

Distance Learning in Early Childhood Education During Pandemic Covid-19

Novi Hidayati^{1,*}, Rudiyanto²

^{1,2}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung

*Corresponding author. Email: novihidayati@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

This article is motivated by the condition of the COVID-19 pandemic which has an impact on changes in the learning system which requires distance learning from home. Distance learning is not only for the middle level, but for early childhood education. So that in this study aims to look at distance learning in early childhood education. This study uses literature review research from various sources. Based on the results of a literature review that distance learning can be carried out at the early childhood education level through information technology, such as Television of the Republic of Indonesia (TVRI), a computer or laptop connected to an internet and mobile network connection (Whatsapp (WA), zoom application or other media) or non-information technology, such as education in education, assignments, and home visits.

Keywords: *Distance learning, early childhood education, Covid-19.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is taking a break from all the routines that have been in a fast paced situation and working non-stop. However, all these conditions have turned inversely due to the Covid-19 pandemic which forced him to stop for a moment. Because this virus is spread from person to person through droplets from the nose or mouth that come out when a person infected with Covid-19 coughs or exhales. The spark then falls on objects and surfaces around it. Because when people touch these objects or surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, that person can contract Covid-19. In addition, Covid-19 transmission can occur if people inhale the splashes that come out of a cough or breath from a person infected with Covid-19, so it is important to keep a distance of more than 1 meter from the person who is sick so that people start to take distance to break the chain transmission of this virus [1], [2].

The spread of this virus has resulted in the closure and restrictions of various places such as tourist places and places of worship. It is not enough to get there, the education sector, both schools and campuses, has also been affected by the 2019 coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19). So responding to the pandemic of the 2019 coronavirus (Covid-19) which is increasingly worrying as seen from the increase in positive cases infected with the virus so that the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Education and Culture issued circular number

4 of 2020 regarding policies to change learning procedures with the concept of distance learning far from the PAUD to SMA / SMK levels which aim to maintain the health of children, teachers, and all school members. One of the important points related to learning from home, namely activities and assignments can vary according to the interests and conditions of each child [3].

Enacting this policy to study from home by utilizing information technology in distance learning is not entirely easy to do, even it often makes teachers and children and parents confused because they need to change the system, syllabus, and the learning process which is not only fast but appropriate for children, especially for early childhood education [2].

In addition, distance learning using information technology, such as this gadget is often used by teachers and students in high school. This can be seen from research conducted by Zuriyah [4] at higher education, which explains that the application of distance learning can increase learning independence and critical thinking skills in children. However, it is different from research at primary schools conducted by Agus and Purnomo [5] that students, parents, and teachers have problems with learning at home because they feel forced to study long distances without adequate facilities and infrastructure at home. However, distance learning in early childhood education is still rare because teachers, children and parents are not used to using information technology as a learning media, moreover there are still many teachers,

parents who are not proficient in using information technology. So seeing this, the authors are interested in seeing distance learning early childhood education during the pandemic, Whether distance learning can be implemented in early childhood education or otherwise.

2. DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning is one way of learning in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic because it can use various learning media and can be used anywhere [6]. Because in the learning process it is done more separately so it requires tools such as technology to connect teachers and students [7]. In addition, learning becomes independent, meaning that children are given freedom in determining study hours, learning methods, learning resources, and friends to study so that they gain meaningful experience from activities that have been carried out at home, without being burdened with demands to complete all curriculum achievements for class promotion and graduation [8].

Even so, in this distance learning teachers also provide direction / guidance and monitor the learning development of children from parents, but the responsibility for education lies more with parents. Because parents act as teachers, motivators, as well as facilitators for the various learning needs of children so that parents cannot help completely, it is enough to observe the activities that the children are doing and then see what things the children cannot do, then parents can collaborate. When the child is not involved in the work process, of course it is not good, because the goal of the educator to give the task is, of course, not to keep the parents busy but to give it to the child to become more skilled and gain experience from activities [2], [9].

3. DISTANCE LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it also had an impact on learning media that was transformed than before, where more learning activities were carried out face-to-face in class. However, due to this condition, making learning activities carried out remotely. So the implementation of distance learning is not only intended for the secondary level but for early childhood education. In the development of distance learning in PAUD, the Ministry of Education and Culture asks PAUD teachers not to assign tasks to children during the Covid-19 pandemic, but instead give children freedom to play and emphasize life skills, instill character values, independence and so on. One of them can make the activity of understanding the Covid-19 pandemic as learning material for children. Starting from an explanation of the covid-19 virus to preventive steps such as washing hands 7 steps and using a mask, but it can be packaged through playing. Because basically learning

activities in PAUD are carried out through playing [8], [10].

Even so, in its implementation, teachers provide assignments through children's worksheets or theme magazines. It can be seen from research conducted by Nahdi [11] explained that the implementation of learning during the pandemic was in the form of assignments, as a process of giving assignments to children in the form of worksheets and theme books in accordance with the ongoing teaching material. In addition, home visits are also one of the implementations of distance learning in PAUD because through this home visit, teachers maximize the monitoring of learning activities carried out by children while at home.

In addition, children use gadgets to do distance learning with teachers. Learning carried out through information technology is not only to change face-to-face learning, but this learning can encourage children to be creative so that they can form children as lifelong learners [2]. This gadget is used to be able to access various applications, such as WhatsApp group, google suite for education, teacher room, Zoom, Zenius, Google Classroom, and Learning House. This application aims to facilitate teachers, children, and parents in communicating related to distance learning so that learning can be carried out well [12]. However, it was reported by CNN Indonesia that not all parents have gadgets, even not all parents understand using them, so sometimes this becomes a problem, not only parents are confused, but teachers also experience the same thing because teachers rarely use these devices for distance learning [13]. In line with that, in the research of Nurdin [14] that the shift of face-to-face learning systems to remote learning systems suddenly makes teachers, children, and parents unprepared and the facilities they have. Because in implementing this distance learning, teachers and parents need to pay attention to a stable internet network, then a capable device or computer, an application with a user friendly platform and the readiness of teachers in mastering learning applications. So, as to overcome these limitations, the Ministry of Education and Culture has also created a home learning program to facilitate schools in areas that do not have internet access, and limited funds for internet quota or credit [15].

This program starts from early childhood to high school levels which will present some learning content. The material or content to be presented in this home learning program will focus on improving literacy, numeracy, character building and children's life skills in a light and fun way. Where the program material is taken from various sources, one of which is Educational Television which has been produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture but there are also materials produced from parties outside the Ministry of Education and Culture. Not only that, this program will also present

guidance programs intended for parents and teachers as well as cultural broadcasts that air on weekends through television media which will start on April 13, 2020. This program is planned to run for the next three months with duration of half an hour per tier [16], [17].

The reason for choosing television media for this learning is so that educational services can be widely accessed for people in the frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged areas (3T) who have limited access to internet or economic access. In addition, TVRI television media is a free channel that can be enjoyed by all people in various regions so that it can help teachers, parents, and children in learning during the Covid-19 pandemic period [18], [19]. Even so, the program is not to replace the learning process but as a supplement or addition to the learning process for schools that have problems accessing during the Covid-19 pandemic so there is no reason not to develop the talents, interests and hobbies of children. Parents at home. So here it is necessary to have collaboration and communication between teachers and parents related to fostering children's interests, talents, and competencies so that they can be sustainable by providing facilitation for the development program even though it is limited to the scope at home [15]. Related to this, in the research of Nurdin [14] stated that the development of interests, talents, and hobbies is also one of the activities in implementing distance learning, so parents need to report children's activities while at home through children's daily reporting activities carried out to the school.

4. IMPACTS AND PROBLEM ON DISTANCE LEARNING

Schools are closed for long periods of time and education carried out at home during this pandemic may have a negative impact. This can be seen from the results of the study by Wang et al. [20] that there are negative impacts on distance learning during this time of the pandemic for children, such as physical health because children are physically less active, have longer screen times, irregular sleep patterns, and negative effects on health are likely to be much more worse when children were locked up in their homes without outdoor activities and interactions with friends of the same age during the pandemic. In addition, a number of parents complained about their children being stressed because of getting various tasks every day and of prolonged duration, frustration and boredom, lack of direct contact with classmates, friends, and teachers [5].

Not only that, this distance learning also has obstacles for some parents. This is consistent with research conducted by Purwanto et al. [5] stated that there is no culture of learning done from a distance because so far it has been carried out conventionally, through face-to-face so that parents and children's education need to adapt to new changes. Not only that, parents need to spend more

time assisting children in distance learning so that it also affects the activities or work of parents which become a little limited. Then in this distant learning requires internet access, but not everyone has that access. As well as costs that are fairly expensive to buy pulses or quotas, and often have network constraints that make the internet slow to access. Not much different from the constraints felt by parents, teachers also feel the obstacles faced when this distance learning, such as not all teachers are able to operate information technology connected to the internet for learning media. Then limited availability of facilities used by teachers to deliver learning material. The next obstacle is the absence of a culture of distance learning at the early childhood education level because so far the learning system is implemented through face-to-face. With this distance learning, teachers need time to adapt so that it will indirectly affect the quality of learning [5].

5. BENEFITS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Although there are obstacles, distance learning for early childhood education provides benefits, namely overcoming the limitations of space and time to stimulate children to learn something new, and building a fun learning atmosphere for children [21]. A similar thing was added by Jerusalem et.al [22] that distance education is a flexible education based on technology across time and space so as to increase the openness of education, minimize time, place, and economic and demographic obstacles in obtaining education. In addition, education can be obtained without leaving home. Not only that, the use of information technology in distance learning can increase independence and critical thinking skills. It can be seen from Zuriah research [4] that before using the learning application (Google Class) the percentage of independence was 17.14% but after using the application it increased to 90.02%. Whereas for the critical thinking skills before using learning applications 25.29% then the presentation increased to 90.37%.

6. CONCLUSION

Distance learning in early childhood education uses various media and learning activities that are different for each region, starting from using information technology such as gadgets and television in learning, some are giving assignments through magazines or books according to the learning theme, and some are more emphasizing meaningful education, such as life skill, and play. This distance learning has impacts and constraints such as negative or positives depending on the readiness of teachers and parents and supporting facilities in learning because different demographics differ in school conditions. So that distance learning can be implemented in early childhood education using information or non-information technology with careful planning and readiness both in terms of facilities and human resources.

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