Research article

The Implementation of Distance Higher Education Policy

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Abstract.

The policy tools for implementing services for citizens to increase capacity, competence, and qualifications through distance higher education (DHE) are widely accessible. It is however unclear which methods the Government uses and can use to implement these DHE policies operationally for citizens to immediately obtain the benefits. Furthermore, the opportunities for citizens to continue to higher education are limited, as evidenced by the low gross participation rate (APK). This rate is around 34.5% due to factors such as policymakers' commitment, policy implementers' ability, inequality of access, and public knowledge about DHE. Information technology is a tool for implementing distance education that has a substantial systemic and constructive impact on dedicated students. It also affects the continuity of the Government, the House of Representatives, and academics.

Keywords: policy implementation, distance higher education, information technology

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1. Introduction

Distance Higher Education (DHE) management with single-mode or consortium has systemic and massive implications on the number and range of services for hundreds, thousands and even millions of students. These services include practices carried out by DHE in the world, such as Open University in the United Kingdom, China, Pakistan, Turkey, and Universitas Terbuka (UT) in Indonesia. Furthermore, the implementation of DHE reaches all corners and provides access to a variety of (systemic) communities that require increased capacity, competence, educational qualifications, and massive services. These services are required to enable to communities serve hundreds of thousands and even millions of students.

The Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (MRTHE) implements various higher education regulations such as Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 109 of 2013. Furthermore, the Minister of Education and Culture, in Decree Number 0564 of 1991 implemented Distance Education in Higher Education. Meanwhile,

Decree Number 51 of 2019 was concerned with the organization, dissolution, and revocation of Higher Education by state and private universities which were related to distance education (DE) implementation. Through the implementation of DE there also exists opportunities for higher education providers or other stakeholders to improve the quality of human resources. Capacity, access, infrastructure and costs, tools, networks, and management aspects of managing face-to-face higher education are the main obstacles of DE implementation. Other problems related to the number of secondary school graduates and persons with the desire to continue annual studies but could not be accommodated in face-to-face colleges were 2,022,776 [1]. This number was equivalent to 750,000 registrants, which indicated a low rate of Indonesian partication, and this contributed only 34.5%.

Furthermore, the community and prospective organizers of DHE are still unsure concerning the existence of a DHE administration, in terms of philosophy, learning process, management, and carrying capacity of superstructure and infrastructure. The 4.0 industrial revolution era is important and an opportunity for prospective organizers of DHE to participate and contribute significantly towards improving the quality of human resources.

Problems regarding the importance of DHE are inseparable from the commitment and consistency of regulators during the formulation of effective policies. These problems also affect the ability to implement policies, duties and functions consistently, which commences from the formulation, implementation and evaluation stages of DHE [2, 3] at the central level, which is the House of Representatives and Ministries, to the regional level which is the Regional House of Representatives and provincial/city/regency governments.

2. Policymaker Commitment

Law number 20 of 2003 was concerned with the National Education System, while number 14 of 2005 was concerned with Teachers and Lecturers. Furthermore, Law Number 12 of 2012 and article 31 were concerned with Higher Education, and an explanation of Distance Education respectively. The article explains that DE is the process of teaching and learning carried out at a distance using various communication media. Therefore, the Minister of Education and Culture, in Regulation No. 109 of 2013 (Article 2)[4] explained that DE aims to provide higher education services to groups of people without face-to-face education or access and participate in higher education services in learning.

The policy was a product of the House of Representatives which was followed up by executives with various derivative regulations[5]. The MRTHE dissolute and revokes licenses of state and private universities that do not include DHE. It is the main implementor of policies which help maintain the credibility and authority of academic quality. This form of policy was an initial step and commitment from the legislature and executive on the importance of improving the competence, capacity, and qualifications of human resources systemically and massively.

Furthermore, policymakers use full capacity to carry out an important role which is ensuring continuous observation, protection, and analysis of DHE policies. These policies are implemented by the MRTHE through the director-general, related directorates, and central and regional bureaucratic stakeholders of DHE. Subsequently, the implementation of DHE is measured by evaluating policies as an input in the process of assessing whether the content or context of future policies needs to be revised or replaced.

Commitment and consistency of DHE policies require long-term strategic steps in the policy process added to political stability from the House of Representatives and the consistency of the implementors namely the MRTHE and related ministries stakeholders. The above bodies are committed to constructive criticism of the consistency and continuity of DHE implementation which is profit oriented.

Furthermore, government policies during the period of 2019-2024 that will prioritize the improvement of human resources and consistent DHE policies with concrete plans and programs for the community and stakeholders required more measurable focus on achieving the competency needs of national and global market users. It will also need more user-targeted programs and continue to maintain the stability of equal opportunity in the absorption of human resources to eliminate the paradox of Java-centric [5].

3. Implementor's Ability, Commitment, and Consistency

The MRTHE as DHE implementor shows the importance of the role carried out by DHE. Its role is very strategic and has systemic and massive imprisonment that provides access to citizens who desire to improve quality and dignity through education. Implemented policies are carried out through actions and real programs that support the ability of the implementer[6] at the ministry level commencing from the director-general, directors and related bureaucratic devices. These parties involved consistently disseminate or communicate [7] DE implementation all universities and regional government through the provincial, city or regency education office. Furthermore, other efforts

can be carried out by establishing an ad hoc institution in the ministry for the provision of understanding to higher education organizers or community members interested in DHE.

The consistency of regulators greatly determines the success or failure of the DHE implementation [2] which is not separated from the interests of various stakeholders and the political policies of human resource development (HR). The government's focus in 2019-2024 is to improve the quality of human resources, especially in vocational education that requires specific and massive competencies for the interests and absorption of national, regional, and global human resources. This improvement is carried out to ensure that the role of DHE remains crucial in determining accuracy, compatibility, and success in producing quality human resources.

4. Access for All

The nation and state levels of Indonesia are very diverse in various aspects that open opportunities for the citizens to use and enjoy access to quality higher education which leads to an increase incompetency. Furthermore, the number of high school graduates was approximately 2,022,776 people in 2019. Topographical and geographical conditions were challenges with implications in the form of education disparities within the outermost and foremost regions.

The DHE implementation has always relied on information technology (IT) as a tool to facilitate its management. One of the strategic efforts is to provide access for citizens to improve capacity, competence, and qualification. The providers strengthen and expand networks with increased bandwidth, which is very helpful and easier for people to use and enjoy DHE.

Furthermore, the 4.0 Revolutionary Era is constructive and beneficial for the community provided that the MRTHE and related ministries are consistent and continuous in implementing DHE. This is seen particularly during the instruction of state universities to carry out DHE, appealing and convincing private universities and interested institutions to organize DHE, and supporting infrastructure, such as IT devices and DHE management training, and superstructure facilities commencing from the stages of preparation and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

Obtaining equitable education through DHE reflects on the government's concern that all citizens should receive the same education services apart from the existing face-to-face education services, which is only different in learning mode. Furthermore, the government also implemented the mandate of the 1945 Constitution, article 30. This

article was followed up with other derivative policies and stated that every citizen had the right to education.

The development of DHE implementation in Indonesia commenced in 1960. According to the development and the regulatory push, various universities provided DHE, as shown in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: Providers Of Higher Distance Education in Indonesia.

No.	Providers	Number Of Study Programs	Explanation
1	Universitas Terbuka	40	1 Diploma III Program, 1 Diploma IV Program, 31 Bachelor Programs, dan 7 Master Programs
2	Bina Nusantara University	5	
3	Politeknik Kesehatan Kementerian Kesehatan Kalimantan Timur	2	
4	Politeknik Kesehatan Kementerian Kesehatan Kupang	2	
5	London School of Public Relations	1	
6	Universitas Pelita Harapan	1	
7	Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya	2	
	Total	53	

Source: Kemenristekdikti (MRTHE) 2019

The data shows that the role of providers or communities towards carrying out DHE is still low compared to the 4,312 face-to-face colleges in Indonesia. Also, the continuous education concerning the importance and strategic development of systemic and massive human resources to catch up with educational development are the MRTHE duties.

5. Information Technology Paradox

The rapid advancement of IT and the tight competition of its providers have an impact on the ease and affordability of citizens to obtain and utilize various software (paid and free features) and hardware at affordable prices on the market[8]. The views and thoughts behind IT development today may be a necessity and perhaps a dream for communities, especially citizens who live in remote areas and have difficulty accessing communication[9]. Therefore, people easily and rapidly communicate directly, both visually and virtually at affordable prices without the constraints of distance and time.

Progress, dissemination, and use of IT is easier for humans to fluently communicate and positively impact on well-being, such as the economic aspect with the availability of online banking credit, marketing, and product mapping[10, 11]. Furthermore, political aspects such as constituent communication features, the strengths, and weaknesses analysis of opposing political parties, quick count, etc. The learning process is also carried out in the form of face-to-face or distance modes.

IT has been widely used by universities, lecturers, and students, both independently and institutionally. Institutionally, universities have implemented application systems ranging from registration to graduation, provision of online learning (such as online tutorials, web seminars, video conferences), and online counseling (such as plagiarism devices, end notes, e-libraries, google scholar, etc.)[12–14].

The phenomenon that occurs due to the progression of IT cannot be separated from its positive or negative impact. There are social, political, and economic phenomena due to the abuse of IT namely bullying, online gaming addiction, spreading hoax news, manipulation, and criminalization of electronic transactions. Furthermore, this negative phenomenon also occurs in the field of education carried out by individual academics and students, such as plagiarism and the use of IT to participate in malpractice.

Various efforts were made through legislature to prepare policy instruments due to the enactment of Law Number 19 of 2016 which was concerned with Electronic Information and Transactions. Activists also attempted to provide positive education on the use of IT in a constructive direction, such as the development of DHE in Indonesia through various modes of implementation.

The spread and education of DHE are not completely limited to the provision of opportunities and equalization for capacity improvement, competence, and education qualifications to the community alone. The most important value is how the content and context of educators Jones CO. An introduction to the study of public policy. California: Wadsworth. Inc.; 1996. (lecturers, tutors, instructors) change students' behavior and attitudes more constructively, systematically, and massively through the role of DHE.

6. Conclusions

1. Commitment and continuity of the House of Representatives and the government become a gamble during the implementation of structured and massive DHE.

2. DHE is the right step implemented by the MRTHE with operational implementations in various universities.

3. The management of DHE requires committed and serious management capabilities, not strictly based on technological progress and the high cost of implementation.

4. There is a need for security and wisdom in the use of IT, especially among academics to maintain integrity in educating students with a constructive impact that leads to changed behavior and attitudes.

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