



## Distance learning in early childhood education in Jayapura, Papua Province

<sup>1</sup>Dyan Pratiwi, <sup>2</sup>Faisal Riza Hasbullah

<sup>1</sup>IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua, <sup>2</sup>BP PAUD DIKMAS Papua, Indonesia

Email : <sup>1</sup>[dyan.pratiwi@iainfmpapua.ac.id](mailto:dyan.pratiwi@iainfmpapua.ac.id), <sup>2</sup>[faisalriza92@gmail.com](mailto:faisalriza92@gmail.com)

### Article History

Submitted: February 2, 2021

Accepted: February 19, 2021

Published: March 21, 2021

DOI: 10.26555/jecce.v4i1.3613

### ABSTRACT

Distance learning (PJJ) is an alternative to learning during the Covid 19 pandemic. This article aims to find out PJJ in early childhood education in Jayapura, Papua Province. The research method used is descriptive qualitative by taking data from six early childhood education institutions in Jayapura, Papua. The results of this study indicate that the form of distance learning in early childhood education in Jayapura is by submitting children's worksheets every week, using the Zoom meeting application, using the Whatsapp application, and home visits. The results obtained from this study can be used as information about distance learning in PAUD in Jayapura and can be used as an evaluation of the implementation of PJJ for the government and PAUD institutions in order to manage the education system in Indonesia more effectively, efficiently, and optimally.

**Keywords:** Distance Learning, Early Childhood Education Programs

### ABSTRAK

*Pembelajaran jarak jauh (PJJ) menjadi salah satu alternatif pembelajaran pada masa pandemi Covid 19. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui PJJ pada pendidikan anak usia dini di Jayapura Provinsi Papua. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan mengambil data pada enam lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini di Jayapura, Papua. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa bentuk pembelajaran jarak jauh pada pendidikan anak usia dini di Jayapura yaitu dengan penyampaian Lembar Kerja Anak tiap pekan, penggunaan aplikasi Zoom meeting, penggunaan aplikasi Whatsapp dan home visit. Hasil yang diperoleh dari penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai informasi tentang pembelajaran jarak jauh pada PAUD di Jayapura serta dapat dijadikan evaluasi pelaksanaan PJJ bagi pemerintah dan lembaga PAUD agar dapat mengelola sistem pendidikan di Indonesia lebih efektif, efisien, dan optimal.*

**Kata Kunci :** Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 pandemic has made many sectors of life undergo significant changes. Not only in the health, economic, and social sectors but also in the education sector. Before the pandemic, education was carried out face-to-face, now learning is carried out remotely. The existence of the Covid 19 pandemic has implemented education with a distance system one of the steps taken to reduce the rate of transmission of the Covid 19 virus in Indonesia (Ratu et al., 2020) . Distance learning is not a new thing in the world of education. Distance learning (PJJ) in Indonesia has even started to exist since the 1950s, namely since the education system itself existed in Indonesia (Yaumi, 2007).

Many benefits can be obtained from this distance learning system, including learning that can be done more flexibly because it can be done anywhere at any time with the support of adequate internet access, it is more efficient in transportation costs because to take part in learning, you do not have to come to the place where the learning is taking place, and you can hone it. the potential for educators and students to be more familiar and technology literate (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). However, distance learning also poses quite a challenge, especially when applied to early childhood.

Early childhood is children aged 0 to 6 years (Indonesian National Education System Law 2003). In another definition, early childhood is a child aged 3 to 6 years or what is often called preschool children. This period is a period where children like to play. Play is an integral part of children's learning at this age (Mashar, 2015). In nature, learning for early childhood is like playing which should be fun and exciting (Zamzami, 2020). Through play activities, children can explore and develop their potential (Marhun, 2020). Early childhood education has the function of developing all aspects of child development from an early age as terms for life to be able to adapt to the surrounding environment (Syafriada et al., 2020). Children at this age cannot do complex things alone. The process of mentoring and direction from parents or adults is needed in the learning process.

Distance learning that is developing nowadays mostly utilizes technology such as handphones, laptops or computers, TV, radio, and the internet to support distance learning. This is a challenge in implementing distance learning for early childhood. Early childhood is individuals who are still in the development stage, who are very sensitive to many radiations emitted by electronic goods such as TVs, radios, handphones, and computers which have many unfavorable health effects (Prayogo et al., 2013). It is not good if the radiation occurs continuously, especially for early childhood who are physically still in the early stages of development.

Another challenge of distance learning is the level of stress experienced by parents in learning assistance from home. Some parents who are overwhelmed to assist the child's learning process during the pandemic are carried out remotely. This is felt by working parents and parents who have more than one school-age child who is at different levels of education. At one time, parents had to carry out a learning assistance process, on the other hand, parents also had other activities. Parents' educational background is also influential in the learning assistance process of children during the pandemic. The ability of parents to foster interest and motivation is also an obstacle faced by parents in assisting their children to learn from home (Kurniati et al., 2020; Wardani & Ayriza, 2020; Yulianingsih et al., 2020).

These factors trigger the high level of stress of parents in accompanying the implementation of distance learning in early childhood education.

A challenge that is also often found in implementing distance learning is the quota of data that is absorbed up a lot for distance learning activities. The implementation of learning activities that are carried out indirectly leads to more administrative tasks, such as materials that must be digitized, sending evidence of children's learning that is carried out regularly, making the need for internet data quota increases. The internet data quota that is consumed for the distance learning process becomes quite large if the material and evidence of the assignment administration must be made in the form of images, videos, and audio-visuals. The increasing need for internet data quota and the high price of internet data quota is heavily felt in eastern Indonesia regions. One of the largest cellular operators in Indonesia sets the most expensive internet charges to apply in zones 11 and 12 of which Papua is one of the areas included in the zone category (Rahmayani, 2015).

From that above background, this research is important to do to see what distance learning is like in early childhood education in Jayapura, Papua, where the challenges faced by educators, parents, and students are quite a lot. With the hope, this research can provide information to the wider community about distance learning in early childhood education in the Jayapura, Papua Province so that it can be used as a reference for improving and improving the quality of education in the future.

## **METHOD**

The research method in this research is descriptive qualitative by taking data from six early childhood education institutions in Jayapura, Papua Province. This method does not use statistics but through data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). The data collection techniques used were observation, interview, and documentation. Data collection was carried out at six PAUD institutions in Jayapura, Papua. The six institutions were drawn from three districts, namely Jayapura City, Jayapura Regency, and Keerom Regency. The six institutions studied were: 1.TK Yapis V perumnas I Waena; 2.PAUD Karya Kasih Perumnas III Waena; 3.TK Aisyiah Abepura; 4.TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal, Sentani City district; 5.RA Al-Ikhlas Doyo Baru, Waibu District; 6. RA Al Asyrafy Asyaman Swakarsa, Arso District. Data analysis was carried out by the stages of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Distance Learning in Early Childhood Education in Jayapura, Papua**

The following is data obtained from six PAUD institutions in Jayapura regarding distance learning in early childhood education. The six institutions are: TK Yapis V Perumnas I Waena; PAUD Karya Kasih Perumnas III Waena; TK Aisyiah Abepura; Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten, Sentani City District; RA Al-Ikhlas Doyo Baru, Waibu District; RA Al Asyrafy Asyaman Swakarsa, Arso District.

TK Yapis V Perumnas I Waena, Heram District, is one of the early childhood education institutions in Jayapura City. This PAUD institution is located in Waena Village, Heram District. From the data obtained, the implementation of PJJ at TK Yapis V Perumnas I Waena was carried out in the form of giving child worksheets (LKA) containing learning themes to parents or guardians of students for one week of learning. To assist children in playing and learning from home, parents are given Worksheets taken from the Variety of Weekly Learning Program Plans (RPPM), a variety of children's play is made during the week (Siti Mukaromah, Personal Communication, 2020). The results of the LKA work are then sent to the teacher via the Whatsapp application as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Documentation of children's learning outcomes sent via the Whatsapp application at TK Yapis V Perumnas I

Distance learning for early childhood at TK Yapis V Perumnas I is carried out by learning from home. To guide the learning process from home, the teacher gives a child's worksheet (LKA) each week which is submitted to the parents as a reference in assisting the child in learning. LKA is a teaching material that is useful as a method of learning guidance for children and makes it easier for teachers to provide assignments (Mongkek et al., 2019). This form of distance learning with the delivery of LKA can be a bridge between teachers and parents in assisting children to learn from home.

The implementation of PJJ in early childhood by delivering LKA every week is also carried out at PAUD Karya Kasih Perumnas III. PAUD Karya Kasih Perumnas III is one of the PAUD educational institutions in Heram District. In its implementation, distance learning

in PAUD Karya Kasih is carried out by providing material by the teacher in the form of children's play programs/types of children's play which are periodically given to parents by taking the worksheet and submitting the evaluation in the form of documentation sent via the Whatsapp application as teacher assessment materials. This children's play program is similar to the children's worksheet (LKA). Once a week the parents take the children's play program and at that time the parents also submit the children's work that was assigned the previous week (Manggaprow, Personal Communication, 2020). To connect long-distance communication between teachers and students, the Whatsapp application is used as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Utilization of the Whatsapp application for distance learning in PAUD Karya Kasih**

To monitor learning activities from home, parents send assignments via the Whatsapp application. The use of the Whatsapp application in addition to sending assignments is also used for synchronous learning or two-way learning. This is in line with the implementation of synchronous online learning carried out in other regions in Indonesia, WhatsApp being the most widely used application (Astuti & Harun, 2020; Botutihe et al., 2020). Learning in PAUD Karya Kasih also combines online and offline activities through home visits as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Home Visit Activity by Karya Kasih PAUD teacher**

Home visits are an alternative when children start to get bored and miss the figure of a teacher. This home visit activity is also expected to be able to provide the best service for children during the Covid-19 pandemic (Nirmala & Annuar, 2020). Home visits are also an alternative for students or parents who have difficulty participating in online distance learning.

TK Aisyiyah is one of the PAUD institutions in the Abepura District, Jayapura City. At TK Aisyiyah, distance learning is carried out in the form of giving worksheets as in TK Yapis V and PAUD Karya Kasih. LKA is taken by the parents or guardians of students to school as shown in Figure 4. This form of LKA that is given to the parents of students is a way that is considered appropriate for distance learning in early childhood because children need assistance and guidance from adults, in this case, it is the student's parent or guardian. Because parents have different backgrounds in understanding educating and accompanying children's learning, the TK Aisyiyah institution also collaborates with a parenting program to support the implementation of distance learning for early childhood more optimally (Nurjayanti, Personal Communication, 2020).



**Figure 4. Taking LKA by parents at TK Aisyiyah Abepura institution**

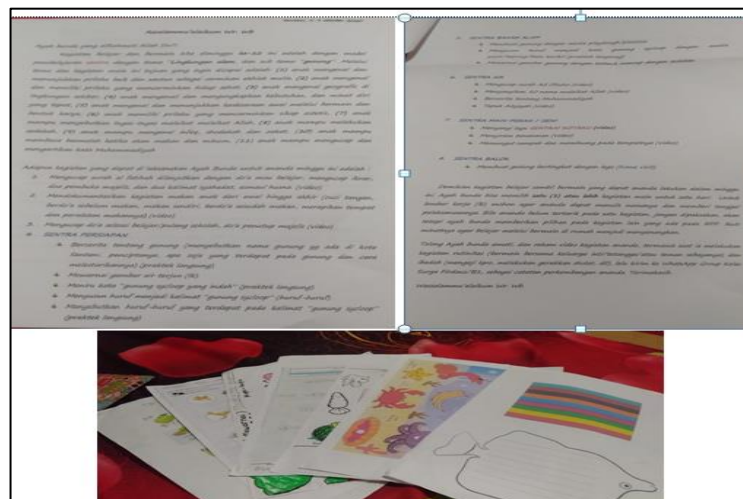
Judging from the data obtained, the form of distance learning (PJJ) implementation in early childhood education at TK Aisyah Abepura has combined the form of learning with the provision of LKA and utilizing the Whatsapp and Zoom Meeting applications. Zoom Cloud Meeting is an application that can facilitate face-to-face interactions via video conferencing virtually. This application can be accessed using a PC, laptop, and smartphone which is flexible enough to use anytime anywhere as long as there is an adequate internet network access (Ismawati & Prasetyo, 2020).



**Figure 5. Use of the Zoom Meeting Application for distance learning at TK Aisyiyah Abepura**

Judging from the features offered, this application is quite helpful in distance learning. This application can also bridge communication between teachers and parents. However, for early childhood, the use of this application, of course, must be accompanied by an adult.

The form of distance learning in early childhood education implemented at RA Al-Ikhlâs Doyo Baru also utilizes LKA which is delivered to parents to guide parents in the process of learning assistance from home (Maslindah, Personal Communication, 2020). This LKA is prepared by taking from the RPPM document (Weekly Learning Program Plan) which is then developed into various forms of play as shown in the figure 6.



**Figure 6. RA Al Ikhlas Doyo Baru Weekly RPPM Document**

This PAUD institution combines it with conducting a home visit. The home visit activity is carried out due to consideration of the parents' request. Home visits or visits to students' homes by the teacher are a form of learning carried out at RA Al Ikhlas Doyo Baru. Home visits are implemented with due attention to health protocols (Maslindah, Personal Communication, 2020). This home visit is also a solution when children start to get bored and

miss a teacher. This home visit activity is also expected to be able to provide the best service for children during the Covid-19 pandemic (Nirmala & Annuar, 2020).

The implementation of PJJ in TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal is also not much different from previous PAUD institutions. In this institution, the distance learning process is also carried out by delivering materials or RPPM once a week. To monitor children's learning activities, learning is carried out through Vidio Call on the Whatsapp application (Muis, Personal Communication, 2020). Implementation of PJJ in early childhood at RA Al Asyrafy Asyaman Swakarsa Arso District was also carried out by giving worksheets by teachers to parents or guardians of students by communicating them through the WA application (Fatonah, Personal Communication, 2020). In addition to learning carried out by delivering LKA to parents, learning is also combined with home visit activities according to the health protocol during the pandemic as shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 7. RA Al Asyrafii Arso Swakarsa's Home Visit Activity**

For parents who are not supported by the Whatsapp application, the teacher provides an alternative for parents to come to take LKA at school or teachers who come to the student's house (Ningsih, Personal Communication, 2020).

The results of this study indicate that there are several forms of distance learning in early childhood in Jayapura, Papua Province. The first form of distance learning is the delivery of Children's Worksheets (LKA) or a variety of games or play programs from teachers to parents that are carried out every week regularly. The variety of play is a list of games designed for early childhood learning which are obtained from the RPPM (weekly lesson plan). In its implementation, the teacher sends LKA and this variety of play to parents. In the delivery, some go through the WA group and some are parents who come directly to the school. After the LKA is sent to the parents, then the parents guide and assist the children to learn from home according to the instructions in the LKA or the play program



obtained from the teacher. Evidence of learning is documented and then sent to the teacher via WA or delivered when taking LKA the following week. The teacher monitors the learning process through the WA group or communicates by telephone to monitor the child's learning development. So even though the mentoring is carried out by parents, the learning material is still compiled by the teacher and the learning process is still under teacher monitoring.

The form of PJJ in PAUD in Jayapura, Papua also uses the Zoom Meeting application. This application is a long-distance communication medium that can connect several people with a two-way form of communication (Haqien & Rahman, 2020). The use of this application supports multi-way communication, specifically from teacher to student, and from teacher to parent. Distance learning with the Zoom Application also provides greater opportunities for teachers to monitor children's learning processes. The form of learning that is applied is to utilize the Zoom meeting platform which is very helpful in PJJ implementation because it can bring together zoom meeting participants to communicate with each other and exchange information directly even in a virtual room. However, the form of PJJ for early childhood using this application is still considered difficult considering that some parents have problems with cellphones that do not support this application and the price of data packages is quite high in Jayapura. Besides that, parents' activities as a companion for their children to learn from home have various activities that are difficult if they have to learn all the time using this application. However, if the use of the Zoom meeting application is used occasionally to support the distance learning process, this is an effort to develop following the changing times and technological advances.

Distance learning in early childhood education in Jayapura also uses the Whatsapp application to communicate via chat or via video call. However, for learning through video calls, this application is very limited for participants who can join, which is only about 4 to 6 people. Most of these applications are used as a medium for sending LKA and children's learning outcomes to teachers. Some institutions also use it for face-to-face learning activities virtually even though it is still limited in terms of the number of people who can join.

Home Visit was also chosen as a form of distance learning in early childhood education in several PAUD institutions in Jayapura, Papua. The form of home visit learning is taken as a step to observe or see the child's development stage directly. Home visits can also be a solution for parents who don't have a cellphone or android that supports online learning and online communication. Home visit activities carried out by the teacher to students are carried out in rotation. Home visits are considered suitable for seeing the stages of children's learning development directly and can make it easier for teachers to evaluate distance learning activities. Study visits by teachers are also an alternative strategy to

provide solutions to the problem of some parents who are constrained by long-distance communication tools.

## CONCLUSION

From the results and discussion that have been described, it can be concluded that the form of distance learning in early childhood in Jayapura, among others, is the delivery of Child Worksheets (LKA) to parents or guardians of students. Some PAUD institutions in Jayapura implement distance learning by using the Zoom meeting application and the Whatsapp application to communicate between teachers and parents and children. Home visit learning was also chosen as a form of offline learning in several PAUD institutions in Jayapura. Thus the results obtained from this study can be used as information about distance learning in early childhood education in Jayapura, Papua Province.

Suggestions for the government and early childhood education development institutions so that in the future they can manage the distance education system in Indonesia to be more effective, efficient, and equitable.

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