

# Management and Sustainability Challenges of Early Childhood Education Institutions in Pandemic Era

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## ABSTRACT

A new life must be carried out in all aspects, including adjusting to the new order of all levels of education, including early childhood education institutions. The biggest problem is the sustainability of the organization and the continuity of early childhood to continue the education process at the formal, non-formal levels, influenced by parental care. When the problem is that parents choose not to register and send their children to school because of economic difficulties. There are no special requirements to enter the primary school level, and they must have an early childhood education institution certificate. The findings of this problem will be sought for a solution because it is a shared responsibility for the next generation of the Indonesian nation. The research design used was descriptive quantitative with survey techniques at Early Childhood Education or Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (hereafter, PAUD) institutions in the Kediri. The research subjects are fifty managers in the Kediri area. Dissemination of data mining with questionnaires distributed by google form and the results are studied related to the description of the characteristics of the respondents, namely early childhood education institution managers. Based on the results of data processing, the most significant problems and challenges in the sustainability of early childhood education institution management is due to (1) the importance of teachers' ability in the mastery of ICT, (2) a decrease in the number of students, (3) the socioeconomic factors impact of Covid-19 influence on PAUD institutions. Based on these results, of course, strengthening institutions that survive are those that can follow the development patterns of the challenges of the times by changing policy adjustments, increasing the competence of both educators and educational staff, and remaining consistent in carrying out learning according to the characteristics of unique learning styles of students.

**Keywords:** *The Impact of the Covid Pandemic, Management of Early Childhood Education Institutions.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the management of educational institutions at the Early Childhood Education level will be very different from that of other educational units. Why should this be done holistically because? What is faced is a child with unique, distinctive characteristics and is in the Golden Age where the stages of development are stimulated to prepare for the next stage. Children learn by observing, imitating the adults around them. The biggest question indeed arises in all our minds, how will the management of Early Childhood Education institutions be during the Covid-19 pandemic? Various studies related to the methods applied in learning during the Covid-19 emergency have sprung up where all refer to policies established by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture where the implementation of learning is carried out remotely from home besides paying attention to regional zones for

safety and the main factor in preventing health risks for all parties related education should be a priority for the delivery of Education [1].

Even though the material that promotes habituation provided by the teacher is done at home with parents is not something new because it involves habituation of positive characters, daily life skills, and religion. Still, not all parents are ready to assist their children in learning. Implementing learning with the methods that are accustomed to at home with this mentoring is not as easy as imagined. Of course, the patience that teachers in Early Childhood Education have when the child is at school is not necessarily that of the parents, where the child who is faced often changes his mind and mood. It will be challenging for parents to understand children's communication patterns when conveying feelings that parents sometimes do not understand. The form of parental involvement, in the end, is not just conveying

children's assignments, sending video photos but how to make the child's emotional atmosphere stable, and doing activities happily where the primary model is the parents at home as a reference [2].

Another challenge that raises problems is in terms of the sustainability of the next Early Childhood Education institution. This is in line with the fears faced by parents regarding the Covid-19 outbreak affecting children where parents choose to protect from the risks generated by this outbreak by not registering children in early childhood education schools. Research carried out by [3] indirectly, the high emotional anxiety of parents will affect the increased fear of their children. Suppose all parents who have early childhood when they enter Early Childhood Education institutions tend to regulate negative emotions. In that case, this will also affect the amount of student income in the institution [3].

The more significant influence of parenting comes from the mother as the person who communicates a lot with the child. This is confirmed by research [4] which confirms the research results on parental involvement in the early childhood learning process in the form of parenting, two-way communication, strategies applied in learning at home, decision making. In conclusion, this type of involvement is dominated by mothers who have a decisive level of activeness in assisting children in learning at home. Emphasis on the readiness of parents to carry out education and care for their children during the Covid-19 pandemic also focuses on whether children are enrolled in educational institutions is one thing that is very closely related [4].

Although it is undeniable that research shows the importance of education from an early age, when the outbreak occurs, everyone will think about how to survive in an emergency. Seeing the aspects of child development that require socialization according to developmental stages, the UNICEF statement in [5] it will take a lot of Early Childhood Education educators to return to support related childcare because children's development will depend on an interactive process that is nurturing, educating, directing, and stimulating with science that puts forward the characteristic context of early childhood. The opportunity for Early Childhood Education institutions with their educators here is still wide open, so that it still must make efforts to sustain the institution in various ways which will become the foundation of the nation's children in the future [5].

In addition, the second biggest challenge is in terms of how the readiness of Early Childhood Education institutions changes the paradigm of the learning process

where there is a concept of science and technology-based methods that educators and education personnel must master in carrying out the learning process. This point is emphasized by [6] that the effect of the Early Childhood Education unit during the pandemic has changed the conventional learning system from the traditional way to online distance education where the use of digital media must be a skill that is well mastered in its application. The problem arises when the competence skills of educators in readiness to use technology and digital learning materials are also not the emergence of parental trust. The impact of online learning to fulfill children's rights to learn will also provide valuable experiences in child development [6].

In terms of managing the institution's sustainability, the duties of a school principal will increase because it has an essential role in moving all components of the school to run harmoniously—one side control how the learning methods used by the teachers also keep operational management in check. The principal must create a conducive situation as a leader looking for breakthroughs to open opportunities for the broadest possible cooperation so that the implementation of institutions that are minimal with the problems faced can still survive and carry out the role of providing meaningful activities for their students [7].

Various arguments, as well as theoretical support from relevant research results, have been presented to make the author interested in conducting research that raises how the sustainability of the institution and what challenges are faced by institutions to survive the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic by taking the title: "Management and Sustainability Challenges of PAUD Institutions in Pandemic Era." This research from research studies that previous researchers have carried out examines the learning process and management of the institution where previous research discusses each separately; some choose to study only learning, some choose to study management only.

## **2. METHOD**

The research design used is descriptive quantitative research with data collection techniques in a survey (using google forms/ questionnaires). The survey was conducted from the end of March until the end of April 2021. It is randomly distributed to respondents through ITGKI and HIMPAUDI (two most prominent organizations on early childhood education in Indonesia) partner groups in Kediri. The targets were institutional managers or school principals. The survey was conducted

by distributing a google form/ questionnaire containing questions related to learning methods and the management of PAUD institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fifty-three respondents filled in, while the initial plan of the respondent's target was 50 by answering ten questions related to media use in online learning and the management of institutions during the pandemic.

In this article, only five answers are processed by respondents, namely: (1) Teacher's ICT mastery, (2) Ability to operate online learning media, (3) Registrant condition during a pandemic, (4) Low motivation factor for parents to register their child in early childhood institutions and (5) The most significant reason parents choose not to register their children.

Furthermore, after the specified time, the google form is closed because the data is sufficient, then the data will be studied in literature concept and analyzed by qualitative descriptive techniques. In-depth conclusions from quantitative exposure data associated with in-depth literature, it is hoped that the analysis results can answer problems in achieving research objectives.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Teacher's ICT Mastery

The following will describe the data obtained from the google survey form based on each question. In connection with the research focus, there are five main questions related to the challenges and management of the sustainability of early childhood education institutions, which can be explained as follows:

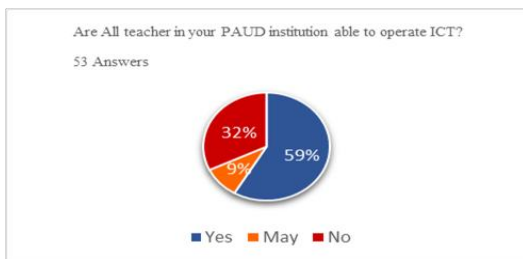


Figure 1 Teacher's ICT Mastery

58.5% of respondents stated that all early childhood education institutions that filled out the questionnaires mastered ICT. Interviews with Google Meet 50 respondents corroborate this data. Where the results of the interview stated that the mastery of ICT includes:

The importance of understanding simple ICT mastery is corroborated by the research conducted who

surveyed the readiness of early childhood education educators in East Java during the Covid-19 outbreak, 54.7% of the data obtained were sufficiently supportive, agreeing that simple ICT operations are helpful in online learning since before they cannot be face-to-face [8].

The use of ICT is also a part of learning innovations that support break the spread of the virus. It is also a bright and precise step to improve the quality of professional competence to become educators and realizing the desire to learn adapts to innovating education during the times [9].

Teachers also use ICT to develop learning media that are sent to parents, where many innovative learning videos have been produced, such as research [10]. It is emphasized when online video learning as a substitute for a teacher explains specific material so that parents can follow the instructions when accompanying children at home to work in the order in the learning video [10].

#### 3.2. Ability to Operate Online Learning Media



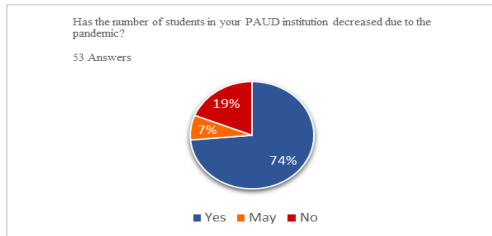
Figure 2 Ability to Operate Online Learning Digital Media

Respondents answered 94.3% of all educators and education staff could operate online learning modes according to their abilities between Google Meet, WhatsApp, or zoom. Research that supports the results of the research is stated by [11], wherein the selection of distance learning methods utilizing WhatsApp, which is connected on a cellphone by utilizing internet data packages also using video calls, can be accepted by children and parents because the media used is adjusted to the carrying capacity of the institution [11].

The ability to choose digital media in online learning was also raised by [12]. The learning phenomenon during the pandemic is how schools that do not want to make changes to adjust the procedures for learning practices by utilizing online will not maintain their existence but will raise new problems. Therefore the learning media for the zoom application, google meet, WhatsApp, telegrams, and applications from other media must be chosen

appropriately according to the needs and skills mastered [12].

### 3.3. Registrant Condition During a Pandemic

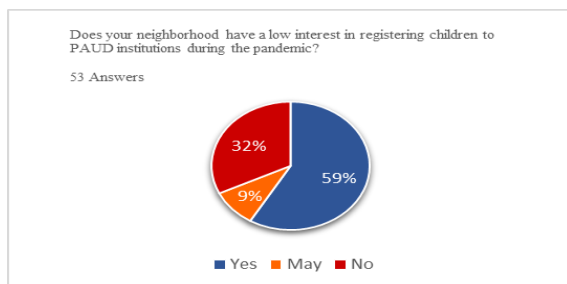


**Figure 3** Declaration of the Decrease in the Number of Students During the Pandemic

As many as 73.6% of respondents stated that the early childhood education institution he taught had decreased the number of students during the Covid-19 pandemic. As published on (Liputan6.Com, Jakarta; 2020), the Ministry of education's statement is used as data on the number of children who registered themselves to early childhood education. It is revealed that the number is decreased as parents delay sending their children to any early childhood education institution [13].

Another news was revealed (CNN Indonesia; 2020) in which it writes down community participation in PAUD on a national scale has decreased not only those who have not registered to postpone, but those who have become students choose to ask for permission while not enrolling their children is offset by not participating in payments if their children do not attend school [14].

### 3.4. Low Motivation Factor for Parents to Register Their Child in Early Childhood Institutions

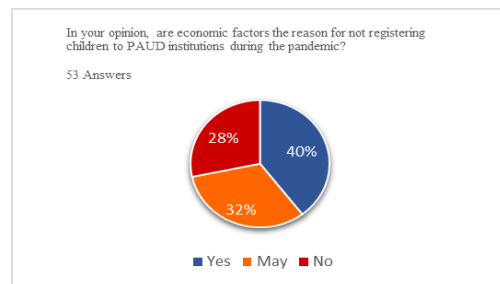


**Figure 4** Low Interest of Parents in Registering Children in early childhood education Institutions

Respondents answered 58.5% of the low interest of parents around early childhood education institutions in registering their children since the pandemic has a low

tendency to increase compared to face-to-face conditions before the pandemic. Not only does early childhood education age children create happiness as long as this virus is afflicted by adolescents also where a good relationship within the family will increase happiness according to Ribar's 2015 research, in [15], the quality of marriage in the family supporting teenage happiness. If we look closely at adolescents, it is very much influenced by the family's quality; what about early childhood still under parental guidance [15].

### 3.5. The Most Significant Reason Parents Choose Not to Register Their Children



**Figure 5** Economic Factors are Parents' Reason for not Enrolling Children in early childhood education Institutions.

The question leads to whether the economic factor is the reason for the respondents. 39.6% answered yes, 28.3% no, and 32.1% maybe. This supports the finding that economic factors are still high when the impact of the pandemic is the reason parents choose not to register their children in the early childhood education institution.

Research conducted by [16] will be a possibility when the effects are felt financially during a pandemic. There will be consideration of the priority things needed are innovation and collaboration [16].

In addition, research was conducted by explaining that one of the factors that parents do not enroll their children in kindergarten is socioeconomic conditions. Making decisions where delaying registering as consideration for economic reasons will undoubtedly have an impact on the child being unable to do anything because parents have a dominant attitude when the child is still at the stage of the most excellent care for the family [17].

The discussion and presentation of these results can show how difficult it is to go through the challenges and obstacles of early childhood education institutions to survive in conditions of limitations due to Covid-19. It

can be said that only someone who has the sincerity to serve children as the nation's generation will continue his profession as an early childhood education teacher. However, based on the interview results, there were still optimistic voices of Indonesia's golden generation fighters with all their limitations. Gentle and patient hands provide education that is the foundation for further children's development that must be fought for and must be given motivation and enthusiasm where long prayers that hopefully the pandemic will soon pass. The children will get the freedom of play and expression.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusions obtained from the results of this study strengthen the findings of the biggest problems and challenges in the sustainability of the management of early childhood education institutions during the pandemic seen from various factors, namely (1) the importance of teacher abilities in mastering ICT, (2) the decreased number of enrolled students, and (3) socioeconomic factors impacted by Covid-19 that affects the management of early childhood education institutions.

The advice given from the results of this research is that institutional strengthening to survive must follow the development of technology-based learning by changing policy adjustments, increasing the competence of both educators and education staff, and remaining consistent in carrying out learning according to the characteristics of unique student learning styles.

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