Bridging the Gap: Securitizing Lack of Accessible Compulsory

Education in Indonesia during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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The Global South continues to face new threats and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The debate over health and economy continues and often leaves one aspect out of the equation: education. Especially in Southeast Asia where regional and domestic disparity still lingers. Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) acknowledged that the development gap remains one of the most crucial issues in the region. Using Buzan et.al. 's securitization theory and the Japanese approach to human security, the article tries to prove why the current state of education should be considered as a new non-traditional security threat and should be securitized by countries in the region. The article will use a qualitative method and hypothesizes that the inability of states to ensure quality education during the pandemic affects the quality of the states' human capital. The pandemic forces education institutions to rely on online learning. However, not every student has access to required facilities such as internet connection, gadgets, technologies, etc. Students in underdeveloped areas might struggle to participate in online classes, forcing them to be left behind. In the long run, this will slow down Indonesia's progress in tackling the development gap.

Introduction

Quality and accessibility of education remain to be the major contributor to Indonesia's human resources development. Approaching the demographic dividend in 2030, Indonesia aimed to tackle the development gap of human resources to maximize the benefits of the demographic dividend. This is important, as ensuring a high-quality human resource will result in the fulfillment of one of the aspects of human security, economic security, as these people will be employed and have broader access to vast economic opportunities.

While improving their education system, the COVID-19 pandemic forces Indonesia to adapt towards internet-based learning. The pandemic enforces a new remote-learning mechanism for educational institutions. This becomes a new challenge and threat for Indonesia, as even before the pandemic, Indonesia struggled to ensure an accessible education due to economic disparities in Indonesia's provinces. The diverse quality of education gap also remains the core issue Indonesia needs to tackle. As education is the primary key towards achieving a higher quality of human resources, the government should see this matter as urgent.

Most literature has discussed how education during a pandemic should be prioritized but failed to explain why education should then be securitized and how it affects Indonesia's effort to maximize the demographic dividend it is said to have.

Seeing the urgency for education accessibility during the COVID-19 pandemic to be recognized as a threat, the Indonesian government should securitize this issue. Securitizing the issue will lead the Indonesian government towards extraordinary measures needed to handle the issue. Therefore, this article would like to explain **why securitization of education in Indonesia is urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

First, this research would lay out the importance of education as a catalyst for human development to maximize Indonesia's demographic dividend. The authors would also explain the current condition of Indonesia's education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the research will focus on the concept of security as its theoretical framework. Third, the authors will provide literature reviews on the case of education during the pandemic. Fourth, the analysis. The analysis will focus on the current education landscape and digital gap as an urgent factor on why education should be securitized.

Education during COVID-19

The current COVID-19 pandemic becomes a new challenge for every international actor, but especially in this case, for Indonesia. Due to the enforced large-scale social distancing, educational institutions are forced to conduct their learning activities online, namely called to be "remote learning". Online learning requires an accessible internet connection, gadgets, etc. Not every student has access to these luxurious goods that enable them to participate in online learning. UNICEF calculated that there are at least 147 million schoolchildren are unable to access online (or remote) learning in South Asia (United Nations Children's Fund, 2020). This makes South Asia the region with the most schoolchildren lacking access to a proper education during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Indonesia out of 217,515 compulsory education institutions (starting from *Sekolah Dasar, Sekolah Menengah Pertama*, to *Sekolah Menengah Akhir*) 42,159 lack access to internet connection, and 8,522 are not yet powered with electricity (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (KEMDIKBUD), 2020). The inaccessibility towards education during this COVID-19 pandemic has put Indonesia's journey to maximize its demographic dividend into a pause, or even a step back. Moreover, if not handled well, this would affect Indonesia's recovery post-COVID-19.

Education as Key to Maximize Demographic Dividend

The development gap in human resources has been a long struggle for ASEAN and its members. Research conducted by J.P. Morgan and Singapore Management University showed that even the ASEAN-5 (Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines) are lacking skilled workers for industrial demands (Vineles, 2018, 2).

Struggling to develop its quality of human resources, Indonesia is pressured to maximize its demographic dividend, which is

said to reach its peak in 2030. According to Gribble and Bremner, a demographic dividend refers to the "accelerated growth that begins with changes in the age structure of a country's population as its transitions from high to low birth and death rates" (Gribble & Bremner, 2012, 2). By this, Gribble and Bremmer refer towards a time frame where Indonesia will be benefited from the high number of the productive population. Hence, Indonesia needs to increase the quality of human resources, to ensure that this demographic dividend will benefit the country instead of burdening them.

Jokowi has high hopes for the development of human resources. The population data in 2019 showed that the productive age population in Indonesia reached around 181 million people, meaning about 67.6% of Indonesia's population (Badan Pusat Statistik, n.d.). To increase the quality of human resources to ensure a beneficial demographic dividend in the later years, Indonesia relies on cooperation and domestic efforts. Domestically, according to the press release, Indonesia is currently undergoing a strategy for reshaping Indonesian education. It aims to increase access, quality and relevancy of education (Afandi & Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional/Bappenas, 2017, 2). Indonesia also maximizes its cooperation with other countries to pursue a better quality of education. The Indonesian government has utilized the *Reversed Linkage,* a mechanism for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, technology, and resources to develop South-South cooperation funded by Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) (Islamic Development Bank, 2018, 6). They have conducted several *Peer*

Learning and Knowledge-Sharing Workshop on Skills Development Strategy Formulation to achieve a higher quality of human resources. Both domestically and internationally, the Indonesian government aims to increase the quality of human resources through assessing their current education system and increasing citizen's access.

Methodology

This research was conducted using the qualitative method. Using the qualitative method enables the researchers to "explore, describe and explain a social phenomenon" (Leavy, 2017, 9). The authors discuss the current condition of Indonesian compulsory education and see how the COVID-19 affects it, and how the Indonesian government responds to it. This method was chosen to fit the need for the analysis of the securitization theory used in the paper.

To answer the research question posed, the researchers chose to use the case study approach. Yin in Bungin (2003, 21) explained that a case study approach is used to answer the question of 'how' and 'why.' Through a case study approach, authors will specifically discuss the conduct of Indonesian education during the COVID-19 pandemic. A case study approach ensures an in-depth analysis of the specific issue. A specific approach towards Indonesia's education system during COVID-19 is urgent to hinder generalized analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The Changing Concept of Security

Scholars agree that the concept of security has changed. After focusing on traditional security, that is security in terms of

military and hard power, with the emergence of life after the Cold War, scholars started to see different possible sources of insecurities. The Copenhagen School of security studies (Buzan et al., 1998, 1-19) argues that the concept of security experienced widening and a deepening. That being said, they argued that there has been a change of the perception of threat to security: from merely military threats to also non-military threats; a widening perception that it is not only about national security, or state as the main actor, but also international security: ranging from international organizations, states and also its people (the nation); and an understanding of new multidimensional perspectives to see security, as new actors and new approaches emerged.

This new perception of security is also supported by the existence of the human security concept. First introduced by Mahbub ul Haq and the United Nations Development Program, the human security concept consists of seven components: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (Acharya, 2001, 444 - 445). Other than ul Haq's definition, the United Nations Commission on Human Security (Stein-Kaempfe, 2008, 42) believes that the concept of human security should be dynamic, hence also defines human security to consist of "what people consider to be vital, what they consider to be, of the essence of life and crucially important, varies across individuals and societies."

Under the notion coming from the Commission on Human Security, countries also define human security based on their condition and their needs. Acharya (2001, 446) argues that this view might lead to people believing that the debate and disagreement of human security will be between the western and eastern sides of the world. However, rather than simplifying it into a debate between the east and west, Acharya (2001, 446) sees that the disagreement also happens internally between western countries and eastern countries.

The Japanese definition of human security started as their response to the 1998 Asian financial crisis. The then-Japanese Prime Minister believes that the economic downturn has been threatening the daily lives of people. Hence, the Japanese approach to human security concept will be used in analyzing this article as it 'takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life, and dignity, which stresses the need to respond to such threats' (Bosold & Werthes, 2005, 94). The Japanese definition criticizes other human security concepts, including the Canadian one, that focuses more on freedom from fear and often neglecting the freedom of wants aspect (Acharya, 2001, 446). Through the Japanese approach, education is a part of the freedom of wants.

To enhance the state of security for humans, the Copenhagen School of security studies offers the concept of securitization. This concept will be used to explain the measures taken by the Indonesian government concerning education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Buzan, et.al (1998, 24) argue that when an issue is securitized, that means that it is perceived as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and actions outside the normal bounds of political procedures. They

argue that each country will securitize different aspects, under their main interests (Buzan et al., 1998, 24). Vuori in Kurniawan (2018, 22) emphasizes that there are five different objectives to a securitization act: to raise an issue on the agenda; to legitimize future acts; to legitimize past acts; to reproduce security status, and to exercise control.

There are three components of securitization of an issue: existential threat, emergency actions, and effect on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules or also known as extraordinary measures. Kurniawan (2018, 19) stated that existential threat refers to 'the dominance of one issue' that requires and must receive absolute priority; the threats to the existence of something. An issue, Buzan et al. argue, is securitized once it is considered and collectively responded to as a threat, through the process called speech act (1998, 26). However, for one issue to be considered as securitized, it has to also be accepted by the audience to whom the securitizing actor talks.

In analyzing the process of securitization, Buzan et al. (1998, 36 - 41) mention three units of analysis. The first unit is the referent object or the things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival. Traditionally, states (and nations) have been considered to be the primary referent object of security. The second unit is the securitizing actors or someone or group of people who perform the security speech act. Buzan et al. affirm that usually, the common players are political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups. The last unit of analysis is functional actors, those who affect the dynamics of a sector and

significantly influence the decision in the field of security.

Literature Review
Education in Times of Crisis

COVID-19 has indeed affected the way we conduct education. Several scholars have researched about the impact of COVID-19 on education. Here, we are going to lay down several related research to show the effect of a crisis on education; the changes happening to education during the COVID-19 pandemic in general and in Indonesia, and its effects on students.

In discussing education during times of crisis, Thomas et al. (2001) aim to analyze the condition of Indonesia during the 1997 - 1998 financial crisis. They found that during this time, school enrollment decreased, especially for households with lower income that are usually located in the rural areas (Thomas et al., 2001, 24). They analyzed so by using the correlation between household consumption and school enrollment. They concluded that the crisis will affect those who are poorer first, and it will have a different short, medium, and long-term effect on the specific group of people.

Bozkurt and Sharma (2020, i) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic is the 'first crisis to occur on the global scale in the digital knowledge age, and there will be socio-cultural, economic, and political consequences in the wake of the crisis.' The pandemic is changing the way we organize education, from offline, face-to-face meetings to remote, often online, learning. However, Bozkurt and Sharma argue that in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, what is being taught is less important than the way the students feel. Hence, they favor a more

empathetic approach to education during these times (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020, iv).

The way students feel is not the only problem to remote learning, especially in Indonesia. Rahiem in their writing 'The Emergency Remote Learning Experience of University Students in Indonesia amidst the COVID-19 crisis' laid down several problems faced by Indonesian students in general. Rahiem stated that in Indonesia, there are several different approaches to emergency learning during COVID-19: e-learning (using the internet), m-learning (using mobile devices), and conventional learnings (through modules, tasks and notes taking) (Rahiem, 2020, 8-9). The findings of the research stated that Indonesian students experienced several problems during their emergency remote learning experiences, including technological problems, for example, availability of mobile and learning devices; internet connection; boredom, and finding study materials for their study. However, Rahiem argued that as it is considered to be an "emergency," hence it will only be temporary.

Another study was done by Mailizar, et.al., focusing on the teachers' views towards e-learning in Indonesia during the pandemic. Mailizar, et.al. (2020, 7) found out that Indonesian teachers, specifically mathematics teachers that are their main subject of analysis, face a great challenge during the conduct of e-learning. They argued that the main barriers are the access to devices and internet connection for learning (Mailizar et al., 2020, 8). According to their study, they fear that this might have a grave implication on the students' understanding of the subject and their overall learning.

A policy response published by the OECD analyzes the long-term impact of education during the COVID-19. Even though the impact might seem temporary and insignificant since the majority of schools implement remote learning, student's comprehension is difficult to ensure. OECD argued the current loss of education will lead to a 'hysteresis' (OECD, 2020). 'Hysteresis' in the education context refers to the marginalization of how much students learn during face-to-face learning versus remote learning, and how much students dropped out of school due to the inability to participate in remote learning. A 'hysteresis' will occur as a result of high-intensity remote learning but low student engagement. This literature highlights that a student's low ability to comprehend and engage in remote learning will impact their generation in the long run.

The five pieces of literature explained education in times of crisis, more specifically for the latter three pieces of literature, during the Covid-19 crisis. Bozkut and Sharma, Rahiem and Mailizar, et al. all agreed that COVID-19 has pushed education to have a new approach for its conduct, which is through remote learning. Exclusive to Rahiem, they argued that the conduct consists not only of e-learning but also m-learning and conventional learning. OECD argued upon low student comprehension during remote-learning as a catalyst for a bigger problem: a hysteresis in education. All five, however, argued differently when it comes to the effect of remote learning. Thomas, et al., Mailizar, et al., and OECD argued that there are long-term effects due to the change of conduct of education. While Rahiem and Bozkut and

Sharma did not mention specifically the long-term effect, they highlighted more the short-term effect, with Rahiem arguing that this is only temporary.

For this writing, we argue that the sudden change of conduct of education will indeed have a long-term effect for the students, as has been stated by Thomas, et al. and Mailizar, et al. However, both studies have not yet explained why education should then be securitized and how it affects Indonesia's effort to maximize the demographic dividend it is said to have.

The Current Problems in Indonesian Education Landscape

As education remains the key actor towards increasing the quality of human resources, the Indonesian education system determines Indonesia's ability to maximize its demographic dividend. This section will discuss the current Indonesian education landscape and the challenges it faced during the COVID-19 remote learning.

The current Indonesian education landscape struggles to increase the quality and accessibility of education. Based upon the Rancangan Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2020-2024 (RPJMN), accessibility and quality remained an unachieved goal from the previous RPJMNs. The quality might increase in the past years, but the improvements are not yet significant enough to achieve higher-order thinking skills (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019, 4). To measure the quality of education there are two key determinants: quality of teacher and classroom facilitation. As teachers play an important role in student's

comprehension and development, the quality of available teachers in Indonesia becomes one of the most determining factors upon Indonesia's quality of education. Teachers are required to have academic qualifications, competency, and certification. From the school year of 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, the percentage of qualified teachers increased for SD, SMP, and SMA by less than 5%. The learning environment in schools also determines education quality. The provided facilities for students should meet the qualified standard to support a more conducive learning process. However, the percentage of schools with proper classroom facilitation has not reached 50% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019, 17). This proved that the quality of education does increase, but the increase is still too insignificant for the Indonesian education system.

The gap in education accessibility in the urban and rural areas still becomes one of Indonesia's obstacles. In terms of quantity of schools, from 2018 to 2019, the number of national primary schools decreased from a total of 131,974 to 131860 as a consequence of the newly implemented "regrouping policy" where several national schools are forced to shut down due to national budgeting efficiency (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019, 10). The decrease of available schools affects the participation rate. The less school available, the fewer students are educated. Angka Partisimpasi Murni (APM) measures the student's participation rate. Geographically, the school participation rate in urban areas is 16% higher than the participation rate in rural areas (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019, 55). Indonesian rural areas are still burdened with a high percentage of Anak Tidak Bersekolah, reaching 29.36% of

16 to 18-year-olds as of 2019 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019, 81). With the current condition of Indonesia's education which lacks in quality and accessibility, Indonesia faces a real challenge in tackling the development gap to increase the quality of human resources. Indonesian education system still has a lot of room to improve.

Compared to other nations, Indonesian student's knowledge of mathematics, reading, and science is ranked below average. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiated the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to test the knowledge and skills of students worldwide in three different subjects: mathematics, reading, and science. It aims to help schools and policymakers to assess their education system through a comparative measure (Schleicher & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2019, 3). The PISA 2018 results show that Indonesian students scored below average with a 116 margin in reading, 110 margins in mathematics, and 93 margins in science (Avvisati et al., 2019, 1). PISA categorized 79 countries into 4 different levels based upon the student's average scores in the examination, with Level 1 being the lowest average scores and Level 4 being the highest. Overall, Indonesia is categorized in Level 1 for reading, mathematics, and science (Schleicher & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2019, 6-9). Indonesian student's scores in PISA demonstrates that Indonesia still needs to improve their education quality to compete with other nations.

Digital Divide in Indonesia as a Problem to Remote Learning

Access to technology is crucial to support the success of remote learning in Indonesia. However, it is evident that Indonesia is currently still facing what is called a 'digital divide.' UNESCO in Borrero (2016, 5) defined the digital divide as 'a gap between those who are information-rich and those who are information-poor.'

Indonesia has been experiencing rapid internet penetration growth. The data from Statistic Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik) shows that in the span of four years (2014 - 2019), the internet users in Indonesia grew from only 17.4% of the whole population to 39.9% of the population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018, 19). While households that have access to the internet almost doubled, from 35.5% in 2014 to 66.22% in 2018 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018, 19). However, where it is being used will show us clearly the digital divide that currently is still happening in the country.

Internet and mobile device usage in Indonesia is still concentrated in several areas only. Statistic Indonesia (2018, 123) showed that 50.92% of Indonesians that live in urban areas access the internet, while in contrast, less than 30% of the people living in rural areas have access. In addition to that, 60% of the people living in DKI Jakarta, the city's capital, have accessed the internet. However, less than 20% of people in the country's most-eastern province, Papua, have access to the internet (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018, 125). Other than the data coming from Statistic Indonesia, in 2018, the Indonesian Internet Providers Association (APJII) survey showed that the

island Java contributes to more than half of the internet usage in the country (Iswara, 2020).

The government has tried to narrow the digital divide in the country through the Palapa Ring 4G broadband project (Iswara, 2020). The Palapa Ring project was first introduced in 2005 but was finally realized in 2019 (Adisti, 2017, 18). Regardless of the government's effort to make sure every part of the country has access to the internet, the digital divide remains. A report was done by Indonesian media, Tirto, said that the utilization of the Palapa Ring broadband was under 50%, even during the pandemic of Covid-19, in which a lot of people are asked to stay at home and the usage of the internet was supposedly increasing (Thomas, 2020).

The digital divide experienced by the country has indeed affected the country's readiness to face the pandemic. An article written in The Jakarta Post stated that the digital divide being faced in the country 'weighed down on schools affected by the social restriction, which are expected to shift to online learning with little to no preparation in internet access' (Iswara, 2020). Even in areas in Java, the island most connected to the internet, the problem still persists: teachers in West Java had to visit their students' houses to do private tutoring, or local communities preparing their *pendopos* to give access to the internet for students to access and do their remote learning (BBC Indonesia, 2020; Souisa, 2020).

Securitization of Education: A Needed Act?

Based on the arguments and data presented before, the Indonesians are facing a threat to their security, especially in terms of education. The UN Commission of Human Security (2003, 114 - 115), the human security perspective underscores the importance of education, as it improves one's quality of life and directly affects one's security.

Enforced remote learning during the COVID-19 poses new threats and challenges towards Indonesian education. It threatens the progress Indonesia has made towards the increase of education quality and education accessibility to ensure a better quality of human resources. The pandemic also threatens Indonesians' school participation rate; as the basic requirements widen. To enroll and effectively participate in school, children need gadgets, stable internet and electricity access, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic challenges the Indonesian education curriculum, as it needs to adapt towards remote online learning. The education system was shaped based upon physical learning, where teachers and students interact physically and communications are less complicated. The COVID-19 forces educational institutions to adapt in ways they never imagined before. The Indonesian government needs to reallocate more funds for distance learning expenses, capacity building for teachers, and other further support for remote learning.

The COVID-19 challenged Indonesia to adapt its curriculum to an online-based learning environment, also to provide effective and accessible remote learning for both the students and teachers. Indonesia's education sectors are faced with threats of regress in the school participation rate and their goal to benefit from the demographic dividend in 2030. This posed a threat to Indonesians' human security, especially considering access to education is

important to ensure economic growth as has been mentioned earlier by the authors.

The wide gap in Indonesia between those who can access education during the COVID-19 pandemic can also be considered as a threat to human dignity, as the Japanese approach to human security has stated. Those who struggled to access education due to economic incapability will struggle even more during this crisis, as education becomes harder to grasp. Inaccessibility of education even existed before the pandemic, the gap is widening even more during this COVID-19 pandemic's physical distancing rule and the obligation to do remote learning. That is why this can be considered as an existential threat to every Indonesians' security and in need of an act of securitization.

The main securitizing actor for this issue, the Indonesian Ministry of Education of Culture (MOEC) has already securitized education. They have been producing several speeches done by the minister, Nadiem Makarim. Minister Makarim has several times broadcasted his policies responding to the disruption of education conditions in Indonesia caused by the pandemic. For example, he announced publicly through an online-broadcasted press conference that he chose to cancel the national examination (Ujian Nasional), to ensure the "safety and health of our students, their families' safety, and the students' grandparents" (BBC Indonesia, 2020). At the beginning of the year, the national examination should have been conducted based upon the said schedule, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Minster Makarim decided to take an extraordinary measure to cancel it. Other than

that, he also made another public announcement about an emergency curriculum for students during COVID-19, a new regulation for the school operational aid (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah, BOS) for school, cooperation with Netflix to broadcast educational contents on TVRI, the national broadcasting company of Indonesia, a reduction of university fee, to name a few. Furthermore, in an interview with Najwa Shihab, Minister Makarim swears over his position as the minister to fight in order to free internet data packages for students. These responses from the government act as an extraordinary measure to securitize education during the COVID-19.

Even though the government has securitized education during Covid-19, the fundamental problem of quality and accessibility has not been addressed. We can analyze the securitizing actor (Minister of Education and Culture) doing the speech acts through several online-broadcasted and televised programs being agreed upon by its audience, the Indonesian students, and making extraordinary measures. However, if we ask whether or not they have been securitizing the most fundamental problem in Indonesian education during COVID-19, which is equal access to education, the answer is no; they have not. The extraordinary measures done by the Indonesian MOEC have not been able to answer the existential threat of Indonesian education during the pandemic: the very wide gap between the more developed and the less developed areas (rural and urban areas). The extraordinary measures from the Indonesian MOEC only maintain the status quo but fail to solve the fundamental problem, the one we

consider to be the existential threat.

We can take the example of the MOEC's policy of giving out free internet quotas. Indeed, Minister Makarim has been able to enact the policy of distributing internet quotas for students, from primary education to tertiary education. However, the policy only benefits those who already have stable internet and electricity access. While in reality, most Indonesian students who are living in remote and rural areas do not have a gadget that can be used to access the internet, to begin with. They also struggle with access to a stable electricity. And this has been the reality to most of the Indonesian students during the pandemic. Another example is the policy to broadcast educational content on the national television channel, TVRI. A teacher in Garut, West Java, and part of the country's more developed area, still decided to give offline private tutoring to their students. They decided to do so because the students do not have gadgets to access internet-based learning, nor the antennae needed to watch television, as it is considered to be expensive (BBC Indonesia, 2020). The condition in Indonesia proves that accessibility towards education worsened during the pandemic. Those who initially have the luxury to enjoy education can utilize internet quotas from the government. However, those who struggle to access basic equipment for remote learning such as electricity, connection, and gadgets, remain unable to access education.

One extraordinary measure that can be considered to be more inclusive and can answer the need to narrow the gap is the emergency curriculum that is said to be more 'Covid-sensitive.' Minister Makarim said that the curriculum consists of a simplification of the current curriculum, and to focus only on essential competencies (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Even so, Minister Makarim did not make this policy obligatory, again opening the chance to widen the gap between schools in the nation. As has been explained in the sections before, the quality of schools in Indonesia varies. The quality of teachers, which is one of the determinants to measure the quality of education in the country, still varies. Hence, changing the curriculum to become more sensitive towards the pandemic but not making it obligatory, will give the possibility to make schools with better teachers that pursue more complicated materials, widening the education gap in Indonesia.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has tried to securitize education. Their extraordinary measures maintained the status quo, but sadly, have not answered and solved the existential threat faced by Indonesians: accessibility and quality of education. Thus, it is indeed important for the MOEC to revisit its policies, to ensure a better approach towards the root problems of the Indonesian education landscape.

Conclusion

Struggling to improve their quality and accessibility of education, Indonesia is facing a new challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. The enforced remote learning has forced Indonesia to adjust their progress in achieving a qualified education to increase the quality of their human resources for the upcoming demographic bonus.

Remote learning has challenged Indonesia's ability to ensure effective online learning and tackling the digital divide in Indonesia. These problems occur even before the COVID-19 pandemic, but it remains unsolved, hence why it is important for the government to securitize education, to ensure the future of the country itself. Using the theory of securitization, the author has analyzed the measures taken by the Indonesian government.

Through the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia has been doing several actions that can be considered as an act of securitization. Minister Makarim has been doing several speech acts to create extraordinary measures to help alleviate the condition of education, especially in terms of remote learning, during the COVID-19 pandemic. **However, the act of securitization has not yet answered the fundamental and current problem Indonesia is facing, the quality and accessibility of education during the COVID-19 pandemic**. The extraordinary measures done by the government were only to maintain the status quo. Those who have access to education, continue to enjoy online learning with the internet quotas provided by the government. But those who initially struggled to access education remained untouched; their feasibility of getting education decreased as they do not have access to a stable internet connection, electricity, gadget, etc.

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