Blended Learning as an Alternative for Learning in the New Normal Life

By

Khundhori Muhammad
Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia
khundhori.19012@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Mustaji
Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia
mustaji@unesa.ac.id

Mudjito
Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia
mudjito@unesa.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to describe blended learning in junior high schools. This research was conducted in Surabaya City in East Java Province, Indonesia. To achieve the research objectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, and staff members. The research data was analyzed through the stages of a case study and phenomenological analysis. The results showed that there are five indicators found in the implementation of blended learning in 30 junior high schools in Surabaya, namely blended learning planning management; blended learning organizational management; blended learning implementation management; blended learning management evaluation; and supporting and inhibiting factors in blended learning management. Blended learning can make it more cost effective and time-efficient. Online and offline learning can increase insight and knowledge, and can improve learning outcomes, especially on specific materials. The combination of online and offline percentages can be adjusted to the needs of time allocation for learning in schools.

Keywords: blended learning, online, offline, new normal life

Introduction

The era of new civilization in the COVID-19 pandemic, or what is often referred to as the new normal, forces teachers to abandon the old learning concepts that still rely on all face-to-face. Teachers and students are shifting to the basic use of information and communication technology (ICT) (Hartono, 2020). This is a demand that must be met. It is realized that among teachers, students do not fully understand the application of technology for learning. It is hoped that in the not too distant future, all will be able to adjust, because learning using information and communication technology, or what is often called "online," is a renewal of learning. Media can be visualized in a very interesting, varied, and dynamic form when combined with the use of the internet network as a conductor. Learning in this way greatly increases the enthusiasm of students. Online learning has been carried out since the mid-1960s in England and the United States, namely by distance learning. The material is formed into videos in the form of video tapes, which eventually continue to develop into the form of CDs, DVDs, and the internet (Hartono, 2019). According to Joyce et al. (1998), online learning only increases

insight and knowledge, so it still requires real face-to-face activities (offline) if you want to get an increase in skills and attitudes. This is supported by the results of research conducted by Dziuban (2004), which states that combining online and offline training can increase students' interest in learning and is superior to 100% online training. It is also better than 100% offline training.

Blended means a mixture or combination, and learning means learning. So, blended learning is a combination or combination of various online and offline learning methods (file sharing and face-to-face) (Graham et al, 2014). Online learning, also called distance learning, is where teachers and students can do learning outside of school. They are not in the same room or face to face. Teachers provide learning through online media that can be accessed via the internet. Blended learning combines learning face-to-face with the help of information and communication technology, which has advantages, among others. Lalima (2017) describes some benefits such as students can interact directly with the content of learning and they can interact with friends, with group discussion, exchange of opinions, access e-library, virtual class, online assessment. Blended learning combines various forms of devices that can be used in learning, ranging from communication applications such as Whatsapp, Zoom, and Facebook; web-based learning programs such as Edmodo, Zenius, Quipper, and Zenler; or using other applications such as Google Classroom.

The concept of blended learning by Henzi and Procter (2004) has various compositions in the implementation of blended learning, some of which use a 50:50 percentage, meaning 50% online and 50% face-to-face. There are also those who use the percentage of 70:30, meaning 70% online and 30% face-to-face. The determination of the percentage is highly dependent on the level of mastery of the expected skills, whether or not the tools and equipment are available, and the level of initial mastery of the students. From the material side, there are material characteristics that are 100% do not require offline or face-to-face interaction, such as material for proposal preparation, preparation of working papers, preparation of work plans, preparation of books, preparation of scientific papers, and others. All difficulties that may arise from these materials can be overcome by online conversation. On the other hand, there are materials in which the percentage of face-to-face meetings must be carried out, and the higher the percentage, the better, such as: how to operate machinery and equipment, how to swim and others.

The main consideration in determining blended learning is the provision of resources in accordance with the characteristics of the material so that it is attractive, effective, and efficient. The principle of blended learning lies in communication between the facilitator and students through a combination of online and offline or face-to-face.

Theoretical Framework

Garrison and Faughan in Husamah (2014) said that the principles of blended learning are (a) the use of thinking by combining online learning with face-to-face learning; (b) Rearrangement of learning design by involving students in the learning process; (c) Re-arrange the previous pure way of learning by doing face-to-face. The most common characteristics cited by Egbert & Hanson Smith (1999) includes (a) learners have the opportunity to interact socially and negotiate; (b) Learners have enough time and feedback; (c) Students are guided to attend the learning process with full attention and (d) students work in an ideal atmosphere, namely low stress/anxiety levels. Blended learning supports all the benefits of e-learning including cost reduction, time efficiency and ensuring a comfortable location for students and more importantly, understanding each individual and his motivation (Brown, 2003; Yonge,

2014). The University of Northern Illinois (2015) states that blended learning is a flexible, social atmosphere and reusable learning object. It also helps students learn according to the pace of their capture of the material and their time. In blended learning, students have enough freedom to learn from time to time with feedback provided by the facilitators. This is the best way of learning between facilitator and learners.

Then we can conclude that blended learning has certain characteristics as its main characteristics, such as a learning process that combines various learning models, learning styles, and the use of various information and communication technology-based learning media. It is a combination of independent learning via the online and face-to-face learning by facilitators with their students and a combination of independent learning. Students' learning is supported by effective learning from the method of delivery, learning methods, and learning styles. Then when it comes to students at school, in blended learning, parents and teachers also have an important role in students' learning.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method regarding the blended learning that is used by 30 junior high schools in Surabaya City. Respondents were comprised of 30 school principals, 30 teachers, and 3 supervisors. The researchers accumulated the research data through semi-structured interviews using in-depth interview guidelines under the focus of the research. The questions relate to the focus on semi-structured questions and open-ended questions concerning the implementation of blended learning for almost two years. In-depth interviews with each respondent were conducted twice or more on average, with the duration of each meeting lasting 60 minutes. The analysis of the data in this study uses the tradition of case studies of phenomenology (Creswell, 2016) by using the following steps, (1) create and organize files for data, (2) read through the text, make margins and notes, the form of core codes, (3) describe the case and its context, (4) use categorical aggregation, and (5) establish patterns of categories. We maintain the validity of research data through triangulation and comparative studies through school documents related to interview data.

Results

Based on the results of research on how to manage blended learning at the junior high school level during new normal life in Surabaya, five indicators emerged, namely planning management, organizing management, implementation, management evaluation and the supporting and inhibiting factors of blended learning in 30 junior high schools in Surabaya, that is:

a. Blended Learning Planning Management
The management of blended learning learning planning is planned when the instruction is from the Surabaya City Education Office. This means that when instructions from the Central Government of Jakarta are forwarded simultaneously to all schools under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. Instructions for online learning at all levels of education. This instruction is confirmed in the official government regulation.

Empirically, there are several cases of blended learning planning management realization in junior high school of Surabaya. First, the readiness of the central government must guarantee that by providing a smooth and stable internet connection, quota subsidies, digital device assistance, and increasing digital capacity, it also minimizes access inequality. Second, the readiness of budget allocations specifically to support the smooth running of the

online learning activities. However, the readiness that has occurred in several online learning schools has not been met, meaning that neither schools nor parents can do it if they do not have adequate quotas to access their devices.

Blended learning also does not occur when teachers and students both do not have computers and android mobile phones. Schools allow funds from the education office to be used to support the implementation of online learning. Because education is very important in any circumstances, education must always be sought to run smoothly and well. So that distance learning can be implemented in all junior high schools of Surabaya.

Some findings of blended learning planning in all junior high schools of Surabaya, namely the readiness of blended learning planning based on instructions from the Surabaya City Education Office looks less mature; the readiness of blended learning planning for all teachers in the field of study is still lacking; the readiness of blended learning planning attached to every teacher in the field of study to implement it is still not optimal; readiness and socialization of blended learning planning for all students taking less lessons; the readiness of blended learning planning is informed by the principal and students must have an android cell phone or PC or laptop less; and the readiness of learning planning Blended learning seemed sudden, namely in the form of strategies and methods related to the implementation of teaching when at home was lacking.

b. Blended Learning organizational management

Based on the overall description of the data exposure findings that have been put forward, the notes on the findings of the cases found relate to the organization carried out by all junior high schools of Surabaya, mainly: organizing learning is done through the division of tasks for all teachers is not maximized; learning organizing is carried out delivered during meetings both to teachers in the field of study that are lacking; organizing learning is carried out on an ongoing basis forwarded to all poor school residents; organizing this learning is carried out including the division of tasks to IT trainers that are less than optimal for each teacher; and the teacher's strategy for organizing online learning is less than optimal.

c. Blended Learning Implementation Management

The case findings related to the implementation of blended learning are shown as follows: the implementation of blended learning management requires teacher resources capable of using an Android cell phone or laptop to understand optimally; implementation of blended learning management requires sufficient financial resources or budget; the implementation of blended learning management requires facility resources, projector media, laptops in each class that have not been fully prepared by schools to support learning policies; and the implementation of blended learning management requires that the information resources used are still lacking, only obtained through school supervisors and the Surabaya City Education Office.

Since the government implemented social distancing to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, there were restrictions on meetings with students. This has an impact on teaching and learning activities in several schools which were originally face-to-face in class, shifted to distance education in a network with an online system. For this reason, the implementation is very disturbed if there are cases such as students being unable to attend lessons due to illness, quota runs out, and cell phones are still old school, meaning they are not androids. For that provision like this is a separate case for all schools

d. Blended Learning Management Evaluation

Case findings of evaluation of blended learning management in all junior high schools of Surabaya include: teachers' understanding of blended learning has not been fully understood by all teachers as the target group; the principal has not been maximal in supervising learning; teachers still need the assistance of trainers in operating computers or cell phones in student learning; and the internet quota that is continuously being carried out has not been consistently met by schools.

e. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Blended Learning Management

Some findings from the results of research on the supporting factors for blended learning management in all schools in Surabaya are: (1) Supporting factors: the management of blended learning in schools is supported by all teachers and education personnel; the use of blended learning during the pandemic is suitable for schools to implement; the quota budget for teachers is provided by the school; and school-facilitated student blended learning services. (2) Inhibiting factors: management of blended learning in schools has not been accompanied by a clear step procedure to implement it; the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum have not mentioned Blended Learning in the New Normal Life period and in the future; the use of blended learning during the pandemic requires mature readiness from schools; the quota budget for teachers has not been fully funded by schools; a special room has not been prepared in schools for teachers to teach blended learning; and student blended learning services have not been maximally facilitated by schools.

Discussion

Kant, K. (2014) mentions the following limitations of blended learning: (1) Before a blended learning scenario can be considered ready for use, the preparation of learning must do a long, detailed and extensive work. (2) Learners sometimes feel that they are given more work to do when the distance modality is used. (3) The materials developed by the facilitators cannot be just the same set that they developed for the handouts. There is no doubt that new technologies used in the teaching and learning process improve student performance. More information can be gathered using technology and information sharing can take place not only on campus but also around the world. The flexibility and accessibility of the method make it more interesting and challenging. It motivates the learners to complete their assignments within the allotted time. The current generation of learners are digital natives. They were born with the internet, and now they are transitioning from the old to the new, more participatory and more collaborative web-based technology. The Importance of Blended Learning In many fields, it has been proven that information technology and blended learning and their applications in the New Normal Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic have been proven.

In the field of education, the use of information technology and telecommunications has provided the widest opportunity for students to study independently online without having to be constantly accompanied by a teacher. Likewise, the teacher can produce one broadcast material or teaching material (e.g., in the form of a video) that can be used repeatedly so that time can be used to improve other work. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that online learning does have obstacles, especially interaction constraints (Husamah, 2014). Students want further explanations about something that may not have been explained in detail in the video material. Likewise, teachers also need to explore whether it is true that students have increased their competence with online learning.

Even though there are currently many online media that facilitate such communication, such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and so on, when it comes to skills, it cannot only be done with online media. Mixed learning, or hereinafter referred to as blended learning, is a way out of all the problems of online learning, which is a combination of online and offline (face to face). Increased knowledge and insight can be fully achieved online in the form of video materials and online interactions, while skills and work attitudes can be complemented by offline learning, especially technical materials such as agriculture. Various studies in various faculties by Mayes and Marison in Jeffrey show that many lecturers are interested in online learning, but Bates and Sangra add that online learning really needs offline learning (face-to-face) to provide feedback from students to the facilitator and vice versa.

The combination of online and offline learning or training can result in effective and efficient learning or training. Effectively, blended learning or training is a balanced training between increasing insight and knowledge through online and improving skills through offline, while attitudes can be obtained from online and offline learning. Efficiently, the facilitator can arrange teaching materials in the form of multimedia only once and can be used many times. Learners can access online materials anywhere and anytime according to their needs and time availability. Likewise, with costs, students are only collected in a relatively short time because they no longer discuss knowledge and insights but only improve skills, especially technical agricultural skills. The benefits of blended learning can be demonstrated as follows:

a.   Help students develop project and time management skills (Spika, 2002).
b.   Develop a stronger sense of community among learners than traditional/conventional or fully online training (Rovai and Jordan, 2004).
c.   Support the provision of information and resources for students (Griffith institute for higher education, 2010).
d.   Engaging and motivating learners through interactivity and collaboration (Griffith Institute for Higher Education, 2010).
e.   Synchronous technologies such as Skype and Elluminate Live, allow students to communicate.
f.   Blended learning and its applications in the "New Normal Era" of the COVID 19 pandemic

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that there are five indicators found in the implementation of blended learning in 30 junior high schools in Surabaya, namely blended learning planning management; blended learning organizational management; blended learning implementation management; blended learning management evaluation; and supporting and inhibiting factors in blended learning management.

Learning programs that use full online are not appropriate for face-to-face learning because there are subjects that require practice, such as how to practice biology in the laboratory, how to calculate mathematics and other subjects. Blended learning is a very effective and efficient way to increase students' ability to have fun. Students' interest in learning is greater with a comfortable learning environment. Blended learning offers better learning, either separately or in groups and at the same or different times.

References

Alammary, A., Sheard, J., & Carbone, A. (2014). Blended learning in higher education: Three different design approaches. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 30(4).
Bath, D., & Bourke, J. (2010). Getting started with blended learning. Switzerland: GIHE.
Bruce, J., Marsha, W., & Emily, C. (1998). Model of Teaching. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

Brown, R. (2003). Blended learning: rich experiences from a rich picture. Training and Development in Australia, 30(3), 14-17.

Charles, D. D, Joel, L.H., & Patsy, D.M. (2004). Blended Learning. Research Bulletin.Vol. 7(1).

Dangwal, K. L. (2017). Blended learning: An innovative approach. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 5(1), 129-136.

Graham, C. R. (2004). Impress Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Persepektives, Local Designs. San Fransisco CA: Pfeiffer Publishing

Graham & Charles, R. (2004). Blended Learning Systems: Definition, Current Trends, and Future Directions. San Fransisco CA: Pfeiffer Publishing

Hains-Wesson, R., McKenzie, S., & Bangay, S. (2015). Anytime and anywhere: a case study for blended learning. Educause review, 1-11.

Hartono, S. (2019). Using photomath learning to teach 21st century mathematics skills: a case study in two-variable linear equation problem. 4thICERD, 296.

Hartono, S. (2020). Effectiveness of Geometer's Sketchpad Learning in Two-Dimensional Shapes. Editorial from Bronisław Czarnocha, 84.

Heinze, A., & Procter, C. T. (2004). Reflections on the use of blended learning. Salford: University of Salford.

Husamah. (2014). Pembelajaran Bauran, Blended Learning, Jakarta: Prestasi Pustaka Publisher.

Ishak, A. & Deni, D. (2013). Teknologi Pendidikan. Bandung: PT Roda Karya.

Jackson, B. (2014). What Blended Learning Means for Teacher. Retrieved July, 21, 2015.

Jeffrey, L. M., Milne, J., Suddaby, G., & Higgins, A. (2014). Blended learning: How teachers balance the blend of online and classroom components. Journal of Information Technology Education, 13.

Kant, K. (2014). Blended Learning: A Latest Trend in Higher Education. University News, Vol. 52, No.34

Kauts, A. & Kaur, G. (2014). Blended Learning: A Shift from Unimodal to Multimodal. University News, Vol.52, No.09

Nurhadi, N. (2020). Blended Learning dan Aplikasinya di Era New Normal Pandemi Covid 19. AGRIEKSTENSIA: Jurnal Penelitian Terapan Bidang Pertanian, 19(2), 120-128.

Precel, K., Eshet-Alkalai, Y., & Alberton, Y. (2009). Pedagogical and design aspects of a blended learning course. International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 10(2).

Rovai, A. P., & Jordan, H. M. (2004). Blended learning and sense of community: A comparative analysis with traditional and fully online graduate courses. International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 5(2), 1-13.

Shivam, R., & Singh, S. (2015). Implementation of Blended Learning in Classroom: A review paper. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 5(11), 369-372.

Vaughan, N. (2007). Perspectives on Blended Learning in Higher Education. International Journal on Elearning, 6(1)

Yonge, P. K. (2014). Blended Learning: Making it Work in Your Classroom. Retrieved July, 22, 2015.