

PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT : Many parents speculate that enrolling children in early childhood education cannot provide any benefits for children because children only play and sing. However, there are parents who think that the presence of PAUD in the community can help children adapt, get to know the environment, have experiences, and interact with peers, so that children are ready to enter elementary school (SD). The purpose of this study is to get an overview of parents' views on PAUD in Sumba. The method used is a type of descriptive qualitative research. Data collection techniques use interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of this study contribute that parents' perception responds positively to the presence of PAUD to provide experience, skills, adapt, recognize numbers and letters, and easily get along and interact with peers. If the education of parents is better, then automatically the level of growth and development of the

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I. INTRODUCTION

Parents are figures who provide solutions to early childhood education to achieve a better future for children (Fasina, F. Fagbeminiyi, 2011). The formation of a family is certainly a person who wants to live together, live together with the same goal and to continue the descendants who are bound by customs/culture and church marriages. Providing awareness to Cameroonian parents to play an active role in early childhood education (Ashu, Felix, 2012). Parents need to build relationships with teachers, in order to provide good services for children (Anders, 2020). Parents formed in the nuclear family are responsible for raising children, protecting, nurturing, caring for, nurturing, and educating children from womb to adulthood. However, becoming a parent is certainly not easy and requires enough education to educate children to become useful children for themselves, their families, the State and the Nation. However, it is rare for parents to see the development of children in the golden age, because each parent has different views/perceptions about early childhood education, so that it has an impact on the development of children.

The high interest in PAUD in the community is increasing along with the increasing awareness of parents about the importance of early childhood education. The number of National Gross Participation Rates (APK) of children participating in PAUD throughout Indonesia in 2020 increased by 90% (Rohmani, 2020). Parents' understanding of early childhood education is also increasing with the results of research or studies, including the results of research that reveal that the increase in human intelligence is almost 50% occurs at birth age to 4 (four) years, when 4 to 8 years old it increases to 80% and reaches a peak of 100% when it is 8 to 18 years old (Suryana, 2021). Advances in technology and digital information have also made it easier to access information about Early Childhood Education. Parents who often access this information have a positive impact with increasing awareness of the benefits of Early Childhood Education by parents. This happens because it is difficult for parents to understand the importance of education for children in their golden age. Problems include low education and parental income so that they do not encourage children to go to school in Early Childhood Education (Pratiwi, Widiastuti, and Rahardjo, 2018), online learning makes parents panic with the character of children during covid-19 (Aisyah, et al., 2021), low community participation in including their children due to differences in perception (Zahrawanny and Fitria, 2019). There are still many parents who have not responded well to Early Childhood Education due to a lack of knowledge or information about early childhood education (Ismawaty, 2023), parents prefer to take care of their children at home rather than sending them to school on the grounds that parents do not understand much about the importance of early childhood education because they do not receive socialization about the importance of early childhood education (Sari, Suyatmin, and Nugraha, 2022). However, parents' perception of Early Childhood Education institutions in Indonesia, especially in Sumba, is still very low in sending children aged 0-6 years to school, previously they had not socialized to parents about the importance of early childhood education.

In fact, education is very helpful for children to stimulate the development of early childhood social-emotional, cognitive, moral values, and art. Restoring preschool children's smiles has a positive impact on social behaviour, (Muataz Abdelmaula & Fowziya M. Ali, 2025). Thus, it is necessary to provide insight to parents regarding the importance of early childhood education, so that parents increasingly understand and realize the importance of children in school life. The theme highlighted in this study is the low perception of parents towards early childhood education, this is important to be studied more deeply to find a solution to provide understanding to parents in Sumba.

Early Childhood Education is successful because of parental involvement in children's education, (Baroroh., Budiartati., and Fakhruddin, 2020) Maternal education is often considered an important determinant of early child development, (Cuartas, J. (2022). Optimizing care for child development at home is essential to reduce the adverse impact of poverty on early child development and later life, (Tran, T. D., Luchters, S., & Fisher. J. (2017). Children's cognitive and social development levels are at the age of 0-8 years, (Susan H. Landry.Karen E. Smith, & Paul R. Swank, 2011). Families should act as their tutors to make them high-quality people and grow at their age stage, (Siti Juwariyah., Achmad Slamet., and Kustiono Kustiono, 2019), improving parenting programs aims to reduce family poverty, Waylen, A & Brown, S.S., 2010). The purpose of this study is to get an overview and an appropriate explanation regarding parents' perception of early childhood education. However, it is different from the view that those who send children to school in Early Childhood Education are educated parents. In fact, even uneducated parents can be responsible for maintaining, caring for and even meeting the educational needs of their children. Parents play the role of the first figure who instills good values as well as figures who become role models for their children. Many parents can't carrying out their responsibilities due to limited knowledge, experience, and skills, so parents leave it to others or to educational institutions to educate and guide their children.

II. METHOD

The type of research used in this study is a type of qualitative descriptive research. The use of qualitative research types, in order to understand phenomena and clear pictures related to parents' perceptions of Early Childhood Education. This is obtained based on the opinions of participants or internal views, not based on the opinions of the researcher himself or external opinions. The subjects of the study were parents who had children aged 3-6 years. Data collection techniques use interviews, observations, and documentation. The data collected was in the form of records of interviews with parents, records of observation results and documentation of child development.

The data that has been collected is analyzed to get an overview and explanation related to parents' perception of early childhood education. Data analysis is carried out interactively and continuously until the data is saturated, namely no new information has been obtained. The steps taken in data analysis are to collect data using a combination of interviews, observations, and documentation techniques regarding parents' perceptions of Early Childhood Education, data correction and taking basic and important data, then presenting data in the form of a narrative so that it is easy to understand, the last step is to draw conclusions and verify. This study focuses on obtaining an overview in the field of how parents perceive early childhood education from the educational background of parents, income, and parental age.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research from 52 parents interviewed about parents' perception of early childhood education responded positively to attendance and enrolled their children in nearby Early Childhood Education Institutions. Parents have different perceptions about Early Childhood Education at an early age, but overall it is said that the perception of parents is good (Ismawati, 2023), different perceptions of parents regarding the needs of their children are high, so they are less involved in children's education (McGinnis, E. W., Copeland W., Shanahan, L., Egger, L. E. 2021). This means that according to this researcher, the perception of parents is very good from the results of the interview. The participants involved in this study were parents whose education varied (undergraduate, high school, junior high school, and elementary school), income (low to high), with age variations (36-50) years. The interview guidelines used are as follows: Are children required to enter Early Childhood Education; Whether Early Childhood is taught to read, write and count; What are the advantages and disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education; Do you support your child to go to school; Is there a difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood education and go directly to school; Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of playing; and Are you involved in Early Childhood Education. The interview guidelines used are as follows: Are children required to enter Early Childhood Education; Whether Early Childhood is taught to read, write and count; What are the advantages and

disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education; Do you support your child to go to school; Is there a difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood education and go directly to school; Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of playing; and Are you involved in Early Childhood Education. Based on the results of the interview, educated parents responded very positively to the presence of Early Childhood Education in Sumba. Children are able to interact, adapt, and hone their skills through play activities in the environment, so that the interaction of children's parents greatly affects the emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children (Briegel, W., Greuel, J., Stroth, S., and Heinrichs, N., 2019). Parents and help to provide health services, are involved in policymaking, support community-based school programs (Garris, N. H., Davis, M. M., Kan, K., 2018). It is proven that parents give positive answers to Early Childhood Education. The following is an example of an answer from a father and mother whose level of education varies, for more details can be seen in table 1. 2. 3. 4 below:

Table 1. Results of Mr. GL's Interview

Number	Question	Answer
1	Are early childhood children required to enter Early Childhood Education?	Mandatory because of the requirements before entering elementary school; Children get to know their peers and are able to practice their skills in the school environment
2	Are early childhood taught to read, write, and count?	It does not need to be taught because at this age they learn while playing, know numbers, adapt, but children ask to be taught to read, write, and count, and parents supervise
3	What are the advantages and disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education?	As a parent, support children to go to school, but sometimes they do not force their children to go to school.
4	Do you support your child to go to school?	Supporting, we as parents do not want to curb the age of children and often invite children to be diligent in going to school
5	What is the difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood Education and directly enter Elementary School?	Children who enter Early Childhood Education have developed knowledge, good children's mentality, confident children, and young trained. Children who enter elementary school are slow to develop, have difficulty getting along, and the language is lacking.
6	Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of play?	I 100% agree that the concept is to play in an Early Childhood Education institution, because it can fit in, know a lot of vocabulary, and express freely according to the development and growth of the child
7	Are you involved in Early Childhood Education?	Get involved if you get information from teachers, support children, often ask questions to children and teachers.

Table 2. Interview Results of SVMU (High School Education)

Number	Question	Answer
1	Are early childhood children required to enter Early Childhood Education?	Early childhood children are required to attend school in Early Childhood Education institutions, where early childhood education is a place to learn and play for children to process in improving their development to prepare for entering elementary school
2	Are early childhood taught to read, write, and count?	Depending on the readiness of the child, not forced to learn to read, write, and count, as parents must have creativity to introduce children to letters and numbers to children through play, so that

		children do not have difficulty entering elementary school
3	What are the advantages and disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education?	Children's development can increase, young people adapt to peers, and learn together with peers in the school environment
4	Do you support your child to go to school?	It is supported because the early age level has a lot of understanding and regulations at school so that children can easily interact and adapt both in the school and family environments.
5	What is the difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood Education and directly enter Elementary School?	Of course, it is different because children who follow the Early Childhood Education level have a good understanding or attitude. Meanwhile, children who do not enter Early Childhood Education when entering elementary school will have difficulty learning in further education.
6	Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of play?	I don't agree because I don't want teachers to teach children to read, write, and count, so that children don't just play and sing at school.
7	Are you involved in Early Childhood Education?	Yes, I am involved because early childhood education is very important for children so that they can learn and develop the potentials that children have.

Table 3. Results of the Interview with Mrs. MIB (Junior High School Education)

Number	Question	Answer
1	Are early childhood children required to enter Early Childhood Education?	Children are very obliged to enter Early Childhood Education, before entering elementary school children must be guided in Early Childhood Education. So when entering elementary school, children already have provisions or knowledge that has been obtained in Early Childhood Education.
2	Are early childhood taught to read, write, and count?	In my opinion, children must be taught to read, write, and count, the reason is that when children want to enter elementary school, they can already read, write, and count.
3	What are the advantages and disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education?	Children can learn well, many experiences are taught by teachers at school. So when my child will enter elementary school, my child already has a lot of provisions
4	Do you support your child to go to school?	I really support my child going to school every day, because my goal as a parent is for my child to learn well in school.
5	What is the difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood Education and directly enter Elementary School?	If a child enters an Early Childhood Education institution, of course, there will be a lot of knowledge or experience that he can get at school, so when he enters elementary school, the child already has a lot of knowledge. Meanwhile, if a child enters an Early Childhood Education institution, of course the child will have a lot of knowledge or experience that he can get at school, so when he enters elementary school, the child already has a lot of knowledge.
6	Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of play?	I agree that it is important for teachers in Early Childhood Education schools to teach my children

		to learn.
7	Are you involved in Early Childhood Education?	I as a parent am very involved in educating my children at home. because my child spends more time at home than at school, so when my child is at home I will give him a lesson even if it is not up to an hour.

Table 4. Interview results of Mrs. MB (Elementary School Education)

Number	Question	Answer
1	Are early childhood children required to enter Early Childhood Education?	Early childhood is required to enter an Early Childhood Education institution in order to get to know friends, adapt, interact with peers, play together, and learn together
2	Are early childhood taught to read, write, and count?	Children are not allowed or forced to read, write, and count, they should only be taught how to hold a pencil correctly.
3	What are the advantages and disadvantages of forcing children into Early Childhood Education?	I as a parent am happy because my child can enter an Early Childhood Education institution, I feel a loss if my child does not enter school from an early age.
4	Do you support your child to go to school?	I as a parent are very supportive of my children going to school every day and I as a parent have to take my children to school, because that's my obligation as a parent.
5	What is the difference in the development of children who go through Early Childhood Education and directly enter Elementary School?	Children who enter Early Childhood Education institutions will have no difficulty entering elementary school because they already know how to use a pen and pencil correctly even though they cannot read. Meanwhile, children who do not enter Early Childhood Education institutions will find it difficult to enter elementary school, it is difficult to communicate, adapt, and play with friends.
6	Is learning in Early Childhood Education institutions the concept of play?	I agree if that's the rule at school
7	Are you involved in Early Childhood Education?	Yes, I am very involved in educating my child because apart from school, my child studies at home, I am also a parent, and his parents must teach him to learn.

The results of this study show that parents make a very good contribution to early childhood education. Parents give almost the same answer, both those with undergraduate education, high school, junior high school, and elementary school require their children to enter early childhood education institutions so that children are better prepared to enter the elementary school level. This means that there are no problems related to the level of parental education towards Early Childhood Education Institutions in Sumba. The presence of Early Childhood Education institutions can provide experience, initial knowledge, children are adaptable, and young people are accompanied when studying at home. Children get to know their peers, teachers, and are better prepared to enter elementary school. This means that parental involvement can have a beneficial impact on the development of children aged 0-6 years, but there are also parents who think that Early Childhood Education institutions do not have any impact. Parents are very supportive of the presence of Early Childhood Education institutions (Sari, Suystmin, and Nugraha, 2022), parents support sending their children to Zahrawanny and Fitria Early Childhood Education institutions, 2019).

This study makes a good contribution to early childhood development after analyzing parents' perceptions of parental involvement that greatly supports children's development. parental involvement, including family involvement at school, and at home to see the child's development (Nanch E. Hill, 2022), the involvement of

successful parents in Early Childhood Education institutions have children who are prosperous and more successful in child growth and development (Jenna K. Barnes, Autumn Guin, Kim Allen, Christina Jolly, 2016). Parents who are involved in play can improve the experience of exploring the school and home environment (Truong, M. V., Nakabayashi. M., Hosaka. T., 2022), the role of technology-based media has a very negative impact on children, but parents are ready to accompany their children well so that children can control this (Vaiopoulou, J., et.al., 2021), parents have an important role in the development of their children's attitudes and behaviors (Imran, A. and Khanom, N., and Rahman, A., 2023). Early age is a golden age that does not repeat itself during a child's development. This step must be used to provide the best education and care in the school, family and community environment (Hariawan, Rudi; Ulfatin, Nurul; A. Y., Muhammad Huda; Arifin, Imron, 2019). This means that the three components are really take good care of their babies. Parenting mothers and fathers must nurture children with warmth, thus reducing emotional hostility, good parenting can shape a child's future development (Bili, 2022), (Kate E. Williams & Donna Berthelsen, 2017), parenting factors that do not share knowledge are very risky to children's development (Khatun, Most, Monira, 2020), parental involvement has various benefits for schools and children's outcomes (Shaida, Ali Nazar, 2021).

IV. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to ascertain parents' views regarding the existence of early childhood education institutions in Sumba, because many parents think that early childhood education institutions do not have an impact on the development and growth of children. The view of parents that children only go to school to play and sing, so children cannot read, write, and count. However, at the time of this study, almost all parents required their children to enter school at an early age to obtain provisions when continuing to higher education. The researchers investigated parental perceptions in a variety of ways, but each view showed that parental perceptions had a positive impact on early childhood education. Every parent involved in education contributes greatly to early childhood development. This means that sending children to school in Early Childhood Education institutions is very helpful to adapt, gain experience, get to know numbers and letters, easily interact, get along with peers, and have skills. In general, parents' perception of early childhood education has a very good impact if all parents have higher education, then children will be successful and prosperous in the future. However, the implication is that parental perception greatly affects the level of parental trust in existing Early Childhood Education institutions and the level of child development and growth is increasing. Our findings contribute to parental involvement in Early Childhood Education institutions, thus having an impact on children's development in adapting, interacting, skilled, and sociable. Further studies can provide new knowledge about parents' perceptions of early childhood education, not only parents but also teachers as objects to develop early childhood development for success in the future.

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