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Blended Learning Management: The Efforts to Develop Students' Soft Skills in the New Normal Era

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan manajemen pembelajaran blended learning dalam mengembangkan soft skill siswa di era kenormalan baru. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Lokasi penelitian ini MI Raudlatul Jannah I Maron Probolinggo. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan data primer dan sekunder. Data primer diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi. Sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh melalui dokumen dan perangkat pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan manajemen blended learning di MI Raudlatul Jannah I terdiri dari perencanaan, pelaksanaan dan evaluasi. Penerapan blended learning di era kenormalan baru dapat mengembangkan soft skill siswa dalam empat aspek yaitu kedisiplinan, kejujuran, sikap dan komunikatif.

Kata Kunci: blended learning, soft skill, era kenormalan baru

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the application of blended learning management in developing students' soft skills in the new normal era. This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The location of this research is MI Raudlatul Jannah I Maron Probolinggo. Data collection is done with primary and secondary data. Preliminary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and observation. At the same time, secondary data is obtained through documents and learning tools. The results showed that the application of blended learning management at MI Raudlatul Jannah I consisted of planning, implementing, and evaluating. The application of blended learning in the new normal era can develop students' soft skills in four aspects, namely discipline, honesty, attitude, and communicativeness.

Keywords: blended learning, soft skill, new normal era

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INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus is a new type of disease that has never been identified and causes infectious diseases in humans; WHO has declared it a public health emergency that is troubling the earth's population (Gunawan, Purwoko, Ramdani, & Yustivar, 2021). When WHO determines and decides the status of Covid-19 as a pandemic, it will not change the way the virus works but will change the order of all aspects of life, both structurally and systemically (Basalamah, 2020). This not only impacts the economic, political, social, and cultural sectors but also impacts the pattern of education that changes significantly, which will result in a decrease in the quality of student learning (Gunawan et al., 2021).

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, education and training in schools took face-to-face through a learning process carried out in the classroom (Offline). However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hits, education and training must be carried out creatively and held virtually (online) so that the learning process does not stop due to the pandemic (Sandroto, 2021). The dominant pandemic emergency requires the learning system initially implemented in schools to be replaced with online learning carried out at home so that the learning process continues. Then, after the new average era, learning activities can be carried out with two learning systems, namely online and offline learning. In the new normal era, we must adapt to life by implementing strict health protocols, namely washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining distance (Diana & Rofiki, 2020).

With such a pandemic, principals as leaders and teachers as individuals who are in direct contact with students must be more alert and quick in choosing and implementing alternative learning. As the central point in learning, the teacher must be able to manage the learning system effectively, innovatively, and efficiently to achieve the planned learning objectives (Moh Rofiki, 2019). One way to improve the quality of education is to optimize the learning process effectively. The key to effective learning is to involve students in active learning. Learning is a complex process that applies to every individual interested in their life. The learning process is created because of the individual in the area. So it can be said that learning can happen anytime and anywhere (Hayati & Wijaya, 2018).

Learning only carried out online creates new problems in achieving educational goals. Online learning needs the participation of parents in its implementation. This is a consequence of substitute teachers providing supervision and guidance at home. In addition, which is no less critical related to this issue, online learning has the potential to make students experience difficulties in social interaction. Therefore, in optimizing learning in the new normal era, a good learning model is needed to improve students' soft skills, especially in primary education. Soft skills are understood as a person's competence and skills in social relations with other people (interpersonal skills) and competencies and skills in controlling and managing oneself (intrapersonal skills) (Warni & Intan, 2016). For primary education institutions, the development of soft skills for students is very much needed, considering that primary education is a strong foundation for students to implement in everyday life and as initial capital in continuing to higher education.

In addition, the development of students' soft skills must be developed and instilled from an early age to maximize students' potential. Education aims to maximize the potential of students. Education is carried out through a learning process. The learning process will be created when there is a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students with their environment to achieve the proclaimed educational goals (Moh Rofiki & Munawaroh, 2021, M Rofiki & Hasanah, 2021). Teachers in the learning process need a learning model as an introductory communication that is easier and more convenient to use. Teaching materials can be delivered optimally, and learning can be carried out optimally to develop students' basic non-technical abilities and skills. Students' basic non-technical skills and skills can be described as follows:

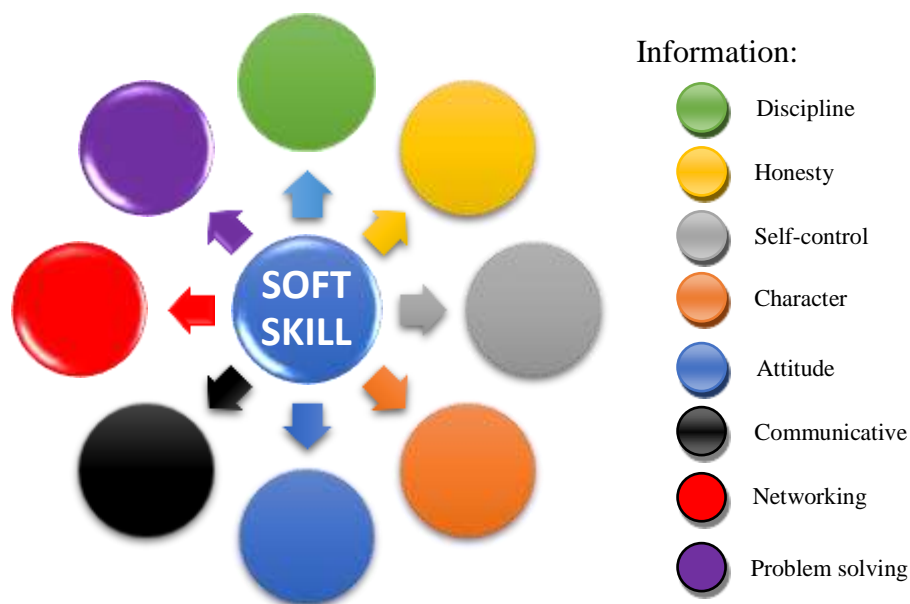


Figure 1. Basic non-technical skills (Soft Skills) (Mardatillah, 2016)

In the new normal era, education needs technology that can facilitate interaction between teachers and students. The implementation of blended learning is entirely appropriate because it will make it easier for students and teachers to interact anywhere and anytime. Blended learning can provide peace and comfort for students and more easily access all learning topics from anywhere without leaving the house. Therefore, the blended learning method offers flexibility in determining the time and place to access the learning provided by the teacher. Because the accurate blended learning method is a learning method that combines the delivery of face-to-face education, independent learning, and online learning (internet or mobile learning), which can be described below (Abdullah, 2018, Husni Idris, 2011).

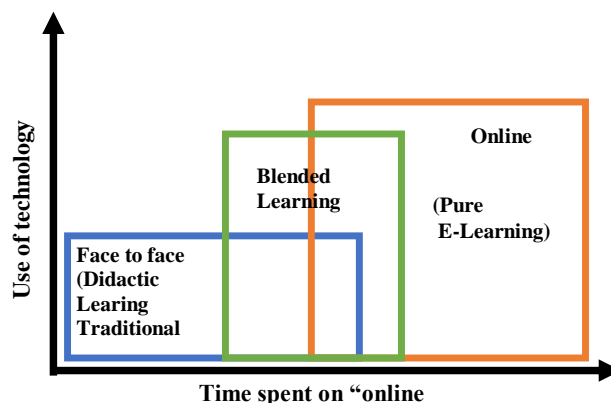


Figure 2. Blended learning concept (Henzi and Procter) (Abdullah, 2018).

Blended learning provides the flexibility to create learning experiences when needed and available for individual students both at school and at home (Fadhilah, 2021). When learning in class or the laboratory, if you need the internet and this learning contains interactive videos, online learning when outside the classroom is by presenting learning videos that can be accessed using the internet obtained from one of the e-learning media (Palera, Anriani, & FS, 2020). Looking at the current situation, the blended learning method supports teaching and learning activities in the new normal era to create easy interactions between students and teachers.

Based on the problems above, the researcher is interested in researching “Blend Learning Management; Efforts to Improve Students' Soft Skills in the New Normalization Era.” This research aims to describe the

implementation of blended learning management in improving students' soft skills in the new normal era at MI Raudlatul Jannah I Maron Probolinggo.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Researchers can describe the management of blended learning in developing students' soft skills in the new normal era. This study uses a case study research type that focuses on the object being studied. Data collection in qualitative research is carried out with primary and secondary data (Herdiansyah, 2010). The primary data was taken through observation and interview techniques. While the primary data was obtained through documentation, in this study, the researcher used in-depth interviews, which aimed to collect data or information to get a complete picture of the topic being investigated (Irianto, Heru dan Bungin, 2001). At the same time, secondary data is taken through assessment documents and learning tools. The informants in this study were coconut schools, teachers, and parents of students. The site in this research is MI Raudlatul Jannah I Maron Probolinggo. The data analysis technique used in this study used qualitative analysis. In the view of Miles and Hubberman, it consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The new normal era gives us a breath of fresh air to be able to do our normal activities. It's just that in this era, we still adhere to health protocols by using masks, maintaining distance, and washing hands. This situation also provides an opportunity for schools to be able to carry out offline learning, where previously learning had to be carried out online during the determination of Covid 19 as a pandemic. The new normal era requires educational institution managers to find solutions to problems with implementation in the learning process to improve students' soft skills. MI Raudlatul Jannah I, as a basic education institution, must educate and develop students' soft skills. Therefore, MI Raudatul Jannah I carried out blended learning to achieve this goal. This is based on the fact that blended learning can develop online and offline multimedia-based learning that has received attention from various groups (Usman, 2019). Blended learning can be used as the best solution in carrying out learning activities in less stable conditions to facilitate interaction between individuals. Based on observations and interviews, it was found that the implementation of blended learning at MI Raudlatul Jannah was carried out in several stages, namely: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Blended Learning Planning

Good learning is well-planned learning. Planning is needed as a basis for determining the learning model that will be used by the teacher in achieving the learning objectives that have been set. In planning the determination of learning carried out at MI Raudlatul Jannah I in the new normal era, it is necessary to pay attention to the state of the surrounding environment. This is in line with the results of interviews with school principals (Nursidi, 2021).

"We in determining the learning model used in the current situation must look at the surrounding environment because not all educational institutions carry out offline learning considering that there are no clear instructions in carrying out offline learning."

Learning planning is carried out in several stages before it is decided which blended learning model is used in the process of teaching and learning activities. The learning planning stage is carried out by holding an internal school meeting before being socialized to the guardians of students to obtain approval for blended learning, as was an interview with one of the homeroom teachers (Damawiyah, 2021).

"MI Raudlatul Jannah I, before holding a mixed offline and online learning, held an internal meeting between the head of the foundation, the principal, and all teachers to determine the learning model. Prior

to the implementation of blended learning, this school was fully online in carrying out learning. The blended learning model was chosen; previously, socialization was carried out to the guardians of the students to ask for approval for the use of blended learning. There are student guardians who want to continue learning online, and there are student guardians who want to learn like before this pandemic. The institution takes a middle path by implementing blended learning but still with the approval of the student's guardian first ".

The application of blended learning is motivated by the lack of mentoring and supervision of student guardians on the application of learning that only focuses on online; the use of smartphones that are not in accordance with their use as online learning media but are more widely used to play online games. This is based on the results of interviews conducted with one of the students' parents (Fatimah, 2021).

"Online learning only makes it difficult for me and other mothers in providing assistance and supervision to children because, on average, mothers here have to help their husbands in the fields and fields and take care of children and lack knowledge of using smartphones. Children use smartphones for online learning only briefly; the rest are used to play online games. I prefer learning before this pandemic, children can study at school, and I can help my husband without being preoccupied with children's learning activities."

The blended learning model was set in this planning stage by looking at some of the reasons above. The blended learning model was chosen to help students gain their rights in obtaining optimal learning. In addition, the determination of this model is also to develop students' soft skills in the new normal era.

Implementation of Blended Learning

MI Raudlatul Jannah I applies blended learning in the new normal era. The use of this learning is expected to be a problem-solving for what has been the anxiety that has occurred in the world of education. The implementation of learning is carried out while still complying with the protocols socialized by the government. The implementation of learning at MI Raudlatul Jannah I is carried out in two parts, namely online learning and offline learning, with an alternate system according to a predetermined schedule. This is as stated by the principal when the interview was conducted (Nursidi, 2021).

"Alhamdulillah, the implementation of learning is carried out with blended learning. With a note, we must comply with health protocols. Initially, we carried out this learning only for two days, namely Monday and Tuesday; offline learning was carried out, and the rest we used an online learning system. Because it is still considered less than optimal and tends to have more losses, we and all teachers agree to carry out learning in a scheduled way so that offline learning can be in the same portion."

The implementation of offline learning is not fully implemented like learning activities before the pandemic. The implementation was only carried out for four hours; this was done because the situation was not yet stable. At the same time, online learning is done only to give assignments to students that can be maximized at home. This is the result of interviews with fourth-grade homeroom teachers (Sudarmi, 2021).

"Offline learning is carried out in class only from seven to ten. This learning is considered sufficient considering the current situation. Worried that there will be officers who come to school. Offline education has not yet been socialized, whether it is permissible or not."

The implementation of blended learning makes it easy for teachers to provide and deliver learning materials. The teacher provides materials and assignments when the online learning is scheduled, while the offline schedule is used to deliver material directly from the teacher and feedback if there are students who want to ask.

Evaluation of Blended Learning

The last stage of the implementation of blended learning is an evaluation carried out to see student learning outcomes. The teacher in carrying out the assessment when learning offline by observing student behavior, such as activeness in the learning process takes place. At the same time, the online assessment is carried out by sending assignments through the WhatsApp application that has been created in a group which is usually a link that is integrated with the Google Form. This was conveyed by the sixth-grade homeroom teacher during the interview.

"We, as teachers, in providing assessments through two assessors. First, when online learning and offline learning. In online learning, we usually use the convenience of technology such as WhatsApp to send assignments that directly lead to the google form. And for offline learning, we do it by observing the activities and responsibilities of students in carrying out assignments."

It is very difficult to objectively assess students during the implementation of online learning. This is because, in online learning, the teacher cannot thoroughly see student activity. After all, the assessment is only done by filling out the form that was previously shared in the WhatsApp group.

In the assessment of students in grades one to three, the teacher does it more flexibly than in the assessment in grades four to six. The assessment of student learning at the beginning of the implementation of blended learning was carried out door to door by sending school representatives to visit students' homes and ask some questions directly. In addition, it is also easy to take assignments directly to the school for students who are unable or unable to attend when the school representative visits by working at the school for one hour and submitting it directly to the homeroom teacher of each student. Thus, in implementing this student learning assessment, teachers at the MI Raudlatul Jannah I institution have taken advantage of the convenience of technology and reduced paper usage because they already use digital forms.

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation of student assessments. Blended learning conducted at MI Raudlatul Jannah I improves students' soft skills, which can only be seen in their overall abilities or skills in four aspects, namely: discipline, honesty, attitude, and communicativeness. This can be seen in the following image.

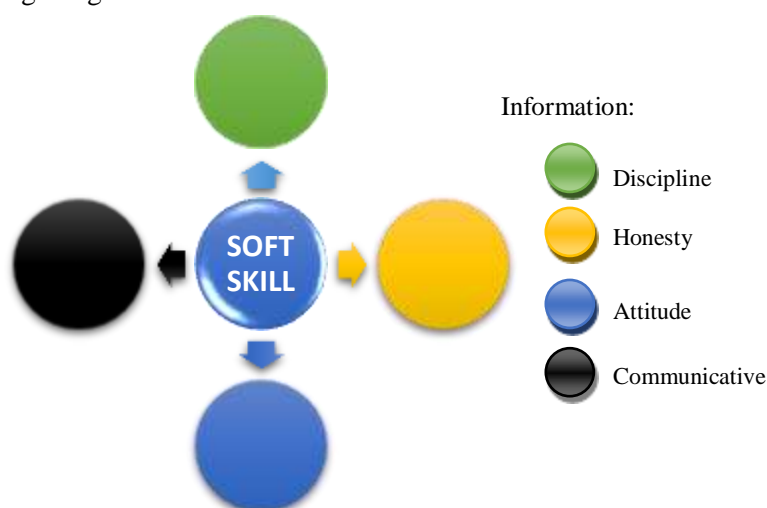


Figure 3. Soft skills of MI Raudlatul Jannah students

The blended learning model is a learning model that combines face-to-face teaching methods with computer-assisted teaching methods both offline and online to form a comprehensive method (Cohen, 1998, Sharma, 2010, Husni Idris, 2011). Another form of blended learning is online meetings involving teachers and students, where teachers and students may be in two different places, but they can also provide feedback, ask questions or answer questions, all of which is done in real-time (Sutanti, Suryanti, & Supardi, 2021). Thus, a

learning model that combines face-to-face learning methods with online learning in an integrative and systematic way will make the learning process more meaningful (Magdalena, Nadya, & Sutriyani, 2020).

This new normal era, where this condition emphasizes all parties who have policies to be able to carry out effective and creative learning to improve the abilities and skills (soft skills) of students in interacting when learning is carried out offline and online. Of course, this requires the readiness and preparation of parents to assist while learning is carried out with blended learning, considering that the object in this learning is at the basic level.

Blended learning in terms of theory is learning that is easy, safe, and comfortable. However, in the current situation, the implementation of blended learning triggers teachers and students to be able to adapt to the learning provisions that have been determined by the school. With such learning, several new problems will arise, especially among elementary school students who need parental assistance (Sudarmi, 2021).

Therefore, the principal of MI Raudlatul Jannah I, with the agreement of the teacher, chose blended learning as an effective learning alternative to improve students' soft skills because it plays a very important role in improving communication skills which is the main thing in implementing teaching and learning activities. Blended learning can improve communication skills and can increase students' interest in learning compared to full-scale learning using virtual learning (Abdullah, 2018). Therefore, blended learning can give birth to good, safe and comfortable interactions for each individual.

In addition, with the implementation of blended learning, the teacher not only focuses on student learning but also involves students to turn on active learning. Blended learning can make classroom learning more efficient and allow for increased discussion or review of information outside the study room. It is easier for students to communicate with both teachers and students between students and other students. Communication is also the foundation of existence that determines the success of the learning model. In addition, blended learning is also very dependent on the students' environment (Hubackova & Semradova, 2016).

The blended learning process is carried out; in offline learning, students can study in class according to the schedule that has been made, while during online learning, students use the WhatsApp application anytime and anywhere. In blended learning, it is carried out with dialogue media between teachers and students, which is useful for developing students' soft skills. In addition, students can develop their potential to be more active according to their respective learning styles and taste through independent study. The existence of various media in blended learning can increase student participation in learning. This is supported by a variety of media such as video and graphics.

With the blended learning method, a two-way flow of information is created between the teacher and students, and the information is equally responded to so that learning can run effectively and learning materials can be accepted and understood by students and generate positive feedback for students. Not only that, the existence of flexible learning with blended learning is quite helpful for teachers and students in communicating; the article is that in each lesson, they can access anytime and anywhere, and study time can be adjusted to the daily activities of students so that benefits and provides flexibility in determining time and place to access lessons.

Blended learning, especially teachers, can print healthy and effective classes due to the presence of the teacher's hand who can control students and their classrooms, and achieving communication effectiveness in teaching and learning activities is very dependent on both parties in improving student communication, and teachers in this learning need a good, safe and comfortable interaction. So learning that is applied with blended learning can overcome several problems that require completion through various learning methods that are quite varied, and learning is certainly more efficient. Because learning with blended learning can be done anywhere, it is very influential on what is expected in learning. In blended learning, students' abilities are very capable, one of which is that students' soft skills can be improved in various ways, including discussion forums,

assignment assignments, video, and audio production (Diana & Jannatun, 2021). Soft skills of students who develop include discipline, honesty, attitude, and communicativeness.

Blended learning is more comfortable and safe and can improve communication skills in teaching and learning activities, as well as practical, realistic opportunities, and learning can run independently, be useful, and be more developed. And with a comfortable place and learning environment can facilitate student concentration, students can also enjoy a comfortable learning process, and it is easier to communicate between individuals. It was also explained that in face-to-face learning, a teacher also provides opportunities for students to question things or teaching materials that are still not understood by students during online learning to encourage students to be more active in developing individual abilities, which can also produce good interactions and weaknesses that can hinder the course of teaching and learning activities can be overcome to the fullest.

It was also explained that from various learning characteristics, students could learn independently both online and offline, and it is easier to access more information. This can be supported by the application of several media. In online learning, students do not only access material, but some of the activities carried out are by involving interaction between teachers and students, both via WhatsApp and interactive forums. Students can also ask about some things that are not understood either by asking the teacher or other students. Also, students can work on assignments in a disciplined manner. Students are given several individual and group assignments and can answer practice questions and any material that is used as a topic of discussion in teaching and learning activities, both in online and offline learning.

Blended learning supports educators and students to create good interactions compared to monotonous learning in one direction only. The existence of blended learning can give birth to good safe, and comfortable communication, especially at elementary school levels; this can be supported by good and active communication skills with students. It is emphasized that teachers must be more sensitive and understand the needs of students in learning to be able to interact to score good communication. What is meant in this case is the ability to understand and design information, choose and use media, and encourage interpersonal communication skills in the learning process. With the presence of learning, teachers and students can form good and comfortable communication in the learning process, both online and offline. Therefore, this learning can optimize communication which is indeed the best solution and is very much needed in the learning process to achieve the learning objectives expected by the school.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning is an alternative solution to overcome the weaknesses of online learning and face-to-face learning so that it can produce a series of effective and efficient learning, especially in this new normal era. The blended learning management carried out at MI Raudlatul Jannah I consists of three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. This blended implementation provides a significant development of students' abilities and skills. Soft skills development is very important to be developed, especially during the learning period at this time. The development of soft skills for MI Raudlatul Jannah I students by implementing blended learning can be seen in four aspects, namely discipline, honesty, attitude, and communicativeness. Blended learning also has a high impact on outcomes compared to learning in which participants are carried out in one direction only (online) because blended learning can create good, safe, and comfortable communication between students and teachers so that learning objectives can be carried out efficiently and learning can run optimally.

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