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Parents' Perceptions Regarding The Implementation of Child-Friendly School Policy in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract: Parents' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of Child-Friendly School Policy in Early Childhood Education. Objectives: This study aims to describe the perceptions of parents towards the implementation of child-friendly school policy in units of early childhood education institutions at kindergarten (TK). **Method:** This study used a qualitative-descriptive approach with 47 participants who have been selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using Milles and Huberman's analysis. **Findings:** Parents' perceptions related to the implementation of child-friendly schools that have been applied in kindergarten Aisyiyah and TK Negeri Pembina tend to be positive in terms of the five concepts of child-friendly schools. **Conclusions:** Positive parent perceptions are very important to drive the success rate of implementing child-friendly school policies.

Keywords: parents, child-friendly school policy, early childhood education.

***Abstrak: Persepsi Orang Tua Mengenai Implementasi Kebijakan Sekolah Ramah Anak pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana persepsi orang tua terhadap penyelenggaraan kebijakan sekolah ramah anak pada satuan lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini di jenjang Taman Kanak-kanak (TK). **Metode**: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Kualitatif jenis deskriptif dengan 47 orang partisipan yang telah diseleksi menggunakan Teknik sampling purposif. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis Miles and Huberman. **Temuan:** Persepsi orang tua terkait dengan implementasi sekolah ramah anak yang telah diterapkan di TK Aisyiyah dan TK Negeri Pembina cenderung positif dilihat dari lima konsep sekolah ramah anak. **Kesimpulan:** Persepsi orang tua yang positif sangat penting untuk mendorong tingkat keberhasilan penerapan kebijakan sekolah ramah anak.*

***Kata kunci:** orang tua, kebijakan sekolah ramah anak, pendidikan anak usia dini.*

■ **INTRODUCTION**

Child-friendly school policies in the last few years have been increasingly prevalent and widespread in Indonesian schools. Not only senior high schools, junior high schools, elementary schools, or even pre-school levels are adopting child-friendly school policies (KemenPPPA, 2019). The number of schools that have adopted these policies through the KemenPPPA report is increasing every year; even, every months. The enthusiasm of educational institutions in Indonesia that adopted child-friendly school policies was carried out to support UNICEF's International policies. Furthermore, UNICEF's policy on Child-Friendly School was ratified through the Minister of Woman Empowerment and Child Protecting in the division of child development deputy as an effort to fulfill children's rights at school. However, beyond that, there are still many cases of violence against children (Modipane & Themane, 2014; Orkodashvili, 2010).

KPAI (Indonesian Children's Services Commission) noted an increase in cases of violence in education in 2018 (Abdi, 2018). In the cases received by KPAI, the cases of violence with victims and perpetrators of childhood age still dominate. The details of the cases are explained by Retno Listyarti (KPAI Commissioner in Education) in which there are 3 cases of physical violence, 8 cases of child psychological abuse, 3 cases of sexual violence, 1 case of student brawl, 5 cases of policy victims, and the other 1 case of exploitation (Abdi, 2019).

Based on these increased cases, the existence of child-friendly schools certainly becomes a big hope that cases of violence, harassment, and discrimination against children can be overcome (Orkodashvili, 2010). Collaboration between schools, parents and the community is very important to support the success of child-friendly school policies (KemenPPPA, 2014). Aside from being the closest element to a child, parental involvement in children's education in formal and nonformal education institutions is also needed for children (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Hornby, 2011; Houtenville & Conway, 2008; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Siregar, 2013; Tekin, 2011). Not only participation, but parental perception is also an important element to support the successful implementation of child-friendly school policies(Cross & Barnes, 2014).

Perception is defined as a series of processes in acceptance, selection, organization, and giving meaning to the stimuli received (Siregar, 2013). Based on Keraf's perception theory, the process of perception can be published as follows: The initial step of receiving stimuli, in this process individuals receive stimuli from various sources. The second process is Election after the stimulus is received it is chosen so that attention arises. The initial process is organizing, stimuli received and then arranged in another form. The fourth process is interpretation after the stimulus or data is received, and the recipient then establishes the data in various ways. After the data is felt, it can be seen that there has been a perception (Keraf, 2007). Parental involvement is defined as parents' participation in the educational process and experience of their children(Hornby, 2011). Parental involvement can be realized by helping complete homework, communicating with teachers, meeting parents at school, and helping in activities organized by the school(Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). The form of the parents' decisions is in line with the school's policies and programs because parents are an important element in implementing child-friendly school programs.

Child-Friendly School is a distinctive approach, as it goes beyond academic achievement to include all dimensions of a rights-

based approach to education, promoting dialogue and debate about matters of value as well as about learning outcomes in academic content (Clair, Miske, & Patel, 2012). Schools are categorized as child-friendly (SRA) if they have friendliness elements such as safe, clean and healthy, caring and cultured environment, able to guarantee, fulfill and respect for children's rights and protect children from violence, and helping others, and supporting children's participation in planning, policy, learning, supervision, and mechanism of complaints related to the fulfillment of children's rights and protection in education (Çobanoglu, Ayvaz-Tuncel, & Ordu, 2018).

The conceptual framework includes five important to transform the schools into child-friendly ones (Clair et al., 2012; Çobanoglu et al., 2018; Orkodashvili, 2010). The first principle named as inclusiveness, seeking out and enabling participation of all children and especially those who are different ethnically, culturally, socioeconomically and in terms of ability; The second principle is effective academically and relevant to children's needs for life and livelihood knowledge and skills; The third principle is healthy, safe and protective for children and their emotional, psychological and physical well-being; The fourth principle is gender-responsive in creating environments and capacities fostering equality; and The last principle is interactively engaged with student, family, and community, enabling their participation in all aspects of school policy, management, and support to children's learning (Bernard, 2000).

Situbondo Regency, East Java has 4 Kindergartens in this regency who have predicated as child-friendly schools. In this study, kindergartens in Besuki Sub-district were selected as research targets. There are 2 kindergartens with a child-friendly predicate in Besuki sub-district. Those are TK Negeri Pembina and TK Aisyiyah. When we conducted a pre-study at the local education department, the PAUD supervisor of Besuki sub-district gave a statement that so far there has been no evaluation from the local education department regarding the implementation of child-friendly school policies that have been carried out in kindergartens. whereas evaluation is important to provide assessment and improvement.

Based on the results of previous research studies, it is necessary to look at the implementation of child-friendly school policies based on the perception of parents in early childhood education institutions. Because early childhood education is also the foundation of educational institutions that is very important to oversee together as a child-friendly school organizer. Therefore, in this study, the authors emphasize the five conceptual aspects of child-friendly school policies based on parents' perceptions. This is done in order to get a general view of parents related to positive or negative perceptions of schools in implementing child-friendly school policies. This is very important, considering those of kindergartens are pilot others kindergartens. It is expected to be able to provide improvements and improvements to become a reference for other TK institutions in order to get positive perceptions from parents. This study needed to considering the importance of children's schools to help realize the national Indonesian Child-friendly program (Indonesia Eligible Children) IDOLA 2030 (KemenPPPA, 2019).

■ METHODS

This research is presented with a descriptive-qualitative approach that aims to describe and understand parents' perceptions about the implementation of child-friendly school policies in kindergarten. This research type illustrates more situations in the field (McMillan

& Schumacher, 2001). This research was conducted for 4 months in October 2019 until January 2020. The study was conducted in Aisyiyah Kindergarten and Pembina State Kindergarten, Besuki Sub-district, Situbondo Regency, East Java. The research location was chosen because the kindergarten is a pilot kindergarten throughout Situbondo Regency, and has implemented a child-friendly school policy.

The data of this study refers to the data source of certain social situations because it is more appropriate for a qualitative approach (Komariah & Satori, 2014). The informants were chosen in a focused manner based on the knowledge of qualified informants for in-depth studies, as well as the selection criteria for data sources chosen by purposive sampling (Sukmadinata, 2008). As in this study, the primary data source is the guardian of students in TK Aisyiyah and TK Negeri Pembina, Besuki Sub-Distric, Situbondo Regency, Indonesia. Meanwhile, the additional participants for the purposes of data triangulation are kindergarten teachers and kindergarten chief.

In this study, participants were selected using a three-stage stratified purposive sampling. In the first stage, age restrictions were selected based on their age between 20 and 40 years old. Second, it was selected based on high school education minimum qualifications for parents and bachelor degree minimum qualifications for teacher and head of kindergarten. Last, all of the selected participants were asked for their availability to be part of the study participants (respondents). After being selected, 47 people (consisting of 2 principals, 20 teachers, and 25 parents) stated their availability to be respondents. It is done in order to they can have sufficient knowledge to provide information logically for the quality of research.

Based on the data source selection criteria, the type of data in this study take from interviews, observations, and documentation studies to obtain in-depth information (Creswell, 2018). A qualitative research approach makes humans as a research instrument (Sugiyono, 2010). Therefore, the instruments were prepared based on the purpose of the research data type in the form of semi-structured interview guidelines, Observations, documentation studies, and questionnaires. Those were given to parents elaborated through the blueprint of the research (not attached in this paper). The interview technique with a semi-structured type in this study was conducted to answer research questions by conducting a question or answer process conducted by the researcher and research respondents. The interview in this study was limited as an interaction in the form of a conversation that focused on the goal of gathering information and answering research questions. Then, the observations were conducted in the form of direct and indirect observations.

The final step in this research method is to analyze the data using Miles and Huberman's data analysis, which divided 3 components in qualitative analysis, namely: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, was used in this study. The description of the data analysis process of Miles and Huberman model in this study is illustrated in Figure 1 as follows:
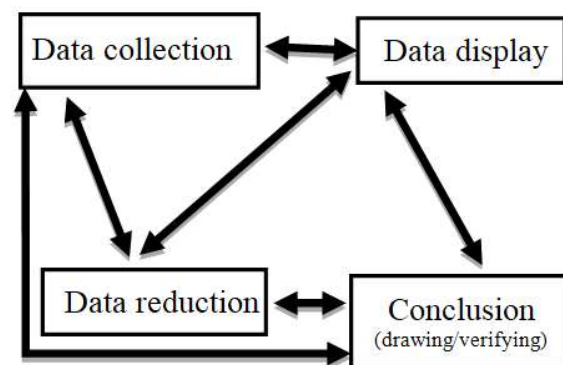

Figure 1. Interactive data analysis model (Creswell, 2015; Sugiyono, 2010).

■ **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The current implementation of the child-friendly school policies in TK Negeri Pembina and TK Aisyiyah was started with an official call from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia through the Regent and the Regency PPPA Service. This revealed that the two kindergarten institutions outperformed all kindergartens in Besuki Sub-district were submitted as candidates for the Child-Friendly School Award in 2019. Realizing this, the two kindergarten institutions took all elements of the school including the community or the committee which includes parents, the community and other people who support the implementation of child-friendly school policies.

Based on the results of interviews with parents, the child-friendly school program in each early childhood education institution has been carried out due to the instructions from the local government to support the Child-Friendly City/Regency (KLA) program because the child-friendly school policy (SRA) is one indicator from the success of the KLA. Therefore, both TK Negeri Pembina and TK Aisyiyah are appointed to make adjustments to the child-friendly school policies in each early childhood education institution with the aim of fulfilling children's rights so that children enjoy being in school.

The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of parents about the implementation of friendly school policies seen from 5 aspects of the successful implementation of child-friendly school policies. The following will be explained and analyzed one by one related to the perception of parents in each concept:

Inclusiveness

According to student guardians at TK Negeri Pembina (SR and DT), there is no special assessment for children before entering TK Negeri Pembina. This means that TK Negeri Pembina has implemented inclusive education for all, as well as TK Aisyiyah, but what makes it lacking in the view of the guardians is the absence of special services if there are children who have special needs. This is justified by the head of the kindergarten (IA) and also the teacher (HT) because the number of teachers is very limited. The teacher is only able to guide the children as he treats other children.

Parents are of the perception that in TK Aisyiyah and TK Pembina are kindergartens that are in the spotlight, so students who register at TK are the chosen ones. However, more opinions from the results of the interviews revealed that in the two kindergartens the selection system was not used in the admission of new students. that means, the TK has applied the concept of inclusiveness.

Effectiveness

Some parents build the perception that children can go to kindergarten if they graduate with reading and arithmetic. But generally, parents also perceive that successful learning is learning that can make children happy while playing. That is, children are not forced to do something as required to read, write, and count, because the three forced activities will make children easily bored in learning.

Most of the parents in TK Negeri Pembina and in TK Aisyiyah, when asked about teachers who are trained to be child-friendly, said that they did not know. All they knew was that teachers had educated the children friendlily. They interpreted educating friendlily as not doing violence while teaching, able to draw children's interests in learning, educating and caring for children at school. However, there is some acknowledgment from the guardians of students in the TK Aisyiyah that there is still one teacher who has not applied friendliness. He revealed that there are still teachers who use methods to scold children at school when they do not follow the

teacher's orders. Regarding this matter, this is not a problem for the other guardians because they still considered that this was a disciplining step for a teacher to studentsas said by one of the guardians in the TK Aisyiyah:

Researcher: *Are there teachers who use inappropriate words or actions for children?*

Student guardian (DT): *Most teachers act and say friendly things to children, but there is one teacher who is rather harsh in educating them. But for me, it was not a problem because my child also felt enjoyed and at the beginning, it was a request to be taught by the teacher because my child really needs to be affirmed and reminded, mom.*

Researcher: *What are the inappropriate actions or words usually spoken by the teacher?*

Student guardian (DT): *Yes, it's usually just an expression. I never committed physical violence. I tend to dictate children to do all the tasks quickly and thoroughly. But generally, all teachers are good at educating children, also friendly to parents. What makes me happy when coming to school is always warmly welcomed by the board of teachers and the kindergarten head.*

A Safe, Healthy, & Protective Environment

Parents (KU, MN, and SW) at TK Negeri Pembinagenerally assume that outdoor playing equipment at TK Negeri Pembinadoes not accommodate a large number of students. In terms of safety, however, parents consider that it is safe enough for children because it is rare for parents to get a report about a child's accident while playing. Therefore, parents consider the existing game equipment in TK Negeri Pembina to have met safety standards. Regarding the condition of the building in the classroom in TK Negeri Pembina, parents consider it very suitable to be used. It is safe and comfortable for children with a variety of wall decorations and hangers. However, guardians of students regrettedaccess to TK Negeri Pembina. The location is too narrow so that if the guardian who uses a car enters a small road to TK Negeri Pembina, it is slightly obstructed by other vehicles passing by.

The teacher (LH) and the head of the TK Negeri Pembina (IA) revealed that such road conditions were intended to provide secure vehicle access for students because it does not pass through a large road where large and high-speed vehicles pass. Meanwhile, according to reports from guardians of students in TK Aisyiyah (LI), out-door playing equipment in TK Aisyiyah has been very numerous and varied. Children can freely play the game without the need to queue for long. In addition, the shady environmental conditions due to shade by trees around the playground make the child's play atmosphere more refreshing. The head of the TK Aisyiyah (SN)said that planting trees in the schoolyard aims to restore enthusiasm and refresh the child's brain after doing activities in the room (classroom).

The teacher (RZ) also revealed that this condition makes the child not bored to carry out further activities in the classroom. Parents also mentioned that there are child shoe lockers in front of each class so that children's shoes do not fall apart. Cleanliness at the TK Aisyiyahis also good, seen by the availability of trash bins in every corner of the class and in the yard. Parents become comfortable and are not worried about children's hygiene at school.

Parents (GT, RY) at TK Negeri Pembina revealed that TK Aisyiyahhas clean bathrooms, but it was still not suitable for children. The location of the water tank is too high, making it difficult for children to reach water during toilet training

activities. On the other hand, parents (FS) at TK Aisyiyah mentioned their experience that TK Negeri Pembina has a newly renovated and attractive toilet for children. The toilet walls are decorated with funny pictures that make children not afraid to do toilet training activities themselves without the help of the teacher. The cleanliness is also maintained so that the bathroom floor is not slippery and the childrenare safe.

TK Negeri Pembina and TK Aisyiyahshare the common thing that they do not have a healthy canteen. Students are accustomed to bringing their own food from home so that they do not need to buy food at school or in the schoolyard. Regarding the health of children in school, parents are not worried about their children because, in TK Negeri Pembina and TK Aisyiyah, drugs for first aid in child accidents are available. Teachers (SU) and school principals (SN and AI) also revealed that in order to anticipate children consuming unhealthy food, children are encouraged to bring their own lunch from homeevery day.In addition, a healthy canteen is not made because at school children are not taken care of. Thus, to make buying and selling transactions is very worrying. Even, when at school,children are not allowed to bring money except for saving activities and special tasks from the teacher.

Democratic Participation

Some parents (RS, ST, HN, and FT) in TK Negeri Pembinaand in TK Aisyiyah revealed that when children are in school, they are given the freedom to choose what games the child wants. In addition, because the learning model that is used is group-based, children are also given freedom by the teacher to do what activities they want to do first. Teachers (MD) and school principals (IA and SN) arrange such learning models to give freedom to children in doing their class assignments as they wish.

Parents assume that the school has often involved them in planning and even special activities of children in kindergarten. At the end of each child's activity, parents are always invited to a meeting to discuss the program together with the teacher. The role of parents is felt to be very necessary to help establish closeness with children. Parents feel valued because they can participate directly and it is programmed. This makes it interesting when parents from TK Aisyiyah reveal that they have a special group of guardians of students as a team of parents who function as coordinators of parents. Parents are very appreciative of the school program that involves them in the community because that way they can get along more with other parents and can participate actively and be involved in the success of school programs. Teachers and principals are also proud of the custody of student guardians.

Gender-Responsive

Parents (ST) revealed that in every activity in TK Negeri Pembina boys and girls do the same activity. there is no special treatment or activity that classifies a gender group. For example during cooking class activities, boys and girls without exception all join in the cooking. as well as washing dishes. When at home, perhaps the general dishwashing activity is carried out by women. But at school, all children are taught this skill. boys and girls learn dishwashing skills after cooking class activities.

Meanwhile, (PS) parents in TK Aisyiyah perceive that both boys and girls have the same opportunity to lead marching and prayer reading activities. In certain activities such as worship, men who act like priests, while women as the congregation. The Head of the TK Aisyiyah (SN) and TK Neger Pembina (IA) also said that the curriculum in the TK Aisyiyah and TK Negeri Pembina also did not emphasize men in the public

sector and women in the domestic sector. Looking at what the parents' perceptions about gender are, it can be seen that both TK Aisyiyah has fulfilled the gender-responsive requirements.

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be seen that the child-friendly school policies have been implemented well in the early childhood education institution units. Parents have a very strong role to foster the existence of schools (Đurišiæ & Bunijevac, 2017). As seen from 5 components of child-friendly schools, generally, parents consider this policy to be very positively applied in all early childhood education institutions (Abera, Robbins, & Tesfaye, 2015; Gorard, See, & Davies, 2012; Houtenville & Conway, 2008; Nevelsteen, Steenberghen, Van Rompaey, & Uyttersprot, 2012; Prevention et al., 2012; Shute, Hansen, Underwood, & Razzouk, 2011).

It has more benefits for children and soothe parents who send their children to the kindergarten that is child-friendly,and parents also have a significant role in participating in activities at school. Only a few parents have not been fully involved in school activities due to busyness so that they are replaced by the role of the grandmother or grandfather or sister of the students. Parents' perceptions related to the implementation of child-friendly schools that have been applied in kindergarten Aisyiyah and TK Negeri Pembina tend to be positive in terms of the five concepts of child-friendly schools.

■ CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion that can be drawn from the results of previous studies and discussions, underlines that parents have a positive perception of the implementation of child-friendly school policies. Parents consider that child-friendly kindergarten will be a special attraction for parents who will send their children to school. This is because schools that have Child-Friendly School standards have a higher level of trust in 5 aspects of child-friendliness. The parents also

think that to realize the child-friendly school policy in kindergarten requires hard work and good cooperation from various parties such as the kindergarten head, teachers, children, and parents or the community. Therefore the role of the head of the kindergarten as leaders and managers in schools must be qualified in implementing the policy.

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