

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR FAMILY EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

Parental involvement in early childhood education plays a vital role in the growth and development of children. Various research results show that parental involvement has a positive impact on parents and educators or managers of PAUD institutions must be in an excellent relationship to meet all children's needs. The aim of this study is to examine the involvement of parents in early childhood education in order to empower families in a digital age that is full of challenges, particularly in the context of the organization of quality early childhood education. This aims to inform parents of the importance of their involvement in the child education process and to establish good communication and collaboration between parents, educators and managers of educational institutions. This research uses a descriptive method of research with a qualitative approach. The research was conducted at TAUD SaQu Nurul Islam Al Husna Kota Cimahi, with the research subjects of 30 parents, 2 educators and 1 managers of PAUD institutions. Collection of data through interviewing techniques, observation and documentation studies. The results showed that: parental involvement in TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al Husna includes parenting activities, sharing information between parents and teachers through various communication media, parental volunteering, home learning assistance, involvement in decision-making, and parental participation in field activities. Through a variety of activities involving parents, making it more empowered to build a family force that can be beneficial to the child's success.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Early Childhood Education, Family Empowerment

Abstrak

Keterlibatan orang tua dalam pendidikan anak usia dini memiliki peran penting dalam pertumbuhan dan perkembangan anak. Berbagai hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan orang tua berpengaruh positif terhadap Orang tua dan pendidik atau pengelola lembaga PAUD harus terjalin hubungan yang baik agar terpenuhi semua kebutuhan anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji keterlibatan orang tua dalam pendidikan anak usia dini dalam rangka memberdayakan keluarga di era digital yang penuh dengan tantangan terutama dalam konteks penyelenggaraan pendidikan anak usia dini yang berkualitas. Hal ini bertujuan untuk membentuk pemahaman orang tua mengenai pentingnya keterlibatan mereka dalam proses pendidikan anak, serta membentuk komunikasi dan kolaborasi yang baik antara orang tua, pendidik, dan pengelola lembaga pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian dilakukan di TAUD SaQu Nurul Islam Al Husna Kota Cimahi dengan subjek penelitian adalah 30 orang tua, 2 pendidik serta 1 pengelola lembaga PAUD. Pengumpulan data melalui teknik wawancara, observasi dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: Bentuk pelibatan orang tua di TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al husna meliputi kegiatan Parenting, berbagi informasi antara orang tua dan guru melalui berbagai media komunikasi, kerelawanan orang tua, pendampingan belajar di rumah, terlibat dalam pengambilan keputusan, dan keikutsertaan orang tua dalam kegiatan lapangan. Melalui berbagai kegiatan yang melibatkan orang tua, menjadikannya semakin berdaya sehingga membentuk kekuatan keluarga yang dapat bermanfaat untuk keberhasilan anak.

Kata kunci: Keterlibatan Orang Tua, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pemberdayaan Keluarga

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INTRODUCTION

Families have a significant influence on children and play a role in managing child development (Bronfenbrenner 1986). Therefore, each family member plays an essential role in the child's development process, especially for each parent. Every parent is responsible for early childhood development and education. The importance of parental involvement in child education has been demonstrated in various studies. Furthermore, the research results of Park, Byun, dan Kim (2011) revealed that parental involvement contributes significantly to the achievement of children's development, both in cognitive aspects and other developmental aspects.

The Early Childhood Education Institute (PAUD) is one of the places where children are systematically educated. PAUD plays a role in helping parents support the development of children so that parents and educators in schools must work together to meet all aspects of the developmental needs of children. A good relationship between parents and school educators will have a positive effect on the child. On the basis of these considerations, it is clear that the involvement of parents in children's education is an absolute thing that must be done in every educational institution in order to optimize the development and objectives of children's education programmes. However, in reality, parental involvement in some PAUD institutions is still very minimal. This is because there is still a great deal of lack of collaboration between parents and early childhood education managers. Parents, educators or PAUD managers tend to meet only when there are issues to be discussed. Meetings should be held on a regular basis.

According to Hardin and Littlejohn (1994) regular meetings between parents and professionals allow them to build relationships and have the opportunity to discuss the strength of the child, not just the challenges or negative aspects of the child. In addition, if parents are not physically able to attend face-to-face meetings at school, then the PAUD institution manager should be able to encourage a variety of communication options, including home visits, letters and telephone conversations. Based on the description in line with the aim of this research, teachers and parents in each educational institution are aware of the importance of parental involvement in children's education in order to increase the intensity and quality of parental involvement.

TAUD SaQu Nurul Islam Al Husna is a Non-formal PAUD institution that focuses early childhood learning programs on memorizing the Qur'an and planting religious values in children. Researchers assume that it takes a good collaboration between PAUD institutions and parents to be able to help children learn to memorize the Qur'an well and consistently. This is an interesting thing to research because, in this digital era, family empowerment tends to weaken because there are some parents who work and submit their children's education entirely to PAUD institutions.

Parental Involvement

Sheldon (2002) defines parental involvement as the investment of resources by parents in children. While Coleman and Churchill (1997) provide a more descriptive definition, family

involvement can include many different components, including emotional support programs, providing parents with skills and knowledge, and communicating with the education provider about the child. Furthermore, McBride, Bae and Wright (2002) used the words "family-school partnership," "parental engagement" and "family engagement" to determine the process between school and family that improves children's learning.

Meanwhile according to Diadha (2015) the involvement of parents in children's education is a variety of activities carried out by parents through cooperation with teachers at home and at school, in order to maximize the development and education of children at school for their benefit, children and school programs.

Based on a literature review of parental involvement conducted by Rous, Beth, et.al (2003) The first step is to recognize and share knowledge about the importance of collaboration between parents and educators. Second, parents and educators must come together to develop ideas for them to work together to improve the well-being of children. It sets out specific objectives, continuous two-way communication, parental and professional support, parental empowerment and awareness of needs, contributions and barriers to all concerned.

Parental involvement models have been described by Epstein (2001), which includes six types of involvement, namely: parenting, communication, volunteering, home learning, decision-making, and community-based work. This model is based on the needs and expectations of different families and educators. Families and educators can work together to set goals and develop meaningful and appropriate best practices for both parties. There are six types of engagement, according to Epstein.

Table 1. Six Types of Parental Involvement According to Epstein

| Type | Involvement | Goal |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Type 1 | Parenting | Helps all families to build a home environment that can support children in learning |
| Type 2 | Communicating | Establishes effective communication between schools and home-schools regarding all school activities and their child's development. |
| Type 3 | Volunteering | Improves recruitment and organizing parents to help and support school activities |
| Type 4 | Learning At Home | Provides information and ideas to parents on how to help children learn at home and other activities that are in accordance with the curriculum in school. |
| Type 5 | Decision Making | Involves parents in making school decisions, and establishes leadership and parental representation |
| Type 6 | Collaboration with the Community | to identify and integrate community resources and services to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. |

Family Empowerment

From a language point of view, empowerment is meant to make a person more empowered. According to Mas'ood (Theresia et al. 2014) the definition of empowerment is defined as an effort to provide empowerment or strengthening. Furthermore, Karwati (2017) defines empowerment as one of the containers used to help the community meet the needs of citizens to learn in the form of knowledge and skills related to a better life in family and community life. The concept of empowerment is an effort to make something fair and civilized more effective in every aspect of life.

Family is defined as two or more people united by togetherness and emotional closeness and who identify themselves as part of the family (Friedman, Bowden, and Jones 2003). Furthermore, William J. Goode (Indrawati and Rahimi 2019) the family is defined as the smallest social unit human beings have as social beings characterized by economic cooperation. Thus, family empowerment means every effort of guidance and guidance given to the family in order to live a healthy, prosperous, advanced and independent life. While Murray et al. (Murray et al. 2013) stated that parental empowerment involves the ability of caregivers to meet the needs of their families while maintaining emotional control. Family empowerment can be seen from the confidence shown by parents in managing their children and the actions they take to meet their children's needs (Vuorenmaa et al. 2016). Family empowerment can also be interpreted as any non-formal effort to improve the family's knowledge and ability to identify problems, plan and make decisions to solve problems correctly, either with their efforts or other parties' help. The helplessness of the family in dealing with the problems contained in it encourages an effort to empower the family's function to run correctly and adequately. Family empowerment is essentially an act associated with high self-efficacy (Green et al. 2007; Ice and Hoover-Dempsey 2011). The family empowerment in this study is an effort to increase parents' role and function in educating their children through a program of parental involvement in early childhood education.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research examined the focus of research problems on parental involvement in early childhood education. This study's subjects were one principal, thirty parents, and two educators/teachers at TAUD SaQu Nurul Islam Al Husna institution, Cimahi.

Data collection techniques are by interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The interview was conducted by asking several questions to gather information about parental involvement activities in the school and their participation rate. Observations are carried out by observing various school activities involving parents. In the implementation of observations, not all the involvement of parents can be observed by researchers. Through documentation studies, researchers collect and obtain information from data or archives at TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al Husna related to parental involvement activities that have been carried out.

Furthermore, this research used data analysis in the field at the time of data collection and after collecting specific data. Data analysis in this study used Miles & Huberman model (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014), namely: 1) reducing data by selecting and summarizing the information obtained so that according to the focus of the research, 2)

presenting the selected data with the form of narration to describe the results of the research, and 3) conclude as to the final stage in achieving research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Analysis of the interview revealed that parental involvement in early childhood education at TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al Husna includes the following activities.

Parental Education

Parental education is the first form of parental involvement. Parents and educators play a key role in the education of children. Cooperation between the two needs to be established so that children's education is the same between school and home. Parenting is an educational activity for parents concerning the development and pattern of child care. All parents are involved in this activity. The school reports that the school communicates information about parenting activities to all parents through two events: formal letters and messages in the WhatsApp group of parents. Teacher interviews are known to be held every three months at the TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al Husna parenting program, which is a seminar on parents and children's themes. Materials and speakers for parenting activities have been identified by the school. Furthermore, through the parents interviewed, it is known that 15 parents have stated that they always follow parenting activities at school, and 10 parents have responded sometimes, while five parents never respond to parenting activities because they have to work. On the basis of the results, it is known that schools routinely carry out parenting activities through seminars to improve parents' ability to stimulate children's growth.

Communicating

The school obtains information about the characteristics and growth, and learning needs of children through several ways such as meeting parents and teachers, from questionnaires shared at the beginning and end of the semester, from home visit activities, and from teachers' notes on children's learning outcomes, or from other professionals such as health professionals who come to school. Based on these findings, the school collects information about children in various ways to obtain complete and accurate data. Furthermore, the communication channels used by the school are known that teachers and parents communicate through parent meeting meetings, through phone calls, contact books containing notes by teachers for parents or vice versa, personal meetings based on appointments, short messages in parent groups, and informal contacts that occur when parents drop off or pick up children to school. From the parents interviewed, most parents always ask the teacher about the child's development and always get information about the children's activities in school. Based on the interview, information was obtained that communication between the school and parents was established through various means, both formally and informally. Various communication media are also used by the school so that parents can choose the communication channel they like.

Volunteering

Involving parents as volunteers in school becomes an interesting activity. This form of involvement is more parents who give up their time to attend activities in school. Meanwhile, to act as a companion teacher in the classroom or even a resource for all parents interviewed is still not willing.

Learning at Home

It is known that the school has a children's learning progress book and a parents' connecting book. The book contains messages and tasks that parents should carry out when educating children at home. Most parents always accompany their children to study, encourage their children to do school assignments, and help their children memorize the Quran. Few parents know the learning methods used in school. It is not surprising, therefore, to have differences in how to learn between home and school.

Decision Making

The headmaster explained that some activities involve parents making decisions. Such as conducting a survey of parents to gather information as a consideration to make changes to the learning program. Alternatively, if specific problems arise, then the school, teachers, and parents arrange a formal meeting. Nevertheless, for important policy, the school already has a special committee in determining the decision. Furthermore, most parents who are interviewed are happy to be involved in making decisions, and a small number feel that whatever the school decides is the best for their child so that there is no need to provide input for the school.

Collaborating With The Community

The Headmaster stated that the cooperation activities with the community are carried out through a program of educational trips for children. Educational trip is an out-of-class learning activity by visiting a number of places of scientific value. The child will interact with the people in these places. In this activity, parents and teachers work together to prepare everything related to the implementation of these activities.

Discussion

Parental involvement in every educational activity has an impact on the achievement of children's interests and learning achievements. Some activities show that parents are aware of the importance of their involvement in children's education. Parenting is a routine activity that takes place once every three months, but not all parents can take part in the activity because there are some working parents. The problem can be resolved by organizing weekend activities to participate in these activities to improve parents' knowledge, understanding and ability on child development, parenting patterns, and child-related issues. This activity involves parents as students, where parents learn about parenting. This follows on from what Coleman (2012) stated that parents have a role as students by holding workshops or classes to improve their knowledge and skills. The school's way of engaging parents is also done by establishing a communication system. In accordance with type 2 parental involvement, according to Epstein (2018) his involvement in the form of communication activities that include a communication from school to home, from home to school regarding various school programs and children's development in learning. The availability of various communication channels between parents and teachers helps establish excellent and effective communication. Parents can choose the way they like to get information about their child. However, this condition certainly gives teachers demands because they have to use different communication mechanisms with parents. Teachers' information must also be understood and understood by parents because they have different levels of understanding. As Flett & Conderman (2001) has classified, teachers must use a language familiar to parents to provide information about children, and teachers must also

patiently explain concepts that parents do not understand. This is because every parent has a different level of understanding, so it takes the patience of both parents and teachers.

Volunteering is an activity that involves parents in the learning process. In this form of involvement, it is expected that the role of parents may be more intense, i.e. as resource persons or volunteer teachers in the classroom. However, it is still not possible to carry out these activities. So far, new parents have taken their time to take part in school activities, such as highlighting the theme event. Volunteering activities need to be carefully planned by identifying what activities parents are willing to help and what skills parents have to work with in the implementation of the learning process (Smith et al. 2011). In addition to school, parents should also be involved in children's learning at home. Parents act as a child's learning companion and as non-academic supporters, ensuring the child has finished doing homework, getting enough sleep, getting an adequate nutrition intake, and supervising the child's play environment (Hodgkinson 2010). Not all parents are directly involved in the education of children at home. This is because of the parents' routine, so that they do not have time to teach the children or to repeat the materials that have been given at school. Some parents also decide to call a private tutor to teach their children. This indicates that parents do not fully understand how to teach their children, or do not understand the materials and tasks of the teacher. Teachers and schools should therefore help families with the different skills required by their parents. As Morrison explained (2012) schools can provide books and materials for parents to help children at home, provide guidance on how to accompany children to study at home, or various media and facilities that can help parents develop or continue learning classroom.

In every school activity, there is always deliberation involving parents, teachers, and the school. This can be one of the efforts to improve parents' understanding of the importance of parents' ability in children's education. As Bruckman & Blanton explained (2003) allowing parents to make decisions and set rules leading to empowerment, and when parents feel competent and influential in their child's education, they see parental involvement as necessary. Further parental involvement is a field activity involving the environment and community groups such as field trip activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Parents' involvement in early childhood education needs to be well planned and synergized because the school needs to adjust the time, skills, experience, availability and commitment of parents to education and child development. Forms of parental involvement in TAUD Saqu Nurul Islam Al Husna range from parenting activities, sharing information between parents and teachers through various communication media, parental volunteering, home learning assistance, and involvement in decision-making, and parental involvement in field activities. The ultimate goal of parents' involvement in children's education is a collaborative partnership between families, teachers and schools that will see the advantages, uniqueness and need of each other. Parents will understand and have the ability to develop the growth of children. Parents who have been empowered and have a role to play in their child's education will therefore form a family force and, together with other programs, make it easier for children to succeed.

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