

UTILIZATION OF TIKTOK AND YOUTUBE AS LEARNING MEDIA TO ADDRESS POST-PANDEMIC ACADEMIC BACKWARDNESS IN RURAL AREAS

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges to education delivery, especially in rural areas. This study aims to analyse the perceptions and experiences of students in rural areas using TikTok and YouTube as learning media during and after the pandemic. This research uses mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). The results show that students in rural areas face internet access constraints and low learning motivation. However, they are interested in using TikTok and YouTube, as they are considered interactive and easily accessible materials. This study concludes that both digital platforms have the potential to overcome the academic backwardness of students in post-pandemic rural areas. Specifically, quantitative data collected through closed questionnaires revealed that the majority of students in rural areas rely on unstable mobile internet and devices, resulting in poor connectivity. The qualitative, open-ended questionnaire highlighted decreased motivation and increased stress among about half of the respondents. Despite the decrease in motivation, the students remained enthusiastic about using TikTok and YouTube for self-directed learning. They found the platforms engaging, flexible, and enabled discussion with peers. This study suggests that increasing the interactive capacity of these digital tools could promote effective online education for underserved groups, reducing the pandemic gap.

Keywords: TikTok, YouTube, online learning, rural students, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created major challenges and changes in education delivery, especially in rural areas. Rural areas are classified by topography, distance or accessibility to urban facilities, agricultural landscape, or population density. These attributes are commonly used to describe "rural" areas in related research and policy formulation (Putri et al., 2022). COVID-19, or Coronavirus Disease 2019, first appeared in the world in December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei, China. Initially, the virus was known as the Novel Coronavirus or 2019-CoV (Louis-Jean & Aime, 2020). World Health Organization (WHO), in February 2020, announced the official name of the virus as COVID-19. According to the WHO (2020),

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS- CoV-2 virus (De Sanctis et al., 2020). The virus spread rapidly around the world, and on March 11, 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. COVID-19 is still a serious global health issue that impacts many aspects of life, including education, health, the economy, and society to this day. As explained in the previous paragraph, the education sector is one of the sectors most severely affected by COVID-19. One of the most obvious changes in the education sector is the emergence of an online learning model that relies heavily on devices and the Internet. According to the report of Education during the Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students (Departments of Education USA, 2021), the implementation of distance learning to break the chain of the virus spread has caused academic lag in students in rural areas.

This academic lag is due to a lack of access to the internet and a lack of learning support from parents. In addition, research from Chiu, Lin and Lonka (Chiu et al., 2021) also showed that students in rural areas experienced low learning motivation during the pandemic. The article explains that the main challenges to motivating online learning are a lack of interaction with teachers, technical and internet access issues, and a lack of parental support. Students tend to be passive and find it difficult to fully concentrate on online learning. Previous study on online learning during covid pandemic in West Borneo shows that it is difficult for teachers to monitor student activity because teachers can only teach using online platforms without communicating with their students (Arjunanta et al., 2021). Those studies suggest that students in rural areas face major challenges in participating in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The subjects of this study were students from rural areas in 9 districts in West Kalimantan (Kapas Hulu, Sintang, Sekadau, Sanggau, Landak, Mempawah, Bengkayang, Sambas, and Ketapang). Based on the analysis of the subject data, it was found that these subjects came from areas that have constraints on internet access. Thus, the characteristics of this research subject are by the topic to be researched and elaborated.

Digital platforms such as TikTok and YouTube have the potential to be a solution to this problem. Both platforms are very familiar to students and provide informative and interesting content. During the first quarter of 2018, TikTok placed itself as the most downloaded mobile



application with a total of 45.8 million downloads. The number of downloads even surpassed other popular applications such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram (Nugroho Aji, 2018).

YouTube is a video-sharing platform that allows users to upload, watch, and interact with videos. It has become one of the largest websites in the world and hosts a wide range of video content, including music, vlogs, tutorials, and more (author, year). Several previous studies have examined the utilization of TikTok and YouTube as learning media. According to Syarifuddin and Sinta (Syarifuddin, 2022) the development of TikTok- based online learning media for teaching local wisdom during the COVID-19 pandemic can increase student interest and learning motivation.

This study aims to analyze the perceptions and experiences of rural area students utilizing TikTok and YouTube as learning media during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This study seeks to comprehensively examine the potential of TikTok and YouTube as innovative solutions to overcoming the academic gap of rural students after the pandemic. The novelty of this research lies in the in-depth exploration of the use of popular social media platforms in the context of higher education in rural Indonesia, which has been minimally studied in the national education literature, especially in relation to higher education in rural areas.

METHOD

This research used a mixed method that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data collection was conducted through a closed questionnaire distributed to 94 students who came from rural areas in West Kalimantan. The closed questionnaire contains questions where respondents are only allowed to choose the answers that have been provided. Qualitative data collection was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire which was also distributed to the same respondents. The open- ended questionnaire contained questions where 94 respondents were asked to provide descriptive answers by writing their opinions and experiences. Data from closed questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data from the open-ended questionnaire was analyzed using a phenomenological approach to understand the perspectives and experiences of the research subjects.



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Internet Access and Digital Devices of Rural Area Students During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused face-to-face learning to shift to online or distance learning. While distance learning provides benefits for controlling the spread of COVID-19, it also increases the socio-economic gap in access to technological resources (Hossain & Rahman, 2021).

During the pandemic, there has been an increase in inequality in learning outcomes between children from low- and high-income families (Cortés-Albornoz et al., 2023; Louis-Jean & Aime, 2020). Low-income families tend to have limited access to the internet and reliable devices compared to high-income families in the same city (Francis DV & Weller CE, 2022). As a result, children from less affluent households spend less time learning and are more at risk of dropping out of school (T. Lancet, 2021).

In a survey conducted by the Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia in 2020–2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2023), the percentage of households accessing the internet in the last three months in rural areas was only 15.13%, while in urban areas it was 34.97%. This shows that households in rural areas tend to have much less hotspots internet access than in urban areas. With this internet limitation, many students have difficulty accessing the internet. A survey in Indiana also found that 8% of respondents paid additional fees for mobile hotspots due to limited home internet (Lai et al., 2020).

Table 1. Internet Usage Choices of University Students in Rural Areas
INTERNET USAGE CHOICES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RURAL AREAS

ITEM	PERCENTAGE
Mobile Data	65.22%
WIFI	32.61%
Cable	2.17%

Table 1 above shows that 65.22% of students use cellular data, WIFI only (32.61%), and cable only (2.17%). This means that the majority of students have to pay additional costs for the internet because of limited internet access at home. Based on survey data from the West Kalimantan Central Bureau of Statistics, the index of the percentage of households with



telecommunication expenses is 92.54%. The data shows that households have to pay additional costs to pay for internet access.

Table 2. Student Internet Speed in Rural Areas

STUDENT INTERNET SPEED IN RURAL AREAS	
ITEM	PERCENTAGE
> 10 Mbps	31.91%
1 Mbps	24.47%
1-10 Mbps	43.62%

Based on the data above, the majority of students in rural areas still access the internet at low-to-medium speeds (speeds of 1 Mbps by 24.47% and 1–10 Mbps by 43.62%). Thus, it can be concluded that internet access used by students for learning and daily activities still tends to be low.

In addition, based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2023), *laptop* and *smartphone* ownership in the rural area in 2020–2022 is 50.32% (2020), 55.73% (2021), and 58.15% (2022). Meanwhile, ownership of *laptops* and *smartphones* in urban areas in 2020–2022 is 72.46% (2020), 74.18% (2021), and 75.96% (2022). This means that ownership of laptops and smartphones among students in rural areas is very limited. This has an impact on the difficulty students have accessing lecture materials online.

Learning Motivation of Students in Rural Areas During Distance Learning

Table 3. Learning Motivation of Students in Rural Areas During Distance Learning

STUDENT LEARNING MOTIVATION INDEX DURING DISTANCE LEARNING	
LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
1	18.09%
2	9.57%
3	31.91%
4	15.96%
5	24.47%



The table showed that 18.09% students have a learning motivation index of 1, which indicates a very high level of motivation. 9.57% students have a learning motivation index of 2, which indicates a high level of motivation. 31.9% of students have a learning motivation index of 3, which indicates a medium level of motivation. 15.96% of students have a learning motivation index of 4, which indicates a low level of motivation. 24.47% of students have a learning motivation index of 5, which indicates a very low level of motivation. The above data shows that the majority of students experienced a decrease in learning motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4. Student Academic Demand Load Index

STUDENT ACADEMIC DEMAND LOAD INDEX	
LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
1	14.89%
2	12.77%
3	37.23%
4	13.83%
5	21.28%

Based on the data above, it shows that 21.28% of respondents feel very often burdened by academic demands and difficulty understanding lecture material during the pandemic (index 5), 13.83% feel often (index 4), 37.23% feel quite often (index 3), 12.77% feel not often (index 2), and 14.89% feel very not often (index 1).

Based on the data provided, the majority of respondents experienced difficulties quite often or very often in dealing with academic demands and understanding lecture material during the pandemic. This can be seen from the percentage of respondents:

1. Very often difficulty: 21,28%
2. Often difficulty: 13,83%
3. Quite often difficulty: 37,23%

So, the total number of respondents who experienced difficulties quite often to very often was 72.34%. Meanwhile, only 27.66% of respondents had difficulties from not often to very often.

Table 5. Student Learning Difficulty Index During Distance Learning

STUDENT LEARNING DIFFICULTY INDEX DURING DISTANCE LEARNING	
LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
1	14.89%
2	11.70%
3	30.85%

4	23.40%
5	19.15%

The data above shows that as many as 14.89% of respondents feel very rarely burdened by academic demands and difficulties in understanding lecture material during a pandemic (index 1), 11.70% feel not often (index 2), 30.85% feel quite often (index 3), 23.40% feel often (index 4), and 19.15% feel very often (index 5). Based on the research data, it can be concluded that most respondents experience a level of burden that is quite frequent to very frequent, related to difficulties in understanding lecture material during a pandemic.

Based on the closed questionnaire given to students in rural areas, the researchers discovered there are some factors cause academic stress during distance learning such as limited internet or network access, very expensive internet/quota price, lack of understanding of the material and difficulty in self-study, lack of socialization or social interaction, lack of parental support, boring and monotonous learning.

These factors are the causes of academic stress experienced by students in rural areas during distance learning. Technical constraints such as limited internet access and expensive quota prices can hinder access and disrupt the smooth flow of learning. In addition, difficulties in understanding the material and learning independently without direct guidance from lecturers can also increase stress levels.

Lack of social interaction and lack of support from parents can also affect students' academic well-being. In addition, boring and monotonous learning can also lead to high-stress levels. Students in rural areas experience academic stress during distance learning because students in rural areas experience considerable psychological pressure and anxiety as a result of social isolation, lack of social interaction, and academic support (Mulenga & Marbán, 2020).

Sudden school closures and uncertainty of when schools will reopen, the hasty adoption and implementation of distance learning, as well as crises in society in general, adversely affect the mental health of children and adolescents (Bozkurt et al., Ghosh et al., and Guessoum et al.).

In a review of data on children's learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, (Di Pietro et al.) found an increase in depressive and anxiety symptoms in children, particularly feelings of anxiety and stress. Studies on students in secondary and higher education by (Bozkurt et al., Di Pietro et al., and Xie et al.) indicated many reported increased stresses due to uncertainty of academic evaluation, potential study delays, and unfavourable home situations. According to (Arsenio & Loria and Di Pietro et al.),



increased school-related stress in both normal and quarantine periods during the previous pandemic was associated with reduced academic performance in the short and long term.

Rural Students' Perceptions of the Use of TikTok and YouTube for Learning

Table 6. Rural Students' Perceptions of the Use of TikTok and YouTube for Learning

UTILIZATION OF TIKTOK AND YOUTUBE FOR LEARNING	
PERCENTAGE	CHOICE
Yes	63.83%
No	3.19%
Maybe	32.98%

The data above shows that most (63.83%) answered Yes, only 3.19% answered No, and the rest (32.98%) answered yes when asked if they were interested in using TikTok and YouTube to access lecture materials. The respondents considered both platforms to be interactive, and interesting, and provide flexibility to learn according to their learning styles. The results of this survey indicate a very positive enthusiasm and interest among rural students to utilize TikTok and YouTube as a means of self-learning and accessing lecture materials.

This finding is consistent with previous research that examines the effectiveness of learning media in motivating students to master subject matter. As stated by (Viklous, 2022) the use of interactive learning media such as flashcards and Scrabble proved to be effective in increasing students' motivation to learn vocabulary. TikTok and YouTube, with their video features and ease of access, offer a more flexible and enjoyable learning experience, especially in the context of online learning. This suggests that digital platforms such as TikTok and YouTube have great potential to be effective learning tools, especially in addressing learning challenges in rural areas.

Experiences and Benefits of Utilizing TikTok and YouTube to Access Course Materials

Based on the data from the closed questionnaire given to students the researchers found out several benefits related to Utilization of TikTok and YouTube to Access Course Material.

Most respondents (45.7%) considered both platforms easy to understand and access. In addition, 37.2% of respondents consider learning through TikTok and YouTube to be more varied and flexible because it can be downloaded and studied again. Only 8.5% experienced obstacles such as full mobile phone memory and distractions from other notifications that interrupt concentration. Overall, the findings of



this survey indicate that rural area students perceive many advantages in utilizing TikTok and YouTube to support learning, especially in terms of ease of access and flexibility of materials.

TikTok and YouTube as Means of Discussion and Searching for Materials

Table 7. TikTok and YouTube as Means of Discussion and Searching for Materials

FEATURES ON TIKTOK AND YOUTUBE FOR LEARNING	
CHOICE	PERCENTAGE
FYP	50%
Live Streaming	13.83%
Stitch	36.17%

The data above shows that the features on TikTok and YouTube that are most often used are the FYP (For You Page) feature, which accounts for 50.00% of live streaming (13.83%), and stitch (36.17%). This data shows that half of TikTok and YouTube users utilize the FYP (for you page) feature more often. Rural area students assess that the FYP and Stitch features on TikTok and YouTube can be utilized as a learning tool even though they are constrained by internet access.

TikTok and YouTube as a Solution in Learning Implementation

Table 8. TikTok and YouTube as a Solution in Learning Implementation

TIKTOK AND YOUTUBE AS LEARNING MEDIA	
CHOICE	PERCENTAGE
Yes	52.13%
No	3.19%
Maybe	44.68%

The data above shows that 52.13% of respondents answered "yes," 44.68% answered "maybe", and only 3.19% answered "no.". The results of this study indicate that students in rural areas expect the use of TikTok and YouTube platforms as media providers for learning by lecturers.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the perceptions and experiences of students in rural areas when utilizing TikTok and YouTube as learning media during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that rural students faced challenges related to internet access and limited digital devices, which resulted in decreased motivation to learn during online lectures.

Students feel burdened by academic demands and have difficulty understanding course material, which

is caused by factors such as limited internet access, a lack of social interaction, and a lack of parental support. Nevertheless, rural area students have a positive interest in and perception of the utilization of TikTok and YouTube for learning. They consider both digital platforms to be interactive, interesting and facilitate access to lecture materials.

Based on students' experiences, learning through TikTok and YouTube is easier to understand and remember because it is supported by features such as comments and discussions that facilitate interaction between students. Rural area students expect lecturers to utilize TikTok and YouTube as media for providing lecture materials, as these two platforms are considered to be innovative and effective online learning solutions during the pandemic and post-pandemic.

Overall, the results of this study indicate the potential of TikTok and YouTube to overcome the academic lag of rural students due to the pandemic. Future research can be conducted to explore the application of specific learning models based on TikTok and YouTube to improve the learning outcomes of rural students.

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