# Indonesian Higher Degree Education in the VUCA Era: Pathway to a Hybrid University?

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## Abstract

*The COVID-19 pandemic has become a significant disruption in managing higher education institutions in various parts of the world. UNESCO released information that stated that there are at least around 60 million students affected worldwide due to 429 universities that had to be temporarily closed. Indonesia is experiencing the same phenomenon. In March 2020, it was recorded that 8 million students and 300 thousand lecturers had to undergo the transformation and start implementing online learning. At least 98% of the 4,582 tertiary institutions in Indonesia have implemented online learning. The online learning policy is regulated in a Minister of Education and Culture Circular concerning Online Learning which was strengthened by the Joint Decree of the Four Ministers in 2020. Even though many universities in Indonesia have implemented learning transformation, the processes may show differences. This article discusses how Universitas Padjadjaran's policies and strategies respond to the learning transformation policy and the challenges and mitigation strategies in overseeing the process. As one of the PTNBH in Indonesia, Unpad has started to adopt e-learning since 2003. Partially, COVID-19 accelerated the e-learning process through the Decree of the Rector of Universitas Padjadjaran Number 1190/UN6.RKT/Kep/HK/2020 requires the entire learning process at various levels to be carried out online. In line with Unpad's efforts to achieve World Class University, the Chancellor of Unpad initiated the Hybrid university policy in 2021. The new direction of the Hybrid university policy still refers to the Unpad Strategic Plan (2020-2024) implemented through various hybrid university infrastructure development programs, the Learning Management System platform (LMS) development, HR capacity building, etc.*

*Keywords: Higher degree education, hybrid university, online learning policy*

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global community and affected the progress of regional development so that all governments in the world have adapted to various existing policies and resource allocations (Miftah, Ida, et al., 2023; Widianingsih et al., 2023). The condition of the Covid-19 pandemic can be associated with the acronym VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), defined as a chaotic, rapidly changing, and turbulent environment (Murugan et al., 2020). This condition makes Covid-19 conceptualized as a 'wicked problem' (El Masri & Sabzalieva, 2020; Peters, 2017).

Meanwhile, the education sector is trying to adapt to shifting teaching and learning activities from face-to-face and entire direct interaction to online (Aristeidou & Cross, 2021; El Masri & Sabzalieva, 2020). At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, 193 countries

announced the closure of national-level schools and tertiary institutions to reduce the spread of Covid-19 (El Masri & Sabzalieva, 2020). Then, UNESCO released information that stated that there are at least around 60 million students affected worldwide due to 429 universities that had to be temporarily closed. The supporting elements of the curriculum also cannot be applied, such as practicum in laboratories, apprenticeships, art, or sports (Stock et al., 2022).

Some practice-based lessons have become impossible due to the unplanned shift to online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic (Stock et al., 2022). Educational institutions are switching to online distance learning, which is still trial and error (Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021). Higher education also takes advantage of digitization through digital transformation, such as social media (Miftah, Widianingsih, et al., 2023; Nanda et al., 2023). However, most fail to consider academic readiness and digital competence (Proches & Singh, 2023).

Indonesia is experiencing the same phenomenon; in March 2020, it was recorded that 8 million students and 300 thousand lecturers had to transform and start implementing online learning, and at least 98% of the 4,582 tertiary institutions in Indonesia had implemented online learning. Universities in Indonesia are also implementing distance learning to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 (Jahidi et al., 2023). In 2020, 6,349,941 students throughout Indonesia were conducting distance learning from a total of 68,729,037 students for each level of education.

Based on the Minister of Education and Culture Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education in the Emergency Period of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) and the Minister of Education and Culture Circular Joint Decree of the Four Ministers in 2020, the Indonesian government has also implemented distance learning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.In addition, private sector support has assisted the health sector by providing oxygen cylinders, COVID-19 kits, and implementing awareness and law enforcement programs to curb the spread of the virus (Miftah, Ida, et al., 2023). To support the implementation of the Long Distance Learning policy, the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, is working with the private sector to provide access to education, namely access to Rumah Belajar; G Suite for Education; Kelas Pintar; Microsoft Office 365; Quipper School; Sekolah Online Ruangguru; Sekolahmu; dan Zenius (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2020a). Apart from that, the government also provides Internet quota assistance for students, students, teachers, and lecturers as regulated in Secretary-General Regulation Number 14 of 2020 concerning Technical Instructions for Internet Data Quota Assistance for 2020 (Juliya & Herlambang, 2021).

Then, the Ministry of Education and Culture also considers the long-term negative impacts due to distance learning conditions, namely the threat of dropping out of school, decreased learning achievement, and threats of violence against children and other risks. (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2020b). In addition, accompanied by the downward trend of positive cases of Covid 19 in Indonesia and globally collectively, in August 2020 the Ministry of Education and Culture released a Guidebook for Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Terbatas (PTMT) (La Ode Onde et al., 2021). Even though an order had been

given, areas in the red and orange zones were still prohibited from conducting PTMT then. The form of PTMT combines distance learning and face-to-face learning, called hybrid learning. (La Ode Onde et al., 2021).

Hybrid learning helps students improve student learning outcomes, claims to provide students with broader insights, and teachers can use various platforms (Adisel et al., 2022). Hybrid learning is also considered to be more effective than the other two methods, namely distance learning and face-to-face learning (Tanuwijaya & Tambunan, 2021).

Using social media, such as the Whatsapp application in hybrid learning, increases learning outcomes and knowledge exchange for higher education students (Alsharif et al., 2020). This condition is caused because students can study anywhere and anytime. In addition, there are challenges, namely ambiguity between in-site students and remote students and engagement with remote students and teachers. At the same time, the advantages of hybrid learning are flexibility, ease of recording data, self-learning, and self-discipline (Khatun et al., 2022), including for Universitas Padjadjaran. Based on this explanation, it opens opportunities and opportunities for the broader use of hybrid learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. This study describes how Universitas Padjadjaran develops Hybrid Learning in dealing with disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**METHOD**

This study uses retrospective studies (Berney & Blane, 1997; Freedman et al., 1988) to describe the steps of Universitas Padjadjaran in navigating the challenges of VUCA and disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic towards a hybrid university. This study's data sources are secondary data derived from official documents, statistical data, reports, official news, and related articles. From these data, it is then analyzed how universities in Indonesia, such as Universitas Padjadjaran, can run hybrid learning.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on higher education. The most prominent change is the shift from face-to-face learning to distance learning. In addition, many students are experiencing financial difficulties, resulting in fewer new student enrollments. The university's revenue also decreased due to a reduction in the tuition fees collected. Research at higher education institutions is experiencing disruption due to limited access to laboratories and facilities. Students also find it challenging to develop their careers due to the postponement of international exchange and internship programs. In addition, the pandemic has also affected the mental health of university students and staff. Amid these challenges, universities are adapting by investing in learning technology and innovation, providing financial aid to students, and finding new ways to deliver educational experiences—practical and relevant online education.

With the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, Padjadjaran University is one of the universities that has been affected. Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) as a form of community service, one of the Three Pillars of Higher Education in 2020/2021, is carried out mostly remotely, namely by 6087 students who participate in Virtual Community Service Program (Universitas Padjadjaran, 2020). Apart from impacting learning patterns, the COVID-19

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pandemic also affected the number of visits to the Padjadjaran University library. Padjadjaran University already has an e-library that can be accessed by students anywhere.

**Table 1. Number of Library Visitors**

| Year | Number of Visitor | Number of Visit |
|------|-------------------|-----------------|
| **2018** | 8433 | 128229 |
| **2019** | 19592 | 121301 |
| **2020** | 9300 | 33255 |
| **2021** | 8433 | 16869 |

**Table 2. Students Deduction During COVID-19 Pandemic**

| Program | Registrar | | | Accepted | | | Registration | | |
|---------|-----------|------|------|----------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Bachelor of Applied (D4) | 2453 | 5989 | 19541 | 808 | 855 | 1242 | 764 | 506 | 1015 |
| Bachelor (S-1) | | | | | | | | | |
| SNMPTN | 38944 | 34089 | 42529 | 1517 | 1389 | 1512 | 1493 | 1365 | 1486 |
| SBMPTN | 42170 | 56446 | 52593 | 3496 | 2634 | 2382 | 2992 | 2210 | 2257 |
| Self-Sufficient | 9564 | 35313 | 83007 | 1338 | 2722 | 5107 | 1114 | 1200 | 3889 |
| Bachelor International Class | 2 | - | 251 | 2 | - | 90 | 2 | - | 43 |
| Bachelor AdiK Program | 31 | - | - | 31 | - | - | 29 | - | - |
| Profession | 326 | 210 | 904 | 286 | 168 | 803 | 131 | 115 | 794 |
| Master (S-2) | 959 | 990 | 2201 | 777 | 825 | 1450 | 679 | 587 | 1256 |
| Doctoral (S-3) | 644 | 255 | 615 | 535 | 218 | 383 | 435 | 192 | 335 |
| Specialist | 425 | 426 | 902 | 217 | 180 | 379 | 214 | 178 | 378 |
| Subspecialist | | 58 | 59 | | 55 | 40 | | 46 | 40 |

Digital technologies enhance student interaction and learning, especially when face-to-face learning is limited or impossible. Universitas Padjadjaran and other educational institutions can use various hybrid learning methods, such as:

1. Learning Management Systems (LMS): Use LMS platforms such as Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas, or Google Classroom to access learning materials, assignments, and other resources online. This method allows students and lecturers to interact with learning materials and learn remotely.
2. Online Lectures (Virtual Lectures): Webinars or other online communication tools can turn physical classes into virtual ones. Students can access these lectures from anywhere if they have an internet connection.
3. Online Discussion and Collaboration: Using online communication tools, forums, or social platforms dedicated to learning, students can participate in group discussions or project collaborations.

4. Project-Based Learning: Students can be assigned project assignments that can be completed online, encouraging them to learn, collaborate and communicate online.
5. Online Evaluation: Examinations and assessments can be conducted virtually via a secure, trusted platform for fair reviews.
6. Online Tutoring or Tutoring: To help students who need additional support, teachers or lecturers can provide extra tutoring or guidance through online sessions.

Focusing on strengthening academic reputation, citations, and lecturer reputation. Unpad itself has launched an acceleration program to become a World Class University which is described in various derivative programs. Several spin-offs have been achieved, including international recognition for all study programs; strengthening cooperation with international partners in the form of associates, double degrees, and associates; international exposure in the form of more foreign language speakers; at the student fair (Maulana, 2022).
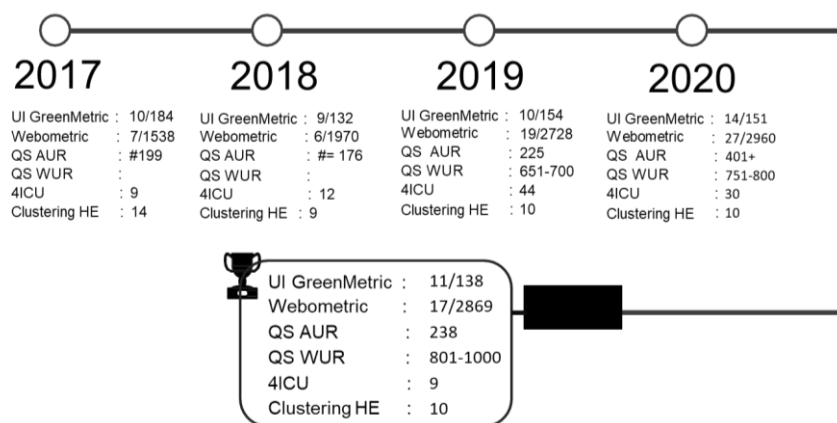


**Figure 1. Universitas Padjadjaran Ranking**

In 2021, Padjadjaran University was ranked 801-1000 based on the QS World University Rankings (WUR). One of Padjadjaran University's actions is launching the Online Learning Innovation Grant (HIPDU), which encourages lecturers to develop innovative learning approaches that suit distance learning environments. HIPDU can provide grants or financial support to lecturers to support innovation in online learning. Grants can be awarded for a variety of purposes, among others.

1. Improved Quality of Online Learning: HIPDU allows lecturers to develop and implement more efficient and attractive methods for delivering online lessons. This includes the appropriate application of educational technology, interactive tools, and strategies to encourage active student participation.
2. Adaptation of Learning Materials: HIPDU can help lecturers adapt course materials to suit online learning better. This includes creating lecture videos, multimedia content, and other online learning resources.
3. Development of Learning Platforms: This grant can be used by lecturers to create or upgrade more effective online learning platforms that allow interaction with students and information dissemination.
4. Lecturer Training and Development: This grant can also provide training and professional development to lecturers to address issues related to online learning.

Training materials that can be supplied include understanding learning technology, effective teaching methods for online learning, or pedagogical approaches for distance learning.

Universitas Padjadjaran continues to provide intensive training for teachers and educators in each department. The Faculty is taking the lead in implementing e-learning. Therefore, this year Unpad has implemented the program "E-Learning Heroes." In this program, 2 to 3 people per Faculty will support the Unpad E-Learning team. In addition, his party continues to advocate for using LMS by preparing guidelines and leaflets and organizing discussions by inviting online learning experts to the ToT for teachers and staff. Education teacher. Another innovation created is the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) program. The MOOC program is Unpad's effort to expand access to quality education for the community through the development of digital technology.

**CONCLUSION**

This study highlights how Padjadjaran University's policy steps and strategies respond to the learning transformation policy and the challenges and mitigation strategies in overseeing the process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when things were chaotic and changed very quickly, the education sector was one of the sectors that was quite affected. Educational institutions have switched from face-to-face to online distance learning, especially since the practice is still trial and error (Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021).

Most also fail to consider academic readiness and digital competence. Padjadjaran University is one of the universities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be seen from the limited lecturing activities, such as the Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) activities, which are carried out remotely, the decrease in the number of library visitors, the reduction in the number of students, and the most obvious is the learning activities which cannot be carried out face to face, so they are carried out by online learning.

The education system is growing from year to year. Currently, education has reached the stage of requiring technological commitment (Hartono et al., 2018). Advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) catalyze hybrid learning approaches to integrate various technologies to facilitate student learning (Lam & Ng, 2015). Universitas Padjadjaran has adopted e-learning since 2003, then when the outbreak of COVID-19, learning was limited and could not be done directly; this accelerated the e-learning process at Padjadjaran University. Based on the Decree of the Chancellor of Padjadjaran University Number 1190/UN6.RKT/Kep/HK/2020 instructs that all learning processes at various levels be online.

Universitas Padjadjaran has started to plan towards a hybrid university. This is due to the transformation of learning in the Universitas Padjadjaran environment after the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, the change of knowledge has rushed; from the beginning, education was carried out face-to-face, then during the COVID-19 pandemic, it switched to an online system, then now it is entering the hybrid learning era. Hybrid learning conducted by Universitas Padjadjaran will combine face-to-face methods with online methods. The face-to-face method is needed because it will provide an irreplaceable learning experience, such as discussion activities, practicums, and so on, which cannot be done online.

Meanwhile, access to knowledge, theory, and learning materials can be done online. In addition, the class system will be implemented in the direction of a flipped classroom,

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wherein in one class, half of the students take face-to-face lectures, and the rest can take courses online. However, to support hybrid learning, updating the curriculum to improve educational technology is necessary (Maulana, 2021). In implementing hybrid learning, Universitas Padjadjaran has developed a LiVE Unpad Learning Management System (LMS) to access various learning content. Students can use this facility to access various lecture materials anytime and anywhere.

If this hybrid university is implemented correctly, it is hoped that in 2045 Unpad will be able to compete globally, and its digital learning will be able to produce graduates who are superior and have a character so that programs outside the degree can become one of Unpad's independence as PTN Legal Entities. In addition, with this hybrid university step, universities can adapt to the VUCA era (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), defined as a chaotic, rapidly changing, and turbulent environment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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