

Early Childhood Education Management as an Effort to Improve the Quality of Learning

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ABSTRAK

Manajemen pendidikan anak usia dini memiliki peran strategis dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran pada lembaga PAUD. Kualitas pembelajaran tidak hanya ditentukan oleh kompetensi guru, tetapi juga oleh bagaimana proses pendidikan dikelola secara sistematis dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji manajemen pendidikan anak usia dini sebagai upaya peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research). Data diperoleh melalui penelusuran dan kajian terhadap buku, artikel jurnal ilmiah, hasil penelitian terdahulu, serta dokumen kebijakan yang relevan dengan manajemen PAUD. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui studi dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan analisis isi (content analysis). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan manajemen pendidikan yang meliputi perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi pembelajaran berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran anak usia dini. Manajemen pendidikan yang efektif mampu menciptakan pembelajaran yang terarah, menyenangkan, dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan perkembangan anak.

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education management plays a strategic role in improving the quality of learning in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions. Learning quality is not determined solely by teacher competence but also by how educational processes are systematically and sustainably managed. This study aims to examine early childhood education management as an effort to enhance learning quality. The research employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. Data were collected through a review of books, scholarly journal articles, previous research findings, and policy documents relevant to ECE management. Data collection was conducted through documentation studies, while data analysis employed content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that the implementation of educational management encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of learning significantly contributes to improving the quality of early childhood learning. Effective educational management is able to create learning experiences that are well-directed, enjoyable, and aligned with children's developmental needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the primary foundation in shaping children's character as well as their cognitive, social, emotional, and moral abilities from an early age (Abdulkareem, n.d.; Nurfazri et al., 2024). Early childhood is widely recognized as the golden age, a critical period that greatly influences children's development in later stages of life (Qorry'Aina, 2023). Therefore, educational provision at this level must be carefully designed and optimally managed to provide appropriate stimulation in accordance with children's developmental needs. ECE institutions do not merely function as childcare centers but also as educational institutions that bear significant responsibility for developing the quality of human resources from an early age. The quality of learning in ECE is strongly influenced by how the educational process is managed. Proper management creates a safe, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment for children. Thus, educational management is an inseparable aspect of efforts to improve the quality of learning in Early Childhood Education.

Educational management in the context of Early Childhood Education encompasses various aspects, including learning planning, organization of resources, implementation of learning activities, and evaluation of both learning processes and outcomes (Rosmayati & Yulianti, 2022). Effective management enables ECE institutions to carry out educational functions in a systematic and well-directed manner. In addition, educational management plays a role in optimizing the contributions of educators, educational staff, facilities, and parental involvement (Resi & SUGIARTO, 2013; Rizkiyah et al., 2024). Without proper management, learning processes tend to be unstructured and less effective. This condition may lead to a decline in the quality of educational services received by children. Therefore, the implementation of professional educational management is an urgent necessity for every ECE institution. Appropriate educational management is expected to support learning activities that align with the characteristics and developmental needs of young children.

Despite the crucial role of educational management in Early Childhood Education, many ECE institutions have not yet implemented it optimally. Several institutions still face problems related to unsystematic learning planning that is not sufficiently based on children's developmental stages. Furthermore, the management of human resources, particularly the competence of ECE teachers, remains a significant challenge. Limited training and mentoring opportunities for teachers affect the quality of learning, which tends to be less varied and innovative. Learning facilities and infrastructure are also often not managed effectively to support children's learning activities. Another issue concerns the weak implementation of learning evaluation as a basis for continuous improvement. These conditions indicate that the quality of

ECE learning is highly dependent on how educational management is applied within the institution.

Research conducted by Musa and Uthartianti shows that the efforts of early childhood education managers in achieving accreditation focus on strengthening institutional management, improving administrative systems, and enhancing the quality of human resources. The study concludes that the accreditation process plays a significant role in improving the quality of educational organization and ensuring more systematic and accountable early childhood education services (Musa & Uthartianti, 2019). Research conducted by Firdaus and Ansori indicates that optimizing early childhood education management through community empowerment strategies contributes to improving the effectiveness and sustainability of educational services. The study highlights that active community involvement strengthens institutional management, supports learning activities, and enhances the overall quality of early childhood education programs (Firdaus & Ansori, 2019).

Research conducted by Wulan and Syaleh reveals that education management has a significant influence on learning motivation in early childhood education settings. The study finds that effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational management contribute to increased student engagement and motivation during the learning process (Wulan & Syaleh, 2023). Research conducted by Susiani et al. shows that efforts to improve the quality of learning play a crucial role in enhancing the overall quality of elementary school education. The study concludes that effective learning planning, implementation, and evaluation significantly contribute to improving student learning outcomes and educational quality (Susiani et al., 2022).

Although numerous studies have examined educational management in Early Childhood Education, there remain research gaps that require further investigation. Most previous studies tend to focus on specific aspects, such as leadership or partial curriculum management. Research that comprehensively examines educational management in ECE as an effort to improve learning quality is still relatively limited. Moreover, only a few studies explicitly link the implementation of management functions with the quality of early childhood learning. The diverse contexts and characteristics of ECE institutions have also not been fully accommodated in previous research. Therefore, more in-depth and contextualized studies are needed. This research gap forms the fundamental basis for conducting the present study.

Based on the background described above, this study aims to examine early childhood educational management as an effort to improve learning quality. This research seeks to analyze how planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating educational processes are applied in ECE institutions. In addition, this study aims to identify the role of educational management in supporting learning processes that align with children's developmental needs. The study is expected to identify managerial factors that influence the quality of ECE learning. The findings are

anticipated to provide empirical insights into educational management practices in Early Childhood Education institutions. Furthermore, the results are expected to serve as evaluative input for ECE administrators. Thus, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of early childhood educational management.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design, conducted in a systematic and well-planned manner (Majid, 2017). Practically, the research was carried out by identifying, collecting, and reviewing various written sources relevant to early childhood educational management and learning quality. Data sources consisted of reference books, scholarly journal articles, previous research findings, and educational policy documents related to Early Childhood Education (ECE). The literature search was conducted through national and international journal databases, both in print and online formats. Each identified source was then carefully selected based on topic relevance, author credibility, and alignment with the research objectives. The selected data were recorded and categorized according to the focus of early childhood educational management. This process was carried out iteratively until sufficient and representative data were obtained.

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis of the collected literature (Setiawan, 2018). The researcher carefully read and examined each source to identify educational management practices related to the improvement of ECE learning quality. Relevant data were then summarized, compared, and categorized into major themes, including learning planning, teacher management, learning implementation, and evaluation. Subsequently, the findings were organized into a narrative description illustrating the relationship between educational management and the quality of early childhood learning. Data validity was ensured by cross-checking findings from various literature sources. Finally, the results of the analysis were synthesized to comprehensively and contextually address the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quality of Learning

Learning quality is a primary indicator of the success of the educational process, as it reflects the extent to which learning objectives are achieved effectively and meaningfully (Kintu et al., 2017). High-quality learning is not measured solely by students' learning outcomes, but also by the processes that occur during teaching and learning activities. These processes include interactions between educators and learners, the use of appropriate learning strategies, and the creation of a conducive learning environment. Learning quality emphasizes how learners understand, internalize, and apply the knowledge and values they acquire. Therefore, learning

quality should be viewed as an interconnected system involving learning objectives, processes, and outcomes.

One important aspect of learning quality is systematic and well-directed lesson planning. Effective planning reflects educators' readiness to manage learning activities in accordance with learners' characteristics. In the planning process, educators are required to formulate learning objectives, select relevant materials, determine appropriate methods, and prepare supportive learning media and resources. Thorough planning enables the learning process to be conducted effectively and efficiently. Moreover, well-prepared lesson planning provides clear direction for both educators and learners, ensuring that learning activities have measurable and meaningful goals.

The implementation of learning is a key determinant in realizing learning quality. High-quality implementation is characterized by the active involvement of learners in the learning process. Educators act as facilitators who are able to create interactive, enjoyable, and challenging learning environments (Gautam & Agarwal, 2023). The use of varied, contextual, and learner-centered instructional methods enhances learners' motivation and interest in learning. In addition, educators need to pay attention to differences in learners' abilities and learning styles. Thus, effective learning implementation is able to optimally accommodate learners' diverse learning needs.

Another important aspect of learning quality is the competence and professionalism of educators. Competent educators possess strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and classroom management abilities. Educator professionalism is reflected in their attitudes, ethics, and commitment to carrying out instructional responsibilities. Professional educators are able to reflect on their teaching practices and continuously strive for improvement. Educator competence and professionalism directly contribute to learning effectiveness. With qualified educators, the learning process can take place optimally and sustainably.

Learning evaluation is also a crucial component in determining learning quality. Evaluation functions not only to measure learning outcomes but also to assess the learning processes that have been implemented. Through evaluation, educators can determine the level of achievement of learning objectives and identify challenges faced by learners. Evaluation results serve as a basis for improving and developing subsequent learning activities. Continuous and objective evaluation enhances overall learning quality. Therefore, learning quality is the result of an integrated and continuous process of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Early Childhood Education Management Strategies as an Effort to Improve Learning Quality

Early Childhood Education Management Strategies play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness and quality of learning processes in early childhood education institutions (Musa & Uthartianty, 2019). Early childhood education is a foundational stage that significantly influences

children's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development, making effective management a key determinant of educational success. Learning quality in early childhood education is not solely shaped by instructional practices in the classroom, but also by how educational processes are systematically planned, organized, implemented, and evaluated. Sound management strategies enable institutions to align educational goals with children's developmental needs, optimize human and material resources, and create a supportive learning environment that fosters meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, effective management ensures the consistency and sustainability of educational programs, supports teacher professionalism, and promotes continuous improvement in learning practices (Haydarova, 2024). Therefore, the application of comprehensive and strategic management approaches is essential as an effort to enhance learning quality and to ensure that early childhood education institutions are able to provide developmentally appropriate, engaging, and high-quality learning experiences.

1. Management of Early Childhood Education Planning in Improving Learning Quality

Planning is the initial stage that greatly determines the success of early childhood education management (Arthur et al., 2017). In practice, planning in Early Childhood Education (ECE) does not merely focus on the preparation of learning administration, but also on aligning learning activities with children's developmental needs. Effective learning planning includes the formulation of learning objectives, the selection of age-appropriate materials, and the design of educational play-based activities. Through careful planning, learning can be implemented in a directed and systematic manner. In addition, planning assists ECE teachers in preparing engaging and enjoyable learning strategies for children. Thus, learning quality can be enhanced starting from the planning stage.

In the context of ECE educational management, learning planning is carried out collaboratively between the head of the institution and teachers. The institution head plays a role in directing learning policies in accordance with the institution's vision and mission, while teachers translate these policies into daily and weekly learning plans. Collaborative planning enables alignment between institutional goals and classroom learning practices. Moreover, effective planning also considers the availability of facilities and infrastructure as well as the characteristics of learners. This is essential to ensure that learning activities are realistic and effective. With structured planning, the quality of ECE learning can be significantly improved.

Early childhood education planning must also adhere to the principle of learning through play. Learning activities are designed to allow children to learn through direct experience and social interaction (Yildirim & Akamca, 2017). Proper planning enables teachers to create activities that stimulate cognitive, social, emotional, language, and motor development in a balanced manner. Furthermore, effective planning helps prevent

monotonous and less meaningful learning experiences. Children tend to be more enthusiastic when learning activities are designed according to their interests and needs. Therefore, planning serves as a fundamental foundation for improving the quality of ECE learning.

Based on the literature review, it can be understood that weak learning planning is often a major cause of low learning quality in ECE institutions. Unsistematic planning results in learning activities that lack clear direction. Therefore, the management of early childhood education planning must be carried out seriously and continuously. Effective planning not only impacts learning effectiveness but also supports optimal child development. Thus, educational planning is a strategic step in improving the quality of ECE learning.

2. Management of Resource Organization in Early Childhood Education

Organizing is a management function that plays an important role in supporting the success of early childhood learning (Marlina & others, 2021). In practice, organizing in ECE includes the management of human resources, facilities and infrastructure, as well as the distribution of tasks and responsibilities. Teachers, educational staff, and institution heads each have complementary roles. Effective organization enables individuals to perform their duties optimally. With clear task distribution, the learning process can be carried out effectively. Therefore, organizing is a crucial aspect of ECE educational management.

Human resource management is a primary focus in ECE organization. ECE teachers should be assigned according to their competencies and educational backgrounds. Proper organization allows teachers to develop their professional potential in supporting children's learning. In addition, balanced task distribution can improve teacher performance and reduce excessive workloads. Institution heads play a vital role in coordinating all human resources. Through effective organizational management, learning quality can be significantly enhanced.

In addition to human resources, the organization of facilities and infrastructure also affects learning quality. A well-organized learning environment creates a comfortable and safe atmosphere for children. Educational play equipment, classrooms, and other supporting facilities must be organized effectively. Proper facility management enables children to explore and learn optimally. Thus, effective organization supports the creation of high-quality learning experiences.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that weak organization often leads to suboptimal ECE learning processes. Imbalanced task distribution and poor coordination among educators may hinder learning implementation. Therefore, organizational management must be planned and sustained continuously. Effective organization creates synergy among educational elements in ECE institutions. Consequently, the quality of early childhood learning can be continuously improved.

3. Management of Learning Implementation in Early Childhood Education

Learning implementation is the stage where planning and organization are put into practice. In the ECE context, learning implementation must be oriented toward the needs and characteristics of young children. Learning activities are conducted through purposeful and meaningful play-based experiences. Teachers act as facilitators who guide children throughout the learning process. Effective learning implementation enables children to learn actively and joyfully. Therefore, learning quality is strongly determined by how the implementation process is managed.

The management of learning implementation in ECE requires teachers to apply varied and creative teaching methods (Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2023). Teachers need to create interactive and communicative learning environments. Effective learning implementation encourages children to actively participate in learning activities. Moreover, teachers must adapt learning strategies to children's developmental conditions. With proper implementation management, learning becomes more meaningful and aligned with the objectives of early childhood education.

In learning implementation, management is reflected in the institution's ability to control and monitor the learning process. Institution heads play a role in ensuring that learning activities are carried out according to established plans. Monitoring and supervision are essential components of learning implementation management. Through effective supervision, learning quality can be continuously improved. Well-managed learning implementation has a positive impact on children's development.

Literature findings indicate that poorly managed ECE learning tends to be monotonous and less effective. This condition may reduce children's learning interest and hinder their development. Therefore, learning implementation management must be carried out consistently and sustainably. Effective learning implementation creates positive learning experiences for children. Thus, the management of learning implementation is a key factor in improving the quality of ECE learning.

4. Management of Learning Evaluation in Early Childhood Education

Evaluation is an essential component of early childhood education management that functions to assess the effectiveness of the learning process. In practice, evaluation in ECE is not solely oriented toward academic outcomes but focuses on children's holistic development. Evaluation is conducted to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved. In addition, evaluation serves as a basis for improving future learning. With effective evaluation management, learning quality can be continuously enhanced.

The management of ECE learning evaluation is carried out through observation, documentation of children's development, and reflective learning practices. Teachers play an active role in evaluating each learning activity. Evaluation results are used to adjust learning strategies according to children's needs. Continuous evaluation allows teachers to gain a deeper understanding of children's development. Thus, evaluation becomes an important tool in improving learning quality

In addition to teachers, institution heads also play a role in managing learning evaluation. Institution heads are responsible for coordinating and directing evaluation processes to ensure systematic implementation. Evaluation results can be used as a basis for managerial decision-making. Through well-managed evaluation practices, ECE institutions can implement continuous improvements. Evaluation also supports institutions in enhancing the quality of educational services.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that weak learning evaluation leads to stagnation in the quality of ECE learning. Without effective evaluation, learning weaknesses cannot be properly identified. Therefore, evaluation management must be a primary concern in the implementation of early childhood education. Systematic and continuous evaluation supports improvements in learning quality. Hence, evaluation management is a crucial element in realizing high-quality Early Childhood Education.

CONCLUSION

Early childhood education management plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning. The systematic implementation of management functions, including planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating learning activities, supports the creation of well-directed, effective learning processes that are aligned with the developmental needs of young children. Effective education management enables the optimization of educators' roles, the efficient use of facilities and infrastructure, and the management of a safe and enjoyable learning environment. Furthermore, continuous evaluation management serves as an essential foundation for ongoing improvement in learning practices. Therefore, enhancing the quality of early childhood education learning cannot be separated from the implementation of professional and sustainable education management within early childhood education institutions.

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