

Impact of Online Learning Policy for Early Childhood Character Building in Tulungagung District

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Abstract— The government's quick action in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in education, especially in early childhood, will significantly impact the nation's next generation. The success of character education in early childhood is the foundation for the formation of the character of the life of the government and state. Changes in learning from face to face to online certainly impact the construction of the character of early childhood. The impact will be used as an evaluation of the policies needed by the community in the future. Qualitative methods were used, and data were collected through interviews and documentation, where the technique used was purposive sampling.

Keywords— policy impact; online learning; early childhood character formation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The covid pandemic that began in 2019 required the government to make quick moves to make policies in all areas of the nation's life. The education sector is no exception. Procedures in the world of education must be made immediately so that the teaching of the nation's children does not stop just because of the coronavirus outbreak.(Wardhani, 2020). How great the Indonesian state will experience the consequences if the world of education cannot find an effective way of learning during the pandemic.(Hafidati, 2021)

The learning policies taken must be able to accommodate various parties, and the most important thing is to prioritize the health and safety of students, especially in early childhood. Early childhood is at an age that is vulnerable to coronavirus transmission. Still, on the other hand, early childhood education is laying values, attitudes, and character for their provision to become agents of change and national development.

Character formation for students is vital, so starting in 2017, the government feels the need to strengthen character education from an early age in formal education units as outlined in PERMENDIKBUD Number 20 of 2018, which is the implementing regulation for the provisions of Article 14 of Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education.(Ma'ruf, 2020)

Strengthening character education is sticking out when more and more Indonesian people, especially the younger generation, are increasingly forgetting the identity of the Indonesian nation. Changes in attitudes, behavior, and even life values believed to have been felt are getting further away from the importance of the nation's life guidelines, namely Pancasila. Friendliness, mutual help, mutual respect, prioritizing cooperation, and tolerance have disappeared.(Purnawati, 2019)

The increasing number of brawls between community groups, crime rates, corruption cases, patriotism, and fading nationalism due to the rapid flow of information and foreign culture cannot be dammed with only a ban and legal sanctions. The replanting of a nation's character by the values of Pancasila at an early age is the answer to all community's problems.(Afrilia & Indriya, 2020).

Because the child is at the golden age, in this phase, children begin to form and develop both their cognitive and motor skills and even aspects of their spiritualism. It is hoped that all the things children get at this time can be remembered and used as a foundation in social and state behavior.(Lestari & Kurnia, n.d.).

An early childhood period is a momentum for children to absorb all the information known more quickly. Therefore, good parenting by the environment, family, Early Childhood Education

(PAUD) unit, and the community is needed. It is also explained in PERMENDIKBUD Number 20 of 2018 that the organizers of Strengthening Character Education (PPK) in formal education units for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) are carried out in Kindergarten (TK) education units to add character values in the implementation of learning.

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) provides the basis for all aspects of individual development, namely religion and morals, physical, motor, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and artistic. Meanwhile, in the structure of the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) curriculum, efforts to achieve these standards are described in the form of competitions for spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. (Khaironi, 2018).

These character-building efforts are expected to be able to realize Indonesia as a cultured nation, a country that upholds noble character, noble values, wisdom, and character, in addition to recognizing a cultured nation through strengthening religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, respect for achievement, communicative, love peace, love to read, care for the environment, care about social, and be responsible.

With the spread of coronavirus, the government issued circular letter 4 of 2020 regarding implementing education policies in the emergency period of the spread of Covid-19. The circular explained that the learning process was carried out at home through online learning. (Burhanudin, 2021).

Online learning is a new challenge for teachers and students because they are required to be able to adapt to today's conditions. The online or home learning process is carried out to provide a meaningful learning experience for students without being burdened with the demands of completing all curriculum achievements for grade promotion and graduates.

From there emerged the various impacts on early childhood education. This condition is understandable because the development of learning abilities in early childhood is still in the imitation stage. Children learn from what they see and hear. So it can be said that early childhood education is an academic unit that gets the most impact from this online learning system. (Nisa & Muchsin, 2021).

The learning process in kindergarten is a learning process while playing because early childhood cannot receive theoretical lessons directly, but tasks are inserted into a game. This learning is intended so that early childhood can gain knowledge and develop their potential optimally. With understanding, it is hoped that there will be changes in the behavior of early childhood students for the better.

In almost two years of implementing online learning, there have been several impacts of online learning, especially on the formation of early childhood character. From the above, we can

understand that learning in early childhood is considered most effective when done face-to-face. However, a policy must be implemented regardless of the consequences.

Hidayah (2019) studied implementing early childhood character education through the role-playing method for ages 5-6 years in An-Nahl Kindergarten, Bandar Lampung. Such as stories, singing, fairy tales, direct practice, exemplary educators, discussions, rewards, seductions, and punishments for children.(Hidayah, 2019)

Azizah (2019), in the research entitled "Implementation of Character Education through Religious Activities at MI Muhammadiyah Braja Asri, Way Jepara District, Lampung Regency" shows that there are two methods in implementing character building, namely by example and habituation to students.(Azizah, 2019)

Wahyu Aji Fatma Dewi (2020), researching the impact of Covid-19 on the Implementation of Online Learning in Elementary Schools, found that elementary school children in grades I to III have not been able to operate devices; therefore, a collaboration between teachers and parents is needed.(Dewi, 2020)

Sri Anita (2020), in a study entitled Application of Online Learning (DARING) in Early Childhood during the Covid-19 Virus Pandemic in Group A BA Aisyiyah Timbang, concluded that the stages of learning had been implemented from preparation to evaluation of online assessments.(Sri, 2020)

Widia Wulandari (2021), in the research entitled The Effectiveness of Online Learning in Kindergarten Aisyiyah Bustanul Atfhal 2 Talang Padang Tanggamus, the conclusion is that to realize educational goals during a pandemic, it is necessary to prepare educators with appropriate curriculum, availability of learning resources and support for proper devices and stable networks. (WIDIA, 2021)

II. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive approach. Sugiyono said this research was applied to objects with natural conditions instead of the experimental method.(Purnawati, 2020). The subjects studied experienced would be described behaviors, perceptions, and actions holistically.(Purnama, 2016).

The Impact of Online Learning Policies on Character Building for Early Childhood in Tulungagung District will be described and analyzed qualitatively to obtain a comprehensive picture. Data were collected using interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted with principals of early childhood education institutions, teachers, and guardians of students obtained by purposive sampling. Early childhood education institutions used for the research were Dharma Wanita Persatuan Kindergarten and Al-Ishlah Kindergarten Tulungagung. Due to using the

interview method, the research instruments used were voice recorders, cameras, and notes. The data analysis technique uses Miles and Huberman's interactive method, which starts by collecting data, reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Learning is all things that can bring information and knowledge to teacher-student relationships. (Purwanto, 2018) Meanwhile, Law number 20 of 2003 defines the interaction process between students and educators in a learning environment and learning resources.

During the pandemic, the teaching and learning process was changed to online learning or online learning, where the learning process was carried out in a network. Here teachers and students do not meet directly in one classroom. (Pohan, 2020)

Good organization in online learning plays a vital role in knowing precisely what will be done. So that it can convey the intention of the school and guardians of students, good communication is established. An interview with the head of the Dharma Wanita Persatuan TK stated that the teachers had made an adapted learning plan during this pandemic.

This communication is essential, especially during this pandemic where we cannot meet in person, so communication plays a significant role in online learning activities. This communication is also carried out with students because without good communication. Students, teachers, and parents will not have a harmonious reciprocal relationship.

In terms of communication, there are indeed a few obstacles because usually, students will be invited by the teacher to speak in a suitable language, with a soft voice and a face that is not fierce and cheerful. Still, through virtual media, this is a bit difficult to catch by students. Many things that one cause of them is the problem with the internet network.

It's no secret that the internet network's distribution and reception are not evenly distributed with good signal quality. The effect on student image acceptance is not the same. Because they don't meet directly, the focus and attention of students are shallow. So that students can not catch the material presented by the teacher. This situation is one of the impacts that occur in online learning.

Mastery and enthusiasm are essential in learning because, without these two things, learning will be a little disturbed. Students' ability and willingness in al-Ishlah Kindergarten are pretty good because the school makes learning activities easy to understand, giving praise, encouragement, and using teaching aids.

In the early childhood learning process, they still prioritize real examples from teaching staff. (Ramdhani & Ramdhani, 2017) said that early childhood is a group of growing and developing children with unique characteristics.

Even though they are online, teachers still try to provide exciting activities, not monotonous, when supported by technological advances. Motivation and enthusiasm are always given to all students. Praise is given when they do assignments on time and are enthusiastic about students being late for work. The teacher makes guidance and guide videos according to the theme to be taught. This is the main attraction of online learning. Moreover, today's children are more interested in opening gadgets, so video learning is more relevant.

There is flexibility in the learning approach to make the implementation of learning successful. There are 4 (four) things used for this approach, namely:

1. Contextual approach; namely, the explanation is given by the teacher regarding the learning material by providing tangible examples in the environment around the students.
2. Constructivism approach; where students can find the correct answer and are encouraged to have a critical mind.
3. Problem-solving approach: The children, through the story, will be invited to find a cause and effect relationship.
4. Scientific approach; obtained from observations, questions, data collection, and communication. (Ramdhani & Ramdhani, 2017)

A person's character or personality is a characteristic or style of self and a trait or personality that can be a differentiator between a person and others. A person's character will be obtained from his environment, society, and family. (Hasbi & Maryana, 2019) A person will be said to have a good personality if he can know his value and potential. (Idris, 2016).

Education is also considered one of the variables that can shape a person's character. The implementation of character education will produce students who have actual actions in good behavior, are honest and responsible, have respect for the rights of others, and so on. (Hadi, 2019).

So character education is considered very important as a basis for behavior for the nation's next generation. The function of character education is to develop potential based on good heart, mind, and behavior. Development of dignified national behavior and strengthening multicultural understanding in the nation's life. (Andriyani, 2022).

The interview results with the Al-ishlah Kindergarten's principal said that to strengthen the character of students. There must be a harmonious relationship between hearts, minds, and feelings, as well as cooperation with parents and the community. This can be accommodated by making intra-curricular curricula tailored to student's interests and talents.

To the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2018, there are central character values such as religious values, nationalism,

independence, cooperation, and trust. The application is through habituation, exemplary activities, and programmed activities with a learning-by-play approach. The application is through learning with the center and circle model.

Nationalism is a value that needs to be instilled from an early age. It is hoped that this value will continue to be attached and remembered by the younger generation in building the nation so that it can maintain the integrity of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia without any conflicts with religious intolerance or ethnic groups.

The inculcation of religious values is applied to introducing worship activities by the religion that adhered to and loved God and all of God's creation. The value of nationalism is applied through learning activities of traffic order, introduction to Indonesian culture, and using native Indonesian products.

The value of independence is applied through eating and drinking alone, not waiting for parents to attend school. The value of gotong royong is implemented through cleaning the classroom, cleaning toys together, cleaning Friday, or community service. The value of trust is applied through the habit of telling the truth and not lying, not taking friends' things without permission.

Strengthening character education uses principles through examples and examples, is carried out in a sustainable, comprehensive, integrated manner in all aspects of development, creates an atmosphere of affection, actively motivates children, involves educators and education staff, parents, and the community, and lastly, there is an assessment.

Character values will be more impactful through intracurricular activities such as angklung, drum band, coloring, outbound, and memorizing the Qur'an. These things are given continuously to students in the hope that they will become habits until they grow up and enter society as agents of change (Afrilia & Indriya, 2020).

Concerning the method of character education in early childhood, it can be seen that the teaching staff will have a little difficulty if it is done online. The real impact is that educators cannot be maximal in providing exemplary examples in the form of attitudes and actions. Educators only give a kind of picture to students of what they should do.

There is also a level of difficulty in providing an assessment. This is because all tasks, habituation and other tasks, are done at home. If you do it at home, you will most likely get help from your parents. Parents reason because their children do not want to work. In early childhood, the presence of teachers considerably influences the teaching and learning process.

There are no big problems in delivering material and fulfilling the curriculum even though the teaching and learning process is online. However, strengthening character education in early

childhood is a big problem. This can be understood because the teacher cannot directly provide examples and cannot get used to good habits of religious and Pancasila values.

The destructive impact of online learning is that children become addicted to gadgets. Parents find it difficult to control the use of devices in their children. On the one hand, children do need gadgets to learn. On the other hand, it is difficult for children to be told to leave the gadget after the learning process is complete. Even though the intensity of learning time only takes a maximum of 3 hours.

Another bad impact of online learning is that children become individualistic because of a lack of contact with others. They spend more time every day in front of gadgets. Children are also at risk of being easily stressed and bored because they face the same everyday gadgets and no other activities outside the home.

However, not all are bad. The existence of online learning triggers children's creativity. Children are free to explore all their talents and skills. All Indonesian people are no longer technological stutterers. All levels of society are no exception to being familiar with a technology called gadgets and can use it.

Regardless of the impact, a policy must still be implemented after it has been established. Because implementing a policy is an action taken to achieve the goal of a decision that has been made in advance. (Hakim et al., 2021) The implementation process is a dynamic activity between policy implementers to achieve the target (Desrinelti et al., 2021).

After the policy on online learning has been implemented for approximately two years, the government can evaluate the policy. Input from various parties and the most important thing is realizing the goals of national education and character building as the basis for the government to make improvements in the early childhood learning process.

IV. CONCLUSION

The implementation of online learning policies in Tulungagung district seen from the delivery of materials has been able to run according to the lesson plans. Both the school and parents quickly responded to the policies set by the government. Facilities and infrastructure are tried to be fulfilled by all parties so that online learning can run well. However, online learning cannot run well in forming early childhood characters. The purpose and function of strengthening the character of early childhood cannot be carried out optimally because learning at this time is mainly obtained from observing actual actions and habits in everyday life. The impact of other online learning is that students become addicted to playing with gadgets, and children prefer to play alone than their peers. During the pandemic, children do not mingle with the outside world.

Children remain in their environment only, so the delivery of material for character building cannot be effectively formed.

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