

Article

Understanding Student Struggles: The Phenomenon of Objectification in Indonesian Online Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has positioned students as objects. They are not given a position as subjects in the teaching–learning process. The policies of the online education system have forced students to lose their rights to negotiate and interact with teachers and friends. They are required to comply with all applicable regulations in their schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper maps the objectification aspects experienced by students during online education, including the types of burdens experienced during the learning process, as well as learning evaluations that are not optimal. The qualitative method used in this paper relies on data from interviews with 30 elementary school students. The results of this paper show that the online education system during the pandemic has positioned children as passive objects who only accept the decisions of adults, depriving them of opportunities to ask questions or engage in discussions with their teachers and peers. Children were expected to adhere to all pre-determined policies without being given a platform to express their perspectives. This paper concludes that learning in the time of COVID-19 has taken away the ideal meaning of education for students, which should have been realized and safeguarded according to the expected goals.

Keywords: COVID-19; elementary schools; objectification of students; online learning; struggles



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1. Introduction

Online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has neglected students as subjects of education. Instead, students have been reduced to mere objects of education, with decisions imposed unilaterally [1]. The decision to shift to online instruction has forced students to accept everything the teacher says in the learning process, without any opportunity to negotiate or ask questions [2]. Students are made passive by accepting deliveries of materials and assignments from teachers through social media platforms, without considering their readiness and understanding of the provided materials and assignments [3]. Students

engage in their learning process within their limited knowledge for reasons of safety and health [4]. The learning process carried out by students during the pandemic is limited to absorbing knowledge from materials and assignments sent by teachers; they do not generate ideas [5].

So far, studies related to learning during the pandemic have identified three tendencies. First, online learning has caused students to experience psychological disorders, depression, and irritability [6–9]. Online learning not only keeps children confined to a limited space (their homes) but also prevents them from going to school and playgrounds [10] and eliminates students' interactions with their peers, which results in stress and loneliness [11]. Second, online learning has created various obstacles and difficulties for students [12–16]. Students are constrained by their internet networks [17,18], and the small internet data packages that they can afford to purchase makes it difficult for them to fully participate in the learning process [19]. Along with this, the monotonous learning mode resulting from learning activities that only target their cognition has created boredom among students [20]. Third, online learning causes students from low-income families to lose learning opportunities. They cannot fully participate in learning activities because they are unable to meet the necessary requirements, such as access to computers and internet data packages [21–24]. These students have not received their teachers' direct explanations, and instead, these have been replaced with the online delivery of materials and assignments, which has caused a loss in the knowledge dimension [25]. A study found that kindergarten children (4–6 years old) without formal education have achieved lower literacy skills (67%) compared with those attending formal education [26]. The existing studies have not evaluated how the pandemic can serve as a precedent for the loss of students' active roles in education. Therefore, understanding the objectification of students in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is highly crucial to discuss.

The purpose of this paper is to map the objectification aspects of elementary school students undergoing online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Correspondingly, three problems can be formulated in this research: (1) the forms of neglect of children's rights in online learning; (2) how the space limitations in online learning are described; and (3) the forms of objectification in evaluations in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These three problems are the focus of this research.

This paper argues that online learning during the pandemic has contributed to the objectification of students by positioning them as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in their own education. As a result, they have little involvement in determining their learning needs, which affects their ability to engage meaningfully in the educational process. Furthermore, students are expected to comprehend all the materials and complete assignments provided by their teachers without sufficient explanation or guidance, reducing their role to mere recipients of information. This neglect is further exacerbated by the lack of attention from parents, guardians, and teachers, ultimately depriving students of opportunities to develop their skills according to their talents and interests. Consequently, framing students as objects of education rather than active learners hinders their personal and academic growth. Therefore, it is essential to reconsider the structure of online learning to ensure that students are given a more participatory role in shaping their educational experiences.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Objectification of Students

Objectification refers to one's treatment as an object, with no consideration of the prevailing impact, such as ignoring the feelings and experiences of others [27]. According to Chen et al. [27], the subtle manifestation of "objectification" is a form of dehumanization

that has become a familiar phenomenon on social media and in everyday life. Objectification is also defined as the act of treating others as tools for particular interests [28]. Objectification, thus, may refer to ownership, as if one is owned by someone else [29]. In the world of education, student objectification is defined as the loss of students' voices in learning practices and prioritizing the benefits for institutions, academics, and students rather than engagement purposes or value [30].

The objectification of students happens in online learning when students are not given time and space, physically and symbolically, in the class [31]. The lack of direct feedback in the online learning process causes teachers to be merely instructors and students to be the learning recipients [32]. Students are forced to comply with online education policies, even though they are not given training on the use of technology. According to [33], students have lost friends with whom they socialize and learn collaboratively [33], and they have also lost their teachers as their mentors when facing difficulties during their learning process [34]. In addition, during class, students are passive, as they only accept assignments from their teachers, which does not allow for the exploration of students' interests [35].

The objectification of students in education significantly impacts the quality of their learning experience [36]. When students are treated as objects, they lose opportunities to actively participate in the learning process. This often occurs because educational policies tend to prioritize outcomes over the individual development of students. Such an approach not only neglects students' needs but also limits their capacity to express critical thinking and creativity [37]. For instance, in online learning, students are often relegated to merely receiving instructions without the opportunity to engage in dialogue or ask direct questions [38]. This practice reinforces students' passive roles and diminishes their potential for holistic development.

Furthermore, the objectification of students can lead to dehumanization in education. When students' voices are not accommodated, they not only feel alienated but also lose their sense of belonging in the educational process [39]. This condition can negatively affect their emotional well-being and reduce their motivation to learn. Moreover, non-inclusive educational approaches risk creating disparities between students who can adapt to the system and those who are left behind due to insufficient support [40]. Therefore, it is essential for educators and institutions to develop policies that position students as active subjects, providing them with space to contribute actively. This ensures that education is not solely focused on academic outcomes but also on the comprehensive development of individuals [41].

2.2. Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19, which was declared by the WHO as a global pandemic, has had a wide impact, not only on health and the economy but also on the world of education [42]. These conditions have led to the emergence of a social distancing policy, requiring people to work from home [43] and resulting in the shift from face-to-face instruction, which was carried out in schools across the world, to a technology-based online format in which students stay at home [44]. Although this shift is seen as a necessary response to the spread of COVID-19, the ongoing educational process serving Indonesian children simply cannot be neglected [45]. It is necessary to have technological devices, such as cellphones, laptops, and tablets, that must also be connected to the internet, which requires Wi-Fi and sufficient data packages. As a consequence, students must have technological devices, such as cellphones, laptops, and tablets. This sudden situation has created a serious problem because of the unpreparedness of not only educational institutions but also teachers and students in carrying out online learning in Indonesia [46]. This unpreparedness relates to

insufficient infrastructure and low competence in using digital technology among students, parents, and teachers.

The change in “tradition” in the education system caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has given way to several new problems in the world of education [47], especially in developing countries [48]. The problems that arise are caused by several important factors, such as the inability to purchase data packages, not having technological equipment, limited internet access, and unpreparedness of the teaching staff [49]. In addition, the facilities of educational institutions (schools) have not been able to adjust to the needs of the facilities and the infrastructure required to carry out online learning [50]. Muassomah [51] highlights a decline in students’ academic motivation and engagement during online learning. This shift suggests that online learning has contributed to a growing tendency among students to deprioritize both academic responsibilities and social interactions [52].

The Learning Management System (LMS) has become an essential tool for online learning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic [53]. Various LMS platforms, such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Moodle, and SEVIMA Edlink, offer features that support effective teaching and learning processes [54]. These systems enable interactions without spatial or temporal limitations within virtual spaces [55]. While different LMS platforms vary in terms of user-friendliness, they generally demonstrate similar effectiveness in facilitating online education [56]. Popular LMS options like Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp have been evaluated to identify their strengths and weaknesses in supporting distance learning [57]. However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, inadequate device specifications, and overloaded servers may hinder the optimal use of LMS in certain cases [58]. Despite these obstacles, the implementation of LMS has proven to be crucial in maintaining the continuity of education during the pandemic.

LMS can support learning through both synchronous and asynchronous systems [59]. The synchronous system enables real-time interactions between instructors and students via features such as video conferencing (e.g., Zoom and Microsoft Teams) and live chat (e.g., Google Meet or Moodle’s chat feature), facilitating immediate feedback and creating an interactive learning environment [60]. On the other hand, the asynchronous system provides flexibility for students to access learning materials, complete assignments, or engage in discussions at their convenience, without being tied to a specific schedule, through applications like Google Classroom, Edmodo, E-Learning, or Moodle’s discussion forums [60]. The combination of these two systems allows LMS to deliver an adaptive, interactive, and flexible learning experience that caters to the diverse needs of students in various situations and constraints [59].

2.3. Quality of Education

Suderadjat defines a quality education as an education that is able to produce students who have academic competence accompanied by moral values and noble characters [61]. An effective quality education is the most efficient means of empowering individuals, enhancing moral and spiritual culture, and developing individuals’ physical development as a whole [62]. Quality of education is a measure of quality standards, as well as the consequences of all components of educational institutions comprising students, teachers, stakeholders, infrastructure, and outcomes [63,64]. The achievement of the quality of the learning process is hampered with the spread of COVID-19 [65]. The interaction between teachers and students is mediated by technology, so material and knowledge cannot be optimally conveyed. This condition requires efforts to improve the quality of learning, which can result in an output standard for students who excel [66] to successfully make the transition to online learning [67]. In addition to these efforts, students are required

to self-regulate to successfully complete their learning and optimize the quality of their learning outcomes [68].

Aspects of education and quality [69] have become a focus of studies at all levels of education. Online learning is expected to be of high quality; however, the loss of students' rights as objects lowers the quality of the education [70]. Students' low competence and learning achievement [71] are also due to the loss of students' rights to receive explanations of the learning material given by their teachers. In addition to the inadequate availability of an education system that facilitates online teaching for teachers, the low level of teacher literacy in learning technology is also an obstacle in online learning.

Improving academic ability is necessary in the midst of a pandemic [72]. Low learning motivation [73] is due to the loss of students' right to socialize with their peers and teachers. Too many assignments negatively affects students' moods regarding the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic [8]. Ineffective learning [74] has made students lose their rights to develop themselves, so they must be encouraged to achieve higher learning outcomes [75]. Consequently, there are several obstacles, such as inadequate infrastructure, low teacher competence, and lack of student training and enrichment [76], so teachers must develop their professionalism to improve the quality of their students' learning outcomes [77].

3. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative method that relied on data from students' experiences of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were obtained through interviews with students in the selected schools. Student objectification takes the form of neglecting their rights and imposing constraints on them. Various actions related to student objectification were mapped in the research. Data related to students' competency and learning evaluation have implications for their achievement of educational goals.

This study involved elementary school students aged approximately 6–12 years, with participants from Java (represented by Malang, East Java) and outside Java (represented by Bengkulu). Participants were randomly selected from different schools, specifically grades 2–6. They were included in this study to highlight the objectification of students during the learning process amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the research aimed to examine whether the objectification of students had measurable significance.

Data for this study were collected through interviews with 30 children. The interviews were conducted online via voice calls, video calls, and Zoom due to social and physical distancing policies that did not allow face-to-face contact. However, there were four children who were interviewed in person while still adhering to health protocols (wearing masks, maintaining distance, and avoiding physical contact). Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 min, whether conducted online or offline. Before conducting the interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the parents and guardians of the students by contacting them via the WhatsApp numbers provided by the schools. The researcher also made appointments on the agreed-upon day and time to conduct the interviews. Without coercion of any kind, the children willingly and consciously agreed to be interviewed. The interviews aimed to explore the children's experiences during the social distancing period.

The data analysis in this study followed six stages of thematic analysis [78]. First, familiarizing ourselves with the data: This involved transcribing all collected data, reading and re-reading it, and noting initial ideas about objectification in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, generating initial codes: This stage involved systematically coding interesting features of the data across the entire dataset and organizing relevant data under each code. Third, searching for themes: Codes were then grouped into potential themes, and all relevant data for each theme were gathered. Three potential themes emerged

in this study: ignoring students' rights in the online learning process, limited opportunities for students to negotiate their interests, and neglecting students' right to study. Fourth, reviewing themes: The functionality of each theme was revisited in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset. Fifth, defining and naming themes: This ongoing process refined each theme and its associated data, resulting in clear definitions and names for all themes. Sixth, producing the report: In the final stage, clear and compelling excerpts were selected to produce a scientific report based on the analysis.

4. Results

Online learning has shifted students' learning processes from a teacher-based and communal approach to a technology-based approach, which makes the children study in isolation. This shift has resulted in the objectification of students in their learning process, as they find no space for negotiation. During class, students are mainly passive, as they only receive assignments without being given opportunities to ask questions or ask for explanations. Teachers usually send assignments through a WhatsApp Group (WAG) that includes the teachers and the students' parents or guardians. Although the delivery of any assignment is accompanied by a video explaining the material, there is no opportunity for the children to ask questions of the teachers. Parents generally act as intermediaries for student-teacher communication. These conditions not only lead to the neglect of students' rights in the learning process but also overwhelms students with too many assignments. In addition, students are not provided opportunities for negotiation, and the evaluation of their learning is not effectively carried out.

4.1. Ignoring Student Rights in the Online Learning Process

The online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic not only shifted the learning system but also changed the position of students from subjects who directly participated in the learning process to objects who only received assignments. This change in their position has resulted in the neglect of three kinds of students' rights in the learning process: (1) the right to receive references/explanations from teachers and rewards; (2) the right to a sense of togetherness, socialization with their classmates, and learning opportunities from one another; and (3) the right to motor development and self-development. Table 1 below shows evidence of the neglect of students' rights.

Table 1. Neglect of students' rights.

Participants	Student Experience	Code
Respondents (R) 1, 4, 13, 14	There is very little explanation from the teacher; cannot ask for help if I face difficulties when completing the assignments	Right to receive explanations
R2, 3, 6, 7, 11	Now, I have to study on my own, so I get tired and bored; there is no one to discuss and play with	Right to socialize
R8, 12, 16	My hobbies are playing chess, badminton, drawing, and reading books in the library; now I cannot engage in my hobbies.	Right to self-development
R9, 10	Cannot feel proud and happy when moving up to the next grade, becoming a champion	Right to rewards
R15	Cannot talk and communicate directly with teachers and friends	Right to socialization

Table 1 shows that during online learning, materials were sent by the teachers without any explanation, and this resulted in students losing their right to receive explanations and references. The materials and assignments were delivered via WhatsApp groups involving parents and teachers and then passed on by the parents to their children. Students could

not fully understand the materials sent by the teacher through the WhatsApp platform, and they experienced confusion when completing assignments given by their teachers. Opportunities to directly ask questions to the teachers were no longer available in online learning. Teachers' explanations, which previously were the sources or references available to students, have shifted to technology-based online references, preventing students from fully understanding the materials. In the end, students only receive grades. The absence of teachers during the students' learning process has resulted in a shallow transfer of knowledge.

Online learning during the pandemic has changed the educational tradition from a communal to an individual arrangement. Students are forced to study independently, without any friends to study and play with or compete against. Students who used to be able to collaborate, cooperate, and work individually in the presence of their classmates now have to study by themselves at home, without the physical presence of their classmates and teachers. Similar to students in junior and senior high schools, elementary school students benefit from competing with their classmates in class, which can improve their motivation and enthusiasm to learn and achieve the best results. In class, students who are left behind during lessons are often motivated by their classmates to work harder and catch up. However, in online learning, students cannot engage in hobbies that require others to participate, and these interests cannot be developed. Opportunities to socialize with classmates and friends disappear in online learning, and this results in the loss of another right for the students.

Online learning during the pandemic has limited the transfer of knowledge that is cognitive in nature and neglected students' motor development. Students cannot fully participate in sports education because the materials are only given via videos, and their assignments are also submitted in video format. When they are asked to practice kicking a soccer ball, they can only do so individually, without the physical presence of their classmates playing roles as teammates or opponents. Physical fitness exercise, which was usually performed by students of the same class on the school field, now must be performed by every student alone at home, and they must submit a video of their practice containing one to eight movements. These conditions have hindered children's motor development, which requires a variety of movements. During online learning, students are forced to be less active. In other words, students' self-development during the pandemic is limited to mere cognitive development.

4.2. Limited Opportunity for Students to Negotiate Their Interests

Online learning has required students to carry out their learning processes independently without teachers' direct assistance. These conditions have caused children to experience friction that increases the obstacles and difficulties they encounter. Students do not have the space or opportunity to negotiate with teachers and friends in solving problems they face during their learning process, and tasks are continuously given by their teachers. For more details, such conditions can be seen in Table 2 below.

Online learning that utilizes technology, which is considered an educational solution during the pandemic, has turned out to be burdensome for students. Students are required to complete the tasks sent by their teachers, but they do not have a good understanding of these tasks. In addition, students perceive their homes as places of rest, not places for learning. Students face difficulties in accepting the fact that they have to study at home instead of playing and watching television. This is because the situations and conditions of their homes are not conducive to learning. Another difficulty is that students find it difficult to access materials due to poor internet connectivity in the areas where they live, limited financial resources to purchase internet data packages, and the absence

of technological devices such as cellphones/laptops (students do not have these). In other words, technology-based online learning has given rise to various difficulties for the students.

Table 2. Students' burdens and difficulties.

Participants	Student Experience	Code
Respondents (R) 1, 8, 9, 11,	In each subject, there are always assignments: counting, reading, dancing, sports, etc.	No negotiation
R2, 3, 4, 7	Studying at home is hard because our desires to rest, play, and relax always distract us.	Burdensome
R5	It is boring because the lessons are difficult, and there are no friends to work with or talk to.	Boring
R1, 10, 13	The assignment equipment must be bought by us; when we study at school, this equipment is prepared and provided by the teacher.	Burdensome
R14, 15, 11,	Sometimes, there is a connection problem when I need to study and download materials.	Difficulty
R12, 6	Sometimes, it takes a very strong will not to be tempted to play games on my cellphone because I use it for online schooling.	Burdensome

Online learning is conducted at home and full-time by students, resulting in the absence of opportunities for them to negotiate and learn from their teachers and friends. Students are passive, as they only receive materials and assignments from their teachers via online platforms, and they do not discuss which materials should be studied. Students receive instructions that are sometimes inappropriate and cannot be understood. They cannot ask for explanations, which makes them confused. In addition, studying at home without friends to discuss or work with, and without the ability to ask questions of their teachers makes students unable to actively participate in the learning process. These conditions eliminate social spaces for learning and playing for the students, and this results in decreased enthusiasm for learning during the pandemic. Students also no longer have the opportunity to compete with their classmates as they previously did in class before the pandemic because all learning activities must be conducted online and in a limited space.

4.3. The Neglect of Students' Right to Study

The objectification of students in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic also occurred during school examinations, as the skills or knowledge tested had not been taught by teachers. Daily examinations, mid-semester examinations, and end-semester examinations were too difficult for the students, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the objectification of students in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic also occurred in relation to the excessive amount of knowledge or competence required in the school exams. These exams were not based on materials that had been taught by the teachers. The students were given questions they had to answer, but they had not received any lessons on these topics, and they were not given opportunities to ask their teachers for clarification. The students were forced to work on or answer practice questions as they liked, without referring to their learning materials. This caused students to lack sufficient knowledge to answer the questions on the exams.

Students' rights were not fulfilled properly in the learning process. The materials were not given according to the curriculum. At the same time, students were evaluated according to the competencies prescribed in the curriculum. This situation caused students to be psychologically disturbed. They often became angry and upset when their teachers asked them to complete a large number of exercises. These exercises are included in their Student Worksheet (LKS) and are intended to allow the students to practice more on other lesson materials. However, these materials were different from those taught by their teachers, as

they were taken from different sources. As a result, the students did not have any choice but to work on these questions without guidance or assistance from their teacher.

Table 3. Students' learning experience.

Participants	Student Experience	Code
R16, 17, 18, 27, 30	The teacher often changed his/her teaching schedule suddenly. The webinar schedule was suddenly canceled.	The teacher was one-sided, not involving students
R19, 20	I could not answer some of the mid-semester examination questions because I was never taught the material.	Learning materials were not taught
R21, 29	I answered some of the exam questions carelessly because there was no reading material for them. I looked for it in the materials uploaded by the teacher, and it was not there either.	Exams on learning materials that had not been taught
R23, 24	The teacher often sent practice test questions first thing in the morning and sent the learning materials during the day.	Exercises sent before learning materials given
R22, 25	I was annoyed and angry when I was solving math problems because the problems had never been discussed before; so I could not solve these problems.	Cannot complete exercises
R22, 28	I was told to answer 60 pages of questions in the Student Worksheet (LKS) within one week without being given any directions or an explanation of the learning materials.	No explanations
R26	The answers to the practice questions in the LKS were not found in the learning materials.	No learning materials

Throughout the whole learning process, students experienced the objectification of unilateral actions and decisions. Schools implemented a curriculum aimed at competency targets in accordance with the national curriculum. However, teachers did not implement the curriculum accordingly, so teaching materials were not delivered according to the targets. This tendency ultimately positioned students as victims of the targets required to be met as mandated by the school curriculum. Students did not have enough space to express their attitudes and opinions. They were positioned as passive parties who would accept every decision without the opportunity to express their attitudes and opinions.

5. Discussion

This study indicates that online learning has not fully considered students' subjectivity in obtaining their rights as learners, so the space for them to participate and negotiate in the learning process is still limited. Every rule is determined by teachers and policymakers. The problems that occur are due to several factors, especially the lack of students' learning capacity, lack of quality learning support facilities, and the lack of competence possessed by both educators and students. The rights of students to receive explanations and engage in direct socialization with their teachers and friends are denied because of the online learning system. The expected student competencies, according to the school's graduates' profile, are too difficult to realize due to the loss of access to learning for most students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Indonesia, online learning has been implemented for more than a year; however, the methods for delivering materials and assignments to students remain unchanged. For students, the assignments given by their teachers are often overwhelming, with three to four tasks from different subjects assigned daily. Students are required to complete these tasks within strict time limits (assignments are given around 08.00–11.00 and must be sent to the teacher at 17.00), often without receiving clear explanations or guidance. Consequently, students are compelled to complete all assignments without being consulted about the obstacles or difficulties they encounter. This objectification of students leads to superficial engagement with learning materials, which is further exacerbated by the limited competence of teachers in delivering effective online instruction.

The loss of the right to clarify learning materials with teachers is due to the policies prescribed by education laws enacted over the last fifty years [79]. The problems of online learning are also experienced by teachers, in addition to the limited communication and socialization between students and their teachers [80]. Teachers are required to communicate with their students' parents during online learning [81]. Although students' rights to self-development are limited, they still receive support from their parents and other family members [82]. Online learning or education is a new experience that can happen again and be improved in the future [83]. However, the challenges that arise in online learning cannot be ignored. Ineffective learning processes, the loss of students' right to receive comprehensive explanations from teachers, limited socialization with teachers and schoolmates, and obstacles in developing motor and personal skills are the main concerns of this research. Therefore, if not managed well, online learning can risk threatening students' rights. Conversely, if organized with careful planning and involving all stakeholders optimally, online learning can actually be an effective tool for supporting students' competency development more broadly.

The improper implementation of the online learning system has caused significant losses for students, who should have been able to effectively master scientific knowledge, socialize with their teachers and peers, and optimally develop themselves. Many learning management systems (LMS) could have been effectively implemented in quality physical classrooms, demonstrating a high level of effectiveness [84]. However, the success of LMS implementation largely depends on teachers' understanding of the system's functions and features, as well as students' ability to adapt to and utilize it to its fullest potential. Additionally, a well-designed combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods is crucial to ensure that the teaching–learning process remains interactive and focused.

Although teachers have acquired proficiency in using LMS platforms, they often restrict students' rights and limit opportunities for meaningful social interaction with both teachers and peers. The importance of interactions among students is that they support learning success because students help or support one another during learning in class [85]. Asynchronous methods have a significant negative impact [86]. The asynchronous methods used by teachers can cause uneven development among primary school students, increased complexity, a risk of social alienation, and high vulnerability. The constraints that are present in the students' learning process require teachers to pay attention to the space and opportunities for students to negotiate problem-solving, as it is not enough for them to simply give their students assignments. Students complain that they feel overwhelmed by assignments and experience difficulties in learning during this COVID-19 pandemic [87]. Consequently, the students' learning outcomes cannot be achieved optimally.

This study found three main issues with regard to student objectification, namely, the loss of student rights, the lack of facilities and infrastructure required for online learning, and the failure to achieve the expected level of student competence. However, in contrast to these findings, previous research highlights the effectiveness of online learning in certain contexts, suggesting that, under different conditions, online education can still yield positive outcomes [88]. Facilities and infrastructure for self-development (soft skills) are gradually decreasing, so quality attitudes in education are not achieved. Fauzi and Sastra Khusuma [89] demonstrate that 80% of students in their study feel burdened by online learning. Therefore, they are unsuccessful [53]. In addition, online learning with limited pedagogical strategies makes it impossible to verify the evaluative aspect of students' actual learning [18]. In addition, the minimum communication between teachers and students renders learning evaluations unable to be implemented properly. This condition has a negative impact on the quality of education that has been prescribed in the curriculum [90].

This view contradicts the notion that online learning is effective. In fact, research shows that online learning has limited effectiveness, with an effectiveness rate of only 48%, indicating that it may not meet the expected educational standards [91]. Many student rights are ignored, and the problems experienced by students during the online learning process are not solved by teachers. Therefore, one of the possible approaches to solving these problems is to increase teachers' digital literacy so that the delivery of materials can be clearer and more interesting, thereby increasing student participation [92].

Thus, adequate public education is necessary to enhance literacy in understanding pandemics and preparedness in responding to and managing them. Historical knowledge about pandemics, ranging from the time of the Prophet with the disease known as Tha'un, to the 1918 Spanish Flu and COVID-19, can serve as a valuable source of insight [93]. This understanding not only provides perspectives on patterns of disease transmission and effective mitigation measures but also offers insights into how societies in different eras have faced similar challenges. By learning from history, communities can identify mistakes to avoid and strategies that have proven successful. Furthermore, history-based education can foster collective awareness of the importance of solidarity, collaboration, and science-based approaches in addressing future pandemic threats.

6. Conclusions

This research has found that technology, which has been believed to provide convenience and wide-open access to education, actually positions students as objects of education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study indicate that the objectification of students stems from their dependence on their teachers' assistance, as well as the absence of their peers during the learning process. Students receive limited knowledge and explanations from their teachers. In addition, students cannot study with other people or their classmates. However, this study also reveals that the use of technology has successfully ensured the continuity of education during a global crisis. Furthermore, it has introduced students to various digital tools that enhance their technological literacy, which is beneficial for their future learning and professional development.

In view of the findings above, it is suggested that the online learning process be redesigned as effectively as possible to accommodate both students and teachers so that its implementation can be carried out efficiently. The online learning process should be carried out through interactions between students and their teachers, as well as among the students themselves. In addition, online teaching practices should make use of various media and learning tools, such as videos, Zoom meetings, Edmodo, and other applications or platforms.

This research is limited to students' perspectives and has not integrated the perspectives of teachers and parents regarding their objectification in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and parents are also subjected to the existence of online learning policies in the long term. Integrating the perspectives of teachers and parents in developing and implementing online education policies will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the issue. This approach enables stakeholders to find solutions for more effective teaching and learning processes during a pandemic like COVID-19. This paper suggests that further research needs to be conducted, and it should involve the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents by accommodating their experiences in participating in online learning during the pandemic. Through this approach, comprehensive solutions to the problem can be produced. This paper also suggests further research on the objectification of students at various levels of education and the evaluation of the impact of objectification on students' well-being.

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