



'HOME VISIT' AS A LEARNING METHOD FOR EARLY CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *This descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative research aims to describe early childhood learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic in Palopo City. This study is motivated by several problems; the lack of parental involvement in accompanying children to study at home, economic factors, the internet network, and a lack of interest in children participating in learning so that early childhood cannot develop optimally. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires administered via the media google form to 69 teachers and principals in Palopo City. Data analysis uses source triangulation with the stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion. This study's results indicate that teachers still use children's worksheets (LKA) assignments for learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study's novelty is that teachers use a new approach, namely, the visit-home method. Even though there are still a few, who use the home visit method, the home visit method is considered beneficial because the learning carried out is more effective compared to online. Students understand learning material more quickly and are interested in participating in learning at home. Researchers hope this home visit method will not only be applied during a pandemic.*

Keywords: *Home Visit, Learning Methods, Early Childhood, Pandemic.*

A. Introduction

Education is one indicator of a country's progress. This can be seen from the quality of its human resources. Therefore, the government continues improving human resources quality through educational activities. Since 2014, the government has imposed 12 years of compulsory education, starting with elementary school or its equivalent, junior high school or its equivalent, and high school or its equivalent. Even though early childhood education is not included in compulsory education, that does not mean that early childhood education, abbreviated PAUD, is not considered necessary. PAUD is the level of education that children take before entering elementary school (SD). Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is for children aged 0–6.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has been going on since 2020, has impacted the world of education to this day. Since the enactment of distance learning (PJJ) by the government as a form of policy based on Circular Letter Number 2 of 2020 concerning the prevention and handling of COVID-19 within the Ministry of Education and Culture and Number 3 of 2020 concerning the prevention and handling of COVID-19 in education units (Safriyani et al., 2021), this has had an impact on the learning process, which has undergone significant changes from face-to-face learning to online learning for all levels of education, including early childhood education.

Online learning has just been implemented for managers of PAUD institutions, school principals, and PAUD teachers. Implementing online learning is a challenging thing for PAUD teachers. However, teachers remain professional in carrying out their duties. The first step teachers need to take is adapting to the drastically changing learning climate and all learning activities. All stakeholders need to develop new strategies so that learning activities can continue to be carried out, considering the achievements and learning principles at Early Children (AUD).

Remembering the principle of early childhood learning (AUD) is learning while playing. The learning plan designed by the teacher still refers to this principle by implementing learning strategies. To realise this strategy, the teacher needs to pay more attention and use appropriate methods in learning activities. The teacher's instruction method allows

the expected learning objectives to be met effectively (MK Nasution, 2017). Learning methods are very influential in achieving learning objectives in every educational institution, including the early childhood education unit (Arifah, 2020).

The learning method aims to improve six aspects of early childhood development, including the development of religious and moral values (NAM), social-emotional skills (SOSEM), cognitive abilities, language, physical-motor skills, and art. However, the provisions will be amended in 2022 by Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022. The changes to the requirements for early childhood development are 1) religious and moral values; 2) Pancasila values; 3) physical and motor; 4) cognitive; 5) language; and 6) social and emotional.

The “golden period” is essential to a child’s brain development because it can reach 50% (Ratnawati, 2021). At this time, the psychological and physical functions that have begun to mature are ready to receive environmental stimulation (Zaini, 2019). Because of the importance of this age, every teacher, especially during this pandemic, can optimise their role as educators (Hajeni et al., 2022) and adapt to the ever-changing learning climate, from face-to-face to online learning. In addition, parents must provide understanding regarding COVID-19 so that children want and understand changes in learning methods at home (Hajeni et al., 2021). Learning at home raises several issues in learning activities. This is based on the results of interviews with teachers and principals of PAUD schools in Palopo City. Some of these things are 1) for working parents who are less involved in accompanying children in learning; 2) some parents don’t have cell phones as learning media and can’t afford internet quotas; 3) an unstable network causes learning activities not to be optimal; 4) Early childhood’s lack of interest in participating in learning; 5) Early childhood is not fully developed yet.

The above problems certainly affect the achievement of child development. Therefore, teachers need to provide solutions to the issues above by using appropriate methods in carrying out learning. This research examines early childhood learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic in Palopo City.

Based on the above objectives, the researcher examined several learning methods used by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that the methods used by the teacher were giving assignments, teaching videos, plain text, and learning audio (Satrianingrum et al., 2021). Another way the teacher uses is visiting home based on research results (Faila Shofa, 2020). Home Visit is a new method used by teachers during the pandemic. This is based on research studies, which also underlie researchers' studies of the "home visit" method as a learning method during the COVID-19 pandemic in Palopo City.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative and quantitative descriptive design to describe early childhood learning methods during the COVID-19 period in Palopo City, which will be held in July–September 2021. Research data was obtained through limited interviews while adhering to health protocols and questionnaires using Google Forms. With research subjects totalling 40 teachers and 29 PAUD heads in Palopo. The instruments used were interview guidelines, and a questionnaire created using Google Forms, which contained 13 questions according to the purpose of this study.

Data analysis was carried out by collecting research data from teachers and school principals, then, at the reduction stage, by classifying interview data related to research objectives using triangulation techniques. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the suitability of research results from research subjects, namely teachers and school principals. Next is the data display, and the last is drawing conclusions based on the research results. The stages in this study can be seen in Figure 1.

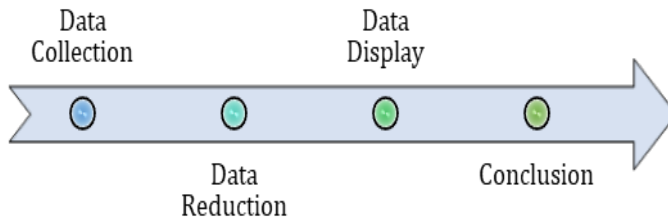


Figure 1. Research Stages

C. Results and Discussion

The introductory part of this research has shown that the purpose of this research is to discover and describe early childhood learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that teachers used several learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic: the assignment method, video-based methods, and home visits. As for what is meant by the technique, it is the right way to use it in the transfer of knowledge based on the age of the child (et al., Leni Herawati, 2013). In early childhood education, several methods are used: the conversation method, the assignment method, the storytelling method, the question-and-answer method, the field trip method, the demonstration method, the socio-drama method, the experimental method, and the project method.

An analysis of research data illustrates that one of the learning methods teachers use during online learning is the assignment method. Previous research by ST Nasution and Sutapa (2021) found that the assignment method is one of the teachers' strategies for learning during a pandemic. The assignment or memorisation method is work students can do without being tied to a place (Yantiningih, 2020), one at home. The same opinion states that the assignment method is the teacher's way of conveying learning by giving assignments to be completed after being given a previous explanation (Mudiati et al., 2018).

The results of interviews with teachers show that the assignment method is the easiest to apply during the current pandemic because the interaction between teachers and children is quite limited. As stated in the Early Childhood Education curriculum, assignments aim to provide children with direct experiences, either in groups or individually. Assignments are given as children's worksheets (LKA) to arouse children's activity and independence in learning (Pratwi, 2016). LKA is a task sheet that will be done by children accompanied by work instructions (Qibtiyah, 2020), which are given to parents for their children's learning for one week according to the learning theme. However, to help parents accompany their children, the teacher first explains how to complete the assignments in LKA at home. The results are sent via the WhatsApp Group media to the teacher, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Assignments in the form of Children's Worksheets (LKA)

The assignment method can improve six aspects of development in early childhood. One is the development of children's cognitive abilities due to research (Megawati, 2021), which shows an increase in children's cognitive skills through the assignment method. In line with the study's results (Indarwati, 2017), which state that several methods can improve children's cognition, one of which is the assignment method.

In addition to the LKA-based assignment method, the teacher also applies a video-based learning method. This is based on interviews with teachers and school principals. The teacher makes a video showing activities and explaining material related to the theme to be taught according to the schedule. Then the video material is sent via the WhatsApp group. Children's learning activities are carried out by watching videos with the assistance of parents. The use of video as a learning method during a pandemic was also applied by Syafi'i, as stated in his research results, where teachers record learning videos while teaching in class and then send these videos to parents. Through videos, children feel like they are learning in class (Shafi'i et al., 2020).

Apart from videos made by teachers, videos sourced from YouTube are also used as references for children's learning during a pandemic. This was conveyed by one of the teachers who became an informant in this study. The teacher sends the video to the parents and then shows it to the children

to practice. The video is in the form of a song related to the learning theme. Research results (Yuliani et al., 2017) stated that learning videos affected early arithmetic abilities.

Not only are assignments given with LKA, but the teacher also gives project-based assignments by making videos, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Project Assignment

The results of this study describe several media used by teachers in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in Figure 4.

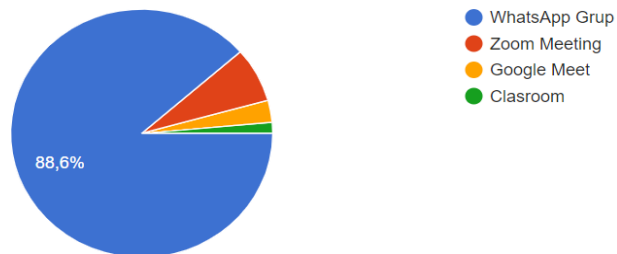


Figure 4. Learning Media during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The figure shows that those who use WhatsApp media are 88.6 per cent or 62 people. Zoom meeting media (7.19%) or five people; Google meet media (2.9%) or two people; and class media (1.44%) or one person.

Based on the data above, the dominance of WhatsApp use is higher when compared to other media. This is because, before the pandemic, this medium was commonly used by everyone, including teachers and parents, so communication between

teachers and parents ran smoothly. Besides, using this medium is easy, and the internet quota is light. Support the results of this study (Anggreani, 2021), which, based on the results of his research, stated that the use of the WhatsApp platform reached 74.8% of PAUD institutions for practical and applicable reasons. According to research (Safriyani et al., 2021), videos and photos are sent by parents to teachers via WhatsApp.

As previously stated (Saifuddin et al., 2019), cloud-zoom meeting videos are another medium learning teachers use to teach during a pandemic. According to the study's findings (Ismawati & Prasetyo, 2020), learning through platforms strongly supports distance learning. It makes it easier for students to understand the learning material delivered by the teacher, even though teachers cannot use video zoom cloud meetings at any time due to limited internet quotas, both for teachers and parents of students, as well as some parents who do not have facilities in the form of an android. It refers to research results (Nasir et al., 2020) that there are four obstacles to using Zoom meetings for teachers: quota, network, application usage techniques, and facilities and infrastructure. Another medium used was Google Meet, although it was only used by two teachers (2.9%). Similar problems in previous media also constrain this. In addition, there is one teacher who uses class media. However, this medium is rarely used among PAUD teachers.

Based on the description above, WhatsApp media is widely used by teachers because it is easy to use and uses fewer internet data. Some parents don't even have cell phones or internet data because they belong to the lower economic class. On that basis, one of the methods used by the teacher to solve these problems is the home visit method.

The results of this study indicate that home visits are very effective in helping people learn during a pandemic, especially for children who cannot study because they do not have access to online learning media. The same thing was also applied to Nirmala as a solution to the same problem based on the results of her research, which showed that home visits were a strategy for serving early childhood during the COVID-19 pandemic (Nirmala & Annuar,

2020). Home visits can be an alternative learning method applied during this pandemic (Euis Sugihartini, 2021).

In addition to the several methods above, the results of this study also show that some teachers also use the lecture method to teach during a pandemic. The lecture method is a classical learning method that teachers continue to apply during the pandemic, even though the intensity of its use has decreased. The lecture method delivers learning material to students through oral communication by attracting their attention (Maemunawati & Alif, 2020). This method needs to be more robust due to the need for more interaction between students and teachers in learning activities, especially in AUD, which still needs to focus on learning. This method is considered less effective in education, especially during this pandemic.

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the methods used by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen in Figure 5.

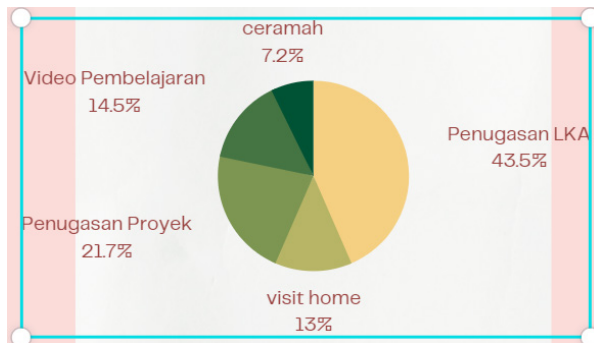


Figure 5. Learning Methods during a Pandemic

The picture above explains that the LKA assignment method was used by teachers (43.5%) or 30 people, the project assignment method (21.7%) or 15 people, the learning video method (14.5%) or ten people, the home visit method lecture method (13%) or nine people, and the lecture method (7.2%) or five people.

Based on the description of the research results above, the researcher believes that even during a pandemic, teachers are still obliged to carry out their duties as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2005, namely, to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess,

and evaluate students in early childhood education. Early formal education, primary education, and secondary education. All stakeholders who manage PAUD institutions work together to make learning activities successful. Including parents.

The role of parents has been explained by Ki Hajar Dewantara Tri Education, known as formal, informal, and non-formal education (Musolin & Nisa, 2021). Informal education, or family education, is given by parents to children. So, in this case, it can be understood that children's education is the responsibility of parents. The study results show that the collaboration between teachers and parents in implementing online learning is essential. The teacher's teaching method must be distinct from the role of parents in it. Like the results of previous research, it is necessary to optimise the part of teachers and parents in online learning systems (Hajeni et al., 2022).

Implementation of online learning requires appropriate learning strategies and methods to support the achievement of six aspects of development in AUD, namely the development of religious and moral values (NAM), social-emotional development (SOSEM), language development, cognitive, psychomotor, and artistic. In learning in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is, of course, the hope of teachers and parents that the level of achievement of children's growth and development will not experience obstacles due to the lack of interaction between teachers and students. as the principle in PAUD learning, namely learning while playing. This principle must be able to grow and develop children's potential, so teachers need to use media and methods that synergise with these principles. Media and methods in the learning process are important studies for teachers, so they are easy to apply (Jennah, 2009). The media in PAUD learning are audio, visual media, and audio-visual. Visual media is media that can be seen. This medium is widely used in PAUD institutions because education will attract children's interest in participating in learning. Audio media is audio or sound that can only be heard, which contains meaningful messages and learning. In comparison, audio-visual media can be seen and heard or heard visually. This media can help teachers carry out learning because it can replace teachers, especially in the

current pandemic conditions. Children can still learn even though they are not in school or have no accompanying teacher.

The use of these media depends on the learning material delivered by the teacher and the level of development to be achieved. The current pandemic conditions emphasise that teachers use learning videos relevant to online learning. As a result of the findings of this study, teachers' preferred learning media include WhatsApp, Zoom meetings, Google Meet, and classroom media.

The following methods can be used: 1) question, answer, and discussion. This method of presenting material involves asking students questions to assess their understanding of the material being taught. 2) The discussion method allows for interaction between students when expressing opinions and solving problems. 3) The lecture method; 4) The role-playing method is a method that provides opportunities for students to portray characters under certain conditions; this aims to train students' self-confidence and make it easier to understand learning; 5) Experimental or problem-solving methods that are usually carried out in the laboratory 6) Mind-mapping method or assignment This method is very often used by teachers when giving assignments to students. 7) The discovery method, with advantage of this method is that students can learn independently and solve problems that still need to be understood.

As PAUD educators, of course, the teacher understands and considers the use of methods that are relevant to early childhood learning so that in the learning process, they will refer to the PAUD curriculum, which contains several learning methods in AUD, namely storytelling, lectures, habituation, role-playing, and assignment methods. Based on learning needs during the pandemic, teachers implemented several new methods, namely video-based and home visits.

Home visits are the proper method to use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children can still get hands-on learning experience with this method, even with restrictions. This visit-home method is not only used by teachers in Indonesia; the Chinese government has also implemented this method. During the global COVID-19 epidemic, virtual home visits have

become an essential tactic among some Chinese government agencies. This method can maintain the teacher-parent-child relationship, ensure the continuity of children's learning, and encourage home-preschool cooperation (Luo et al., 2022).

This research has obstacles due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it becomes a weakness in data collection. Researchers can only make observations and conduct interviews with some sources, but this research uses the Google Forms platform to overcome these obstacles. Because this research is only intended to describe the media and methods used by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers suggest that further research be conducted examining the effectiveness of media and methods in achieving early childhood development.

D. Conclusion

The results of this study concluded that teachers used several methods to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the LKA assignment, project assignment, learning videos, home visits, and lecture method. The dominant method used based on percentage results is the LKA assignment method. However, from the several methods used, one was very effective in carrying out learning during the pandemic, namely the home visit method, because children were more interested in participating in learning activities. According to the findings of this study, the most popular learning media teachers use in online learning in Palopo City is WhatsApp, followed by Google Meet, Zoom, and Google Classroom. Thus, WhatsApp media dominate learning media because they are more applicable. Therefore, the researchers suggest that further researchers study the effectiveness of using learning media during a pandemic and examine the "home visit" method further. This method can be applied during a pandemic and everyday learning.

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