

## Operational Assistance Policy in Improving The Quality of Early Childhood Education

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dimotivasi oleh anggaran besar untuk operasi PAUD tidak teralokasikan dengan baik. Pada kenyataannya layanan untuk pendidikan anak usia dini relatif rendah, tingkat pendaftaran rendah di tingkat PAUD, dan kurangnya personel pendidikan PAUD yang memenuhi standar kompetensi guru dan masih banyak guru paud yang berasal dari kader desa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi kebijakan bantuan operasional untuk implementasi pendidikan anak usia dini dalam meningkatkan kualitas PAUD. Pendekatan penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah pengamatan, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam persiapan anggaran untuk BOP yang dilakukan di sekolah itu melibatkan seluruh komunitas sekolah, yaitu kepala sekolah, guru, dan koordinator kelas yang mewakili orang tua anak -anak. Kegiatan evaluasi dalam program BOP PAUD dilakukan secara rutin dan dijadwalkan untuk kegiatan di sekolah. Hambatan dalam persiapan BOP adalah penurunan jumlah anak -anak sehingga berdampak pada penurunan BOP reguler yang diperoleh, ini mempengaruhi penurunan anggaran yang telah dialokasikan untuk beberapa elemen pembelajaran. Solusi untuk mengatasi hambatan dalam perumusan kebijakan BOP PAUD adalah mencari sumber dana lain untuk menutupi kurangnya BOP, yaitu dana dari yayasan, dan memilah sumber dana untuk berbagai biaya sekolah.

**Kata kunci:** Bantuan Operasional Pendidikan (BOP), Mutu, PAUD.

### Abstract

This research is motivated by a large budget for PAUD operations, but in fact the service for early childhood education is relatively low, the gross enrollment rate is low at the PAUD level, and the lack of PAUD education personnel who meet teacher competency standards, there are still many PAUD teachers who come from village cadres. This study aims to analyse implementation of operational assistance policy for the implementation of early childhood education in improving quality of PAUD. This research approach is a qualitative research with case study method. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that in the preparation of the budget for the BOP carried out at the school it involves the entire school community, namely the principal, teachers, and class coordinators representing the children's parents. Evaluation activities in the PAUD BOP program are carried out routinely and scheduled for activities in schools. The obstacle in the preparation of the BOP is the decrease in the number of children so that it has an impact on the decrease in the regular BOP obtained, this affects the decrease in the budget that has been allocated for several elements of learning. The solution to overcome obstacles in the formulation of BOP PAUD policies is to seek other sources of funds to cover the lack of BOP, namely funds from the Foundation, and sort out the sources of funds for various school expenses.

**Keywords:** Education Operational Assistance (BOP), Quality, PAUD

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The best foundation for optimizing the development of an individual in the future lies at an early age. Stimulants and education given at an early age can help develop a child's ability to receive education at a higher level. Early childhood education is very important in developing various developments and intelligence of children, so this period is called the golden age (Safitri & Ratulangi, 2018; Salsabila, 2021). Optimizing the development of the golden age is the goal of early childhood education (PAUD). PAUD is defined as a coaching effort for children from birth to the age of six years (Latif, 2020; Mulyaniasih, 2014; Rozalena & Kristiawan, 2017). This guidance is provided through stimulation in the

educational path to help children grow and develop, with the aim of being ready to enter further education levels. Children who have attended PAUD are expected to have sufficient readiness to enter the next level. Given the importance of the existence of PAUD institutions, the implementation of PAUD is currently increasingly in demand (Arifudin, 2021; Farhurohman, 2017). The existence of PAUD is still has many shortcomings in its management. The problems contained in the management of the PAUD program include several aspects, such as service coverage, program implementation, learning processes, and evaluation (Ariyanti, 2016; Rozalena & Kristiawan, 2017). In addition to problems in the implementation of learning, there are also problems in the development of PAUD, such as budget problems. This is reinforced by previous results which suggests that early childhood education that is only known to the public is Kindergarten, while playgroups are less popular and child care canters are very less popular in the eyes of the public (Suryani, 2007). The community and also accompanied by the lack of physical institutional procurement, as well as other forms of PAUD. This is due to the lack of a budget that is owned.

The small income of PAUD institutions obtained from student fees cannot meet operational needs, resulting in low service quality. In addition, the funds obtained from dues are not able to provide welfare guarantees for teachers. Constraints on the cost of managing PAUD are experienced by most PAUDs established by the community with a small number of students (Hewi & Shaleh, 2020; Tomo, 2008). The solution related to this has been provided by the government through a special allocation for education of 20% of the government budget. According to previous study argues that the Operational Policy for the Implementation of Early Childhood Education (BOP-PAUD) is one form of legislation policy with a very broad scope (Khairiyah, 2018). So that the policy can be realized so that a transformation is needed in the form of a more detailed regulatory product and can be implemented in the form of a plan and implementation of the Operational Assistance for the Implementation of Early Childhood Education (BOP-PAUD) as a form of policy in the education sector (Lalupanda, 2019; Murdiyaningrum, 2020; Sianturi et al., 2017). PAUD BOP can be used and utilized for various purposes related to the implementation of learning activities, such as: subsidies to help reduce registration fees for underprivileged students, the cost of buying reading books, educational game tools, and other needs related to learning (Muryadi, 2021; Novita & Djamaluddin, 2022; Sinambela et al., 2019).

The root of the problem in this PAUD phenomenon is a large budget is provided for PAUD operations, in reality the service for early childhood education is relatively low, this is evident from the fact that there are still many early childhood children who have not received proper education as they should (Baidowi, 2020; Ufunan & De Romario, 2022). This can be seen from the low Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) at the PAUD level. Gross Enrollment Rate or GER is a calculation of the ratio between the number of students at a certain level of education with the population of the appropriate school age group and is expressed as a percentage (Eriani & Yolanda, 2022; Rochmawati et al., 2022). The results of this GER calculation are used to determine the number of children who attend a certain level of education in a certain area. On the one hand, the government has provided financial assistance for PAUD operations with the hope that the community can access education services more easily, but on the other hand the gross PAUD participation rate is still low, meaning that there are still many PAUD-age children who have not been served their educational needs (Al-Shanawani, 2019; Dunne et al., 2011; Lehan Mackin et al., 2016). The low PAUD participation rate is caused by the low community participation in early childhood education. Base on observation there are many parents who do not send their children to PAUD institutions for various reasons. Factors that influence this, including parents' misunderstanding of the importance of education as early as possible, economic problems that make parents not want to send them to PAUD. Moreover, during this pandemic the

number of PAUD students decreased sharply. Parents consider PAUD learning during this pandemic to be ineffective, so they do not send their children to PAUD level (Harahap, S. et al., 2021; Solekhah, 2020). However, with low quality early childhood education, it will greatly affect the development of students.

The standards of teachers and education personnel have serious problems. There is still a lack of PAUD education personnel who meet teacher competency standards. There are still many PAUD teachers who do not meet the educational qualifications as a teacher (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015; Mami & Arayesh, 2010). To become a teacher at PAUD is not arbitrary, but there are special qualifications so that later the results obtained in the learning process can be maximized and create good graduates. Standards of facilities and infrastructure are equipment in the implementation and management of early childhood education, care and protection activities. Facilities and infrastructure play a direct role in the learning process and serve to facilitate and facilitate the learning process (Bokings et al., 2013; Kusumawati, 2015). The lack of classrooms, the condition of damaged classrooms, and the lack of educational game tools are common problems experienced by many PAUD institutions.

In line with previous study related to operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education (BOP PAUD) in improving the quality of education. Previous study conducted research to analysis of the implementation of policies for providing educational operational assistance funds (BOP) in improving the quality of primary school education (Husain, 2015). The results of this study illustrate that the implementation of the policy of providing BOP (Educational Operational Assistance) funds in improving the quality of elementary school education in Lambay District, North Kolaka Regency has been implemented but relatively not succeeded optimally. It is reinforced by other study that state the factors that hinder the implementation of the policy of providing Education Operational Assistance (BOP) funds in improving the quality of elementary school education from the planning side have not been planned optimally and the reporting system is not carried out openly (Khairiyah, 2018). The above problems are problems that are often encountered in the field. Problems in order to improve the quality of services can be used as a benchmark for the progress of an institution that organizes PAUD. The amount of budget that is routinely given to PAUD education units does not have a big impact on improving the quality of PAUD. This study aims to analyse implementation of operational assistance policy for the implementation of early childhood education in improving quality of PAUD in West Bandung Regency.

## **2. METHODS**

The reasons for choosing research locations in three kindergartens, namely Darul Fikri Kindergarten, Lutfiyyah Kindergarten, and Bina Insan Mandiri Kindergarten in West Bandung Regency. Departing from various assumptions and seeing these phenomena, the researcher will try to get the answer by conducting a comprehensive research in implementation of operational assistance policy for the implementation of early childhood education in improving quality of PAUD in West Bandung Regency.

This study attempts to analyze and describe the implementation of the Operational Assistance Policy for the Implementation of Early Childhood Education (BOP PAUD) in Improving the Quality of PAUD in West Bandung Regency. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Bahri, 2021). This is done by transcribing the data, then coding on the notes in the field and interpreting the data to obtain conclusions. The type of research used in this research is a case study. Case study is empirical research that investigates a symptom in a real-life setting. The

results of this study were collected with primary data and secondary data. Determination of appropriate data collection techniques will determine the scientific truth of a study. Data collection techniques used in this study are, 1.) observation is part of the direct research process on the phenomena to be studied (Hanafiah, 2021). 2.) interviews conducted using predetermined guidelines, the questions are structured strictly and the questions are the same for each subject (Sugiyono, 2015). 3.) Documentation, as a one of the data collection techniques through existing written documents or records (Arifudin, 2022; Tanjung et al., 2022).

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**

#### ***The formulation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

In preparing the budget for the BOP carried out at the school, the entire school community is involved, namely the principal, teachers, and class coordinators representing the children's parents. This is done by sending an invitation letter every time there is an agenda related to the budget preparation meeting for the BOP held at the school. This activity is routinely carried out and scheduled. The budget for each operation has been determined in a meeting related to budget preparation involving the entire school community. In particular, learning activities are fully funded by the Regular BOP and Performance BOP. So that in managing learning operationally assisted by 2 (two) BOPs in order to provide maximum learning services for all children. By maximizing every existing BOP, it can produce improvement efforts in every education implementation. This is expected to provide optimal learning to students.

In determining the BOP PAUD policy on supporting activities, it has been formulated based on a meeting involving all the school community, including foundations. All activities are financed with a budget that has been determined in detail according to the ability and needs. All activities that support learning are carried out with budgetary sources from the BOP, both regular BOP and performance. In determining the BOP PAUD related to all school administration, it has been regulated and formulated based on a consensus decision. This is related to various expenses that must be determined according to the needs and abilities of the school. In addition to supporting learning activities, BOP PAUD is also used to upgrade teacher skills through various trainings, workshops, and also IHT organized by schools and other agencies. The main focus is on improving the IT skills of teachers, so the school brings in an IT trainer once a week to teach teachers about IT. By prioritizing budget expenditures used for various activities, this is very good, especially in improving teacher performance by participating in various training activities. So that it is expected to improve the learning process for the better.

#### ***Implementation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

The policy for organizing BOP PAUD is prepared by the Principal and formulated together with the teachers. In determining the formulation of policies, many people are involved in the framework of formulating policies that are right on target and efficient. In the PAUD BOP has been determined related to the pattern of organization in order to produce a clear organizational process for each field. In the implementation of regular BOP, it is fully used to run learning programs and support school programs such as the stage be creative program, this program is a collaborative program with parents to support creativity and interest in children's talents. Meanwhile, the performance BOP is fully utilized for upgrading

the ability of teachers. The perceived purpose of this BOP is to assist schools in carrying out their operations, both learning operations and administration for the smooth running of learning activities. So that the BOP PAUD program can be right on target in providing assistance to all parties in achieving the quality of early childhood education.

The BOP PAUD policy in schools becomes the school authority and is determined by the Principal. This is done by the government in providing school operational assistance, which can be used for the benefit of the school both in providing various needs for the learning process. However, this must also be improved on the various needs of students, so that students are left behind in internet access. In determining the BOP PAUD policy, the entire school community is involved. This is done to accommodate various inputs from all parties in the school and parents of students. The implementation of BOP involves all parties, such as the Principal, Teachers, Parents, and also the Foundation. The determination process is carried out in a scheduled meeting and annually holds a meeting related to the PAUD BOP Policy. School budget preparation is carried out by the principal and teachers through a working meeting at the beginning of the fiscal year by formulating learning needs for one year and also involving parents' representatives because there are learning programs that also involve parents. This has been routinely done by schools in the implementation of BOP PAUD. With the decision-making mechanism involving many parties, this will provide many inputs in various improvements to PAUD. So, it is hoped that this will have an impact on improving PAUD services and producing quality PAUD.

#### ***Evaluation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education Early Childhood Education***

Evaluation activities in the PAUD BOP program are carried out through annual evaluations for 8 standards, including cost standards which are then reported to the Education Office and also to the Foundation. This evaluation is carried out on a regular and scheduled basis on activities at the school. In the implementation of the BOP PAUD evaluation, the implementation evaluation activities in learning activities are carried out based on children's learning outcomes by paying attention to the progress of children's development to find out whether the learning activities carried out are effective or not. This is very good in seeing the extent of the success of the learning process. The development of students must be an important pillar in formulating future policies in order to produce quality early childhood education. In the follow-up to the evaluation of the PAUD BOP on the use of the budget, it is evaluated based on the report on the use of the budget to determine the absorption of the budget and the suitability of spending. This is done regularly and scheduled by the School. So that with various evaluations carried out, it produces various references for improvements to any existing problems or obstacles. It is hoped that in the future the results of this evaluation will have an impact on improving PAUD learning services.

#### ***Inhibiting factors encountered in the operational assistance policy for the implementation of early childhood education***

In the preparation of BOP PAUD policies, there are various obstacles that exist. The obstacle in the preparation of the BOP is the decrease in the number of children so that it has an impact on the decrease in the regular BOP obtained, this affects the decrease in the budget that has been allocated for several elements of learning. In achieving the quality of BOP PAUD implementation, there are various obstacles. In particular, in the implementation of BOP PAUD, sometimes there are some unexpected expenses that must be accommodated by BOP. This is not stated in the regular expenses at the school. In the obstacle to the evaluation of the BOP PAUD policy, there are unexpected expenses that must be paid by the BOP but cannot be included in the SPJ. On the obstacle in achieving school quality, namely by

decreasing the number of Regular BOPs, it will affect the effectiveness of several elements that are not facilitated which can affect service quality and school quality. So based on this, it must be compiled comprehensively related to various expenses needed by the school. It is hoped that with properly budgeted expenditures it will result in the effectiveness and efficiency of BOP in order to improve the quality of early childhood education.

### ***Solutions to problems with operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

The solution to overcome obstacles in the preparation of BOP PAUD policies is related to seeking other sources of funds to cover the lack of BOP, namely funds from the Foundation, and sorting out sources of funds for various school expenses, such as funds for internet installation taken from the regular BOP while paying for the internet every month taken from the performance BOP, and the teacher's honorarium is allocated to the Foundation's fund. In overcoming obstacles to the implementation of BOP PAUD, there is a solution to overcome obstacles in formulating BOP PAUD policies that are related to budgeting for unexpected costs. This is done in a preventive effort related to budget availability and needs. In overcoming obstacles when evaluating the BOP PAUD policy, namely that BOP reporting is adjusted to technical guidelines, if there is something that cannot be reported, a transfer of payments is made that can be included in the SPJ report. In overcoming obstacles to achieving school quality, schools can seek budgetary support from the Foundation to meet needs that cannot be accommodated by BOP, both regular and performance. With the school being able to produce a budget in mandarin, the school will get a lot of budgets in improving the school comprehensively. Improving the quality of education must be carried out comprehensively, as an important step in improving the quality of early childhood education.

## **Discussion**

### ***The formulation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

In the formulation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education (BOP PAUD) in improving the quality of early childhood education, the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, fairness and accountability are used. In preparing the budget for the BOP carried out at the school, the entire school community is involved, namely the principal, teachers, and class coordinators representing the children's parents. This is done by sending an invitation letter every time there is an agenda related to the budget preparation meeting for the BOP which is carried out at the school on a regular and scheduled basis. This is as stated by previous study which defines that policy is 'what the government chooses to do or not to do (Dunn., 2001). In the definition expressed, it can be understood that the government is the holder of control over the sustainability of a country, which has an attitude in practice if that attitude is taken or not taken. It is a result of a policy carried out by the government, including in education policies, one of which is operational assistance for implementation.

Regarding the budget for each operation, it has been determined in a meeting related to budget preparation involving the entire school community. In particular, learning activities are fully funded by the Regular BOP and Performance BOP. So that in managing learning operationally assisted by 2 (two) BOPs in order to provide maximum learning services for all students. This is in line Permendikbud Number 13 of 2020 that state by previous study, operational assistance for implementation or BOP is a program of providing money from the Ministry of Education to assist and support PAUD institutions in carrying out the educational

process which is given once a year (Husain, 2015). The BOP was issued to help provide funding for the operational costs of PAUD learning.

### ***Implementation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

The policy for organizing BOP PAUD is prepared by the principal and formulated together with the teachers. In determining the formulation of policies, many people are involved in the framework of formulating policies that are right on target and efficient. In the PAUD BOP has been determined related to the pattern of organization in order to produce a clear organizational process for each field. In the implementation of regular BOP, it is fully used to run learning programs and support school programs such as the stage of creative program, this program is a collaborative program with parents to support creativity and interest in children's talents. Meanwhile, the performance BOP is fully utilized for upgrading the ability of teachers. The perceived purpose of this BOP is to assist schools in carrying out their operations, both learning operations and administration for the smooth running of learning activities. This is in line with the Technical Guidelines for BOP PAUD which is regulated in Permendikbud Number 9 of 2021 that BOP PAUD funds are used for activities, operations which include three components, namely: 1) Implementation of learning and playing activities, which is financing for the provision of learning materials and educational game tools. ; 2) Implementation of supporting activities for learning and playing, is financing to support learning and playing for students, as well as learning activities by educators; and 3) Fulfillment of the administration of the education unit which is the financing needed by the education unit in providing education services (Husain, 2015).

The BOP PAUD policy in schools becomes the school authority and is determined by the Principal. This is done by the government in providing school operational assistance, which can be used for the benefit of the school both in providing various needs for the learning process. However, this must also be improved on the various needs of students, so that students are left behind in internet access. In determining the BOP PAUD policy, the entire school community is involved. This is done to accommodate various inputs from all parties in the school and parents of students. The implementation of BOP involves all parties, such as the Principal, Teachers, Parents of Students, and also the Foundation (Khairiyah, 2018; Sianturi et al., 2017). The determination process is carried out in a scheduled meeting and annually holds a meeting related to the PAUD BOP Policy. School budget preparation is carried out by the principal and teachers through a working meeting at the beginning of the fiscal year by formulating learning needs for one year and also involving parents' representatives because there are learning programs that also involve parents.

### ***Evaluation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education Early Childhood Education***

Evaluation activities in the BOP PAUD program are carried out through annual evaluations for 8 standards, including cost standards which are then reported to the Education Office and also to the Foundation. This evaluation is carried out on a regular and scheduled basis on activities at the school. In the implementation of the BOP PAUD evaluation, the implementation evaluation activities in learning activities are carried out based on student learning outcomes by paying attention to the progress of student development to find out whether the learning activities carried out are effective or not. This is in line with previous study that state early childhood education is an effort to foster children from birth to the age of six by providing appropriate educational stimuli for the process of growth and development in children's lives (Madyawati., 2016). The success of the educational process at an early age becomes the basis for the next educational process. This is in line with statement

from other study that state a quality school is characterized The feasibility of the program and/or educational unit refers to the SNP (Arifudin, 2019). The SNP is the minimum criteria regarding the education system in all jurisdictions of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, the SNP should be used as a reference in order to fully map the school's quality profile. Based on the various evaluations carried out, it produces various references for improvements to any existing problems or obstacles. It is hoped that in the future the results of this evaluation will have an impact on improving PAUD learning services.

### ***Inhibiting factors encountered in the operational assistance policy for the implementation of early childhood education***

In the preparation of BOP PAUD policies, there are various obstacles that exist. The obstacle in the preparation of the BOP is the decrease in the number of students so that it has an impact on the decrease in the regular BOP obtained, this affects the decrease in the budget that has been allocated for several learning elements. This is in line with the previous study that state the government issued a policy for the PAUD BOP program to meet the financing of PAUD institutions for the community (Sianturi et al., 2017). In the process, the distribution of the BOP PAUD budget is carried out through regional transfers from the central government to the district government then handed over to each institution through transfers to school accounts. Through this mechanism, the distribution of BOP funds to institutions runs smoothly. Based on this, there are changes in the technical instructions for receiving BOP during this pandemic, one of which is related to the minimum number of students owned by the education unit to get BOP assistance. In the pre-pandemic period, the minimum number of students was 12 people, but during this pandemic the number of students has decreased significantly.

### ***Solutions to problems with operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education***

The solution to overcome obstacles in the preparation of BOP PAUD policies is related to seeking other sources of funds to cover the lack of BOP. The first one is by funds from the Foundation, and sorting out sources of funds for various school expenses, such as funds for internet installation taken from the regular BOP while paying for the internet every month taken from the performance BOP, and for the teacher's honorarium allocated to the Foundation's funds. This is in line with previous study state that in overcoming obstacles to the implementation of BOP PAUD, there are solutions to overcome obstacles in formulating BOP PAUD policies that are related to budgeting for unexpected costs (Khairiyah, 2018). This is done in a preventive effort related to budget availability and needs. In overcoming obstacles when evaluating the PAUD BOP policy, BOP reporting is adjusted to technical guidelines. If there is something that cannot be reported, a transfer of payments is made that can be included in the SPJ report. In overcoming obstacles to achieving school quality, schools can seek budgetary support from the Foundation to meet needs that cannot be accommodated from BOP, both regular and performance.

The implications of this study are providing overview related to Based on the various policies above, it can be concluded that after the BOP Funds are spent in accordance with the RKAS that has previously been formulated and ratified. Then the School must make a Recapitulation and Realization of the Use of BOP Funds in accordance with the applicable Technical Guidelines, and compile it into an accountability report which is then reported to the Education Office. The same goes for receiving BOP funds in the next stage. Of course, the amount of funds received by schools is not always the same every quarter, the amount is adjusted to the state of the number of students who tend to experience changes. The change in



the number of students could be because there are students who have transferred or the number of graduate students with the number of new students entering is not balanced.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the operational assistance policy in improving the quality of PAUD has been carried out by preparing a budget for the BOP carried out at the school involving the entire school community, namely the principal, teachers, and class coordinators representing the parents of students. The BOP PAUD policy in schools becomes the school authority and is determined by the Principal. Evaluation activities in the PAUD BOP program are carried out through annual evaluations for 8 standards, including cost standards which are then reported to the Education Office and also to the Foundation. However, despite all its limitations, the implementation of operational assistance policies for the implementation of early childhood education (BOP PAUD) in improving the quality of PAUD has been carried out based on the stages of policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.

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