged in such a way so that it would not put a burden on students, which was only given 25 to 35 minutes for one meeting of online learning activities. Focus on implementing child-friendly psycho-social learning, considering students' high and low immunity or body resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic. The achievement of learning outcomes in this curriculum was not the primary goal of the learning process. There are no formal standards to provide an accurate assessment of student learning outcomes; focusing on developing life skills, such as the activeness and responses of students to learning materials, is a benchmark that shows the effectiveness of the emergency curriculum implementing the process.

According to Jusuf et al. [27], the application of emergency curriculum in the context of the madrasa, which the main task of students was to improve and increase the memorization of the Qur'an verses and the Hadith of Prophet SAW, during the learning process, many adjustments were made according to the learning needs of students. The first week described the schedule as children getting material online. In the following week, the students only deposited the memorized verses of the Qur'an, and the Hadith of the Prophet SAW to the teacher (Jusuf [27]). From several previous studies, the identified research question in this study is how emergency curriculum policies can mitigate the issue of losing literacy skills in students, especially at the elementary school level. Thus, this study will provide an overview of the literacy loss problems children face due to the shift in teaching and learning activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore the emergency curriculum can be one of the policies that can mitigate these obstacles.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Literacy as a Development Practice

Nowadays, literacy is an essential thing that humans own to nurture the intellect of people's life. Reconstruction of development through education becomes an investment based on human quality that should empower the nation. According to Midgley [28], social development is seen as a concept and approach to promoting human welfare. Comprehensively, social development has a social situation that requires a planned change and a development process that aims to achieve goals (Midgley [28]; Spicker [29]).

The main milestones in improving the quality of human resources and social development can be obtained through the strategic role of education. Through formal and

non-formal education, education has a role in human resource development (Midgley [28]). Thanks to education, humans can elaborate themselves in society and fulfill their needs. According to Sulistyastuti [30], education can embody several factors: freeing humans from obtuseness and backwardness, participating in manifesting a democratic society, and freeing humans from poverty.

Literacy is inseparable from education as it is the primary essential ability that allows humans to recognize, understand, and apply the knowledge they have acquired in society. Literacy in social development helps current social practices that support the development of dynamic human qualities. Literacy in social practice is about reading and writing competency and how humans can create products and services from the skills that literacy emerges. The above statement is supported by the opinion of Lerner [31], which stated that literacy (reading) is the basis for mastering the various abilities that follow. Supporting the statement of Lerner [31], Pahl and Roswell [32] argued that literacy is not a set of existing skills but must be developed and trained through language learning and teaching. Therefore, literacy cannot be separated from social practices closely related to everyday life.

Barton and Hamilton [33], in their book entitled "Situated Literacies," explained several concepts in understanding literacy as a sequential social practice as it is obtained from various events, including the involvement of written texts in its application. They also argued that literacy as a social practice is shaped by social institutions and is closely related to power. Educational institutions, family, and religion are social institutions that influence literacy as a social practice. Giroux and Penna [34] also defined schools in socio-political institutions as institutions that act as secondary socialization agents in developing quality educational programs.

Educational institutions tend to encourage literacy practices to be more dominantly integrated into social relations by creating social interactions between teachers and students in the classroom, producing knowledge. From this point of view, the reality is not objective but is socially constructed by symbolic interactions. The re-conceptualized approach to the curriculum from the perspective of social conflict theory sees the curriculum as a different means of re-creating the social class structure of society (Le Riche [35]).

Social institutions in social practice are closely related to public services; hence in the education field, schools affect the learning preparation and implementation, including the curriculum. The curriculum is compiled by considering several components, such as educational objectives, content, impact on students, and the situation and the condition of the school where the curriculum is implemented. Putri [36] mentioned that the curriculum in sociology studies is a social construction formed by many factors, including technical implementation. Learning activities that focus on literacy require a curriculum as a social practice that supports individual participation in the social arena (Barton [37]). According to Beers [38], literacy has several principles in development practice. In other words, it is a literacy practice

that is integrated with the curriculum. Educational institutions play an essential role in this. Habituation and literacy learning in schools is the responsibility of school members because learning activities require language, especially reading and writing.

B. Emergency Curriculum Policy in an Attempt to Support Social Development

Rizqon [39] argued that distance learning had presented many learning obstacles. First, he mentioned that the prevailing situation when the teacher and students were technology illiterate reduced the quality of teaching and learning activities, resulting in students not understanding the lesson being delivered. Second, external access such as internet networks, laptops, and mobile phones was unavailable for the lower middle class. Third, the assessment of achievement also impacted the mastery of the material. Thus, the presence of maneuver is crucial to overcome these obstacles. The importance of the education stakeholders' role in ensuring the fulfillment of the students' need to continue supporting learning activities and educational infrastructure in Distance Learning is mandatory, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic. He also said that the government as an institution with political power could innovate to mitigate the above obstacles through policy formulation in initiating decisions, such as ensuring an adequate education system and curriculum by implementing an emergency curriculum policy.

Furthermore, Torres [40] also argued that the position of the curriculum (and school organization, education, learning methods) as an educational process in the political formation of education would result in social interactions such as competition, literacy, and political behavior, which are an essential part of the educational process. Law Number 20 of the year 2003 Chapter 1 Article 1 Paragraph 19 concerning the National Education System also explained the meaning of curriculum as a set of plans and arrangements relating to the objectives, content, and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals (National Education Department of the Republic of Indonesia [41]).

LeRiche [35] stated that the curriculum is arguably the most critical aspect of education. The curriculum is the foundation for empowering students through lifelong learning strategies. The success or failure of learning relies on developing an appropriate curriculum to achieve the goal of a better quality of life for the people. In Indonesia, the 2013 national curriculum is a refinement of the Education Unit Level Curriculum by applying integrative thematic-based learning activities (Wangid [42]). This method requires students to be active in learning and observing each discussion theme. The next theme will define the meaning of various basic concepts. This learning provides the whole meaning needed to help students solve their problems in everyday life (Lestari [43]). However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching and learning activities are carried out online, thus requiring many adjustments to quickly mitigate existing obstacles, especially in the utilization of the curriculum. The independent learning program grants

schools the freedom to innovate learning activities, especially during the pandemic, by making various adjustments, such as determining essential competencies and materials (Gusty [44]).

An emergency curriculum is simply a simplification of the 2013 national curriculum. The emergency curriculum includes several essential subjects present in the 2013 national curriculum. This simplification is intended to make it easier for teachers to focus on essential and prerequisite competencies for continuing learning at the next level. Implementation of this curriculum is temporary, and it is used only under particular conditions. (Ministry of Education and Culture, [45]). Implementation of the curriculum during the Covid-19 pandemic should be adjusted to the needs and abilities of students, such as by paying attention to the age and stages of student development, achievement of competency, meaningfulness, and usefulness learning. One of the reasons for adopting the emergency curriculum policy to teaching and learning activities was limited resources, materials that were difficult for students to understand, and the complicated learning techniques that were applied.

The implementation of this emergency curriculum policy focuses on essential things, such as literacy and numeracy (Center for Assessment and Learning of the Ministry of Education and Culture [6]). Literacy products consisting of words, sentences, and texts are now part of life because they are spread out and used everywhere. In using these products, humans require reading as this is an activity to receive and capture knowledge (Lakstian CM [46]). Not only reading, writing, and numeracy skills are also essential for humans (Nordtveit [47]). Supported by the statement of Papen [48], stated that those three abilities are a set of skills for life. These skills are helpful for understanding literacy products because there is information that is shared in the form of text or data.

The Ministry of Education and Culture [41] said that the emergency curriculum is not a mandatory option; this policy is used for its flexibility for academic units in determining the curriculum in teaching and learning activities. The difference between the emergency curriculum and the 2013 curriculum was applied previously. Although it looks practical, the implementation of this policy must be started by mapping core competencies and essential competencies. The need for diagnostic assessments in all classes is also required periodically to determine students' needs by analyzing the cognitive and non-cognitive conditions of students as a result of distance learning. The psycho-social welfare aspects of students are seen through non-cognitive assessments, including the emotional family conditions of students during distance learning.

In comparison, cognitive assessment is done by testing students' learning abilities. The cognitive assessment results will be the basis for selecting learning strategies and providing additional lessons for children lacking in learning. The assessment statement in the previous paragraph is in line with the relaxation of the curriculum and learning, which is expected to provide a meaningful learning experience without feeling burdened with fulfilling the curriculum achievements

of grade promotion or graduation. Therefore, implementing education focuses on the sustainability of life skills. Furthermore, learning activities and assignments are expected to vary according to the interests and conditions of each student, including considerations of access gaps or distance learning facilities. The emergency curriculum wants qualitative feedback without giving quantitative scores (Ministry of Education and Culture [41]).

Similar to the previous explanation, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) in the Socialization of Curriculum Simplification and Elementary Numerical Literacy Module 2020 stated that the curriculum simplification process was carried out by identifying prerequisite essential competencies in one subject first. Next, identify the essential basic competencies in one subject, thirdly group them into one scope or the same competency group in one subject, then identify repeated, essential competencies in one subject. Finally, consider the scope when essential competencies are taught in particular conditions.

The emergency curriculum contains modules with dense explanations specifically for teachers and students' learning partners at home, such as parents. This curriculum also provides literacy and numeracy learning modules to overcome literacy loss. The modules are done for several targets, first a learning module for students, which is equipped with a detailed and contextual explanation of learning activities that contains instructions for learning activities, story sheets, reading journals, properties (letter cards, number cards, measuring tools) supported by the allocation of time to be spent to make it easier for students to train their learning time management.

The similarity between the modules for parents and teachers in the emergency curriculum policy is their function as facilitators. Educators need to act as facilitators to learn what makes sense for children during a pandemic. The teacher's role as a dominant facilitator assists and supports children's learning. Teachers support children's learning in various ways by creating different learning experiences through their interests and needs. Teachers' modifications include coordination procedures, explanation of student learning activities, scope, and framework (learning objectives, basic curriculum mapping, etc.). Ornstein [49] showed that teachers act as facilitators by being good classroom managers, responding directly to students, practicing student learning practices through assignments, asking the right questions, understanding learning, and monitoring the nature of learning. The presence of the module maximizes the teacher's role as a class manager who tends to monitor student learning even during distance learning.

The role of parents as facilitators in the implementation of distance learning is also essential to help and motivate children to achieve positive results, so this also requires internal and external motivation at home (Hapsari [50]). The particular parent module contains guidelines for summarizing weekly learning activities to prepare for consistent learning, such as organizer sheets and weekly learning activity summaries (Ministry of Education and Culture [6]). The emergency curriculum module for the

Elementary/Islamic Elementary level that specifically aims to improve literacy and numeracy can be accessed on the <https://bersamahadapikورونا.kemdikbud.go.id/tingkat-sd-modul-belajar-literasi-numerisasi/page>. The involvement of partners as companions in overcoming literacy loss is essential in the implementation of learning during limited learning activities.

Literacy was chosen as the focus in the emergency curriculum because literacy and numeracy are fundamental competencies that are simplified in the form of learning modules as below, the detailed version of the module can be accessed on the <https://bersamahadapikورونا.kemdikbud.go.id/tingkat-sd-modul-belajar-literasi-numerisasi/page> (Center for Assessment and Learning of the Ministry of Education and Culture [41]). In line with Midgley's [28] opinion, literacy is integrated between social and economic development, which means education develops human capital/capacity. This is a human investment to contribute to economic development in the future. Educational practice harmonizes its participatory activities by promoting the inclusion of individuals in life to support collective welfare. Literacy is a fundamental competency because it can prepare students to choose, analyze information critically and utilize their ability to make decisions. The focus of literacy skill competencies is used to build students' life skills during the Covid-19 pandemic till the forthcoming time.

The emergency curriculum policy functions as a development supporting item through the formulation of policies in the national development plan, one of which is through overcoming learning and literacy loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic, by the principles of curriculum development based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of the year 2006, which was compiled with an emphasis on potential, development, needs, students, and environmental conditions. The curriculum develops students' core skills, beliefs, good personalities, health, knowledge, capability, creativity, independence, democracy, and responsible citizens. Apart from that, emergency curriculum policies can support students' basic literacy skills related to their daily needs during a pandemic.

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 concerning the principles of curriculum development stated that it requires stakeholders' involvement to ensure the relevance of education to the needs of life such as community life, business, and the working world. Therefore, it is necessary to develop personal skills, thinking skills, social skills, academic skills, and professional skills. The skills above refer to the general understanding of literacy as a person's skills and abilities in reading, writing, speaking, calculating, and solving problems. Indeed, this is very important in fulfilling daily life skills. Supported by the literacy statement in the Prague Declaration, which stated that literacy includes the way a person communicates in society and means practices and social relations which of course intersect with knowledge, language, and culture (UNESCO [12]). Thus, literacy and language

skills are a whole unit and cannot be separated; literacy is a bridge to develop skills and solve problems. This policy also supports the embodiment of the 2005-2025 Strategic Plan known as the Policy to Improve Quality, Relevance, and Competitiveness which is based on Government Regulation number 19 of the year 2005 concerning National Education Standards as a declaration of quality education.

The emergency curriculum policy as a social policy becomes a strategy, action, or plan to overcome social problems faced by the community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only that but this policy was also created to meet the community's social needs for the ease of implementing learning activities and overcoming the loss of literacy skills during a pandemic. Seeing the obstacles faced by teachers, such as difficulties in managing distance learning, not focusing on quality curriculum completion activities, less learning time can be overcome by implementing emergency curriculum policies in carrying out learning activities. In line with that statement, the definition of social policy, which contains strategies, actions, or plans to address social problems and is made to meet social needs, includes government policies, for instance, addressing social costs, equity, distribution of public services to meet social needs and social assistance (Marshall [51]; Rein [52]; Huttman [53]; Magill [54]; Di Nitto [55]; Zastrow [56]).

IV. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder for all levels to innovate on the renewal of learning activities to produce quality and competitive human resources. The Ministry of Education and Culture created the emergency curriculum policy to deal with the current constrained education system. The emergency curriculum is no longer a discourse but can also contribute to the success of pedagogy and simplifying core material that will make learning activities more meaningful. Education no longer focuses on academic excellence alone but also considers students' basic needs who are expected to provide appropriate life skills competencies and contribute to the country's development. Nowadays, learning is no longer conducted in the usual way; education in the new average era is conducted with various updates. The input to this policy would be better if the central government also simplifies its sustainability output by updating clear and precise graduation or assessment standards to understand the direction of sustainable use of this curriculum application. To support maximum academic benefits is necessary to update, especially in developing implementation instances in regions that apply emergency curriculum policies. In addition, its development can provide an overview of the effectiveness of implementing the emergency curriculum to meet the needs of children to obtain education and innovation policies that adapt to the needs of children or students. Not to forget, updating the latest scientific, social policy in education, especially during the pandemic. Adapting the perspective can be related to the emergency curriculum policy efforts in mitigating literacy loss from teachers, parents, and education policy experts will add to producing a thoughtful and critical

perspective to create a simple framework for policy adjustments that should be implemented consistently innovate.

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