

The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 2024

Volume 37, Pages 60-69

IConMEB 2024: International Conference on Management Economics and Business

The Transition Policy from Kindergarten to Primary Education

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Abstract: This research aims to comprehensively investigate the implementation of the kindergarten to primary school (PAUD-SD) transition policy in Tumpang District. The research method employed is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection involved interviews, document gathering using recording tools and notebooks, along with references from relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted using the qualitative analysis method by Miles and Huberman, involving data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. To validate data authenticity, a triangulation approach was utilized, engaging various methods and diverse data sources. The research findings indicate that the implementation of the PAUD-SD policy in Tumpang District has been initiated through socialization by the district's education coordinator. This led to an agreement to establish PAUD-SD communication forums in each village, involving collaboration between Kindergarten and Primary School teachers to plan joint programs such as parenting for new student's parents, exchange visits between Primary School and Kindergarten, and a decision not to conduct mid-term or final evaluations for first-grade students for the initial 6 months. However, the formal work program is awaiting guidance from the Malang Regency Education Office. The impact of this research underscores recommendations for promptly taking concrete actions to ensure that the establishment of the PAUD-SD transition forums in Tumpang District effectively achieves its objectives.

Keywords: Education policy implementation, Transition to primary school, Early childhood education

Introduction

Education is a crucial foundation for achieving success in life. Through education, one can build the knowledge, skills and character needed to overcome challenges and achieve goals (Adha et al., 2019; Anshori et al., 2016; Apriliyanti et al., 2020; Bakken et al., 2017). One of them is early childhood education, where early childhood education (PAUD) plays an important role in forming the foundation of children's education before entering primary school (SD), this is in accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the education system which states that early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is carried out through providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education.

Early childhood grows rapidly in the "Golden Age" phase (birth-5 years), so it is important to be stimulated and monitored from the start (Yafie & Haqqi, 2019). Therefore, the transition from PAUD to SD is a crucial phase in child development, where the success of this transition can affect the child's future learning ability (Arningsari et al., 2024; Farizal & Maemonah, 2021; Fitriya et al., 2022). The transition period from the informal to the formal stage in children's lives is considered a crucial time, both for their personal and educational development (Al-Hezam, 2017; Zufar et al., 2023).

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- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the Conference

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Children in this transition period are expected to have both physical and spiritual readiness. However, today there are still many misconceptions about the *PAUD-SD* transition period where many guardians of students in kindergarten still want their children to be able to read, write and count by the time they graduate from kindergarten. Parents and teachers emphasize children's academic ability because it is considered a measure of intelligence in school (Acar et al., 2019; Azizah et al., 2020; Dudovitz et al., 2016; Gooch et al., 2017; Lahti et al., 2019; Magnuson & Schindler, 2019; Pianta et al., 2020; Suntheimer & Wolf, 2020; Varghese et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Besides that parents still think that the most important ability for children is calistung or reading, writing and counting. One of the reasons why these parents think this way is because in early grade primary school or grade one the learning process already requires children to have good reading, writing and counting skills, otherwise children are left behind in the learning process. In addition, there are still many elementary schools that conduct calistung tests during new student admissions, so this adds to the parents' concerns. This is in line with the thinking of Safitri and Aulina (2022), who said that many people still have an incorrect understanding of education for children at an early age. One of the mistakes is in understanding that education for children at an early age is only related to calistung activities.

The quality of the school is strongly influenced by the quality of the results of the learning process that takes place in it (Bafadal et al., 2019; Rahayu et al., 2018). Then in kindergarten, In addition to basic *calistung skills*, early childhood education aims to develop 6 areas that include moral and spiritual values, social and emotional abilities, artistic expression, cognitive abilities, language, and physical and motor skills (Rofi'ah et al., 2023). Early childhood learns from curiosity by finding facts and inferring (Yafie et al., 2020). This is also in accordance with the concept or idea Wulansuci (2021), which suggests that the purpose of early childhood education is to direct the development of children's potential, supervise their behavior, provide exciting experiences, create a foundation for children's abilities, and foster spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social intelligence at an important time of their development through an educational and entertaining play environment. During early childhood education (ECE), children are given guidance to build skills that will support them as they move into the next stage of education. According to Catron and Allen, crucial developmental skills include self-awareness, emotional development, social skills, communication skills, motor skills, and the development of thinking skills (Hasanah, 2016).

To overcome many of these misperceptions from parents, government policy is needed. The need for government policy on early years education manifests itself in the form of a curriculum that supports a positive transition from kindergarten to primary school. This policy primarily provides direction regarding school readiness and effective transition practices in accommodating the changing educational environment (Mirfani, 2016; Mustifa, 2019). This year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has introduced a policy in the 24th section of the Merdeka Curriculum on "Joyful Early Childhood Transition". The transition from early childhood education (ECE) to primary school (SD) is an effort that aims to ensure that every child, no matter where they come from, has the opportunity to strengthen their basic skills. The objectives of the policy are to eliminate the use of the reading, writing and arithmetic proficiency test in admission of new students in primary schools, to implement introductory activities for students during the first 2 weeks, and to implement a method of receiving knowledge or skills that reinforces the six basic skills at the *PAUD* or primary school level. It is expected that the transition process from *PAUD* to primary school at the beginning of the class will focus more on aspects that influence and strengthen children's development, not just cognition. Therefore, the transition period is considered an important period for children to strengthen their basic skills in order to protect their rights to growth, development, and respect in the education area and at home (Lestari, 2023; Sirait, 2017).

According to previous research conducted by Mustifa (2019), in her work entitled "*PAUD* Transition to Elementary Level: Curriculum Content in Facilitating the School Readiness Process," it was concluded that to facilitate a smooth transition to school, collaboration between children, families, school institutions and the community environment is required. Engagement, cooperation and communication among these parties are considered crucial factors in promoting and supporting school readiness. In addition, early childhood education policies that cover the curriculum from kindergarten to primary school has an important role in supporting a positive transition process. These policies need to provide clear guidelines for school readiness as well as practices that support a smooth transition from the preschool environment to formal education (Mustifa, 2019). There are also research results from Intan Prastihastari Wijaya in her work entitled "Implementation of a Fun *PAUD-SD* Transition: Viewed from the Psychological Aspects of Children" shows that students at the elementary school level who do not attend pre-school education (*PAUD*) still receive guidance to build the foundation of their abilities. This allows them to have a solid foundation to continue their studies to a higher level. In addition, the development of children's psychological development can also experience positive growth in this process (Wijaya, 2023). And the last is the result of research conducted by Susilahati et al. (2023), with

the title "Efforts to Implement a Fun Transition from Early Childhood Education to Elementary School: Viewed from *PPDB*, *MPLS* and the Learning Process" with the results of the study, *SD* Lab School FIP UMJ has implemented the transition from Early Childhood Education (*PAUD*) to Primary School (*SD*) with several methods.

First, in the process of admission of new students (*PPDB*), the use of *calistung* tests is not used, but instead uses assessment as a selection method. Second, they implement a one-week School Environment Introduction Program (*MPLS*) as part of the transition activities. Third, the learning approach used at *SD* Lab School FIP UMJ focuses on developing the foundation for children in an exciting way. It can be seen from the pleasant learning atmosphere in the elementary classroom, the merging of the environment between *PAUD* and early primary classes in one location, and the placement of graduates from Early Childhood Education Teacher Education (*PG-PAUD*) as teachers in early primary classes. However, the teaching methods applied at *SD* Lab School FIP UMJ still use written and oral tests to evaluate students' learning progress. The use of these tests is still related to the use of Curriculum (2013), and this is considered an obstacle in the implementation of the transition from *PAUD* to *SD* at Lab School FIP UMJ. This research presents a novel aspect that is different from previous research, namely the formation of a *PAUD-SD* transition forum formed by teacher collaboration between teachers in kindergartens and teachers in primary schools.

One of the sub-districts that has implemented this *PAUD-SD* transition policy is Tumpang sub-district, which is part of the Indonesian education system that also faces significant challenges in ensuring a smooth transition for children from the early childhood education (*PAUD*) stage to the primary school (*SD*) stage. This transition is not only a move from one stage of education to the next, but also a crucial first step in establishing a solid foundation for children's educational development. The implementation of the *ECD* and primary school transition policy in Tumpang sub-district has therefore been a major focus of efforts to improve the quality of education at this early stage.

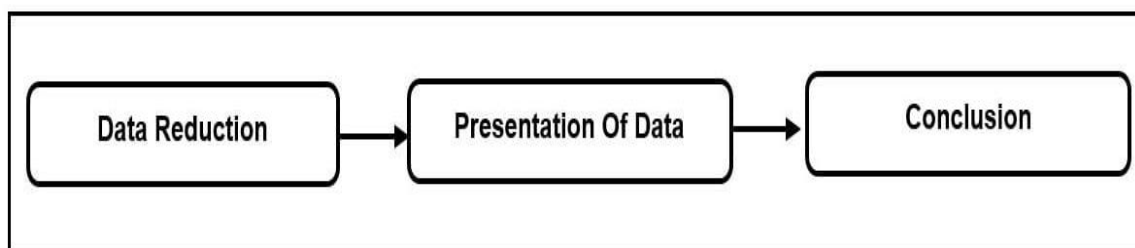
Progressive steps have been taken to ensure that children receive appropriate assistance in dealing with the changing learning environment, curriculum and different educational demands at the primary level. However, in an effort to formulate effective policies, it is important to evaluate and understand how these transition policies are implemented on the ground. Based on this information, the purpose of this study is to examine in depth the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition policy in Tumpang sub-district. Through this evaluation, it will be analyzed how the policy is implemented, what methods are used to align children's transition, and the impact felt by policy participants, such as educators, parents, and the surrounding community. By understanding and evaluating the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition policy in tumpang sub-district, it is hoped that this article can provide valuable insights for relevant parties, provide guidance for the development of education policy at the local level, and support the improvement of the education system in the early phase of children's education. thus, this article will review and evaluate the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition policy in tumpang sub-district, in order to make a significant contribution to efforts to improve the quality of children's education in the early stages of their transition.

Method

This research adopted a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to describe the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition policy in Tumpang sub-district, particularly in Pulungdowo village. Information was collected through interviews and document collection. These techniques were chosen because they were appropriate for the participants, which consisted of two principals involved in the policy, namely the principal of Muslimat NU 1 Tumpang Kindergarten and the principal of Muslimat 6 Al-Huda Kindergarten. As stated by Sugiyono (2019), in qualitative research, the researcher plays a key role as the main tool or means used in research. In this study, the researcher utilized the interview guide as the main tool applied by the two principals. Recording devices and notebooks were also used as support in the research process. Furthermore, this study was carried out by collecting various data sources and reviewing and collecting references from relevant literature. The information collected was then filtered and organized based on the focus of the topic under study.

The research subjects consisted of two principals who served in two kindergartens, TK Muslimat NU 1 Tumpang and TK Muslimat NU 6 AL-Huda in Pulungdowo village, Tumpang sub-district, located in Malang district. The data analysis method used refers to the Miles and Huberman qualitative analysis method which involves three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and data verification/conclusion drawing (Ambarita et al., 2019; Tanto & Sufyana, 2020; Wardiah, 2017). Data analysis is carried out qualitatively, where

data collected from interviews will be interpreted and analyzed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Nisa & Arifin, 2021; Nuryadi & Rahmawati, 2018; Suwandi, 2021). The analysis process began with transcribing the interviews and documenting the results. This step aimed to identify patterns, linkages and meanings that emerged from the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition policy in Tumpang sub-district. In addition, in verifying the validity of the information or data, a triangulation approach involving different methods and data sources was used (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). The steps in the Miles and Huberman qualitative analysis method are presented in Fig 1.



Results and Discussion

This section is divided into three sub-sections. First, an explanation of the interview results from two kindergarten principals regarding the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* Transition Policy. Second, the *PAUD-SD* transition policy. Third, the implementation of the *PAUD-SD* Transition Policy in Tumpang sub-district.

Interview Results

Based on an interview with the head of the Muslimat NU 1 Tumpang Kindergarten located in Pulungdowo village, Tumpang sub-district, he said that the implementation of the transition policy from *PAUD* to *SD* in the sub-district had been socialized by the regional office of the Tumpang sub-district, where on 25 September 2023 the regional office of the Tumpang sub-district invited one teacher and the principal of the primary school and kindergarten in the Tumpang sub-district in the *PAUD-SD* transition socialization event held at the Tumpang sub-district teacher building. In the event, the head of the regional office of Tumpang sub-district said that it was necessary to establish a *PAUD-SD* transition forum in the hope of bringing progress in the world of education. In the event, the regional office of Tumpang sub-district also invited a resource person who works as one of the *PGSD* lecturers at *FKIP UMM* named Dr. Siti Fatimah Soenaryo where she said that there is no continuity between *PAUD* and *SD*. She also said that according to psychological studies, children are ready to learn starting at the age of seven years old so it is expected that the transition from *PAUD* to *SD* should be fun. This is done because learning in kindergarten must be fun, kindergarten age is the age of play so activities must be fun through games or through play activities.

Early childhood has a tendency to repeat learning because it is fun, so it is hoped that the classical learning model should no longer be used. In addition, he also suggested holding parenting for parents and prospective new students both in *PAUD* and in *SD*, as well as conducting *anjangsana* or friendship both from primary school to kindergarten and from kindergarten to primary school, this is done so that there is continuity between *PAUD-SD*. Meanwhile, the primary school was represented by one of the heads of primary school in Tumpang sub-district, he said that for grade 1 primary school there is no midterm/end of semester assessment for the first 6 months. The village/sub-district *PAUD* mother is requested to convey to the mothers of young students not to demand children with extraordinary demands such as the ability to write, read, and count to be a mandatory requirement when completing studies in kindergarten. She also said not to use student worksheet for kindergarten children and early grade children in primary school and for parenting activities she requested to really explain to guardians about how the *PAUD - SD* transition works.

From the results of the socialization, in each village in the sub-district of tumpang, a *PAUD-SD* transition forum was formed. Including pulungdowo village in tumpang sub-district, where the results of an interview with one of the principals at the Muslimat NU 6 Al-Huda Kindergarten in pulungdowo village that has formed a *PAUD-SD* communication forum in pulungdowo village, the forum was formed by involving 2 kindergartens and 3 primary schools in the village. For the program, an agreement has been made, namely the first to hold parenting for new student guardians together between kindergarten and primary school, the second to conduct *anjangsana*

or friendship both from elementary school to kindergarten and vice versa, the third is an agreement not to conduct midterm or end-of-semester assessments for first grade students for the first 6 months. However, the official program has not yet been made because it is waiting for instructions from the Malang Regency office. The management structure of the *PAUD-SD* transition forum it can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Pulungdowo Village *PAUD-SD* Transition Forum Management Table

No	Name	Position	Work Unit
1	Ika	Protector	Village Office
2	Barokatul	Chair	Kindergarten
3	Nur	Secretary	Primary School
4	Amala	Treasurer	Primary School

The Implementation of the *PAUD-SD* Transition Policy in Tumpang Sub-District

This *PAUD-SD* transition policy has taken place in various regions in Indonesia, including in Tumpang sub-district, Malang district, in Tumpang sub-district itself, a socialization has been held by the regional office of Tumpang sub-district with the results of the formation of *PAUD-SD* transition forums in each village, including in Pulungdowo village which has been formed with members of the teachers from 3 primary schools and 2 kindergartens in Pulungdowo village. The establishment of the *PAUD to SD* transition forum in Pulungdowo village is a strategic step in encouraging the strengthening of children's transition from *PAUD* to *SD*.

The forum aims to be a communication platform that enables stakeholders, such as early childhood education teachers, primary school teachers, parents and communities, to collaborate in supporting children's transition process. Through this forum, it is hoped to create a common understanding between all parties related to *PAUD-SD* transition policies, so as to overcome misconceptions that often occur, such as the demand for children to be able to write and read formally when they graduate from *PAUD*. Several policies and programs, such as those on new student admissions, as well as efforts to streng then the effectiveness of learning process and the transition of students from *PAUD* to *SD*, have supported the implementation of the *PAUD to SD* transition. It is hoped that, through the establishment of the *PAUD-SD* transition forum, Pulungdowo village is able to create a fun and supportive learning environment that provides help and assistance to children during their transition process from *PAUD* to *SD*. For the program, an agreement has been made, namely the first to hold parenting for new student guardians together between kindergarten and primary school, the second to conduct *anjingsana* or friendship both from primary school to kindergarten and vice versa, the third is an agreement not to conduct midterm or end-of-semester assessments for first grade students for the first 6 months. However, the official work program has not yet been made because it is waiting for instructions from the Malang Regency office.

PAUD-SD Transition Policy

The enjoyable *PAUD-SD* transition policy is a series of independent learning episodes, this policy is the 24th episode policy, which was launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research on March 28, 2023. According to Kemdikbudristek in (Anggriani et al., 2022) this definition of *PAUD-SD* transition is the alignment of learning between early childhood education (*ECED*) and primary school (*SD*) aims to minimize the need for adjustment for learners as they move from the *ECED* environment to the *SD* environment. Another goal is to ensure that primary school students who have not previously attended *PAUD* programs continue to receive adequate guidance in the development of their basic skills. This program was launched because many processes in the admission of new learners (*PPDB*) and learning methods still do not fully consider the principle that the development of basic skills (such as social-emotional maturity, literacy, basic numeracy, and other basic skills) is a gradual and continuous process, starting from early childhood education (*PAUD*) to the early stages of primary school (*SD*).

In addition, not all children have the right to a foundation in learning because they do not go to kindergarten first but directly to grade 1, so they have never had the foundation phase that should be their right. In addition, the misconceptions of most people still encourage their children to have the ability to read, write and count when they graduate from kindergarten so that inevitably most kindergartens develop skills that focus on calistung. With this policy, it is expected that there will be alignment between *PAUD* and *SD* curriculum so that there will be no more calistung tests when entering *SD*, then *PAUD* and *SD* will conduct an adaptation process for new students for two weeks and apply learning methods that develop the six foundations of children such as

religious and moral values (*NAM*), social emotional (*SOSEM*), Language, Cognitive, Fismot and positive learning meaning.

The transition policy from early childhood education (*ECE*) to primary school (*SD*) sets out three objectives for change at the start of the new academic year. These include: 1) the elimination of the written calistung test at the time of admission; 2) the introduction of an adaptation period for new students to ease their adjustment, while planning learning activities, integrating information about children's needs based on initial evaluations into learning tools during the first two-week period at the beginning of the school year and 3) the design of learning activities that are joyful, build a foundation of skills, and do not involve formal evaluation. These three policies are very important to follow and implement, so that children can get through the transition from *PAUD* to *SD* well (Kemdikbudristek, 2023). Such as the elimination of the written test for reading, counting and writing when admitting new students to primary schools, this is very necessary because when early childhood graduates from kindergarten, not all of them can do *calistung* and indeed in kindergarten the basic abilities or foundations that must be possessed and developed at this time according to the *Merdeka Curriculum*, namely at this age, it is important for them to have basic skills that include understanding of religious and moral values, emotional maturity appropriate for interacting in the learning environment, social and language skills that facilitate positive relationships with peers and other individuals, good attitudes towards the learning process, development of motor skills and independent habits of self-care in order to be able to take part in the school environment independently, and cognitive maturity to undergo learning activities, including basic reading-writing skills and number comprehension (Khaironi & Yuliasri, 2017; Nur, 2013; Utami, 2018). These abilities need to be instilled and developed from an early age to the beginning of primary education to prepare children for the learning process. In line with this concept, Gardner recognizes eight variations of multiple intelligences that include language, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences (Marpaung, 2017). The aim is to develop and stimulate potential in these areas, a fun and meaningful approach to learning is essential, so that the child can achieve the basic skills required (Ainia, 2020; Pristiwanti et al., 2022; Sari & Frasandy, 2018; Susilahati et al., 2023).

The second policy is the introduction of an adaptation period for new students to facilitate their adjustment, while planning learning activities that are able to describe the needs of children. based on the initial assessment guide in a tool in the teaching and learning process during the first two weeks of the new school year, which is usually called the introduction to the school environment. This activity is necessary because it has significant benefits for children entering a new environment, especially from kindergarten to primary school. The introduction of the school environment is organized through positive methods, meaningful education, innovative, and last but not least, fun for new students based on the principles of learning in the institution. The aim is to provide opportunities for children to get to know their new environment in a fun and educational way. In addition, the delivery of materials in the introduction of the school environment is presented in an interesting way so that students remain engaged and do not feel bored during the event (Sarmini et al., 2023). And the third policy is to implement learning approaches that develop children's six basic skills. This action is also important because success in education depends largely on how children receive learning, where they develop their potential and learn how to apply it. They also develop and master emotional aspects, enabling them to communicate and collaborate with peers or other individuals around them (Chingono et al., 2018; Kirk et al., 2018; Mahoney et al., 2020; Sukatin, 2021; Yafie et al., 2024).

According to Musbikin, early childhood education aims to direct the growth of children's potential, observe their behavior, provide joyful experiences, strengthen the basics of children's skills, and develop their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social intelligence during important growth phases, through an educational and interesting game environment (Wulansuci, 2021). Copple and Bredekamp explain that basic skills can form the foundation of future learning, which can be extended through cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical areas (Kostelnik et al., 2017). Yusuf and Sugandhi also highlighted the importance of the development of various skills in children, including motor development, language, cognitive, social, emotional, and awareness in terms of religious aspects (Wahyuni, 2021).

Conclusion

Interviews with the head of a kindergarten in Pulungdowo village, Tumpang sub-district, indicate that steps are being taken to implement the transition policy between early childhood education and primary school. However, there are still some barriers and challenges in harmonizing the education process from early childhood education to primary school. Although there has been socialization and the establishment of *PAUD-SD* transition forums

in various villages, including Pulungdowo village, the implementation of concrete programs is still awaiting further instructions from the Malang District Office.

Recommendations

The first suggestion for the *PAUD-SD* transition forum in Pulungdowo village is the need for better alignment where the *PAUD-SD* transition forum has been established in Pulungdowo village, but does not yet have a concrete work program. Concrete steps are needed to ensure that the forum's objectives are effectively achieved. These include the development of fun education programs, better communication between *PAUD* and *SD*, and approaches that take into account the different needs of individual children. Secondly, it is important to develop a concrete program within the *PAUD-SD* transition forum. The program should involve all relevant parties, such as early childhood and primary school teachers, parents, and the surrounding community. The program could include fun learning activities, strengthening social-emotional skills, and lesson planning that supports the transition process without emphasizing formal learning materials. The third is strengthening communication and information such as the need for more intensive and informative communication to parents regarding the transition process from *PAUD* to primary school. This aims to eliminate unrealistic expectations of children who are new to primary school, for example in terms of *calistung skills*, which are too imposed on *AUD*. The fourth is the development of an integrated curriculum by integrating the curriculum between *ECD* and primary school to synergize and harmonize, ensuring that the educational objectives at both levels can be achieved without burdening children with demands that are not in line with their developmental stages. Finally, the fifth step is to increase support from the local government, both in program development, teacher training, and the provision of resources that support the effective implementation of the *PAUD-SD* transition. With these steps, it is hoped that the transition process from early childhood education to primary school in Pulungdowo village, Tumpang sub-district, can run better, be more supportive, and provide a more meaningful educational experience for children and parents in the area.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in *EPSS Journal* belongs to the authors.

Acknowledgements or Notes

* This article was presented as an oral presentation at the International Conference on Management Economics and Business (www.iconmeb.net) held in Antalya/Turkey on November 13-16, 2024

* The Authors are supported by The Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi-BPPT) and The Education Fund Management Institute (Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan-LPDP) from the Ministry of Finance Republic Indonesia.

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To cite this article:

Andriana, C., Burhanuddin, & Sobri, A. Y. (2024). The transition policy from kindergarten to primary education. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational and Social Sciences (EPESS)*, 37, 60-69.