

# Innovative Model of Tiered Early Childhood Education (ECE) Training: A Case Study of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office

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## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the implementation of tiered training programs for early childhood education (PAUD) teachers and their effectiveness in enhancing professional competence. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study provides an in-depth analysis of how such training influences teachers' academic qualifications, particularly in the domains of knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional attitudes. The findings reveal that the tiered training approach significantly contributes to the development of teachers' capacities by addressing their practical needs in the classroom. Teachers reported substantial benefits, including improved understanding of child development, the ability to design innovative lesson plans (RPP), and the application of effective and contextualized learning strategies. Furthermore, the incorporation of innovative training methods such as case studies, simulations, and the integration of digital technologies ensures that the training remains both relevant and applicable to contemporary educational contexts. Overall, the study concludes that the innovation embedded in the tiered training program has been systematically and strategically designed, resulting in measurable improvements in teachers' performance and professional growth. These outcomes underscore the critical role of structured capacity-building initiatives in advancing the quality of early childhood education.

**Keywords:** Tiered Training Program, Professional Competence, Teacher Performance.

## I. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is the main foundation in the development of superior human resources. At this stage, children experience age golden age, which determines intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth and development. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, PAUD is a form of education that is held before the basic education level, aimed at helping the physical and spiritual growth and development of children to be ready to enter further education. This education is a long-term investment in shaping the character of the nation's children (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Along with increasing public awareness of the importance of education from an early age, the number of PAUD institutions in Indonesia has experienced a significant increase. West Sumbawa Regency, as one of the developing regions in West Nusa Tenggara Province, has also experienced a similar trend. Data from the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office (2021) shows an increase in the number of

PAUD institutions from year to year. However, this increase in quantity has not been comparable to the quality of existing education, especially in terms of the competence of educators.

The main problem faced is the uneven quality of PAUD educators in various sub-districts. There are still PAUD teachers who do not have an appropriate educational background or have not followed training that is relevant to the development of science and early childhood pedagogy. This condition causes inequality in the quality of educational services received by children in remote areas compared to those in the district center. The competence of educators has a great influence on the quality of the process and learning outcomes of children. PAUD teachers not only act as facilitators, but also as mentors and motivators who must be able to create a pleasant learning atmosphere, educate, and be in accordance with the needs of children's development. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of PAUD teachers is a must. In this context, the existence of a tiered training or training program becomes very strategic. PAUD tiered training is a multilevel training program that is tailored to the level of teacher competency, ranging from basic, advanced to professional. This program aims to improve the pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competence of PAUD teachers sustainably. One of the advantages of this program is a field needs-based training approach that reflects the real problems faced by teachers in teaching practices.

The implementation of PAUD tiered training in West Sumbawa Regency is part of the strategic policy of the Education and Culture Office in improving the quality of human resources in the PAUD sector. Through this training, teachers are expected to be able to understand the development of children as a whole, prepare innovative learning plans, and be able to conduct sustainable learning evaluations. In addition, this training was also designed to be able to build a professional network between PAUD educators. But in its implementation, the tiered training program is inseparable from challenges. Limited budget, lack of availability of competent facilitators, as well as the affordability of the training location are the main obstacles. In some remote sub-districts in West Sumbawa Regency, access to formal training is still classified as difficult, so special strategies are needed to ensure the continuity of this training program. In addition, teacher participation in training is also influenced by internal factors such as personal motivation, self-confidence, and support from the manager of PAUD institutions. Studies conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2022) show that PAUD teachers who have high motivation and feel supported by their institutions are more active in training and able to apply the material received. However, there are still many teachers who feel that the available training is not yet fully relevant to their practical needs in the classroom, both in terms of teaching strategies, utilization of educational game tools, and local culture-based learning approaches. Some of them also have difficulty in implementing training materials because of limited facilities and social contexts that are different from the examples given during the training (Kurniasih & Sumantri, 2021). Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of the design and implementation of training is very necessary so that its usefulness can be felt optimally by all participants.

This study aims to examine in depth the implementation of the PAUD tiered training program in West Sumbawa Regency, by examining aspects of planning, implementation, obstacles encountered, and their impact on increasing the competence of PAUD educators. The main focus of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the training program in the local context and the extent to which the program is able to address the real needs in the field. The results of this study are expected not only to be an evaluation material for relevant agencies, but can also contribute to the development of educational policies in the regions, especially in the early childhood education sector, which currently receives national attention. The main purpose of this study is to find out the extent of the effectiveness of the tiered training program in improving the competence of PAUD educators, as well as how this training can be adjusted to the local needs of the people of West Sumbawa. This research is expected to provide recommendations to local governments and training organizers to design programs that are more contextual, applicable, and based on local potential. This is important considering that PAUD education is not only a basis for the formation of children's character, but also part of the development of long-term human resources. The Merdeka Learning Program and the Smart Indonesia Program, for example, have underlined the importance of strengthening early education as part of the national strategy to build superior Indonesian human resources (Kemendikbudristek, 2020).

The quality of PAUD education also has a close relationship with the regional development agenda. Children who get quality education services from an early age tend to have better literacy and numeracy capabilities and are more likely to complete education at a higher level (UnicefIndonesia, 2021). Thus, the increase in PAUD teacher competence can be seen as a strategic investment that will have a broad impact,

not only in the aspect of education, but also in the social and economic dimensions of the community in the future. The success of PAUD education will contribute to reducing social inequality, increasing educational participation, and ultimately helping to break the chain of poverty between generations. Furthermore, from the perspective of education ecolinguistics, PAUD teachers have an important role in local cultural inheritance, including regional languages and the values of local wisdom. In West Sumbawa Regency, which is rich in local culture and traditions, well-trained PAUD teachers can become agents of cultural preservation through learning activities that include elements of locality. According to Nurhadi (2021), local culture-based learning can increase student involvement, strengthen their identity, and enrich the vocabulary of children in two languages, namely Indonesian and regional languages. Therefore, the training given to PAUD teachers needs to contain local content so that the learning process not only touches the cognitive aspects but also strengthens the cultural identity of students.

Based on this background, this research becomes very relevant. Qualified PAUD teachers also play an important role in preserving local culture and values of local wisdom for children. In West Sumbawa, where cultural and regional language wealth is very high, competent teachers can integrate cultural values in the learning process, so that children are not uprooted from their local identity. Based on this background, this research becomes very relevant. Evaluation of the implementation of PAUD tiered training will not only provide an overview of the success or failure of the program, but also become a basis for formulating new policies that are more effective and oriented towards field needs. This research is also expected to make a scientific contribution to the development of literature on PAUD teacher training in the regions, which has been minimal. Most studies on PAUD are still centered in large urban areas, while the reality of education in areas such as West Sumbawa is often neglected. In fact, it is precisely in areas like this, policy intervention is needed.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Innovation is a concept that is often associated with changes and progress in various fields of life, such as education, technology, the economy, and management. In general, innovation can be understood as a process of introducing new things that are better and useful compared to the previous conditions (Rogers, 2003). According to Schumpeter (1934), innovation is the main driver of economic change and is an important element in the entrepreneurial process. He categorizes innovation into five forms, namely: new products, new production processes, new sources of raw materials, new markets, and new organizational structures. In the context of the organization, innovation includes the application of ideas, processes, products, or procedures that are significantly new for the units that adopt them (Damanpour, 1991). Innovation in the organization does not only involve technical aspects, but also managerial and structural aspects. Meanwhile, according to OECD and Eurostat (2018), innovation can be divided into four main types: product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, and organizational innovation. This division is used in the Oslo manual to measure innovation activities in companies and institutions. From a psychological perspective, innovation is often associated with creativity. Creativity is considered a mental process to produce new ideas, while innovation is the realization of these ideas in practice (Amabile, 1996). In the world of education, innovation refers to curriculum development, learning methods, learning media, to learning evaluations that are more effective and relevant to the times (Fullan, 2007). This is important so that education remains adaptive to the needs of the community.

In the field of technology, innovation is characterized by the discovery and application of new technology that facilitates human life. For example, the development of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT) has changed many aspects of the industry and daily life (Christensen, 1997). Innovation also has an important role in increasing the competitiveness of a country. Countries that are able to produce and implement innovations consistently tend to have faster and more stable economic growth (Porter, 1990). Adoption of innovation is an important part of the success of the innovation itself. Rogers (2003), in the theory of diffusion of innovation, explains that innovation will be accepted if it is communicated through the process of communication between individuals in a social system. Factors that influence the success of innovation

include organizational culture, leadership support, resource allocation, and stakeholder involvement (Tidd & Bessant, 2014). In the public sector, innovation is required to improve the quality of services to the community. Public sector innovation often focuses on efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness to public needs (Mulgan, 2007).

Social innovation is a type of innovation that aims to meet social needs and create sustainable solutions for community problems. This type of innovation is usually carried out by the community, NGOs, and philanthropy institutions (Murray, Caulier-Grinson, & Mulgan, 2010). In the business environment, innovation is an important factor in creating added value and maintaining competitive advantage. Companies that innovate will be better able to survive in a dynamic and competitive market (Barney, 1991). Not all innovations are disruptive. Christensen (1997) distinguishes between disruptive innovation and innovative innovation. Disruptive innovation changes the market structure radically, while gradual innovation is an increase in existing products or processes. In the field of management, innovation is often associated with changes in strategy, business models, and human resource management to create long-term competitive advantages (Hamel & Prahad, 1994). The innovation process consists of several stages, ranging from the creation of ideas, idea selection, product development and processes, to commercialization. Each stage requires a different approach and involvement of various parties (Trott, 2017). Innovation can grow in an environment that supports experiments, tolerance to failure, and cross-field collaboration. This environment encouraged the emergence of innovative new ideas (Brown & Wyatt, 2010).

The government has a strategic role in creating innovation ecosystems through policies, regulations, fiscal incentives, and support for research and development (R&D). This role is very important to bridge the academic, business, and community sectors (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). In the global context, innovation is the main indicator of a nation's competitiveness. The Global Innovation Index (GII) compiled by WIPO (2023) provides a comprehensive picture of the performance of a country's innovation based on innovation input and output. Thus, innovation is not only about the creation of new technology, but also about ways of thinking, processes, and policies that support transformation in various aspects of life. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of innovation is very important for the progress of a nation and the quality of people's lives. The term implementation comes from the English implementation, which means implementation or application. In the context of policies and programs, implementation is the process of translating plans, ideas, or policies into concrete actions (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). According to Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), implementation is an action or a series of actions taken to achieve policy goals. In this view, implementation is not just an administrative activity, but a complex and dynamic process. In public policy theory, implementation is a crucial stage because the success of a policy is very dependent on how the policy is implemented (Grindle, 1980). Ineffective implementation can cause failure even though the planning is mature.

Implementation does not only depend on policy documents, but also on human resources, leadership, organizational structure, and responses from individuals and target groups (Mazmanian & Sabater, 1983). According to Edwards III (1980), the success of implementation is influenced by four main factors, namely communication, resources, dispositions or implementing attitudes, and bureaucratic structures. These four factors must be managed holistically so that implementation runs effectively. In the context of education, implementation refers to the process of applying the curriculum, learning methods, and educational policies into practice in the classroom. This requires active involvement from teachers, school principals, and other stakeholders (Fullan, 2007). Guba and Yvonne Lincoln (1981) stated that implementation often experienced obstacles due to differences in perceptions between policy designers and implementers in the field. Therefore, clear communication is needed. In the Indonesian context, the implementation of public policy often faces structural and cultural challenges, such as complex bureaucracy, lack of resources, and resistance from implementers (Winarno, 2012). A policy or program can be declared successfully implemented if the goals set in the planning stage can be achieved optimally and have a real impact on the target group (Nugroho, 2017). Implementation is not linear, but adaptive. That is, in its implementation, implementation can experience adjustments to the conditions and dynamics that occur in the field (Elmore, 1980). One approach in the

implementation study is the top-down approach, which sees implementation as a process from top to bottom. In this approach, success is very dependent on the clarity of instructions and the strength of the central authority (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984).

Conversely, the bottom-up approach emphasizes the importance of the role of the implementing field in determining the success of implementation. Implementers are considered to have contextual knowledge that is more relevant to the conditions of the target community (Lipsky, 1980). The integrative model was then developed to combine the top-down and bottom-up approaches by suggesting that the success of implementation depends on the interaction between the central and local actors (Matland, 1995). Effective implementation is characterized by careful planning, adequate allocation of resources, active participation of the implementing actor, and sustainable monitoring (Brynard, 2005). Evaluation of implementation is very important to find out whether the implementation of a policy is in accordance with planning. This evaluation also provides a basis for improvement in the next stage (Patton, 2008). Implementation in the education system requires training support for teachers, the availability of teaching materials, adequate infrastructure, and coordination between interests. Without it, educational policies such as the free curriculum are difficult to realize optimally (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Therefore, understanding the concepts and dynamics of implementation is important in policy studies, especially in the field of education. Implementation is not only about running plans, but a complex process that requires coordination, understanding of context, and adaptive ability.

Training, or education and training, is a process designed to improve the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of participants in a particular field. In the context of PAUD, training plays an important role in preparing educators to face the challenges of education that continues to develop. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Training is an integral part of the development of human resources in the field of education. In the implementation of PAUD training, there are several models that can be applied. Competency-based training models, for example, have been proven effective in improving the practical skills of educators. A study by Yulianti (2021) showed that training participants who followed this model experienced a significant increase in teaching skills and classroom management. Data shows that 80% of participants feel more confident in carrying out their duties after following the training. However, although training has great potential to improve the quality of education, there are still many challenges that must be faced. According to research by Prasetyo (2020), the lack of support from the leadership of educational institutions is one of the factors that hinders the effectiveness of training. Without a commitment from superiors, training participants often feel less motivated to apply the knowledge gained in daily practice. In addition, the quality of training material is also a major concern. Research by Setiawan (2022) shows that material that is not relevant to the needs of the field can result in a low level of understanding of the participants. Therefore, it is important for training organizers to evaluate and renew the material regularly to remain in accordance with the latest developments in the world of education.

Tiered Training is a training system designed to provide gradual development of skills and knowledge to educators. According to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 28 of 2020, tiered training aims to increase the competence of educators regularly and sustainably. In the context of PAUD, tiered training is very important to ensure that educators have a deep understanding of children's development and effective teaching methods. One of the advantages of tiered training is its ability to adjust training materials to the level of experience and needs of participants. A study by Fitriani (2021) showed that participants who participated in the tiered training felt better prepared to teach after completing each training level. Data shows that 85% of participants felt an increase in their teaching skills after participating in this program. However, the implementation of tiered training is also inseparable from challenges. Research by Kurniawan (2020) revealed that the lack of coordination between the training institutions and the Education Office often results in unintegrated programs. This can cause overlapping material and confusion among participants. Therefore, it is important to create synergy between various parties involved in the implementation of training.

The success of tiered training is also very dependent on the quality of the instructor. According to research by Lestari (2022), an experienced instructor and having a good educational background can have a positive impact on the results of training. Conversely, less qualified instructors can reduce the effectiveness of the program and make participants feel less satisfied. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is an important foundation in the national education system. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, PAUD is an education aimed at children aged 0-6 years, which aims to develop children's potential optimally. In West Sumbawa Regency, the existence of PAUD is very strategic, given the many early childhood children who need to get quality education. Data from the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office shows that in 2022, there were around 5,000 children registered in various PAUD institutions, but only 60% of those who received education in accordance with established standards (West Sumbawa Education and Culture Office, 2022).

The implementation of the PAUD tiered training program in West Sumbawa Regency is expected to improve the quality of educators in this field. Through structured training, it is hoped that educators can understand and implement a curriculum that suits the needs of children. For example, in training held in March 2023, participants were trained about game-based learning methods that were proven effective in increasing children's involvement (Iskandar, 2023). This skill is very important, considering that children at an early age learn in a fun and interactive way. However, the challenges faced in the implementation of PAUD tiered training are the lack of adequate facilities and resources. According to a survey conducted in 2022, only 40% of PAUD institutions in West Sumbawa Regency have adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the learning process (BPS West Sumbawa, 2022). This affects the effectiveness of the training given because, without the support of adequate facilities, the application of knowledge gained by educators becomes hampered. In addition, there needs to be a synergy between local governments and the community in supporting the PAUD program. Community participation in establishing and managing PAUD institutions can help improve access to education for children. For example, in Labuan Aji Village, the local community succeeded in establishing two PAUD institutions with the support of funds from the government and local initiatives, which showed that this collaboration could increase the number of children who received quality early education (Sari, 2023).

The Field of Development of PAUD Educators in West Sumbawa Regency is a crucial aspect in an effort to improve the quality of education. This coaching includes various activities, ranging from training to supervision, that aim to improve the competence and professionalism of educators. According to data collected by the Department of Education and Culture, there are around 300 active PAUD educators, but only 25% of them have participated in tiered training (West Sumbawa Education and Culture Office, 2022). This shows the need for more attention in the development of educators to ensure that they have adequate skills. One of the coaching programs implemented is competency-based training that lasts for three months. This program is designed to provide practical knowledge and skills needed in teaching early childhood. From the evaluation carried out after the program, 80% of participants reported an increase in their teaching skills, especially in the use of innovative learning methods (Kurniawan, 2023). This shows that systematic and planned guidance can have a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

However, the challenges in this field of coaching remain. One of them is the lack of a budget allocated for training programs. Based on reports from the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the budget for PAUD educators' training only reached 15% of the total education budget in West Sumbawa Regency (West Sumbawa Bappeda, 2022). This has an impact on the frequency and quality of training that can be given, thus hampering efforts to improve the competence of educators. In addition, the importance of collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the community cannot be ignored. The coaching program involving all stakeholders can create strong synergy in improving the quality of PAUD education. For example, cooperation between local governments and local universities in organizing training programs can improve the quality of the material provided and expand the network for educators (Rahman, 2023).

The framework of thinking in the implementation of PAUD tiered training in West Sumbawa Regency focuses on the relationship between education, fostering educators, and the quality of early childhood education. In this context, quality education does not only depend on the curriculum applied, but also on the competence of educators who implement it. According to research conducted by Supriyadi (2023), there is a positive correlation between the competence of educators and children's learning outcomes in early childhood education. This study shows that the increase in the competence of educators through training has a direct impact on child development. Within this frame of thought, PAUD tiered training is one of the main strategies applied to improve the competence of educators. Through tiered training, educators are expected to understand various important aspects in early childhood education, ranging from curriculum development to effective teaching techniques. Data from the Education Office shows that educators who have participated in tiered training showed a significant increase in the application of learning methods in accordance with the characteristics of children (the Department of Education and Culture of West Sumbawa, 2022).

In addition, this frame of thinking also considers external factors that influence the implementation of PAUD tiered training. For example, support from local governments in the form of budgets and policies that support this program is very important. According to an analysis from the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), the success of educational programs is influenced greatly by the commitment and support of the government at all levels (Bappenas, 2022). Therefore, cooperation between the government, educational institutions, and the community is the key to creating an environment that supports the development of PAUD. Furthermore, this frame of thought also includes evaluation and monitoring as part of the implementation process. Routine evaluation will help identify strengths and weaknesses in the PAUD tiered training program. Thus, improvements can be made continuously to improve the quality of education. According to research by Hartono (2023), a systematic evaluation can provide constructive feedback for educators in improving their teaching practices. Therefore, researchers assume that two hypotheses can be developed in this study as follows:

*H1: Innovative implementation of tiered training for ECE positively influences the competency improvement of ECE educators in West Sumbawa Regency.*

*H2: The support of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office moderates the relationship between innovative tiered training for ECE and the competency improvement of ECE educators.*

### III. Research Method

The research design used in this study is descriptive qualitative. This approach was chosen to dig deeper into the experiences and views of informants related to the implementation of PAUD tiered training. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative design allows researchers to understand the context and meaning of the phenomenon under study. In this study, researchers used purposive sampling techniques to choose informants who were considered to have relevant knowledge and experience. It is intended that the data obtained can provide a more comprehensive picture of the existing situation. This study also involved direct observation of the ongoing PAUD training, as well as analysis of documents related to training policies and programs.

The research design also considers aspects of data triangulation, namely, collecting data from various sources to increase the validity of the research results. Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of educational policies in West Sumbawa Regency. Primary data is obtained directly from informants through interviews and observations, while secondary data is taken from official documents, reports, and previous research that are relevant to the research topic. According to Sugiyono (2017), the use of these two types of data can enrich the information obtained and provide a more holistic picture of the phenomenon under study.

Primary data sources in this study include PAUD educators, PAUD Institution Managers, and Officials of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office. The informants were chosen because they had

direct experience in the implementation of PAUD tiered training. Secondary data is taken from the annual report of the Education and Culture Office, as well as policy documents relating to the development of PAUD in the area. Through a combination of primary and secondary data, this research is expected to provide an in-depth analysis of the challenges and successes in the implementation of PAUD tiered training. The data obtained will also be analyzed with a qualitative approach to find relevant patterns and themes.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Research Result

- a. Innovation of the implementation of PAUD tiered training in the field of development of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office.

Both teachers expressed positive views about the implementation of the Tiered Training (Diklat Berjenjang) for Early Childhood Education (PAUD). Teacher 1 found the training extremely helpful in gaining a comprehensive understanding of early childhood development, while Teacher 2 emphasized its importance in enhancing the competencies of PAUD teachers, especially in lesson planning and play-based methods. In terms of innovation, Teacher 1 noted a shift towards case studies and simulations, making the material easier to grasp. Meanwhile, Teacher 2 appreciated the digital-based training and online mentoring from instructors. The training materials were considered highly effective and relevant, particularly in promoting child-centered learning approaches. Both teachers agreed that the training had a strong positive impact on classroom teaching, allowing for immediate application of active learning strategies.

The support from the local Education Department was also seen as significant. Teacher 1 mentioned the provision of facilities, expert speakers, and post-training guidance, while Teacher 2 highlighted the flexible schedule, availability of modules, and regular evaluations. The training is not a one-time event but is conducted progressively through Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. Regarding challenges, Teacher 1 pointed to time management between teaching and training as a major issue, whereas Teacher 2 mentioned limited internet access affecting the online delivery of some modules. The training has significantly contributed to the professional development of both teachers, increasing their confidence and improving their understanding of the PAUD curriculum. It has also enhanced their ability to conduct developmental assessments. Both teachers hope for more frequent and contextually relevant training sessions in the future, with Teacher 2 specifically wishing for more in-depth sessions on digital literacy for PAUD educators. Collaboration among teachers during the training was reported to be strong, with frequent discussions and sharing of best practices. Teacher 2 added that they even formed study groups to help each other better understand the material. As for the most notable innovations, Teacher 1 emphasized the use of child-friendly learning media and technology integration, while Teacher 2 highlighted the contextual, practice-based approach as particularly impactful.

- b. The impact of the innovation of the implementation of PAUD tiered training in the field of development of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office.

The Tiered Training Program for education office staff serves the primary purpose of enhancing their competencies, knowledge, and skills so they can perform their duties more effectively and professionally. It also prepares them to adapt to future changes and challenges. The benefits include improved job performance, greater motivation, higher job satisfaction, and increased organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The selection process for participants typically follows several stages, including registration via platforms such as SIMPKB, verification of eligibility and documentation, official selection by the organizing body, and announcement of participants. Requirements for participation usually include qualifications in education, age, and employment status as an educator or education personnel. Trainings are offered at various levels—Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced—and may be conducted in face-to-face, online, or blended formats.

The training content covers a wide range of subjects relevant to early childhood education, including child development, learning approaches, curriculum planning and assessment, inclusive education, health and nutrition, teacher ethics, and communication in caregiving. These materials are delivered through theory sessions, practical activities, and independent assignments, with duration and content depth varying by level. At the Basic Level, the focus is on foundational concepts such as development, learning methods, planning, and character education. The Intermediate Level expands to curriculum development, classroom management, and teacher self-development. The Advanced Level offers deep exploration of research, program development, supervision, and educator competency enhancement. The training structure consists of 258 hours (JP), with 48 hours dedicated to online theoretical learning via a Learning Management System (LMS) and 210 hours allocated for independent tasks, including teaching, local study visits, and PAUD cluster activities, all carried out over 30 days. Following the training, participants undergo multiple stages of evaluation. These include pre-tests to assess baseline knowledge, post-tests after each module, and final assessments to measure overall progress and competence. Evaluations also consider participant satisfaction, the achievement of learning goals, material quality, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and participant engagement. Collaborative discussions and mentoring sessions (online and offline) are also evaluated to ensure effective support and communication throughout the training process.

The Basic Level Tiered Training for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers is a structured program designed to equip educators—especially those without formal PAUD backgrounds—with foundational knowledge and skills. The primary goal is to ensure that early childhood education aligns with children's developmental stages and emphasizes strong character building. This training includes several components such as objectives, target groups, content, independent tasks, and certification. Participation in this program is essential as it enhances teacher competence and qualifications, helps meet national education service standards, and contributes to improving the overall quality of PAUD institutions and regional education reports. Through tiered and structured training, teachers develop pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. These include a deep understanding of child development, creative and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies, effective classroom management, and strong communication with children and their communities. Motivated by the desire to improve their teaching quality, understanding of child development, and professional growth, teachers join this training to gain credentials, stay updated with educational trends, and build professional networks. Ultimately, after completing the training, PAUD teachers hope to become more insightful, skilled, and capable of delivering joyful and impactful learning experiences tailored to each child's growth phase. They also aim to better identify and support children with special needs, guide parents more effectively, and foster stronger collaboration among educators.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Innovation of the implementation of PAUD tiered training in the field of development of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office. The following is a discussion of the results of interviews with PAUD teachers in Table 1 related to the innovation of the implementation of PAUD tiered training in the field of development of the West Sumbawa Regency Education and Culture Office. The implementation of PAUD tiered training received positive appreciation from the two teachers interviewed. "Teacher 1 states that the training is very helpful in understanding the development of early childhood as a whole. This shows that the training has a direct impact on improving teacher insight and competence in the field of child development. "Teacher 2 reveals that this training is important, especially in improving the ability to compile lesson plans and effective play methods. This indicates that training is not only theoretical but also applicable in daily learning practices. The preparation of good and innovative lesson plans is the main foundation in the fun learning process".



**Figure 1. Interview with the two PAUD teachers**

Both responses indicate that this training program is thoughtfully designed to address the real needs of educators in the field. It not only delivers theoretical foundations of early childhood education but also provides practical guidance that is easy to implement. This means the training is genuinely focused on directly improving the quality of classroom instruction. Moreover, the program reflects a systematic effort by local governments to strengthen the capacity of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers through a structured, tiered approach. This tiered implementation allows teachers to gain a gradual and competency-aligned understanding, from the basic level to advanced stages. Overall, it can be concluded that the implementation of Tiered Training for PAUD is considered highly important and relevant by teachers. The training has significantly benefited them in terms of knowledge, technical skills, and confidence in managing early childhood learning.

Subsequent interview findings highlight that innovation in the training implementation has become a key factor directly appreciated by participating teachers. One teacher noted that the use of case studies and simulations made the training easier to grasp. This reflects that the adult learning approach (andragogy) is being effectively applied in the program. Another teacher emphasized the digital-based training and online mentoring as essential innovations. This approach is highly relevant in today's educational landscape, especially in the era of digitalization. Digital training also offers flexibility in terms of time and location, which is particularly beneficial for teachers who face challenges attending in-person sessions. The statements from both teachers suggest that these innovations represent a transformation toward a more modern and adaptive model of PAUD teacher training. With the integration of technology and practice-based approaches, the training becomes more engaging and has a direct impact on how teachers conduct their classes. The combination of conventional and digital methods, along with hands-on activities such as case studies and simulations, makes the learning process more contextual and applicable. These innovations not only enhance comprehension but also encourage active participant engagement. As a result, the innovations in training implementation have provided added value for the participants. This also demonstrates that the training organizers are making a concerted effort to tailor the content and methods to the current challenges and needs of PAUD teachers.

The interview regarding the training content revealed that it is highly effective in supporting classroom learning activities. Teacher 1 emphasized the relevance of the material, particularly regarding child-centered learning approaches, highlighting its importance since early childhood education must align with children's developmental stages and individual needs. Teacher 2 stated that the active learning strategies introduced during the training could be applied immediately in the classroom, showing that the materials provided are not merely theoretical but also offer practical solutions with direct benefits for day-to-day teaching. These two teachers' statements indicate that the curriculum design of the training program is based on the real needs of educators. When the training content aligns with actual classroom challenges and

dynamics, teachers feel more confident and guided in carrying out their instructional duties. Moreover, effective training contributes significantly to the quality of teacher-child interactions in the classroom. Teachers who understand children's learning approaches are better equipped to design joyful, meaningful activities that support children's holistic development. Thus, the effectiveness of the training materials is clearly felt, as they have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Targeted, practical, and experience-based content is key to the success of PAUD teacher training programs.

Based on the interview findings, the tiered training theory that can be related here is the theory of learning and the theory of competency development. These two theories emphasize active learning experiences, knowledge construction, and the development of skills and attitudes essential to professional work. The next interview also captured the respondents' positive assessments of the support provided by the Education Office. Teacher 1 highlighted the support in the form of facilities, expert speakers, and post-training mentoring, demonstrating that the Education Office is not only organizing training but also ensuring continuity and sustainability of teacher competencies. Teacher 2 added that the support also includes learning modules, flexible schedules, and regular evaluations. Flexible scheduling is especially important for PAUD teachers, who have daily classroom responsibilities. Regular evaluations ensure that the outcomes of the training can be monitored and improved over time.

The interview findings show that the presence of qualified trainers and well-designed modules that meet teachers' needs is vital to achieving training objectives. Post-training mentoring also reflects the Education Office's commitment to supporting the ongoing development of teachers' competencies. This support underscores the active role of the Education Office in enhancing the quality of early childhood education. Such commitment must be maintained to ensure that innovations in teacher training continue to grow and play a critical role in the success of these programs. With this kind of institutional support, teachers feel valued, motivated, and encouraged to keep learning and improving. Finally, the next interview findings highlight that continuous professional development is one of the key strengths of the PAUD Tiered Training Program. Teacher 1 explained that the training is conducted progressively, starting at the basic level and advancing to more complex stages, reflecting a clear structure and pathway for competency improvement. Teacher 2 confirmed that the training is indeed tiered and that teachers may proceed to the next level after completing the previous one. This model is highly effective for gradually and systematically building professional foundations.

In conclusion, one of the key innovations in implementation is the continuity of the training, which offers teachers the opportunity to reflect on and improve their practices over time. Teachers are also given time to apply what they have learned and receive feedback before progressing to the next stage. The sustained nature of the training program demonstrates the government's long-term commitment to developing human resources in early childhood education. This initiative is not just a ceremonial event but part of a broader professional career development system for PAUD teachers. Through this structured, tiered approach, it is expected that the quality of early childhood education will improve consistently.



**Figure 2. Interview with the Head of the KSB Education and Culture Office**

The primary objective of the Tiered Training (Diklat Berjenjang) is to enhance the competencies of education office personnel, particularly in understanding the policies, duties, and responsibilities associated with the early childhood education (PAUD) sector. These competencies encompass not only administrative and technical aspects but also pedagogical, managerial, and supervisory skills. As the education landscape continues to evolve, personnel are expected to remain adaptive and capable of quickly and accurately responding to policy updates. The benefits of this training include improved knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes among staff members. This directly contributes to enhanced job performance, increased motivation, and stronger public service quality within the education sector. Moreover, as individual capacities increase, the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the organization in executing educational programs are also strengthened. Furthermore, the training serves as a strategic measure to prepare personnel for future challenges, such as the digitalization of services, data-driven educational programming, and adaptation to the Merdeka Curriculum paradigm. The long-term goal is to develop high-quality human resources within the Department of Education and Culture.

a. Participant Selection Process for Tiered Training

The participant selection process for the Tiered Training is carried out through systematic and technology-based stages, such as the use of the SIMPKB platform. The process begins with registration by prospective participants who meet the basic eligibility criteria. Their application documents are then verified by the training organizers to ensure the validity and completeness of the required materials. Once verification is complete, organizers select eligible participants based on administrative and technical assessments, which may consider factors such as quota availability, regional distribution, employment status, and qualification levels. Participant announcements are typically made online via the platform or official communication channels of the Education Department and other relevant institutions. The selection process also considers the type of training (basic, intermediate, or advanced) and the mode of delivery—whether in-person, online, or a hybrid format. This demonstrates the program's adaptability to technological advances and participant needs, allowing for a more transparent and accountable selection process.

b. Duration and Schedule of Tiered Training

The duration of the Tiered Training varies depending on the level—basic, intermediate, or advanced. Each level is structured with specific learning materials and time allocations that correspond to the complexity of the content. The basic level focuses on foundational understanding of PAUD, including child development, learning concepts, and lesson planning. Each level is designed progressively, combining theoretical sessions, practical activities, and independent assignments. For example, the intermediate level delves into curriculum mastery, innovative teaching strategies, and classroom management. The advanced level emphasizes research, supervision, and PAUD program management. The training schedule is organized flexibly to accommodate participants' primary responsibilities. A blended learning approach is commonly used, combining online instruction for theoretical content with independent fieldwork for practical application. The schedule is tailored to participants' capacities to ensure that learning objectives are optimally achieved.

c. Expected Competencies for Participants

Personnel who complete the Tiered Training are expected to achieve comprehensive improvements in competencies, especially in professionalism, technical knowledge, and mastery of early childhood education methods. Through a structured curriculum, participants gain a solid understanding of PAUD educational philosophy, learner characteristics, and developmentally appropriate teaching approaches. The training also emphasizes the ability to design and implement contextual and participatory learning programs. Additionally, participants gain experience in classroom management, learning evaluation, and the preparation of reports in accordance with national standards. These capabilities are crucial for improving the quality of education services in PAUD settings. Equally important, trainees are expected to be able to collaborate within their work environments, expand professional networks, and take on roles as facilitators in

training or internal supervision activities. These competencies are essential for addressing the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and driving educational transformation at the regional level.

d. Evaluation of the Success of the Tiered Training Program

The evaluation of the Tiered Training Program is conducted comprehensively, covering all phases from the initial stage to post-training. At the beginning, participants take a pre-test to assess their baseline knowledge and skills. This serves as a benchmark to compare their learning outcomes upon completion of the program. In addition, formative assessments are conducted throughout the training, including post-material tests and observations of participant engagement. During the training, continuous assessments are carried out, focusing on participants' understanding of the material, ability to engage in discussions, involvement in collaborative activities, and the effectiveness of facilitator guidance. This approach aims to gauge the extent to which participants can apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. The final evaluation consists of a post-test, competency assessments, and participant satisfaction surveys. The results of these evaluations provide critical insights for organizers to measure the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement in future implementations. This comprehensive evaluation process highlights that the training program is not merely about delivering content, but also about achieving real, measurable impact in the field.

e. Basic Level Tiered Training for PAUD Teachers

The Basic Level Tiered Training for PAUD teachers is a formal training program designed to enhance the capacity of educators who do not have an academic background in early childhood education. The main goal of this training is to ensure that PAUD teachers are equipped to provide educational services aligned with the developmental characteristics and growth stages of young children. This is crucial, as early childhood represents a critical developmental period that requires appropriate teaching approaches. Technically, the program includes several key components, ranging from a systematic implementation process, clear target participants, measurable objectives, and contextualized content tailored to the world of early childhood. Teachers are also engaged in independent tasks as a form of reflection and reinforcement of the material learned. This strategy effectively deepens understanding and supports the transfer of knowledge into daily teaching practice. The training content goes beyond child development theory, encompassing practical aspects such as lesson planning, child-centered instructional strategies, and the strengthening of national values and professional ethics. Certification awarded at the end of the program serves as formal proof that the teacher has completed the training according to established standards. Through this approach, participating PAUD teachers are expected to become more confident and professional in their teaching delivery. The program also provides access to non-formal recognition for teachers who lack formal PAUD education, helping them gain competency certification through alternative pathways. Thus, the Basic Level Tiered Training serves as a strategic initiative to address the challenges of equitable access and quality improvement in early childhood education across Indonesia, while also supporting government policies aimed at nurturing a golden generation from an early age.

f. The Importance of Attending Tiered Training for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teachers

The importance of participating in Tiered Training for ECE teachers lies in its strategic role in enhancing teachers' professional competencies. As the frontline educators in early childhood education, ECE teachers are responsible for shaping the foundational character, values, and basic skills of young children. Through systematic training, teachers can update and expand their understanding of child development and relevant pedagogical approaches. In addition to improving pedagogical skills, Tiered Training also contributes to the formal upgrading of teacher qualifications. Certificates obtained from the training can be utilized in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, serving as an alternative pathway toward academic recognition—especially valuable for teachers pursuing further education or career advancement.

The training also has a positive impact on the quality of early childhood education units. Well-trained teachers can bring significant improvements in classroom management, learning approaches, and

developmental assessment practices. Ultimately, this leads to better institutional accreditation and enhances the overall image of early childhood education. On a broader scale, improved teacher competencies directly contribute to the enhancement of Regional Education Report Cards, which serve as indicators of the performance and quality of a region's education system. Therefore, this training is beneficial not only at an individual level but also institutionally and regionally. It also plays a key role in increasing teacher professionalism and work motivation, as teachers feel valued and supported by the system, encouraging them to continue learning and developing in order to deliver the best educational services to children.

#### g. Tiered Training Helps Enhance ECE Teachers' Competencies

Tiered Training is specifically designed to strengthen various aspects of ECE teachers' competencies. One key area is pedagogical competence, which includes the ability to plan, manage learning activities, and evaluate children's development in a comprehensive and holistic way. Teachers are guided to understand the importance of developmentally appropriate practices and local context-sensitive approaches. Professional competence is also a major focus, equipping teachers with skills to design educational materials, develop child-centered lesson plans (RPP), and apply creative and joyful learning strategies. Through a phased and structured training model, ECE teachers are encouraged to be more innovative and reflective in their teaching practices.

Beyond technical skills, the training also hones social and communication competencies—such as the ability to collaborate with parents and the community, and to create a safe, supportive learning environment. This is crucial because early childhood education requires strong synergy among teachers, families, and the surrounding environment. The training also emphasizes improving evaluation skills, teaching educators how to observe, document, and assess children's development in cognitive, socio-emotional, motor, and language domains. These insights enable teachers to create more targeted and effective learning programs. By developing a comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an ECE teacher, the training empowers educators not only to meet minimum service standards but also to provide high-quality education with lasting impact.

#### h. Competencies Expected of ECE Teachers After Completing Basic Level Tiered Training

Upon completing the Basic Level Tiered Training, ECE teachers are expected to develop four core competencies: personal, pedagogical, professional, and social. Personal competence emphasizes moral integrity, work ethics, and exemplary behavior as an educator. This is essential, as ECE teachers serve as role models for children during highly formative years. Pedagogical competence forms the foundation for effective learning implementation. Teachers are expected to master theories of child development, understand student characteristics, design and implement contextual learning, and accurately evaluate children's progress. Child-centered, play-based learning is key to achieving these goals.

Professional competence involves the technical ability to design learning materials, understand the ECE curriculum, and integrate relevant technologies and strategies into teaching. Teachers are also encouraged to be lifelong learners—keeping up with scientific advances and adapting teaching methods to the evolving needs of children and communities. Social competence maintains the ability to engage constructively with children, colleagues, parents, and the broader community. ECE teachers are expected to be effective communicators and thoughtful mediators in building productive collaboration within educational settings. With all these competencies, teachers are expected to facilitate holistic child development—encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains—and to prepare children for the next level of education with optimal readiness.

The primary motivation for ECE teachers to participate in Tiered Training is the desire to improve themselves as professional educators capable of delivering the best possible education for young children. Teachers recognize that field challenges are increasingly complex, making it essential to equip themselves with knowledge and skills aligned with current developments. A major motivating factor is the desire to gain deeper insights into stages of child development and to design learning that aligns with those characteristics.

This motivation not only enhances teaching quality but also creates joyful and meaningful learning experiences for children.

Teachers are also motivated by the direct benefits of the training, such as obtaining certificates that can be used for qualification recognition and career advancement. These certificates add value both personally and professionally, serving as part of their competency portfolio. The integration of technology-based approaches in some training programs also adds to their appeal. Teachers not only learn instructional content but also how to incorporate technology into early childhood education. This becomes essential preparation for navigating the increasingly digital nature of the education landscape. Moreover, the training serves as a platform for networking and exchanging experiences among early childhood teachers from various regions. Through these interactions, teachers gain fresh inspiration, broaden their perspectives, and strengthen their collective spirit to improve the quality of early childhood education in Indonesia.

#### i. Expectations After Completing the Basic Level Tiered Training

After completing the Basic Level Tiered Training, early childhood educators generally hope to gain a broader and deeper understanding of early childhood education in a comprehensive manner. Their main expectation is that the training will equip them with relevant and applicable insights, enabling them to teach more effectively, understand individual developmental needs of children, and create a joyful and safe learning environment. Teachers also expect to improve their skills in classroom management and lesson planning tailored to children's developmental stages. Through the training, they feel more confident in designing activities that stimulate various aspects of child development, including cognitive, social-emotional, motor, and language domains. These competencies are crucial for creating holistic and meaningful learning experiences for young children.

Another key expectation is the ability to better understand and support children with special needs. Early childhood educators often serve as the first to recognize signs of developmental delays. With sufficient knowledge, they can initiate early interventions and provide appropriate guidance to parents. This is a critical step toward ensuring inclusive and responsive education for all children. Teachers also aspire to become more professional, creative, and innovative educators. They hope not only to act as instructors but also as facilitators who can build stimulating and engaging learning environments. Furthermore, they aim to establish professional networks with fellow teachers from across the country, fostering spaces to share best practices and innovative teaching ideas. Ultimately, teachers hope that the Tiered Training will not be a one-time learning experience, but rather part of a continuous professional development journey. They wish for ongoing mentorship, reflective forums, and collaborative spaces to ensure the knowledge gained remains relevant and continues to evolve. In this way, the quality of early childhood education can be sustained and improved in response to the demands of the times.

## V. Conclusion

Based on interviews with early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in West Sumbawa Regency, it can be concluded that innovations in the implementation of the Tiered Training (Diklat Berjenjang) program in the area of personnel development have proven successful in addressing the real needs of teachers. The teachers perceive the training as highly beneficial in enhancing their understanding of child development, developing innovative lesson plans (RPP), and applying child-centered learning strategies. Innovative training methods such as case studies, simulations, and the use of digital technology have made the training more practical and relevant to the current educational context. Support from the Department of Education, ranging from facilities, competent instructors, and modules to post-training mentoring, has further strengthened the positive impact of the training on the quality of PAUD learning. Additionally, the tiered approach of the training provides a structured and sustainable pathway for professional development. The step-by-step implementation—from basic to advanced levels—enables teachers to continuously reflect on and improve their teaching practices. This reflects a long-term commitment by the local government to build the capacity

of early childhood educators professionally. This training model not only enhances teachers' knowledge and skills but also boosts their confidence and motivation in fulfilling their educational duties. Therefore, innovations in the PAUD Tiered Training program make a tangible contribution to delivering higher quality, holistic, and contextually relevant early childhood education.

Furthermore, based on an interview with the Head of the Department of Education and Culture of West Sumbawa Regency, it is evident that the innovation behind the implementation of the Tiered PAUD Training program in personnel development has been strategically and comprehensively designed. The main goal of the training is to build the capacity of educational office staff in terms of knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes in managing early childhood education. The implementation process also demonstrates adaptability and responsiveness to modern developments, such as the use of digital platforms for participant selection and the application of blended learning systems in training schedules. The targeted competencies include technical abilities in designing PAUD learning, classroom management, supervision skills, and cross-sector collaboration. Training effectiveness is regularly evaluated through pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and satisfaction surveys, which prove that the program goes beyond theory and focuses on measurable, real-world outcomes. As such, this innovation significantly contributes to improving the quality of PAUD services and supports the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the regional level.

In addition, interviews with PAUD teachers revealed that the Basic Level Tiered Training has had a significant impact on improving teachers' competencies and professionalism in delivering early childhood education. The program not only provides a solid theoretical and practical foundation aligned with child development principles but also strengthens teachers' pedagogical, social, and professional aspects. Teachers who have participated in the training feel more confident, skillful, and prepared to handle the complexities of the learning process, while also gaining formal recognition for their competencies. Their motivation to join the program stems from the desire for continuous learning, certification, and the opportunity to expand their professional networks and insights in the PAUD field. Teachers hold high expectations for the continuity of this program, hoping it will support comprehensive improvements in early childhood education, foster inclusive and joyful learning environments, and help shape a high-quality golden generation from an early age.

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