



Efforts to Improve the Quality of Early Childhood Education

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh Guru PAUD dituntut agar memiliki kompetensi yang mencakup pedagogik, kepribadian, profesional, dan sosial untuk mendukung perkembangan anak secara optimal. Guru berperan penting dalam upaya mengembangkan motorik anak didiknya, sehingga anak menjadi pribadi yang berkembang sesuai perkembangannya dan lebih bisa mandiri. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui upaya meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan guru-guru PAUD sebagai narasumber. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi guru menjadi faktor penentu keberhasilan guru dalam melaksanakan tugasnya memfasilitasi perkembangan anak. Keempat kompetensi guru (kompetensi profesional, pedagogis, kepribadian, dan sosial) harus selalu dikembangkan dan ditingkatkan dalam rangka menjaga mutu dan meningkatkan kualitas kegiatan pembelajaran di sekolah. Dukungan berbagai pihak menjadi hal yang penting dalam proses peningkatan kompetensi guru ini.

Kata Kunci: Kualitas Pendidikan, Anak Usia Dini.

Abstract

This research is motivated by the fact that PAUD teachers are required to have competencies that include pedagogical, personal, professional, and social to support children's development optimally. Teachers play an important role in efforts to develop their students' motor skills, so that children become individuals who develop according to their development and are more independent. The aim of this research is to determine efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education. This research uses a qualitative research design, this research involves PAUD teachers as resource persons. Based on the research results, it shows that teacher competence is a determining factor in teacher success in carrying out their duties to facilitate children's development. The four teacher competencies (professional, pedagogical, personality and social competencies) must always be developed and improved to maintain the quality and improve the quality of learning activities in schools. Support from various parties is important in the process of increasing teacher competency.

Keywords: *Quality of Education, Early Childhood.*

Introduction

Teachers are very important in guiding the younger generation to become quality and competitive human resources (HR) so that they can realize shared prosperity. According to (Ningsih, 2024) the history of civilization and progress of nations in the world teaches

us that it is not abundant natural resources (SDA) that dominantly lead a nation to prosperity, but competitive strength and superiority in science and mastery of technology (science and technology).) It is the nation that plays a role in achieving prosperity.

Even human resources who master science and technology tend to use their technology to master other nations' natural resources. In turn, all of this will influence the educational patterns that are preferred according to the demands of these tendencies. In this connection, according to (Kartika, 2022) education is challenged to be able to prepare human resources capable of facing the challenges of this trend without losing the personality and cultural values of the nation.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that the aim of national education is to develop intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence, develop the health and noble character of students. Furthermore, it forms students who are skilled, creative, and independent. Based on this, according to (Rifky, 2024) this goal is a challenge for educators (teachers), because this goal is the basic capital for students in navigating life in the present and future centuries. Furthermore (Nuary, 2024) explains that teachers must be able to deliver students according to national education goals and compete with the progress of the times. Although teachers and lecturers are not the only factors determining educational success, teaching is the central point of education and qualifications, as a reflection of the quality of teaching staff who make a huge contribution to the quality of education for which they are responsible.

Teachers have an important role in the world of education, the quality of students' learning depends on the teacher's competence in implementing education and learning at school (Djafri, 2024). According to Law (UU) Number 14 (2005) concerning Teachers and Lecturers, it is explained that teachers are professional educators who have the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating their students. Teachers must have academic qualifications, competencies, educational certificates, be physically and spiritually healthy, and can achieve national education goals. There are four competencies that teachers must master, namely: professional

competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, and personality competence.

In the field of early childhood education, teachers have a very crucial role in efforts to achieve optimal development in their students. Teachers, as one of the environments that interact directly with children, have a big influence in providing stimulus for various aspects of early childhood development, starting from gross and fine motor development, cognitive development, development of speaking and language skills, social-emotional development, and social development. moral. The quality of learning will always increase if educators have the competencies mentioned above. According to (Arif, 2024) the learning process will support and facilitate the physical and mental growth and development of children in their golden period as a basis for the next phase of development.

However, problems arise when the teacher who teaches does not have good competence as a professional teacher. Problems in the learning process according to Saepudin quoted (Ulimaz, 2024), PAUD teachers emphasize achieving children's abilities in reading, writing and arithmetic, paying less attention to the age and level of development of children in terms of physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional, as well as the use of methods, models and learning strategies that are not appropriate. According to Khairiah et al quoted (Sembiring, 2024) that the reality in the field shows that there are still PAUD teachers who have difficulties in managing learning, limited knowledge and skills, limitations in carrying out the teaching profession, and limitations in the ability to communicate effectively with students, colleagues. , parents/guardians, and the community.

This teacher competency problem will result in a decline in the quality of education. The decline in the quality of education will be the cause of less than optimal or hampered child development.

The importance of the qualifications of an educator or teacher cannot be ignored separated from efforts to encourage and

improve the quality of education (Kartika, 2021). According to (Arifin, 2024) teachers play an important role in the teaching and learning process and also as the main actor who directly interacts with students.

Therefore, teacher competence is one of the determining factors of educational success. Moreover, along with the development and progress of science and technology in the field of education, demands are placed on teaching staff the greater it is.

In the face of these challenges, Hafsa M. Nur & Nurul Fatonah quotes (Rohimah, 2024) explaining that teachers or educators who have it need adequate competency to improve the quality of students holistically. Where the competence possessed by an educator or teacher does not only revolve around mastery of teaching material, but includes the ability to build relationships with students, understand the needs of students and can also manage learning effectively.

Teacher professionalism is closely related to the ability to realize or actualize the competencies required for each teacher (Kartika, 2024). Mia & Sulastri quoted (Kartika, 2023) explain that competence itself is a set of knowledge, skills, and also task behavior that must be possessed, mastered, and can also be realized by an educator in carrying out his duties, especially in teaching in the classroom. This competency is a thing that becomes mandatory for teachers or educators who teach at primary, secondary and educational levels early childhood.

Another meaning of competency, Sum & Taran quoted (Marantika, 2020) explains that the specifications of knowledge, skills, and the attitudes a person has and their application at work, in accordance with performance standards required by the field. Competence owned by the teacher will show the true quality of the teacher. This competency will be realized in the form of mastery, skills, and professional attitudes in carrying out their duties.

As arranged in the regulations of the minister of education and culture number 137 of 2014 Teachers are required to have all competencies including pedagogical

competence, social competence, personality competence and professional competence which are integrated into their personality.

Teacher professional competence has an important role in creating an effective and quality learning process. Where professional teachers will be able to design learning strategies that suit their needs and create a pleasant learning atmosphere for their students (Kartika, 2020). Apart from that, Sulastri et al quoted (Paturochman, 2024) that professional competence also includes the ability to adapt to current developments where in the world of education teachers are required to be able to keep pace with developments in science. And also, technology which continues develop in society.

Based on the problems above, it is very important to conduct comprehensive research related to efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education.

Methodology

According to Rahardjo, quoted in (Arifudin, 2023), research methods are a way to obtain and search for tentative truths, not absolute truths. The result is scientific truth. Scientific truth is a truth that is open to continuous testing, criticism and even revision. Therefore, there is no best method for searching for the truth, but there is a method that is appropriate for a particular purpose according to the existing phenomenon. Budiharto was quoted in (Rusmana, 2020) that the choice of research method must be adjusted to the research being carried out so that the results are optimal.

This research seeks to analyze and describe efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education. The type of research used in this research is a descriptive analysis method. According to (Ningsih, 2023) descriptive analysis is empirical research that investigates a specific symptom or phenomenon in a real-life setting. The results of this research were collected using primary data and secondary data.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Taylor in (Ningsih, 2022), a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. According to (Fardiansyah, 2023) the method is to transcribe the data, then coding the notes in the field and interpreting the data to obtain conclusions.

This research uses qualitative research with field research methods (field research). According to (Nafisah, 2020) this approach is adapted to the main aim of the research, namely describing, and analyzing efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education. So that this method will be able to explain the problems of the research (Astuti, 2020).

Determining appropriate data collection techniques greatly determines the scientific truth of a research. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interviews, and documentation.

Engineering can be seen as a means of carrying out technical work carefully using the mind to achieve a goal. Even though the study is an effort within the scope of science, it is carried out to collect realistic data systematically to realize the truth. Research methodology is a means to find a cure for any problem. In this case, the author collects information about the analysis of efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education, articles, journals, theses, theses, ebooks, etc. (Khairani, 2023).

Because it requires material from the library as a data source, this research utilizes library research. Researchers need books, scientific articles and other literature related to the topics and problems they explore, both print and online (Khairani, 2024).

Searching for information from data sources requires the use of data collection techniques. Amir Hamzah in (Nuraliah, 2022) claims that data collection is an effort to collect information related to the subject under study. The author uses library research methods to collect data. Specifically, the

author started with libraries to collect information from books, dictionaries, journals, encyclopedias, papers, periodicals, and other sources that share views on efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education.

Amir Hamzah further said that data collection means various efforts to collect facts related to the topic or discussion that is being or will be explored (Susanto, 2022). These details can be found in scientific literature, research and scientific writings, dissertations, theses and other written sources. According to (Arifudin, 2020) data collection can be carried out in various circumstances, using different sources, and using different techniques.

Observation is part of the research process directly regarding the phenomena to be researched (Zebua, 2022). With this method, researchers can see and directly feel the atmosphere and condition of the research subject (Pahruraji, 2023). The things observed in this research are efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education.

The interview technique in this research is a structured interview, namely interviews conducted using various standard guidelines that have been established, questions are arranged according to information needs and each question is needed to reveal any empirical data (Hidayat, 2023). The data in this research was obtained by conducting in-depth interviews. Interviews make understanding the information provided by the informant clear. Interactions that occur between researchers and informants are also very likely to occur during the data collection process, so that the data obtained is more in-depth (Syahlarriyadi, 2023).

Documentation is a technique for collecting data through existing documents or written notes (Sulaiman, 2024). Documentation comes from the word document, which means written items. In implementing the documentation method, researchers investigate written objects, such as books, magazines, meeting minutes and diaries. According to Moleong in (Toharoh, 2024) the documentation method is a way of

collecting information or data through examining archives and documents. Furthermore, according to (Hassan, 2021) documentation strategy is also a data collection technique proposed to research subjects. This data collection method using the documentation method was carried out to obtain data about the condition of the institution (research object), namely efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education.

Muhadjir in (Fitriyah, 2024) states that data analysis is the activity of carrying out, searching for and compiling records of findings systematically through observations and interviews so that researchers focus on the research they are studying. After that, make the found material for other people, edit, classify, and present it.

Findings and Discussions

Before the teacher carries out teaching and learning activities, the teacher is obliged to know the character of the students who will be taught. After that, the teacher can plan the delivery of the material using a variety of interesting methods, fun strategies and make updates to teaching and learning activities. That way, learning using any subject will run effectively. Besides that, students will feel comfortable, enthusiastic and participate more in learning activities. So that learning objectives will be achieved optimally, and learning will be more meaningful for students.

Wuri Astuti was quoted as saying (Arifudin, 2024) that a teacher's ability to teach is very important for creating the expected teaching and learning process, especially in attracting and fostering students' learning motivation. To foster motivation in students, teachers are required to be more creative in teaching, teachers' insights are also expected not to be trapped in textbooks alone. However, teachers are required to be able to apply interesting ways of learning. Early childhood education gives children the opportunity to share their personalities. Therefore, early childhood education needs to provide a variety of activities that cover

various aspects of development such as cognitive, language, social-emotional, physical-motor, moral-religious and artistic development.

The existence of the Law on teachers and lecturers is of course an effort to improve the problems above so that from teachers who have competence and professionalism, it is hoped that students will emerge who have abilities in line with national education goals. Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers is a struggle as well as a commitment to improving the quality of teacher competence along with increasing welfare.

Raka Joni was quoted as saying (Syofiyanti, 2024) that teaching is inspiring and helps the occurrence of learning symptoms among students. Bowden and Ference were quoted (Sehudin, 2023) as saying that teaching does not mean transferring knowledge to students, but helping students develop their knowledge.

Galileo was quoted as saying (Ningsih, 2021) emphasizing that actually we cannot teach anything, we can only help students to find themselves and actualize themselves. Even though every human person has "self-hidden potential excellence", the task of educators to help students discover and develop their talents as optimally as possible is still not very successful.

The word teaching means giving the knowledge they have first to students so that they can understand (Mayasari, 2022). According to (Supriyadi, 2022) the word educate has a deeper meaning because apart from teachers having the task of teaching, they also have the responsibility to direct their students to become virtuous human beings. According to (Arifudin, 2022) a professional teacher is basically determined by his attitude, which means a level of maturity that requires willingness and ability, both intellectually and in prime condition in carrying out his duties.

Jacques Delors was quoted (Ningsih, 2019) as saying that improving the quality of education really depends on improving teacher recruitment, training, social status and working conditions. Teachers need to have

the right knowledge and skills, have personal character, have professional prospects, and motivation. Efforts that must be made are as follows. a. Efforts are needed to increase teacher income to improve their qualifications, namely by equalizing teacher salary payments in balance with expenses. Whatever program the government will implement but if teacher salaries are low will not work. It is clear that to meet their living needs, teachers will look for additional work to meet their needs. This increase must meet the needs for: Financing the development of in-service teachers, the implementation of teachers as professional educators and food, clothing, housing, transportation, health, books, conducting research and saving for the future. b. To meet the number of teacher procurement, the teacher procurement education program should be more aimed at selecting and sorting qualified prospective students rather than functioning as student development, so that the quality of the graduates is truly convincing like teachers who graduated before Indonesia became independent. The PAUD education program needs to: 1) Select prospective students who have adequate intelligence and for the employee class have attended professional teacher education. For prospective teachers, the minimum is a Bachelor's degree, or the professional teacher is a Master's degree with a minimum GPA of 3.3 and is skilled in managing the education process, 2) Applying the learning model: learning to know, learning to do, leaning to live together, how to be, which makes science a way of knowing to adapt to developments in the use of learning models. Learning that fosters the creativity of teachers in the field who are the "spearhead" in the implementation of education, 3) Having complete facilities and infrastructure with adequate funding, 4) Carrying out an evaluation system that assesses students in: ability to apply inquiry methods in learning to how, ability apply principles or laws to solve learning to do problems, the ability to learn to live together and learn to be. Meanwhile, in the second stage of evaluation, the aspects assessed are: willingness to plan and develop

programs, ability to manage the learning process, develop evaluations, analyze program strengths and weaknesses, and perfect programs, and 5) The results of human personality are the result of the process of transformation of knowledge and education. done humanistically.

A good teacher should be able to lead his students towards a better life and future because the future of adults today is largely determined by the way teachers teach today, such as a poem put forward by Delors 'The child is the father of the Man'.

According to Delors quotes (Ningsih, 2020) that education should be designed based on four basic ways of learning throughout a person's life, known as the pillars of education including: Learning to know, in the learning process every child is encouraged to understand their environment so they can live with dignity, develop skills to work in accordance with their field and to communicate. Ultimately the knowledge is understood in a fun way and through discovery. Even though knowledge continues to change and develop, if a scientific way of thinking is ingrained, then all the problems faced by children in the future will become challenges that they will always want to solve scientifically.

Delors was further quoted (Febrianty, 2020) that learning to know implies learning to learn, meaning learning to use all one's resources to concentrate, remember and think. Children should be encouraged to concentrate on objects or people, for example through games and doing scientific work.

In the learning process, learning can be taught by teachers through both inductive and deductive methods. However, for the PAUD level, it is better to go inductively through scientific skills, starting from the concrete to the abstract and from near to far, from simple to complex. Through the deductive method, children will know how knowledge is obtained.

In fact, if the necessary tools are not available at school, they can be replaced if the teacher is creative. For example, knowledge for science or cognitive development can use

objects in the classroom, surrounding environment, or brought from home. Because all these tools may have been seen by children, they may still be conceptually wrong. This is where the role of knowledge construction must be carried out by the child and facilitated by the teacher.

The difficulties experienced by children in understanding new knowledge in the field of study that has been taught by the teacher, because in the learning process students are not active in constructing their knowledge. As a result, this knowledge is only used to fill out rote written tests according to problems designed by the teacher without knowing the learning objectives.

Learning to do means the knowledge that children have acquired should be used in everyday life. It is important to train children to learn to do so that in the future the economy which originates from industrial profits depends on the ability to transform advances in knowledge into innovations that can produce new businesses and jobs. Children who are taught to do will know what to do to reduce their dependence on other people, because they are full of innovation.

In the classroom, learning to do is not taught to students, even if it is not taught continuously. This can be seen in the questions designed by teachers, which rarely or never use students' creative thinking skills. Student learning outcomes are only measured based on their knowledge. Learning can be developed in the classroom through group work, because innovations can be discovered when children carry out experiments in groups.

If learning is not taught in the classroom, the result will be that in the future something that is the result of innovation will rarely be sold so that the goods sold, or food sold on the market will soon be abandoned by consumers because they are boring. The long-term consequences will be unemployment and poverty. People who have good innovation will see problems as challenges. For example, cassava which is not delicious, in the hands of an innovator will become a prestigious food, likewise with various forms of amusement

parks, people quickly get bored, so innovators are needed.

Learning to live together, learning to live with other people (learning to live together, learning to live with others), will probably become a big issue in the world of education. Conflicts occur in various parts of the world and in Indonesia because of differences in ideology, class, ethnicity, race, religion, and belief. How cheap is human life, so that small things become big and destroy state facilities, companies, housing, and places of worship. The task of educators is to teach the diversity of human races, religions, tribes, groups and awareness of equality and interdependence among all humans. All of this is taught from an early age about diversity and equality. This awareness should be modeled by teachers, through acceptance of differences between students. This awareness can also be used as a theme in teaching students to respect other people and benefit from differences.

In the classroom, teaching students together can be done through group or teamwork. In group work or cooperation to achieve awards, children must be able to get out of routine habits, get out of differences and even get out of individual conflicts. In rural kindergartens where students are generally homogeneous, training in togetherness can be carried out among students with heterogeneous intellectual abilities and economic backgrounds. Generally, students who have higher intellectual abilities do not want to work together with students who have lower intellectual abilities because they feel they are at a disadvantage. This situation often makes children with low intellectual abilities become low in self-esteem, resulting in gaps between students in one classroom.

Most teachers do not use learning approaches that can generate togetherness, such as the cooperative learning approach in teaching students using the storytelling method. This togetherness can also be trained in children through group games such as fortifications and go back to the door. Here children are trained to work together so that

their group can become a great team. Through group work, children can learn to appreciate and respect each other's differences.

Learn to be yourself (learning to be). Education should be able to create humans who are complete in body and soul, intelligent, sensitive, have a sense of aesthetics, are responsible for themselves and humans who have spiritual values. Every human being must be able to develop freely, think critically and do what he believes in in different ways of life. Education should be able to make people free to think, feel treated fairly, free to work and imagine developing talents and be able to control themselves.

The four pillars of education above can be realized if the quantity and quality of teachers support good teaching and learning activities. Through quality learning, it is hoped that the world in which humans live will become a better place to live in, where people learn to respect rights, can demonstrate mutual understanding, and use the benefits of knowledge to further advance human development rather than emphasizing differences between humans alone.

Basically, learning objectives are the goals of every educational program provided to children. Muhammad Zaini was quoted as saying (Ramli, 2024) that the teaching and learning process is a process that contains a series of teacher actions towards students based on reciprocal relationships that take place in educational situations to achieve certain goals. The relationship or what is often called correlation is reciprocal between teachers and students, which means the main requirement for the teaching and learning process to take place. In this case, it is not just conveying messages in the form of learning material but also instilling attitudes and values in students who are learning. Teachers consciously plan teaching activities systematically by utilizing everything for teaching purposes.

Therefore, Harjanto was quoted (Sappaile, 2024) that teachers are one of the determining factors for the success of every educational endeavor. That is why every time there is educational innovation, especially in

the curriculum and improvement of human resources, the success of educational efforts always ends in the teacher's efforts. To overcome this problem, teachers are required to make innovations and improve their teaching effectiveness. To teach effectively, teachers must increase learning opportunities for students. These learning opportunities are increased by showing seriousness when teaching so that it can improve student learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research discussion, it can be concluded that teachers have an important role in the world of education, the quality of students' learning depends on the teacher's competence in implementing education and learning at school. Teacher competency is a determining factor in a teacher's success in carrying out their duties to facilitate children's development. The four teacher competencies (professional, pedagogical, personality and social competencies) must always be developed and improved to maintain the quality and improve the quality of learning activities in schools. Support from various parties is important in the process of increasing teacher competency. In the field of early childhood education, teachers have a very crucial role in efforts to achieve optimal development in their students.

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