

The motives using google classroom as a distance learning media during the covid-19 pandemic at the elementary school level in Pontianak

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Abstract: The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia since early March 2020 has changed most sectors of humans' life and one of them is education. Many schools tried to adapt to conduct instructional activities from the distance, and students' learning activities were implemented from home online. Teachers and students were expected to be able to employ online learning platforms and media to support their activities to avoid the spread of the virus. This study investigates the teachers' motives for employing Google Classroom as a media for distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic. This research applied a qualitative descriptive study and semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data from eight respondents of three elementary schools that are actively using Google Classroom in teaching and learning activities in Pontianak city. The findings indicate that 5 motives underlie several teachers for utilizing Google Classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic at five elementary schools in Pontianak city which cover ease of access and use, application superiority, availability of facility and infrastructure, school policy, and level of teachers and students' digital competence.

Keywords: Distance learning, Google classroom, Online learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of many countries worldwide affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic was confirmed in early March 2020 (Ihsanuddin 2020), the virus has significantly changed the pattern of service delivery in most of essential sectors. These alterations embraced educational services in which the teaching and learning activities were implemented via Distance Learning model (Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2020).

Distance Learning has been carried out for three semesters since being instructed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in March 2020 (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2020). Nearly at beginning of the semester of the 2021/2022 academic year, face-to-face learning was planned to be accomplished by prioritizing health protocols and governor's policy, and condition in the domicile school area (Rafie 2020). However, several regional heads have refused to give permission, such as the statement from the governor of West Kalimantan, who asked to postpone face-to-face learning even though it was planned to be implemented in January 4, 2021 (Tribunkaltim, 2020). The instruction was then followed by a statement from the mayor of Pontianak (Tribunpontianak.co.id. 2020), that all teaching and learning activities in Pontianak City must be performed in distance mode.

The Distance Learning concept emphasizing learning by using information and communication tools is the most reasonable and realistic option to conduct instructional activities amid COVID-19 pandemic. Two teaching and learning models (offline or online) are offered to facilitate educators and pupils perform educational activities (Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Learning from Home in an Emergency Period for the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), 2020). Online learning is carried out with the aid of the internet network (Meidawati et al., in Pohan, 2020) which is further divided into synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous online learning refers to learning that is implemented at the same time with the use of educational technologies or conference tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or zoom, while asynchronous online learning refers to learning that is undertaken at different times between teachers and students such as the use of videos on YouTube channels, Google forms, and so on (Yuliani et al., 2020). Offline learning itself is a distance learning mode that inactivate the internet network, such as by utilizing students' learning worksheet, learning modules, student books, and others (Yuliani et al., 2020, p.87).

The implementation of distance teaching and learning via online and offline mode has contributed to learning solutions during the COVID-19 period. Even though school activities are closed, students can perform learning activities at home as well (Herliandry, L.D et al. 2020). Teachers, students, and parents can also discuss the appropriate media or platform to support the educational activities (Amrihani et al. 2020). In addition, time efficiency can be maximized because students and teachers do not need to come to school (Zulkifli et al. 2020).

There are several choices of distance learning facilities that can be used to assist the teaching and learning process during the pandemic. The focus of this research is to discuss learning online supporting by Learning Management System (LMS). LMS refers to a learning management system that is integrated in an online application (Ramadan, 2020). The primary purpose of the LMS is to facilitate the design of classroom settings, delivery of learning materials and media, and management of the computer-based teaching and learning process (Pakpahan et al., 2020). The focus of the LMS facility discussed in this study is Google Classroom. The rationale underlying the investigation of the selected media is the familiarity of this educational tool among teachers and students. Although other educational applications are usable, such as Edmodo, Microsoft Teams, Ruang Guru, Learning Academy, Zenius, Moodle, Sijar LMS, and Seamolec, Google Classroom is more conversant, specifically in schools in West Kalimantan. Suparjan and Mariyadi (2020)

found that WhatsApp, YouTube and also Google Classroom are several learning platforms widely used for distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at the elementary school level in Pontianak city.

Google Classroom is also one of the best cloud-based applications, which means that all application activities are recorded and can be archived. In addition, Google Classroom is also flexible since it is easy to access and operate, and this application can be used for free (Ramadan 2020). Research on the differences between applying Google Classroom and Edmodo (Batita, Wijoyo, and Herlambang 2019) at SMKN 5 Malang illustrated that Google Classroom is more effective to Edmodo to increase students' learning motivation. However, the finding also indicate that Edmodo is better than Google Classroom in improving learning outcomes since it has more exclusive features such as online quizzes. Another study uncover that the utilization of Google Classroom at State Elementary School of SDN I Giling Pati affect to the effectiveness of learning and improve student achievement (Salam 2020). Several high school teachers in Tangerang Selatan (North Tangerang) said that Google Classroom have helped many teachers to manage student assignments, organize classes, and accommodate student interactions (Harjanto and Sumarni 2019).

From several previous studies mentioned above, in-depth investigation on the motives for utilizing Google Classroom as a means for distance learning is required to be conducted. Several studies only reveal the convenience offered by the Google Classroom application. The study on the motives for employing this platform is considered necessary since miscellaneous educational tools offered for facilitating distance learning.

METHOD

Research design

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. A Descriptive research method is a study that tries to find facts with appropriate interpretations. These facts can be the problems that exist in a society, situations, relationships, activities, views, attitudes, and stages in a phenomenon in a research location (Tarjo 2019). The facts obtained are further analyzed using an inductive approach in accordance with the nature of descriptive research that emphasizes meaning, reasoning, and so forth relating to the facts in the research site (Rukin, 2019). Thus, this study tries to identify facts concerning the problems that exist in the community, especially regarding the motives for benefitting Google Classroom as a learning platform for distance learning.

Respondent

Respondents involved in this study are elementary school teachers who actively use Google Classroom as a means to carry out distance learning activities. The eight elementary school teachers are recruited from 3 schools in the city of Pontianak. The identity and location of the school where the teacher teaching are kept confidential to protect the privacy of the teacher. The profile of respondents in this study is as follows.

TABLE 1. *Respondent profile*

Initials	Gender	Education
R1	Male	Bachelor Degree
R2	Female	Bachelor Degree
R3	Female	Bachelor Degree
R4	Male	Bachelor Degree
R5	Female	Bachelor Degree
R6	Female	Bachelor Degree
R7	Female	Bachelor Degree
R8	Female	Bachelor Degree

To determine the respondents of the study, purposive sampling method is applied. This method is used to facilitate the achievement of certain research objectives without any limitation on respondents as long as the study objectives to reveal the motives for employing Google Classroom as a distance learning media at the elementary school level in Pontianak has been achieved (Bernard, in Purwanto et al. 2020).

Data collection technique

The facts that occur at the research site are collected using a semi-structured interview technique. In the interview activity, the interviewer acts as a determinant of the conversation issue. The interviewer develops a question from one issue or topic to another more specific and appropriate ones according to the condition at the study site (Suwartono 2014). In obtaining data, voice recorder applications and mobile phones are utilized. Mobile phones are used to conduct interviews via telephone calls, video calls, or short messages via WhatsApp while voice recording applications is applied to record interview activities between researchers and respondents. This step is accomplished to avoid direct contact between researchers and respondents since data collecting activities is conducted amid COVID-19 pandemic.

Data analysis

The data analysis technique applied in this study is thematic data analysis. The use of data analysis technique aim to find themes from the obtained data. (Braun & Clarke in Heriyanto, 2018). Alhojailan, in Purwanto et al (2020) argue that this technique is the most appropriate ones to explore more profound and more closely findings in the research location.

RESULT

The research result in this study is a written transcription of semi-structured interviews regarding the motives for using Google Classroom as a media for distance learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic at the elementary school level in the city of Pontianak. The findings on the motives for employing Google Classroom as a platform for distance learning are then described in tables and graphs to make it easier to understand and to scrutinize the overall motives for using the application. Based on table 2, motives for utilizing Google Classroom is equipped with a checklist from interviewers' responses. While in graph 1 the motives for benefitting Google Classroom is equipped in details in each major themes discussed.

TABLE 2. *Motives for using google classroom as a distance learning media*

Motives for Using Google Classroom for Distance Learning	Respondent							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ease of Access and Use	√		√				√	√
Application Sophistication	√	√	√	√		√	√	
Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure	√							
School Policy	√	√	√		√			
Level of Digital Literacy of Teachers and Students	√			√			√	√

Table 2 above illustrates that the motive that most expressed by respondents is the superiority of Google Classroom application. This platform is very helpful in supporting distance learning activities amid COVID-19 pandemic. From 8 respondents, 6 of them state that the features in Google Classroom are complete. In addition, 4 respondents assert that teachers, students and students' parents are familiar with Google Classroom and they can easily access and use it. The motive of availability of facilities and infrastructure is only

confirmed by one respondent, indicating that not many schools provide facilities and infrastructure for teachers to teach online via Google Classroom. It is as evaluation for teachers, stakeholders, and parents to run distance learning well by supporting with adequate facilities.

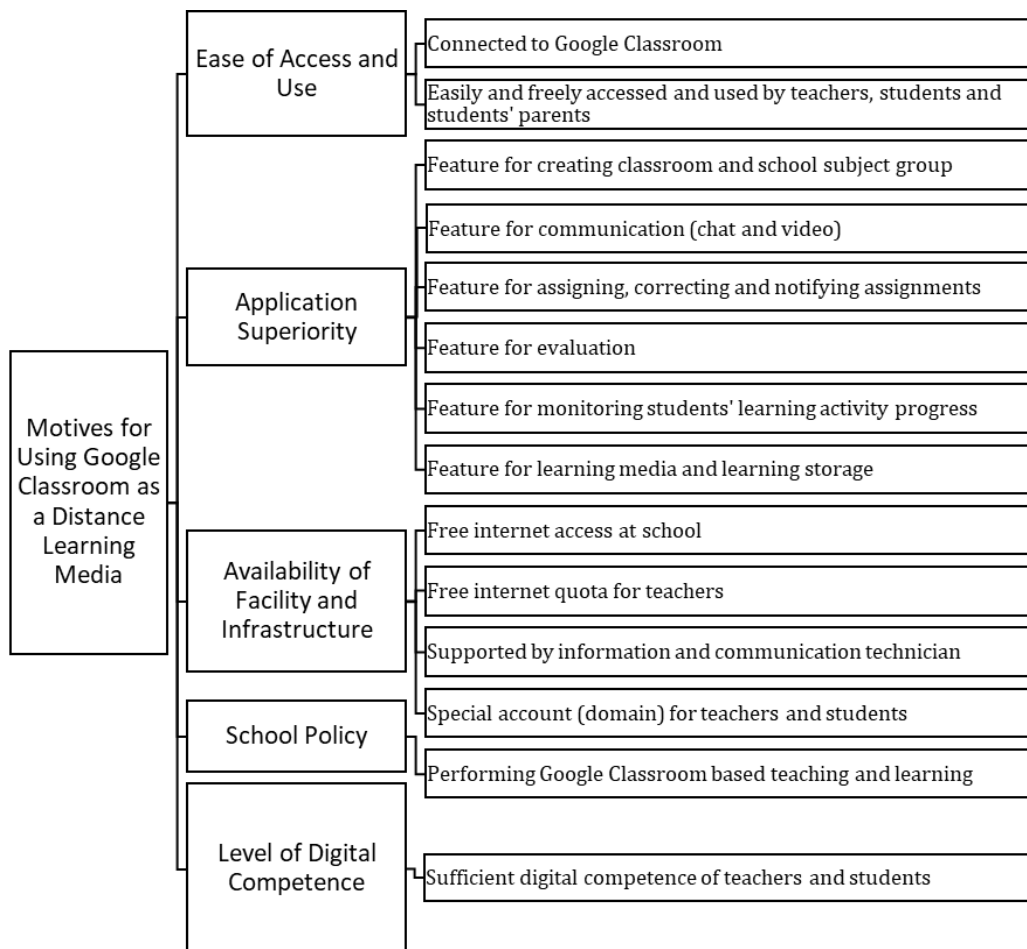


FIGURE 1. *Taxonomy of motives for using google classroom as a distance learning media*

Figure 1 shows that several correspondents admitted that Google Classroom is very easy to use and access. The application can also be used for free and is directly linked to a Google account. In relation to the application superiority, respondents admit that Google Classroom has several features that support the learning process, such as communication features in the discussion forum and Google Meet, assignment feature for uploading or submitting the assignment, evaluation features integrated with Google Forms, monitoring features to check students' activity progress in doing assignments and their participation in learning and media features including Google Sheets, Google Slides and unlimited storage capacity for video and sound recordings. The availability of facility and infrastructure is another motive that emerge in this study. Several respondents acknowledged that the reason for using Google Classroom is supporting from the institution. The availability of infrastructure such as free internet access, gratis internet quota for teachers, availability of information and communication technology (ICT) personnel, and provision of special Google accounts (particular domains) to facilitate the learning process. Several respondents admit that they employ Google Classroom due to school policy. Teachers are obliged to perform Google Classroom based teaching and

learning amid Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of Digital ability, students, teachers, and students' parents are familiar in using Google Classroom.

Ease of Access and Use

Several respondents said that the reason they use Google Classroom as a learning media for distance learning is the ease to access and use. The results of interviews regarding this motive is presented as follows.

... the choice of Google Classroom because it is like a real class but in digital form. It is complete and easy to open. It's free, it's very easy for students and teachers, it's very closely related to its google account ... Although there are other applications, the more familiar one is Google Classroom. (R1)

... With GC making easier for me to carry out the teaching and learning process, its use is easy ... (R3)

... the reason is because it is easier to access ... easy to use because parents / students just download the application and click on the link sent by the teacher to join or with the code sent by the teacher they can join, the class is easy for the teacher to create... (R7)

... Google Classroom is easy to access ... (R8)

The interview transcript above shows that four respondents out of eight stated that their motive for using Google Classroom is easy to access and use the application to facilitate distance learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The teachers easily get the application because it is directly linked to their respective Google accounts, and it can be used for free. Besides, users easily understand the setting of Google Classroom.

Application Sophistication

Several respondents employ Google Classroom as an online learning media because the features are complete and considered more sophisticated. The results of interviews regarding this motive is described in the following interview transcripts.

... completeness features, can communicate. In Google Classroom, you can create groups according to certain subjects, you can create subject files and documents that can be included, and there is a scoring system. So, for example, the form of collecting their assignments is photos, videos, or sounds, the children can collect in Google Classroom ... we can comment ... the notification is in the email and students can respond ... (R1)

... archive all learning activities, task reminders, then if you want to upload it to the GC it can be scheduled ... for the assignments they write we can correct them directly there, they can be scribbled and marked the wrong part and can comment on any mistakes ... for the daily test, make a question on the google form and then send the link to the GC sir ... Everything is available, videos, PPT, pdf are also available ... (R2)

... sending material in the form of PPT or learning videos, sending assignments and daily tests, as a class teacher who teaches thematic, I can also monitor other lessons such as English, PAI, etc. ... about materials and assignments given by other teachers. With GC I easily check assignments, give grades, and return them with comments ... with GC all files are stored on the drive ... one of my communication tools to parents and students ... many features in GC that I can use such as google meet, drive, etc. ... (R3)

... Able to meet face-to-face online with a large number of students, and make it easier for us to manage the noise of students who are noisy online ... (R4)

... use zoom to say hello, classroom to share and collect assignments, form / drive for tests because the analysis can be automated so it's easy for assessment, use quiziz also to hold quizzes ... (R6)

the data is not saved on the cellphone, but in the email, because the cellphone storage area is full. More interactive because it can also provide comments. The number of members can be many, the class can also be many (R7)

The interview transcript above demonstrates that five out of eight respondents declared their motives for benefitting Google Classroom. Application superiority is one of the main reasons they utilize Google Classroom. This application can organize, provide, and facilitate the learning process, such as the availability of communication media, storage for learning materials, grading system, and several other facilities that can help teacher to perform distance learning successfully.

Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure

One respondent said that they apply Google Classroom as a learning media for distance learning as the availability of online facilities and infrastructure that support the use of the application. The results of interviews regarding this motive is illustrated in the following transcript.

... one child was sent a special email ... the school provided great wifi ... increased wifi capacity ... given a quota from the school ... there were IT experts ... almost all students and parents have devices only some do not ... (R1)

The interview excerpt above illustrates that one out of eight respondents admitted that the motive for applying Google Classroom as a distance learning media is due to the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure. The facility and infrastructure used to support distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic embrace internet networks, internet quota, availability of information technology technician and several other supporting devices.

School Policy

Several respondents said that the reason they make use of Google Classroom as a means of distance learning is the agreement of all elements in the school. The results of interviews regarding this motive is depicted in the following transcript.

... the teacher just follows the direction of the principal ... there is a recruitment of IT personnel (R1)

... it's mandatory, sir, because it's been from the foundation's direction, we also use a premium account, and GC is one of the means of assisting when learning from home like this... (R2)

... yes I use GC because it has become a system of schools as a means for online learning ... (R3)

... mandatory, because in schools ... the current learning media used are GC and GM ... (R5)

The interview transcript above elucidate that four respondents out of eight respondents said that their motive for using Google Classroom is the instruction from the school principal.

Level of Digital Literacy of Teachers and Students

Some elementary school teachers in Pontianak said that the reason they choose Google Classroom as a platform for facilitating distance learning is the ability of students and teachers to operate technology including the learning technology. The results of interviews regarding this motive is portrayed bellow.

Before this there was training for teachers, creating classes, inviting students, making assignments as needed, how to upload, how to edit. Only once... On average all students can use GC. What they can't do is that the device doesn't exist. (R1)

...none (training)... (R4)

... not yet (training) ... (R7)

My children are in 6th grade. So my class children can understand and access Google Classroom. (R8)

DISCUSSION

The obtained data above is then analyzed according to the research objectives, namely to reveal the motives for utilizing Google Classroom as a means of distance learning which is divided into several sections according to the findings in the research site. The sections are reperesented as follows.

Ease of Access and Use

Based on interviews with eight respondents, four respondents said that Google Classroom is very easy to use for both teachers and students. Some teachers say they do not learn more regarding to learn using Google Classroom. Some claim that they have received only one training session or obtained no special training at all. In using Google Classroom, they get independently from several media such as articles in the internet, YouTube tutorials, and discussions with colleagues. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers are familiar with in Google Classroom and they have sufficient knowledge and skills in relation to Google Classroom. In some schools, at first, some teachers found difficulty, especially for senior teachers.

For students, the main function of Google Classroom is facilitating students to learn virtually. The process of joining students in groups is straightforward. Students just choose the link or code that the teacher has prepared to enter and join in the learning. After students join the classroom, learning schedules, classes, and announcements from teachers can be seen, and notifications always appear on students' accounts and emails.

Besides being free, Google Classroom can also be linked to other media such as Google Meet, Google Form, and many other applications that can support learning, making it very easy for teachers to focus on using learning applications. Its use can be carried out anywhere as long as the internet network is available. The ease of using Google Classroom in the learning process is also recognized by students at Dian Nuswantoro University who acknowledge that using the media is easier both for lecturers and students.

Application Sophistication

Many media or platform can be benefitted to facilitate distance learning activities. In fact, all social media can be converted into learning media, such as WhatsApp, which is also widely used at the elementary school level in West Kalimantan (Suparjan and Mariyadi 2020). However, the media used is not obviously designed for learning media and tends to be ineffective (Daheri et al. 2020).

From eight responses interviewed, six respondents admitted that they use Google Classroom for online learning process because the facilities provided by LMS-based Google Classroom is easily implemented in virtual learning. In addition to facilitating centralized learning management, the features provided by Google Classroom are also considered all-encompassing. The teachers acknowledge that the existing features are beneficial for most of the learning process, such as creating classroom groups and subject groups; the assignment features are very varied with file types that are very easy to reach by students, such as videos, pdfs, presentation slides, and so on. Google Classroom combines several other Google applications such as Google Forms, Google Calendar, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Meet, and Gmail. These features are very helpful for teachers in assessment, setting study schedules, sending documents, performing PowerPoint presentations, and conducting communication between teachers, students, and parents. Besides, another media can also be linked into Google Classrooms such as YouTube. Several other features in Google Classroom are also beneficial for controlling students' attendance and monitoring students' work. Furthermore, several elementary school teachers also confess that Google Classroom does not make their devices full of archives of learning documents. Google Classroom facilitates to archive all learning documents, so that everything that has been uploaded can be viewed again.

Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure

One of the most important things in the implementation of distance learning is the availability of facilities and infrastructure (Handarini and Wulandari 2020). The infrastructure facilities in this study encompasses the availability of educational tools, technical support, internet quota and internet access. One response from eight respondents said that one of the reasons that underline the teachers to use Google Classroom is the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Thus, schools still have to identify the potential availability of facilities and infrastructure to support distance learning (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2020).

Some schools in Pontianak already have distance online learning facilities and infrastructure. However, in this case, schools must continue to coordinate with teachers and parents to choose appropriate and affordable educational tools or learning applications. Several facilities are also prepared, such as adding Wi-Fi capacity in schools and providing quotas for teachers to teach at their respective homes. In addition, the school also provides technical officers to handle any possible disruptions in online learning, for example, by preparing a special email from the school for teachers and students to maximize the use of Google Classroom accounts.

School Policy

Based on the results of interviews with eight respondents, four of them declared that one of the reasons they employ Google Classroom is school policy. The policy is based on several considerations as discussed above. First, institution has identified that there is a need for standardization in the use of learning media or educational tools to make evaluation and monitoring easier to carry out. Second, considering the availability of facilities and infrastructure owned by students and teachers for performing distance learning. Third, teachers and students' digital ability in operating learning media. Fourth, the completeness of Google Classroom, so it can contribute significantly to the implementation of teaching and learning process.

By implementing online distance learning through Google Classroom, schools also provide additional facilities for teachers such as providing network capacity and information and communication technology technicians, setting up special hosting for school email for teachers and students, and providing free internet quota for teachers. All of these facilities and infrastructure are provided to support teachers performing online distance learning well and it is part of the school policy.

Digital Literacy Level of Teachers and Students, and Students' Parents

Based on interviews with eight respondents, two of them affirmed that students and teachers do not find any significant difficulties in using Google Classroom. The level of digital competence in several schools are good enough to operate the Google Classroom application. Some teachers stated that they only receive training once; the rest is their effort to learn independently. Some teachers, students, and parents do not even get any training in using it. It proves that the level of digital competence of the Indonesian people, especially in Pontianak, is sufficient to operate Google Classroom.

The use of Google Classroom at least provides a new experience for the ability of teachers and students to use technology in learning. Although teachers do not have many choices in selecting face-to-face learning, online learning, which uses Google Classroom media, will have a good impact on the quality of teachers in Indonesia. Likewise, students are directed to positively use the internet, namely as a learning medium (Sudarsana et al. 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted with eight respondents from three schools in Pontianak, it can be concluded that the motive underlying the utilization of Google Classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic in elementary schools in Pontianak is ease of access and use, application superiority, availability of facilities and infrastructure, school policy, and level of digital ability of teachers, students, and parents of students.

The study regarding the motives for using Google Classroom as a Distance Learning Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic at the Elementary School Level in Pontianak City is able to provide a more in-depth portrait of the underlying rationale of employing this media in elementary school learning. This study focuses on using Google Classroom as a Distance Learning Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic at the Elementary School Level in Pontianak. Research with larger respondents, higher education levels, and quantitative research needs to be conducted to provide more profound conclusions about the motives for utilizing Google Classroom for distance learning amid COVID-19 in West Kalimantan.

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PROFILE

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