

What Young Lecturers in Indonesia Perceived Covid-19 Handling Related to Their Anxiety and Continuing Study Plan: A Multiple Regression Analysis

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the relation between perception of government handling the Covid-19 (PG), continuing study (CS) during the pandemic and how it can predict the level of job anxiety (JA) among young teaching staff in an Indonesia university. Sixty-four participants were selected purposively from a teaching university in Indonesia. Respondents filled three-set of online questionnaires. Using IBM SPSS 26, Pearson's correlation and multiple regression technique were used to analyze the data. The results show a statistical significance for PG and CS as predictor for JA. It is concluded that perception towards government handling of Covid-19 and continuing study had a moderate significance relationship with Job Anxiety level among young teaching staff. The PG correlates negatively while CS correlates positively to JA. Despite the fact that the nation is still suffering from the pandemic, the lecturers consider continuing their study to be more anxious than the bad policy of handling Covid-19 issues.

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Introduction

The response of every government in dealing with the pandemic Covid-19 is different from one another. There are currently three ways how the authority responds to discipline in taking health-measurement approaches determines the path to post-pandemic recovery (Alon et al., 2020; Altiparmakis et al., 2021; Anttiroiko, 2021; Bouri et al., 2021; Greer et al., 2020; Hale et al., 2022; Reiersen et al., 2022). The first group is a strict-to-strict approach or known as zero-coved policy. The country such as China, North Korea, and previously Taiwan and Vietnam set a very high standard in maintaining the level of virus spread low by a long and centralized quarantine, lockdown, and harsh penalty (Anttiroiko, 2021; Hartley et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021; Mei, 2020). The strict-to-loose strategy is mostly followed by the democratic system such as European nations, the USA, Japan and South Korea. They try to contain the outbreak strongly in the beginning and then for the sake of the economy or people interests they scale back the measurement in line with the increasing vaccination rate among the population (Bejan & Nikolova, 2022; Engler et al., 2021; Reiersen et al., 2022).

The third approach in the government response of Covid-19 is an ambiguity or loose-to-loose policy. It seems mostly occurred in the developing country, where their society tends to have lower health awareness than in developed nations, while the government also cannot afford – for too long – the economic and political burden from a stricter measurement (Greer et al., 2020; Reiersen et al., 2022). African nations, Brazil, India, and Indonesia are some examples for this pattern when the authorities themselves reluctantly enforced the scientific suggestions approved or promoted by expert both global and domestic for some

subjective or populist arguments (González-Bustamante, 2021; Olivia et al., 2020; Renteria & Arellano-Gault, 2021; Roziqin et al., 2021; Ventura & Martins, 2020).

Hypothetically, countries who considered successful in controlling the transmission of Covid-19 indicate a strong confidence of the society towards their government (Goldfinch et al., 2021; Kaine et al., 2022) and vice-versa. The sense of successful resilience during the pandemic also increases the level of public trust to the authority in a longer period (Altıparmak et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021; Kuo, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2020). This situation is real in Indonesia, when the initiative regarding the Covid-19 issues mostly comes from the top level of the state. Some issues emerged are overwhelmed healthcare system, the statistical doubt, ambiguity and sometime a flip-flop policy of the authority. The uncoordinated and contradictory policy also occurred in almost all levels of the administration between ministerial portfolio or hierarchical structure as happened between Jakarta and the central government (Apresian, 2020; Olivia et al., 2020; Qodir et al., 2020; Roziqin et al., 2021). With this situation, the public trust towards the government is presumably low.

Apart from the physical effect of the pandemic in economic and health, the Covid-19 has also resulted in many new things in the education field. With the school lockdown, in 2020-2021 alone, the average total time for out-of-school learning, distance learning, or online learning has exceeded 80% of the academic calendar in various countries as reported by (Aristovnik et al., 2020; World Bank, 2020). In Indonesia, all educational institutions have been closed or instructed to carry out distance learning since March 2020. This policy is likely put in place at least until the end of 2022 due to the current fluctuation of the virus spreading globally. The prolonged period of out-of-school learning, including at the tertiary level means less effective study, less social contact, and decreasing emotional well-being such as stress and anxiety (Green & Bettini, 2020; ILO, 2020; Schleicher, 2020).

For Indonesia's higher education sector, in particular, the group that is affected most is the lecturers or teaching staff. The sudden switch to online learning at the beginning of 2020 until at least the first semester of 2022 became a tough challenge for facilitators and also management that provided the IT infrastructure for such mode (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020; IESALC, 2020; Minnesota Department of Health, 2020; Sverdlik & Hall, 2018). Among the sub-groups of academic staff are those classified as young or recently admitted in the position of teaching. The group of mostly the millennial is facing two crucial things in this regard. First, the role that is demanded by the senior teaching staff to conduct online learning since it requires sufficient IT skills the senior lack of (Ogundele, 2019; Saripudin et al., 2021; Soysal et al., 2019). Second, there is a potential disruption to their careers due to the pandemic circumstances and the recovery process in the years ahead (Gewin, 2021; Herman et al., 2021; Lokhtina et al., 2022; Wakit & Rhain, 2021).

One of the duties of Indonesian lecturer according to the national philosophy of *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi* – teaching, research, and social service is to continue studies for a doctoral level, as soon as possible (Mursidi & Sundiman, 2014; Siregar et al., 2016). Until now, the minimum requirement for a teaching position in the university is to have a master's degree. This policy makes the majority of junior teaching staffs are master's graduates. Of the 306,000 lecturers across the nation, 72% still hold a master and only 47,000 or about 14% earned a PhD (Kemenristekdikti, 2019). These human resources issue in higher education is also a concern for the government. Without experience from doctoral studies, the research quality and output in the higher education institution will remain low. The assumption is proven by the small number of Indonesian campuses that are listed in the world-class ranking such as QS, ARWU, or THE. In term of publications, Indonesian academics are also less productive than their colleagues from neighbouring countries in

Southeast Asia like Thailand and Malaysia, although the number is increasing in recent years (Barrot, 2021; Elfındri et al., 2015; Purnell, 2021). Indeed, it produces research publication the most in the region, but the per capita number is very low. Probably, the dire situation of the research and publication is also the result of limited number PhD graduate even among university teaching staff (Harun et al., 2020; Pratikno & Sujarwo, 2018).

Anxiety is a normal form of tissue as a human being (Higgins & Kotrlik, 2006). The problem is when disturbances such as mood, as well as thoughts, behavior and physiological activities, and interfere with a person's health so that it becomes a disorder (Adwas et al., 2019). There are several forms of anxiety disorder that experts recommend, including panic disorder (with and without a history of agoraphobia), agoraphobia (with and without panic disorder), generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobia, social phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, acute stress disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Greenberg et al., 1999). If a person experiences an anxiety disorder caused by factors related to the world of work or occupation, this is called job-anxiety (Muschalla et al., 2013). Little research has been done on the relationship between job anxiety. Generally, the findings state that short-term disturbances make performance quality decrease and in the long term it results in the overall work environment such as relationships between co-workers, deviations, and even crime both directly and indirectly (Jones et al., 2016; Muschalla et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2020). Factors that trigger job anxiety include finances (Bryson et al., 2012); future career (Mahmud et al., 2020); and social relations in the workplace (Wood, 2008).

In the field of education, concerns about work anxiety often occur in teachers in particular and have an impact on the quality of teaching in the classroom (Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Ferguson et al., 2012; Halet & Sanchez, 2017). While other studies look at the relationship between co-workers as the cause (Hayden, 2017; Rauch, 2014; Ybañez-Llorente, 2014) and of course financial factors also play an important role in its relevance to teacher incomes which tend to be marginal compared to their workload (Dizon-Ross et al., 2019; Dworkin, 2001). Research on predictors of anxiety levels in higher education is actually still rare, especially in the context of a pandemic. Most studies on teachers seem to apply to lecturers as well (Dandona, 2014; García-González et al., 2020; Sofie Masuku & Stella Muchemwa, 2015). Generally, pandemics trigger increased anxiety for them (Adwas et al., 2019; Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Ganson et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). What about the influence of perception and motivation on anxiety? Such reciprocity is possible (Lazarus et al., 2020; Lee & Pang, 2013; Maesaroh & Genoni, 2010). The lack of literature, especially in the context of Indonesia and the Covid-19 pandemic, raises the need for exploratory studies to see how these three factors are related. If it is proven as indicated from the previous researches that there is a predictive relationship, then policies need to be taken because the impact will be critical regarding how the performance of the teaching staff and their productivity at our university in the future.

This study aims to examine the relationship between perception and anxiety level of the teaching staff at a public university in Indonesia. There are two perceptions to be observed: first, the perception of the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic; and second, their perception of taking doctoral studies or continuing study during the pandemic. Based on the literature review it is indicated that the perception of government handling of Covid-19 and continuing study have predictive relations with job anxiety level.

Research Method

This research is a correlational study using multiple regression technique. There are three variables tested: two independent variables (IVs) and one dependent variable (DV). The

researcher will examine whether there is a significant correlation existed between each IV and DV, the relational form, as well as the coefficient predictor of IVs towards DV (Creswell, 2014). The construct of this research is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

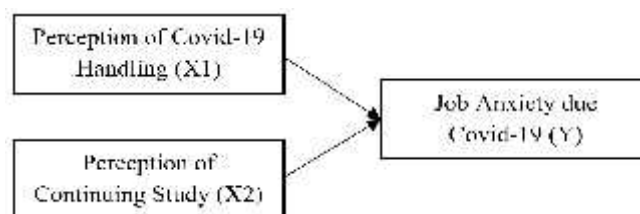


Figure 1. Diagram of Research Variables

The population in this study is lecturers who were categorized as "young". Researchers used a purposive sampling technique by determining several criteria namely (1) <5 years of working period; (2) age under 40 years; (3) without a PhD; and (4) is in the status of an active lecturer teaching in the current semester of 2020/2021. The population is unknown, however, from the general observation, the number of this group is likely to be between 100 and 175 in 2020/2021. A total of 68 respondents have filled out the questionnaire form completely. After conducting a general review, 4 respondents were disqualified due to several reasons such as already hold a PhD or not a member of the institution studied. The final sample used here is 64 respondents, 26 males, and 38 female.

The instrument draft then was examined using (1) content-related evidence, or expert judgment and (2) construct-related evidence. A pilot project was conducted on 20 respondents (11-20% of the population) who were purposively and conveniently selected. The Pearson's Correlation validated the items and reliability of Cronbach's Alpha was used. Two out of the three questionnaires are satisfactory with Alpha =.918 (Questionnaire set 1) and =.906 (Questionnaire set 3) "excellent", while Questionnaire set 2 is "acceptable" =.762 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The total items in the instrument are fifty-four. The first questionnaire is 18-item adapted from Lazarus et al. (2020) on perception towards government. The second questionnaire is a 15-item instrument developed independently on perception of continuing study. The last questionnaire is a 21-item instrument adapted from Muschalla & Linden (2017) "Job-anxiety scale". The original scale is a five-dimension one and I modified it into four-subscale questionnaires. The instrument used 5 points Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). It also contains demographic data such as gender, unit of affiliation; range of age; range of tenure; as well as optional identity and contact items.

Data were analyzed by IBM SPSS Statistic version 26 using the regression test to analyze the form of the relationship between the three research variables. Assumed the data is normally distributed using KS test and histogram, the main analysis is bivariate correlation, summary model, partial correlation, and the regression. Next, test the linearity of the regression line to find out whether the variables have a linear relationship or not. Last, the correlation significance test is to determine how closely the relationship between variables is.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

To find out the highest value, lowest value, mean and standard deviation, the following data is descriptive statistics result:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Result

N=64	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PG	21	70	3168	49.50	9.330	87.048	-.633	.299	.564	.590
CS	39	64	3396	53.06	5.398	29.139	-.109	.299	-.551	.590
JA	43	93	4100	64.06	11.424	130.504	.370	.299	-.326	.590

Tests of Normality

The normality test is conducted to determine whether the research variables are normally distributed or not. There are three variables in this study, namely perceptions towards the government (X1); perceptions of continuing studies (X2); and job-anxiety (Y). The standard in the normality test is if the significance (sig.) value is >0.05 then the data is normally distributed. The following table is the results of normality test calculation using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test because there are more than 50 inputted data.

Table 2. One-sample K-S Normality Test Result

N=64		PG	CS	JA
		64	64	64
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	49.50	53.06	64.06
	Std. Deviation	9.330	5.398	11.424
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.111	.105	.099
	Positive	.072	.105	.099
	Negative	-.111	-.085	-.050
Test Statistic		.111	.105	.099
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.050 ^c	.075 ^c	.199 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Based on the Table 2 the normality test results for perceptions towards the government (X1) has a sig. value of $.050 > .05$, the data is normally distributed; perception of continuing study (X2) has a sig. value of $.075 > .05$, the data is normally distributed; and job-anxiety (Y) with a sig. value of $0.199 > .05$, the data is normally distributed.

Correlational Analysis

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation Test Result

N=64		PG	CS	JA
PG	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
CS	Pearson Correlation	.060	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.638		
JA	Pearson Correlation	-.424 ^{**}	.260 [*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.038	

^{**}. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

^{*}. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Bivariate correlation test results in Table 3 shows that PG and JA has a negative significant correlation [$r(64) = -.424$, sig. = $.000 < p = .01$]. CS and JA has a positive significant correlation [$r(64) = .260$, sig. = $.038 < p = .05$]. Meanwhile, the relationship between PG and CS is non-significant [$r(64) = .060$, sig. = $.638 > p = .05$].

Multiple Regression Test

Below is the result of the linear-regression test to see the R-squared or the proportion of the variance among the data within DV that can be explained by the independent variable.

Table 4. R-Squared Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.424 ^a	.180	.167	10.428	.180	13.612	1	62	.000
2	.512 ^b	.262	.238	9.973	.082	6.777	1	61	.012

a. Predictors: (Constant), PG

b. Predictors: (Constant), PG, CS

Using stepwise regression technique, the model 1 with PG as the predictor show $R=.18$ indicates that just 18% of the variance in the JA is explained by PG. Meanwhile, the model 2 with both PG and CS as predictor show $R^2=.262$ indicates that 26.2% of the variance in JA explained two variables or 8.2% higher than in model 1.

Table 5. Regression Equation Significance Test Result

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1480.088	1	1480.088	13.612	.000 ^b
	Residual	6741.662	62	108.736		
	Total	8221.750	63			
2	Regression	2154.228	2	1077.114	10.829	.000 ^c
	Residual	6067.522	61	99.468		
	Total	8221.750	63			

a. Dependent Variable: JA

b. Predictors: (Constant), PG

c. Predictors: (Constant), PG, CS

Referring to the Table 5 of ANOVA test, both models of regression are statistically significant for PG to JA [$F(1,62)=13.612$] sig.=<.0005 and PG-CS to JA [$F(2,61)=10.829$] sig.=<.0005. It means that job-anxiety (Y) is related to perceptions towards government (X1) and perceptions of continuing studies (X2). The models also imply that 82% and 73.8% of the variance in JA cannot be explained by model 1 and 2, respectively.

In the Table 6 below, the coefficient regression for model 1, PG to JA is $B=-.520$, $p<.05$ or statistically significant. Meanwhile, for model 2 PG to JA is $B=-.541$, $p<.05$ and CS to JA is $B=.607$, $p<.05$ both are statistically significant. The equation for the regression line is the level of job anxiety = $b_0 + b_1 \text{perception of government handling} + b_2 \text{perception of continuing study}$ $Y=58.606 + (-.541) + .607$.

Table 6. Regression Coefficient Test Result

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	89.778	7.091		12.661	.000
	PG	-.520	.141	-.424	-3.689	.000
2	(Constant)	58.606	13.761		4.259	.000
	PG	-.541	.135	-.441	-4.006	.000
	CS	.607	.233	.287	2.603	.012

a. Dependent Variable: Q3

The B coefficient of regression observed above means that for every 1-point scale increasing perception towards the government will increase negatively the job anxiety level by 54.1% while for every 1-point increasing perception of continuing study among the young lecturer it is predicted that job anxiety will increase by 60.7%. The partial correlation test is conducted to see the degree of relations from each variable that might affect each other in the existence of another IV, simultaneously. The results are as follows:

Table 7. Partial Correlation Significance Test Result for PG – JA

Control			PG	JA
CS	PG	Correlation	1.000	-.456
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		df	0	61
	JA	Correlation	-.456	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
		df	61	0

The hypothesis proposed here is

Ho = The correlation between PG and JA controlling for CS is not significant

H1 = The correlation between PG and JA controlling for CS is significant

The results of the partial correlation test for PG and JA controlled by CS shows a coefficient of $r = -.456$, sig. = $< .05$, so, Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted. We can conclude that the correlation level between PG and JA controlling for CS is moderate.

Table 8. Correlation Significance Test Result for CS – JA

Control			CS	JA
PG	CS	Correlation	1.000	.316
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.012
		df	0	61
	JA	Correlation	.316	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.012	.
		df	61	0

The hypothesis proposed here is

Ho = The correlation between CS and JA controlling for PG is not significant

H1 = The correlation between CS and JA controlling for PG is significant

The results of the partial correlation test for CS and JA controlled by PG shows a coefficient of $r = .316$, sig. = $< .05$, so, Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted. We can conclude that the correlation level between CS and JA controlling for PG is low.

Discussions

The current Covid-19 pandemic situation has made young teaching staff at a university in Indonesia rethink about their future study plans, while the perception of the government shows a positive tendency as shown by the Mean for PG (M=49.50) and CS (M=53.06). This result means that although studies from previous researchers show that the preparation and handling of the pandemic in Indonesia are poor, the public's impression, especially among those who tend to be good (Apresian, 2020; Olivia et al., 2020; Qodir et al., 2020; Roziqin et al., 2021). As for the value of job anxiety among these lecturers, they tend to have high scores as well, especially when viewed on an item-by-item basis and overall Mean (M=64.06), the level of JA related to the pandemic is quite high.

As a lecturer, continuing doctoral studies is a must, a duty that should be part of their career both in the short and long term. Meanwhile, the pandemic conditions caused job-anxiety to increase. Based on the results of the correlation test, the relationship between these three factors shows significance which means that each other has a relationship, especially PG and JA with moderate correlation. Why does the perception of CS only have a low correlation with JA? The answer may be that they are currently not prioritizing further studies. The workload and pressures of the pandemic have made studying not a choice, which means it's not really a concern, after all this is still the beginning of their careers (Harun et al., 2020; Lokhtina et al., 2022; Mursidi & Sundiman, 2014; Pratikno & Sujarwo, 2018).



Another finding is a negative relationship between increased perceptions of government and decreased job anxiety level. Respondents implied positive perceptions about the way the government was dealing with this pandemic related to the reduced sense of job anxiety during the pandemic. This confirms previous research on public trust and public confidence in the government that have an impact on public wellbeing (Altiparmakis et al., 2021; Goldfinch et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2021; Kaine et al., 2022; Kuo, 2021). Higher trust in authority means lower anxiety levels at work and better mental health.

On the other hand, this study shows that job anxiety can be influenced by internal factors such as personal priorities or desires but can also be caused by external factors such as institutional support or culture. On an item-by-item basis, this factor implies that despite their high enthusiasm and motivation to continue their studies, their environment is not sufficiently supportive for that purpose. With job satisfaction or low personal achievement, it can have an impact on higher levels of anxiety (Higgins & Kotrlik, 2006; Jones et al., 2016; Karamchandani & Dubule, 2020). It was concluded from the results of the correlation analysis showed that the PG and CS variables had a significant effect on JA.

If we compare the correlation value between PG and JA controlled by CS, which is greater than $-.456$ than CS with JA controlled by PG, we get a value of $.316$. Therefore, the highest perception of the government can predict the work anxiety of lecturers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The overall relationship using the Guilford Correlation Significance Value standard (1956) can be concluded that the two variables have a Medium Correlation or Substantial Relationship ranging from 0.40 to 0.69 . For the results of a simple linear test that examines each independent variable with the dependent variable, it turns out that CS has a greater value for predicting JA than PG as shown by the data in Table 6 even though the significance of PG is greater.

There are several implications that we can draw from this research. There is no doubt that persistent distraction from workplace-induced anxiety will have a negative impact on employee quality of work (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Duraku & Hoxha, 2020; Muschalla et al., 2013). From this study we can see that two factors can be associated with anxiety levels during this health crisis. The following are some implications of the findings in this study in thematic categories based on the subjects discussed. From an academic point of view, research findings on the relationship between perception and well-being are relatively rare. Moreover, in the Indonesian context, academic attention to this matter is quite limited. It is important for academics in higher education and decision makers to address wellbeing issues during a pandemic. For perceptions of government, however, the findings of perceptions of continuing studies are more relevant to study because it is part of their future duties and careers (Pratikno & Sujarwo, 2018; Siregar et al., 2016; Stamatis, 2021). With a broader and deeper understanding of these issues, we can assess and recommend the authorities and all stakeholders involved to improve the quality of work so that it will improve the education sector especially at the higher tertiary level. For teaching staff, this study found that young teaching staff had more positive perceptions of the government than presumed before (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Ding et al., 2020; Lazarus et al., 2020). Despite the fact that the nation is still suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic, they consider continuing their studies to be more of an anxiety than a bad policy.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that perception towards government handling of Covid-19 and perception of continuing study had a moderate significant relationship with Job Anxiety level among young teaching staff in an Indonesia University. Meanwhile, the form of

the relationship between the tested variables is a positive perception towards government (PG) means lower level of job anxiety due to Covid-19; while Positive perception towards continuing study (CS) means higher level of job anxiety due to Covid-19 (JA). Although less than 50% of the data can confirm the relationship between the variables tested and further predict one another, this study implies some characteristics of Indonesia's higher education environment during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially among young teaching staff. They have a positive view on government handling of the pandemic regardless of the chaos it may happened, while also seems less impacted by the situation for their aspiration for continuing study. Job anxiety indeed increases during the pandemic and they seem to care more on pragmatism well-being such as economic support and job workload compare to their future career in general.

Recommendation

There are some recommendations from this study. In terms of policy making, this research confirms the government roles in society whose performance is the key to public trust or public confidence that is predicted by wellbeing and vice versa. In the context of young teaching staff in universities, they must ensure that the regulations give them hope for career development, funding commitments, and mentoring. This effort is needed so that lecturers are less anxious at work, while mentoring means they will be better prepared to continue their studies. The government also needs to evaluate whether current conditions, institutional regulations and culture ideally or at least put minimal pressure for the young lecturers at the beginning of their tenure. University management should also assume responsibility such as providing a reasonable incentive and support for their staff to continue their study as soon as possible even during the pandemic. They need to use distance work, not as another burden for its young lecturers but to invest in their capacity building such as in language preparation training, developing a research proposal, and opening global network.

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