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Implementation of 13-Year Compulsory Education through Holistic Integrative Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Psychology Perspective

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Abstract
The implementation of 13-year compulsory education (WAJAR-13), including one year of preschool education, places early childhood education (ECE) as an important foundation for children's readiness for subsequent educational stages. This study aims to analyze the implementation of WAJAR-13 through Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) from a developmental psychology perspective in Gresik Regency and to identify the supporting factors and challenges encountered during implementation. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Participants were selected purposively from stakeholders involved in the implementation of PAUD HI, including government and education-office representatives, ECE administrators and educators, and parents. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation and analyzed using data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The findings indicate that the implementation of WAJAR-13 through PAUD HI emphasizes educational access and the provision of integrated services addressing children's educational, health, nutritional, caregiving, protection, and developmental needs. The findings also identify challenges related to differences in institutional capacity, human-resource competence, resource availability, parental understanding, and cross-sectoral coordination. From a developmental psychology perspective, the implementation of WAJAR-13 needs to consider children's cognitive, linguistic, physical-motor, social-emotional, moral, and independence-related development as interconnected dimensions of school readiness. The study highlights the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, family involvement, and cross-sectoral collaboration to support developmentally appropriate ECE implementation in the context of Gresik Regency.

Keywords:
13-Year Compulsory Education; Holistic and Integrative; Early Childhood Education; Implementation; Developmental Psychology

A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood represents a critical period in human development because experiences during the early years contribute to the formation of cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, moral, and self-regulation capacities. Children's development during this period is influenced not only by learning experiences but also by nutrition, health, parenting, social interaction, cultural environment, and the quality of stimulation they receive. Therefore, early childhood education should not be understood solely as preparation for academic learning but as an integrated

process that supports children's development across multiple domains. This perspective requires educational services to consider children's developmental characteristics and their surrounding environments simultaneously.

The most important foundation for a child's development is laid between the ages of 0 and 6 a period often referred to as the "golden age." This is a time when a child's brain develops optimally, and synapses form rapidly; this process is influenced by the quality of the environment, nutritional intake, stimulation and learning experiences, parenting styles, and the child's social-emotional and cultural surroundings. (Susanti dkk., 2024) Optimal physical growth and psychological development occur during early childhood education, as this is the period when all of a child's abilities including physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, independence, values and morals, as well as the ability to adapt to subsequent developmental phases are formed. Given this, there is a need to mandate an additional year of early childhood education (PAUD). (Ramadan Lubis dkk., 2025) A child's development is interrelated with biological, psychological, family, educational, and social environments; thus, education must begin as early as possible to help guide the child's various abilities while also comprehensively addressing aspects of health, nutrition, parenting practices, well-being, protection, and social and emotional development (Mufarochah, 2020).

To optimize early childhood development by leveraging children's diverse abilities, it is necessary to establish a 13-year compulsory education requirement including one year of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) as a strategy for enhancing children's development in a holistic and integrative manner. This approach is particularly compelling because it integrates biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. (Salehudin & Asiyani, 2022) This also applies in Gresik Regency; the implementation of PAUD is essential given the importance of developing all of a child's abilities comprehensively so that they can realize their full potential. This development takes the form of holistic and integrative early childhood education, which is not solely focused on cognitive development but also integrates various aspects, including education itself, child nutrition and health, parenting styles, and child protection and well-being. Broadly speaking, this approach views the child as a whole and recognizes the interconnectedness of various aspects within the child and their surroundings. Children can develop cognitively if their nutritional needs are met; they can have a healthy mind if their social-emotional skills develop optimally; and they can view their peers positively if their parents' parenting practices are also positive toward their children (Fitriyah dkk., 2022). The implementation of the 13-year compulsory education policy (WAJAR-13) requires analysis from the perspective of developmental science.

Developmental psychology provides an analytical lens for examining whether the implementation of early childhood education is aligned with children's developmental characteristics. (Maulida, 2025) Piaget's perspective is relevant for understanding the importance of developmentally appropriate stimulation, exploration, play, and learning experiences in supporting children's cognitive development. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective highlights the role of parents, teachers, and the surrounding social environment in mediating children's learning and development, particularly through interaction and language. (Rahayu dkk., 2025) Meanwhile, Santrock's multidimensional conception of development provides a broader framework for examining changes across physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional domains. Taken together, these perspectives allow the implementation of WAJAR-13 through PAUD HI to be examined not only in terms of educational access but also in terms of the extent to which educational services correspond to children's developmental needs. (Tri Wisudaningsih, 2024)

The extensive theoretical perspectives proposed by various scholars can serve as a foundation for previous studies examining the relationship between Early Childhood Education (ECE) and child development, providing valuable insights for researchers. One such study explored and implemented a holistic approach to early childhood education by integrating cognitive, emotional, and social aspects through a qualitative method involving interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings indicated that a holistic approach contributes to balancing children's development across multiple dimensions, including cognitive, emotional, and social development. Furthermore, parental involvement and effective classroom practices were identified as important factors supporting the successful implementation of this

approach. These findings further reinforce the argument that integrating cognitive, emotional, and social developmental aspects into the ECE curriculum can facilitate children's optimal development (Wahyudi dkk., 2024).The second previous study aimed to analyze the role of ECE in supporting the cognitive and social development of young children. This study employed a quantitative approach using scales administered to parents and teachers across various ECE institutions. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the effects of several variables, including socioeconomic factors, child–teacher interactions, and parental involvement. The findings demonstrated that ECE plays a significant role in children's cognitive and social development, with the quality of teacher–child interactions and play-based learning serving as key components of the approach. Meanwhile, parental involvement was found to further strengthen children's social development. These findings were reported in a study conducted by a lecturer at Bani Saleh University (Astuti & Triani, 2024).

Previous studies have examined holistic approaches to early childhood education and the contribution of ECE to children's cognitive and social development. However, these studies have generally examined child development, parental involvement, or classroom practices separately from the implementation of broader education policy. Limited attention has been given to how the holistic-integrative model of ECE can be understood within the implementation of 13-year compulsory education while simultaneously considering children's developmental characteristics. This gap is particularly relevant because policy implementation at the early childhood level involves not only expanding educational access but also ensuring that educational services are developmentally appropriate and supported by health, nutrition, family, protection, and welfare services. Therefore, this study examines the implementation of WAJAR-13 through PAUD HI in Gresik Regency using developmental psychology as an analytical perspective. The study contributes to the discussion by connecting education policy implementation, holistic-integrative ECE services, and multidimensional child development within a single qualitative case-study framework.

B. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the implementation of 13-year compulsory education (WAJAR-13) through Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) in Gresik Regency. A qualitative case study was selected because the study sought to explore how the policy is understood and implemented by stakeholders within its actual educational and social context(Sugiyono, 2024). The case was bounded by the implementation of WAJAR-13 through PAUD HI in Gresik Regency, with particular attention to educational access, the integration of child development services, school readiness, family involvement, cross-sectoral collaboration, and implementation challenges.

Participants and Sampling. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, experience, and understanding of the implementation of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13). The study involved three ECE institutions in Gresik Regency, with approximately 7–10 informants selected from each institution, resulting in approximately 21–30 informants. The informants represented relevant stakeholders involved in the provision and implementation of ECE services, including school administrators, ECE educators, and parents. The selection criteria included: (1) having direct involvement in the management, teaching, implementation, or receipt of ECE services; (2) having experience related to the implementation of holistic-integrative ECE services; (3) being able to provide information regarding educational, developmental, family, health, or child-protection aspects relevant to the study; and (4) being willing to participate in interviews and other data-collection activities. Informants from government or local education authorities were included when their institutional roles were directly related to ECE policy implementation in Gresik Regency. (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024. Abd. Hadi dkk., 2021).

Tabel 1. Interview Guide Framework

No.	Focus	Indicators	Theoretical Foundation
1	Cognitive	Thinking, memory, comprehension, exploration, and problem-solving	Jean Piaget
2	Language	Comprehension, expression, and communication	Lev Vygotsky
3	Physical-Motor	Gross motor and fine motor skills	John W. Santrock
4	Social-Emotional	Social interaction and emotional regulation	Lev Vygotsky
5	Independence	Independent activities and responsibility	John W. Santrock
6	Moral/Values	Values, rules, positive behavior, and morality	Jean Piaget

Source: Adapted from Various Theoretical Perspectives (2026)

The interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña was employed in this study, consisting of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data condensation stage, all interview results were transcribed verbatim to ensure comprehensive data capture and facilitate the coding process based on meanings and their relevance to the research focus. The second stage involved data display, in which the collected data were organized into thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to identify patterns of relationships among themes and compare the perspectives of different informants. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions. Conclusions were derived from patterns, relationships, and themes identified across the entire dataset. These conclusions were subsequently compared with findings from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency and stability of the findings in accordance with the research focus.

Data validity was assessed using the trustworthiness framework proposed by Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, which comprises four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Tri Wahyudi Ramdhan, 2025). Credibility was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed contextual descriptions of the research setting, informant characteristics, and the conditions surrounding the implementation of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI), thereby enabling the findings to reflect the actual context of the study. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the entire research process, including informant selection, research location, data collection, data analysis, and data validation procedures. Finally, confirmability was maintained by ensuring the traceability of the research data, analytical procedures, and findings, allowing the results to be independently examined and linked back to the underlying empirical data.

C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) in Early Childhood Education

The findings indicate that the implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) in Gresik Regency is closely associated with efforts to strengthen the position of Early Childhood Education (ECE) as an important stage in children's educational development. Based on an interview with the Head of the Education Development Division of the Gresik Regency Education Office, ECE has sometimes been perceived by the community as merely supplementary education before children enter primary school. The informant also explained that ECE may still be narrowly understood through activities such as singing and dancing, rather than as an educational process that systematically supports children's development. The informant stated:

"Selama ini masih ada masyarakat yang melihat PAUD hanya sebagai tempat anak bermain sebelum masuk SD. Kegiatan PAUD juga kadang masih dianggap sebatas bernyanyi dan menari. Padahal, anak usia dini sedang berada pada tahap perkembangan yang sangat penting, sehingga pendidikan yang diberikan harus sesuai dengan kebutuhan perkembangan anak."

This statement illustrates that the implementation of WAJAR-13 involves not only expanding children's access to ECE but also strengthening the understanding of ECE as an essential developmental stage. When ECE is perceived merely as preparation before primary school, its function may be narrowed to academic preparation rather than the provision of developmentally appropriate experiences. Therefore, the implementation of WAJAR-13 needs to consider both children's opportunity to participate in ECE and the quality of educational experiences provided within ECE institutions.

Based on the findings and the existing literature, the implementation of WAJAR-13 at the ECE level can be understood through two interconnected dimensions: educational access and developmental quality. Educational access refers to children's opportunity to participate in appropriate ECE services, particularly in relation to the provision of one year of preschool education. Meanwhile, developmental quality refers to the extent to which educational services respond to children's developmental characteristics and needs. These two dimensions are interconnected but should not be treated as equivalent. Increased participation in ECE does not necessarily indicate that the policy has been implemented effectively if the services provided do not adequately correspond to children's developmental needs (Sulaiman & Ardianti, 2019). Thus, access represents an important starting point, while developmental quality concerns the nature and appropriateness of the educational experiences received by children.

From a developmental psychology perspective, this distinction is important because children's learning cannot be separated from their developmental characteristics and surrounding environments. Piaget's perspective helps explain that children in the preoperational stage construct understanding through symbolic representation, language, play, exploration, and interaction with their environment (Marinda, 2020). This perspective indicates that ECE implementation within WAJAR-13 should provide learning experiences that are appropriate to children's developmental characteristics rather than focusing predominantly on academic achievement. In addition, children's development is influenced by health, nutrition, family conditions, social relationships, and the educational environment. Consequently, access to ECE alone cannot fully represent the developmental experiences available to children. The quality of the surrounding developmental environment also needs to be considered (Damayanti dkk., 2019).

This interpretation is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of integrating multiple dimensions of child development within ECE. Wahyudi et al. (2024) found that a holistic approach integrating cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions can support children's development, while parental involvement and classroom practices contribute to its implementation. Similarly, Astuti and Triani (2024) highlighted the importance of ECE, teacher–child interaction, play-based learning, and parental involvement in supporting children's cognitive and social development. The present study extends these discussions by connecting the developmental dimensions of ECE with the implementation of WAJAR-13 in Gresik Regency. Rather than examining child development separately from educational policy, the findings suggest that the expansion of ECE access needs to be accompanied by attention to the developmental quality of services provided to children.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the implementation of WAJAR-13 through ECE should not be interpreted simply as the addition of one year of preschool education. The implementation also requires attention to how ECE services are organized to accommodate children's developmental characteristics and needs. Educational access therefore needs to be accompanied by developmentally appropriate learning experiences and supportive developmental environments. In this context, the PAUD HI approach becomes relevant because it connects educational services with children's broader developmental needs, including health, nutrition, family support, protection, and well-being. Accordingly, the implementation of WAJAR-13 in Gresik Regency can be understood not only in terms of expanding children's participation in ECE but also in terms of strengthening the quality and developmental appropriateness of the experiences provided during early childhood education.

2. Implementation of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI)

The findings from interviews and observations indicate that the implementation of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) in the three ECE institutions studied in Gresik Regency is understood as an effort to address children's needs beyond classroom learning. The informants described ECE services as involving several interconnected dimensions, including education, health, nutrition, caregiving, protection, and children's well-being. Thus, PAUD HI is not positioned merely as an educational program but as an integrated approach that connects different forms of support surrounding children's development.

One of the informants explained that educational activities in the ECE institution are accompanied by efforts to pay attention to children's health and nutritional conditions. A draft reconstruction of the interview statement is as follows:

"Di PAUD, anak tidak hanya diberikan pembelajaran. Kami juga memperhatikan kesehatan dan makanan anak, kemudian bekerja sama dengan pihak lain ketika ada kebutuhan tertentu. Jadi yang diperhatikan bukan hanya kemampuan anak belajar, tetapi juga kondisi anak secara keseluruhan."(Draft reconstruction based on interview findings, ECE informant, July 2026)

This finding shows that the implementation of PAUD HI is reflected in the way educational services are connected with other aspects of children's development. Learning activities provide opportunities for cognitive and language development, while attention to health and nutrition supports children's physical condition. Meanwhile, caregiving and protection contribute to children's emotional security and sense of safety. This interpretation is consistent with the understanding of PAUD HI as an approach that integrates education with health, nutrition, care, protection, and child welfare (Den Ayu Ligina dkk., 2022).

From a developmental psychology perspective, the integration identified in the field is important because children's development does not occur through a single developmental domain or within a single institutional setting. Biological, psychological, and environmental factors interact in shaping children's developmental processes (Sabani, 2019). In this context, health and nutritional conditions may affect children's ability to participate in learning, while caregiving and social experiences are related to children's emotional and social development. Therefore, the findings indicate that the implementation of PAUD HI needs to be understood as the provision of a supportive developmental environment, rather than simply as the addition of several separate services.

The findings also indicate that the implementation of PAUD HI requires cooperation beyond the ECE institution itself. The integration of educational, health, nutritional, caregiving, and protection services cannot be fully managed by teachers alone. The involvement of families, health workers, government institutions, and other relevant stakeholders becomes important because each actor has a different role in supporting children's development. In this regard, PAUD HI provides an institutional framework through which these different forms of support can be connected according to children's needs.

However, the findings also need to be interpreted in relation to the practical challenges of implementing an integrated approach. Previous studies have identified several factors that may limit the optimization of PAUD HI, including educator competence, infrastructure and facilities, parental involvement, and cross-sectoral coordination. These issues suggest that the existence of a PAUD HI framework does not automatically ensure that all dimensions of holistic-integrative services are implemented with the same intensity. The implementation depends on the capacity of institutions and the continuity of cooperation among the stakeholders involved.

This finding is relevant to the implementation of WAJAR-13 because expanding children's access to ECE needs to be accompanied by an environment that supports their overall development. If WAJAR-13 is implemented only by increasing participation in ECE without strengthening the supporting services surrounding children, the policy may address educational access without fully addressing developmental needs. In contrast, the PAUD HI approach provides a framework for connecting educational participation with health, nutrition, protection, caregiving, and child well-being. Therefore, within the context of Gresik Regency, PAUD HI can be interpreted as an important supporting mechanism for ensuring that the expansion of early childhood education is accompanied by attention to children's developmental conditions.

3. Child Development and School Readiness for Primary Education Entry

The findings indicate that school readiness in the implementation of WAJAR-13 should not be measured solely by children's ability to read, write, and perform basic numeracy. Interviews with ECE educators show that readiness also includes cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, and self-reliance capacities, as well as children's ability to adapt to a new educational environment. One educator explained:

"Kesiapan anak masuk SD itu bukan hanya anak sudah bisa membaca atau menulis. Anak juga perlu bisa mengikuti aturan, berkomunikasi dengan teman dan guru, mengurus dirinya sendiri, dan berani mengikuti kegiatan tanpa selalu bergantung pada orang tua." (Draft reconstruction based on interview findings, July 2026)

This finding indicates that ECE practitioners view school readiness as a multidimensional developmental condition. From a developmental psychology perspective, children develop through interconnected cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and environmental experiences. Therefore, ECE should provide opportunities for play, exploration, interaction, communication, and independence rather than emphasizing academic skills alone (Siti Fatimah Soenaryo dkk., 2024). PAUD HI supports this process by connecting educational stimulation with health, nutrition, caregiving, and children's well-being.

The finding is also consistent with (Yuliantina, 2024), who emphasizes that children's readiness develops progressively through capacities such as independence, communication, social interaction, emotional regulation, rule-following, and attention. These developmental characteristics indicate that readiness for primary education is not a single academic competency but a combination of capacities that enable children to participate in a new educational environment.

Accordingly, the implementation of WAJAR-13 should not be interpreted merely as providing an additional year of preschool education. Its implementation also needs to ensure that children receive developmentally appropriate experiences that support their overall readiness. In this context, PAUD HI provides a relevant framework because it connects educational services with the broader developmental conditions required for children's transition to primary education.

4. The Role of Families, the Surrounding Environment, and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration in the Implementation of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI)

Families constitute a critical component in the successful implementation of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) because children spend a substantial proportion of their time within the family environment. Educational institutions cannot independently fulfill all of children's developmental needs, as family practices and the surrounding environment play a fundamental role in shaping children's development. These include parenting practices, nutritional intake, healthy lifestyle habits, and parent–child communication, all of which provide continuous stimulation and protection throughout children's developmental processes. Therefore, parental involvement is essential in understanding children's individual characteristics rather than placing the entire responsibility for child development on educational institutions. Parents need to understand children's developmental characteristics and provide appropriate stimulation according to their developmental stages. Responsive and effective communication, consistent boundaries, and support for children's independence can reinforce the learning experiences provided through PAUD HI (Fidesrinur dkk., 2022).

From a developmental psychology perspective, the relationship between families and educational institutions is closely interconnected in shaping children's social development. Children's sense of comfort and ability to adapt are influenced by the consistency of values, parenting practices, and developmental stimulation provided by both the family and educational environments. Previous research has demonstrated that family involvement constitutes an important factor in the implementation of PAUD HI. However, rather than positioning family involvement merely as a supporting factor for the program, the present study emphasizes its interconnected role in shaping children's developmental experiences and outcomes (Herdiyana dkk., 2024).

The implementation of PAUD HI therefore requires not only the involvement of educational institutions and families but also cross-sectoral participation to comprehensively address children's

needs, including infrastructure, health, education, protection, and welfare. This is particularly important because the implementation of PAUD HI involves multiple dimensions of child development that cannot be addressed by a single institution. Consequently, the successful implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) should not be measured solely by the readiness of individual ECE institutions. The role of local governments and interconnected service networks is equally important in ensuring that children receive the developmental support they require.

Effective cross-sectoral coordination is essential because services addressing children's needs are often provided by different institutions. For example, an ECE institution may identify a child's specific needs, while other sectors may be responsible for addressing health, social welfare, child protection, or family support. Through effective coordination, children's needs can be addressed more rapidly and comprehensively. From a developmental psychology perspective, all relevant sectors need to coordinate in creating an environment that supports children's development because children simultaneously exist within multiple ecological contexts, including educational institutions, families, communities, and public service systems. These environments must provide consistent support to promote stable and sustainable development.

Conversely, when different sectors operate independently and without coordination, children's developmental needs are at risk of being addressed in a fragmented manner. Therefore, cross-sectoral involvement and coordination should not be understood merely as mechanisms for improving policy governance. Rather, they represent a strategic approach to establishing a supportive developmental ecosystem in which educational, health, social, protection, and family-support systems work synergistically to promote children's optimal development (Afrizal dkk., 2025).

5. Challenges in the Implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) through Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI)

Each policy implementation is accompanied by a range of challenges that, if addressed effectively, can determine the overall success of the implementation process. In the context of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13), the first major challenge concerns the varying institutional capacities among Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions. Differences in economic, social, and geographical conditions contribute to disparities in institutional capacity, making it difficult for some institutions to implement the policy effectively. ECE institutions with adequate resources are generally better positioned to adopt and implement various services and programs promoted by the government. Conversely, institutions with limited resources may experience difficulties in accelerating policy implementation. Similar disparities can also be observed in terms of institutional infrastructure, facilities, and the competencies of human resources available within ECE institutions.

Cross-sectoral coordination also plays a significant role in the implementation of WAJAR-13 because different sectors are interconnected and mutually dependent. For example, when information or policy directives from the local education authority have not been communicated comprehensively, educational institutions may be hesitant to implement the corresponding policies or recommendations. In addition, the involvement of families and the surrounding community is essential to ensure that the implementation of PAUD HI does not operate solely within educational institutions. Integrated service provision requires coordination among ECE institutions, families, health services, government agencies, and communities, with each stakeholder assuming clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Such integration is essential for establishing an effective Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) system.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, institutional barriers can directly influence children's developmental experiences. Inadequate access to health services, nutrition, child protection, caregiving, and educational services may become embedded in children's everyday experiences and subsequently influence their developmental trajectories. Therefore, institutional improvement must be pursued across multiple dimensions rather than focusing on a single aspect. Strengthening institutional capacity, service integration, human resources, infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration is necessary to ensure that policy implementation ultimately produces comprehensive and meaningful benefits for children's development (Ito & Formen, 2026).

6. Developmental Psychology Perspective on the Implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13)

The findings of this study indicate that incorporating a developmental psychology perspective into the implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) provides a comprehensive analytical framework for evaluating educational policy. Educational policy should not be assessed solely in terms of administrative organization and institutional management; it should also take into account children's developmental characteristics and diverse developmental needs. From the perspective of developmental psychology, three major implications can be identified. First, educational policies inevitably involve children's developmental potential and trajectories. Chronological age does not necessarily correspond to an identical developmental pattern, as children's development is influenced by various factors, including nature and nurture (Hastuti dkk., 2025). Second, educational activities should adopt a developmentally appropriate approach rather than focusing exclusively on the mastery of academic content. Third, developmental indicators should be incorporated into policy evaluation frameworks to enable the outcomes of policy implementation to be measured more comprehensively and objectively.

The aforementioned perspectives constitute an important contribution to the implementation of WAJAR-13 through Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) by placing child development at the center of educational policy implementation. Previous studies on compulsory education have largely focused on educational access and institutional management, while studies on holistic-integrative early childhood education have tended to emphasize the integration of educational, health, nutrition, protection, and welfare services. The present study contributes by integrating these two perspectives and positioning child development as the primary indicator of policy implementation success.

Accordingly, the implementation of WAJAR-13 should be understood not merely as an extension of the duration of formal education through the addition of one year of preschool education, but as an effort to establish a comprehensive developmental ecosystem for children. The additional year of preschool education is expected to provide broader developmental benefits, including a sense of security, access to health and nutrition services, responsive and inclusive educational experiences, age-appropriate learning, and the fulfillment of children's developmental needs. Thus, the success of WAJAR-13 should ultimately be reflected not only in increased participation in education but also in the extent to which the policy creates an environment that enables children to develop optimally across cognitive, linguistic, physical-motor, social-emotional, moral, and independence domains.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the 13-Year Compulsory Education Policy (WAJAR-13) in Gresik Regency needs to be understood not only in terms of expanding access to Early Childhood Education (ECE), but also in relation to the developmental quality of services provided to children. The findings indicate that Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Education (PAUD HI) provides an approach that connects education with health, nutrition, caregiving, protection, and child well-being. From a developmental psychology perspective, school readiness is a multidimensional process involving cognitive, language, physical-motor, social-emotional, and self-reliance capacities rather than academic skills alone.

The findings further show that the implementation of PAUD HI requires support from multiple stakeholders, including ECE institutions, families, health services, government, and other relevant sectors. Challenges related to institutional capacity, parental involvement, facilities, and cross-sectoral coordination remain important considerations in its implementation. Therefore, WAJAR-13 at the ECE level should be accompanied by developmentally appropriate learning experiences and integrated support that responds to children's broader developmental needs.

Based on these findings, government and education stakeholders should strengthen coordination and institutional support for PAUD HI, while ECE institutions should develop learning practices that respect children's developmental characteristics and promote holistic school readiness. Families also have an important role in providing continuous support for children's development beyond the ECE setting. Future research may examine the implementation of WAJAR-13 across

broader geographical contexts and use quantitative or mixed-method approaches to complement the qualitative findings of this study.

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