

Management of Early Childhood Education In The Covid-19 Pandemic Period

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Management Of Early Childhood Education In The Covid-19 Pandemic Period

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1 **Abstract**--This study aims to analyze the management of Early Childhood Education in the City of Semarang in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative which aims to describe and analyze the implementation of Early Childhood Education in three institutions in the City of Semarang that represent the category of accreditation value. The research objects were teachers, PAUD principals and School Committees using interview guidance research instruments, observation sheets and documentation. The approach used in analyzing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is eight PAUD Standards as Quality Assurance. The results showed that the management of Early Childhood Education during the Covid-19 pandemic underwent changes in several standards. Adaptation and changes must be made so that the quality of education can be maintained or even improved. Quality Assurance as a system that maintains quality stability needs to be improved by establishing changes in some PAUD Standards with the addition of Information Technology as an inseparable part.

Keywords: management of early childhood education, covid-19 pandemic, quality assurance, early childhood education standards.

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I. INTRODUCTION

18 management in a broad sense is planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. Educational management can be defined as the art and science of managing educational resources to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (Usman, 2011).

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is carried out through the provision of educational designs to assist physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education (Law on National Education System, 2003). PAUD units or programs are PAUD services carried out at

3 an educational institution in the form of Taman Kanak-kanak (TK) / Raudatul Athfal (RA) / Bustanul Athfal (BA), Kelompok Bermain (KB), Taman Penitipan Anak (TPA), and Satuan PAUD Sejenis (SPS). Based on these two definitions, PAUD management is management carried out at the early childhood education level.

In the implementation of management, there is an activity that aims to ensure the achievement of organizational goals, namely Quality Assurance. Quality Assurance is before and during the process of the activities concerned to prevent mistakes from happening in the first place. Quality assurance (QA) is about designing quality into processes, to ensure that the product is manufactured to predetermined specifications. Simply put, quality assurance (QA) is a way to produce products that are flawless and error free. Quality assurance (QA) is about consistently meeting product specifications or fixing things the first time, every time. The quality of goods or services is guaranteed by having a system in place, which specifies exactly how production should be carried out and by what standards. Quality standards are maintained by following the procedures set out in the QA system. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the workforce, usually working in quality circles or teams, rather than the inspectors, although inspection can play a role in quality assurance (Allis, 1993).

The establishment of Quality Assurance (QA) in education systems in many countries of the world can be explained as an effort to raise education standards and a strategy to achieve the best possible quality. As an example of reinforcement, Opiyo, Rose A (2010) have conducted research on the effect of Quality Assurance on the training of PAUD teachers in Kenya. The result is that the best way to transform QA training is to expand budget allocations to facilitate the acquisition of human and material resources, build the capacity of partners and strengthen partnerships among various education stakeholders. This study recommends the need to replicate the same study in a wider scope and to determine other aspects affected by QA for quality education and training programs at various levels.

This means that QA affects the improvement of the quality / quality of education and efforts are needed to make it happen (Opiyo, Rose A, 2010).

A good understanding of the potential of Early Childhood Education will influence the policies taken as in Logan, et.al (2012) research on tracking quality improvement in Australia an early childhood education and care policies. This article tracks how and why quality has become a key component of the current Australian Government Council agenda. The study concluded that the improvement in quality status arose from a shift in policy understanding of the social and economic potential of early childhood education and care.

Quality Assurance requires a standard in order to guarantee the process that is being carried out. In implementing PAUD, there are PAUD standards that have been established by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia through Permedikbud Number 137 of 2014. According to Article 3, PAUD standards serve as the basis for planning, implementing, monitoring, and following up education in the context of realizing quality PAUD; reference for each PAUD unit and program to achieve national education goals; and basic PAUD quality assurance.

The purpose of establishing PAUD standards according to Permedikbud Number 137 of 2014 Article 4 is to ensure the quality of early childhood education in the framework of providing a foundation for educational stimulants in assisting physical and spiritual growth and development in accordance with the level of achievement of children's development; optimize children's development holistically and integratively; and preparing the formation of children's attitudes, knowledge and skills.

The situation and conditions in Indonesia and around the world are currently experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost all aspects of our daily life are shaken because of this tragedy. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), data on April 1, 2020, there were 823,626 confirmed cases and to this day it is still continuing (WHO, 2020). The pandemic conditions that hit almost all countries in the world have had quite a broad impact and have paralyzed the economy and other aspects of human life, including the education world. PAUD as part of the education world has also felt the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. All parties must adapt the process of getting through this pandemic. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic situation on PAUD management will be tried to see how big the impact will be with the eight PAUD Standards approach as Quality Assurance.

II. METHODS

In accordance with the research problems described in the introduction, this type of research is a qualitative descriptive study. Researchers

conducted document studies, conducted observations and in-depth interviews at the PAUD institution in Semarang City, Central Java Province. The research subjects were teachers, PAUD school principals and school committees using research instruments as interview guides, observation sheets and documentation. The number of respondents studied was 20 people who developed from the initial plan according to the development of data / information obtained during the research activity.

The object explored in this study is PAUD management during the Covid -19 pandemic which includes eight standards according to PAUD Standards. The measured instrument that wanted to be accomplished is the implementation of the eight PAUD standards and the obstacles that occurred on the education process during covid-19 pandemics. This information is supported by in-depth interviews in order to obtain saturated data. The research data was then supported by the existence of documentation in the form of photos and documents on the implementation of early childhood education. The data analysis used is descriptive analysis, namely analysis that provides an overview of the things that have been researched. The approach used in this research is qualitative in order to produce an in-depth analysis of what is being researched (Sukestiyarno, 2020).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research on PAUD management during the Covid-19 pandemic was conducted in March-June 2020. The PAUD institutions that were the focus of observation during the study were three institutions in the South Semarang District, Semarang City. The selection of the three institutions was based on consideration of the agency's representation based on its accreditation value. The PAUD institutions selected represent accreditation A, B and institutions previously accredited B, but have only recently applied for re-accreditation so that this year they have not received an accreditation score.

Analysis of the implementation of early childhood education based on the National Education Standards resulted in the lack of implementation of the eight established standards. PAUD standards are criteria concerning the management and implementation of early childhood education in all jurisdictions of the Republic of Indonesia. The following are the results obtained during the study.

3.1 Early Childhood Development Achievement Standards (STPPA)

STPPA is a criterion regarding the abilities achieved by children in all aspects of development and growth, including aspects of religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and art. The achievement of the Standards for Early Childhood Development Achievement during the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be fully

concluded. The widespread disaster conditions threaten to disrupt the development of early childhood to develop according to their developmental stages. At least in the aspects of development that would be better if stimulated by the conditions of children's interaction with various environments such as home and school. The results of the observations in the three PAUD institutions in this study, the six aspects of child development are not well stimulated. The learning process that cannot be fully observed by educators directly and some of the obstacles that parents have in accompanying children's learning are factors that cause children to be less stimulated. An example is the result of an interview with Bunda S (informant's initial), an educational institution with accreditation A.

"... the obstacle is that we can't observe the child directly... then sometimes there are children who don't make it because of their parents' busyness, meaning they don't finish on time."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

13 3.2 Content Standards

Content Standards are criteria regarding the scope of material and competence towards a level of developmental achievement appropriate to the child's age level. The conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic did not allow children to develop according to the established PAUD curriculum. Not all aspects can be stimulated because children can only interact with people and the home environment. In addition, the limitations of parents in providing knowledge and time to accompany children are also a problem for the achievement of Content Standards in accordance with Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014 concerning PAUD Standards. However, not all parents understand the stages of child development and ways to stimulate them. It is different from PAUD educators who have become the responsibility of their profession to understand what and how Early Childhood Education is. Interview with Bunda E PAUD educator (informant's initial) from PAUD institution with B accreditation shows this.

"... not all parents know how to assist their children... we educators must frequently communicate with parents about school curriculum materials such as chanting and reciting our school rules, tahfidz / memorizing prayers, hadiths, thoyibah sentences, short letters, school methods such as congregational prayer, Dhuhā, motor skills, life skills, cooking, creativity and science... and how to do it with children at home..."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

3.3 Process Standards

Process Standards are criteria regarding the implementation of learning in PAUD units or programs in order to help meet the level of developmental attainment according to the child's age level. PAUD educators in institutions that are the focus of research, generally have carried out learning planning, namely by making an Annual Program, Semester Program, Weekly Learning Implementation Plan (RPPM) and Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH). However, due to the situation and conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic, the learning implementation process could not be carried out according to the original plan.

All the institutions observed, namely PAUD institutions with A, B accreditation, and those that have not been re-accredited have Whatsapp groups for parents and educators. All information related to learning is conveyed by educators through these media. As stated by Bunda S from the PAUD A accreditation institution in the interview that was conducted.

"... through WA's parent group, Ma'am... yes... I gave the material then the children worked at home accompanied by their parents..."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

The process of implementing learning during the Covid-19 pandemic also encountered many obstacles. In general, this is due to constraints on communication tools / media facilities and internet quotas, which require extra funds. In addition, there are also some parents who do not care about children's learning at home so that educators have difficulty knowing the child's full development. This can be seen in the interview that was conducted with Bunda S from the accredited PAUD institution A.

"... the obstacle is that we can't observe the child directly..., then sometimes there are children who don't make it because of their parents' busyness, meaning they don't finish on time."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

Barriers regarding facilities and difficulties in observing children's learning as a whole were also felt by Bunda H (the informant's initial) from an institution that had not been re-accredited, because there were children who did not like being documented by their parents while learning at home.

"... obstacles during learning at home... the internet, some children don't want to be videotaped / photographed doing their assignments and children don't send assignments..."

(Interview, Monday, 15 June 2020)

The PAUD institution accredited B, which when compared to the other two institutions, is better prepared in terms of Information Technology, both in terms of facilities and the ability of educators, also

complained about the same thing during the Covid-19 pandemic. This can be seen from the results of the interview with Bunda E as an educator.

"... barriers to studying at home, quota costs, laptop facilities for zooming, because WFH really... is limited to providing learning tutorials..."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

The existence of obstacles in the process of implementing learning during the Covid-19 pandemic certainly made the Process Standards stipulated in Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014 concerning PAUD Standards to be less implemented. This is also impacts to other standards.

3.4 Assessment Standards

Assessment of child development during the Covid-19 pandemic is a matter that is still being debated and discussed at all levels of education, including Early Childhood Education. Assessment Standards are criteria regarding the assessment of the process and learning outcomes in order to determine the level of achievement appropriate to the age level of the child. Conditions that do not allow educators to observe children's learning processes make it difficult for educators to make assessments.

One of the ways that educators in PAUD institutions in this study are working with parents. Parents report all forms of learning activities carried out by children at home. The form of reporting is in the form of photos of children's activities, videos and children's work. Although currently parents at home are more likely to observe children's development, educators are still responsible for analyzing children's development based on reports from these parents.

The results of the analysis carried out by the educators are then reported back to the parents through the Child Development Assessment Report (LPPA) or rapot. The distribution of report cards during the Covid-19 pandemic took various forms according to the policies of each PAUD institution. PAUD institutions that represent category A and non re-accredited institution distribute report cards by means of parents taking turns taking them directly at school while still observing health protocols. The PAUD institution representing the accreditation category B provides report cards by conducting meetings with parents online using the zoom application. The report card form provided is also a file, so that parents do not need to directly visit the school.

3.5 Educators and Education Personnel Standards

Most of the teaching staff and education staff from three institutions observed in this study had met the requirements of the Education and Education Standards Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014 concerning PAUD Standards. Educators and Education Personnel Standards are criteria regarding

the academic qualifications and competencies required for PAUD educators and education personnel. The conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic did not dampen the enthusiasm of PAUD educators to continue to develop their competence as educators. Educators, including educators at three PAUD institutions, offer activities such as ECD Webinars or online classes.

The role of professional organizations such as HIMPAUDI and IGTKI plays an important role in increasing the competence of PAUD educators. Various online / online events are held to create reliable PAUD educators. The themes and topics discussed so make PAUD educators more confident in dealing with situations during the Covid-19 epidemic. In general, the Standards for Educators and Education Personnel during the Covid-19 pandemic can still be maintained and even improved through smart innovation efforts with the help of information technology.

3.6 Standard of Facilities and Infrastructure

One of the considerations in giving an accreditation value to an institution is the availability of adequate and sufficient facilities and infrastructure for all students. Facilities and Infrastructure Standards are criteria regarding the supporting requirements for the implementation an Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia management of early childhood education in a holistic and integrated manner that utilizes local potential. The three PAUD institutions in this study generally have met the Minimum Service Standards because they already have an operational permit that requires this.

Even PAUD institutions that have an A accreditation value with all facilities and infrastructure exceed the minimum requirements in the standard of facilities and infrastructure, in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, all facilities and infrastructure owned by PAUD institutions cannot be used as usual because children are learning at home. Assistance of facilities and infrastructure for learning is reduced because now it depends on what is available in each child's home. This gap has been overcome by many PAUD educators in this study by giving parents the freedom to change teaching materials according to what is available and available at home. Parents are given the understanding that learning does not always have to use manufactured teaching materials, but can also use objects at home and around them.

For example, educators from PAUD representatives from accreditation category B direct parents to use loose part media that are widely available in the environment. This media is not manufactured materials but objects that are often found in the vicinity, such as wood, patchwork, metal, plastic, and even natural materials such as seeds, dry leaves, or pine cones. By giving direction to parents, they can play with the children without

having to leave the house much to look for teaching materials.

13 3.7 Management Standards

Management Standards are criteria for planning, implementing, and supervising educational activities at the PAUD unit or program level. The Management Standards for Early Childhood Education during the Covid-19 pandemic also experienced many obstacles. Learning planning for each PAUD institution that has been determined in the Annual Program (Prota), Semester Program (Prosem) cannot be fully implemented. Weekly Program (RPPM) and Daily Program (RPPH) must be adapted to existing conditions. Some of the annual activities that are usually eagerly awaited by children and parents have to be canceled, such as the End-of-Year Art Performance and School Field Trips which have become part of the annual routine activities of PAUD institutions. This is implied from the results of interviews with the principal of the PAUD institute, a representative of an institution that has not been re-accredited, Bunda H.

"... children often ask their mothers and fathers... ma... when are we going to have a picnic to the zoo again... There are even children who call me, teacher... when did we see a Steam Train like my brother yesterday...."

(Interview, Monday, 15 June 2020)

The enthusiasm of children to go to school is also hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic conditions. Learning activities carried out at home with parents certainly cause children's boredom. Some children and their parents eventually visited the school, just to see the place where they used to play and learn. Health protocols are still enforced, namely by wearing a mask, always washing hands and maintaining a safe distance so that unwanted things do not occur. However, until now, schools / PAUD institutions have not decided to re-open classes for students because the risks to be faced are still great. Each institution is still waiting for a policy from the Government when and how they can return to providing education with additional health protocols.

3.8 Financing Standards

3 Financing Standards are criteria regarding the components and amounts of personal and operational costs in the PAUD unit or program. The financing of education during the Covid-19 pandemic has turned out to be quite alarming. Revenue from institutions prior to the Covid-19 pandemic was usually able to support activities, but during this disaster, institutions experienced a decline in income so that some educational expenditures had to be cut or even eliminated. One of the effects that is felt is the provision of salary / income which is only the basic salary. This is in

accordance with the statement of the PAUD institution representative for accreditation category B, Bunda E at the time of the in-depth interview.

"Educators' salaries while studying at home. are only paid by basic salary..."

(Interview, Thursday 18 June 2020)

The same thing is also felt by educators for PAUD institutions representing accreditation category A. Another institution, namely PAUD representatives for categories that have not been re-accredited still provide salaries according to the previous provisions, but the monthly salaries of the educators of this institution are still below the minimum wage standard so that the institution is correct. - really strive to provide fixed rights / salaries like before the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to funding educators' salaries, the institutions in this study also felt burdensome things such as providing internet quota facilities so that learning can still take place even though it is online. The representative PAUD institution for accreditation category B and the representative PAUD institution for the category have not been re-accredited, they only use Whatsapp Group media to communicate with the parents of students. Assignments and learning materials and discussions are carried out through the WhatsApp Group.

The situation and conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic did result in a lack of achievement in the implementation of the PAUD Standards as Quality Assurance in PAUD Management. Of the eight PAUD Standards that are used as references in conducting early childhood education, almost all of them experience obstacles and challenges in its implementation. Even though it cannot be concluded with certainty, but there are strong indications that the development of early childhood is currently being disrupted, especially if the pandemic conditions do not pass immediately. The use of information technology devices such as gadgets in home learning with teacher guidance and parental supervision will also have a negative impact if used too long due to this pandemic situation. Research by Nirwana et.al (2018), and Munawar et.al (2018) confirms this. The aspect of early childhood social development, which uses too much gadgets, has proven to be less developed according to Munawar et.al (2018). Likewise for the language aspect, especially the speaking ability of early childhood, which is the focus of research by Nirwana et.al (2018). Children who use gadgets frequently and do not practice speaking in direct interactions show decreased abilities. If the Covid 19 pandemic condition does not recover immediately, it can threaten the National Education Goals and the desire of the Indonesian people to realize a golden generation in 2045, considering that early childhood education is the foundation for education at the next level.

The achievement of Standard Content implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic also decreased from before the pandemic. The PAUD curriculum, which has been painstakingly compiled and implemented so far, faces challenges to be adapted again to suit the current situation and conditions. The addition of several things such as Information Technology as an urgent part of the curriculum needs to be the attention of stakeholders of PAUD institutions. The use of Information Technology for early childhood certainly has to take into account the side effects that could cause other problems in the future, such as the danger of radiation and the lack of comprehensive motoric activities of children, namely fine-motor and gross-motor.

The next standard, namely Process Standards, was also affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Face-to-face learning is not possible because it has a large enough risk for both students and educators. Changing learning procedures and mechanisms to go online or using communication media such as the Whatsapp Group has become a trend during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is not without creating new problems. From the observations of the three PAUD institutions in this study, it can be seen how the school and parents both have difficulty in accompanying children while studying at home. Technological disparities for schools or parents who do not have communication tools, signal strength or internet quota fees are problems that accompany changes in learning methods during the Covid-19 pandemic. Adaptation and minimizing impact are steps that must be taken by all parties.

Assessment standards are standards that are still being used today in webinars and online classes for all levels of education, including early childhood education. Particularly for PAUD, the difficulty of conducting an assessment is increased due to the unique characteristics of early childhood which are more individual and process oriented. Not to mention educators who cannot directly observe children's development and only receive activity reports from parents about their children. The problem of parents who do not care about children or have little time for children because they have to meet the economic needs of the family is another problem that also makes it difficult for educators to make an accurate assessment of their students. The impact of inappropriate assessments of course makes it difficult for educators to create learning programs that are suitable for the development of students in the future.

Most of the teaching staff and education personnel from the three institutions observed in this study had met the requirements of the Educator Standards and Education Personnel so that the problems that arise in meeting other standards were more manageable by educators. The competency

development of educators during the Covid-19 pandemic can still be done even though using online modes and the involvement of PAUD professional organizations greatly help PAUD educators to remain enthusiastic about carrying out their profession as PAUD educators. Mastery of information technology such as gadgets is indeed what helps PAUD teachers to carry out their duties and functions as educators. In accordance with the research of Nurani (2018) which concluded that gadgets can help as a self-assessment which is used as a model development of teaching skills for early childhood teachers.

The standard of facilities and infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic experienced significant disruption. The availability of teaching materials that can be used by children is the new responsibility of parents at home. However, with the innovation and creativity of educators to assist parents in accompanying children's learning, difficulties in providing teaching materials can be overcome. Management Standards in the implementation of Early Childhood Education during the Covid-19 pandemic cannot run properly because it needs adaptations and changes to suit existing conditions. Viewed from the point of view of Quality Assurance, this indeed creates an inconsistency with the established planning.

The last is the Financing Standard which plays an important role in the implementation of education and in guaranteeing the quality of education. The Covid-19 pandemic has completely devastated the economy of Indonesia and most countries in the world so that the rise of the economy is a concern that must be prioritized so that the quality of education can be achieved. Education can take place without cost, but costs can better ensure the sustainability of educational institutions and quality improvement. Reinforcement to rise from an economic downturn for the Indonesian nation, inspire people to re-cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit of educators, including PAUD educators. Entrepreneurial competence has indeed become part of the competency requirements for school principals. In line with the research focus of Haekase, et. al (2020) who concluded that the entrepreneurial instinct of the principal as a competency, can manage (planning, organizing, implementing and monitoring) production / service activities in schools as a learning resource for students. However, PAUD educators also need attention so that together with school stakeholders, their entrepreneurial spirit is awakened. An initiative that can be started is to compile and carry out a complete and detailed "Teacherpreneur Management" so that it becomes a reference for educators in conducting and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and creating a school that is colored with an entrepreneurial spirit. The hope is that with an entrepreneurial spirit, all elements of education can go through the times of the Covid-19

pandemic and rise again to realize the golden generation of the Indonesian nation in 2045 as aspired by us all.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the management of Early Childhood Education during the Covid-19 pandemic has changed in several standards. Adaptation and changes must be made so that the quality of education can be maintained and even improved. Quality Assurance as a system that maintains quality stability needs to be improved by stipulating changes in some PAUD Standards with the addition of Information Technology as an integral part.

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