

Analysis of Early Childhood Education Management in Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education at TK Darul Fallah 3 Samarinda

¹Indah Kurnia Rahmawati, ²Pradiva Mei Saputri, ³Zahra Nur Habibah, ⁴Neyla Restyana Putri, ⁵Sharena Diva Dwiyantri, ⁶Hasbi Sjamsir, ⁷Fachrul Rozie

¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷Universitas Mulawarman, Indonesia

Corresponding E-mail: indahkurniarahmawati373@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) constitutes an essential foundation for shaping children's character, attitudes, and basic abilities before they enter the next educational level. At this age, appropriate stimulation significantly influences their growth and development. Therefore, PAUD institutions play a strategic role in providing a learning environment that is conducive, enjoyable, and aligned with children's developmental needs. To understand how PAUD institutions carry out their role, we employed a direct field observation method. Through observation, we gathered information regarding the organizational structure, curriculum used, facilities, resource management, and forms of parental involvement in supporting the children's educational process. This observation was conducted at TK Darul Falah 3, a PAUD institution located in Samarinda city. This institution holds a vision and mission to form participants who are devoted, intelligent, cheerful, and environmentally conscious. By conducting this observation, the students (researchers) gained an understanding of how the institution executes learning activities and school management to optimally support the children's growth and development.

Keywords: *Early-childhood education; PAUD management; observation.*

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is one of the essential foundations for shaping children's character, attitudes, and basic abilities before they proceed to the next educational level. At this age, appropriate stimulation significantly influences their growth and development. Therefore, PAUD institutions play a strategic role in providing a learning environment that is conducive, enjoyable, and suitable for the children's developmental needs. Furthermore, early childhood is a critical stage in a child's physical growth, inductive, emotional, and social development. The progress of mental and physical abilities is very rapid from birth up to six years old. To ensure that these stages of growth and development are directed and measurable, guidance through education must be provided.

Education is the right of every citizen, including education in early childhood, which is the right of citizens to develop their potential from an early age. Early childhood is the best foundation for developing a person's life in the future. The education provided in early childhood can optimize the child's basic capacity to receive education in subsequent years. Education is an organized, planned, and continuous effort (lasting continuously throughout life) aimed at developing human

beings/students into complete, mature, and civilized individuals (Suhardi et al., 2024). This PAUD institution provides educational services from ages 0-6, focusing on development and care, whether organized by governmental or non-governmental bodies. According to Santika et al. (2023), as a PAUD institution, it must provide competent educational standards to create a quality educational institution. Therefore, all this is inseparable from sound PAUD management.

High teacher performance will yield qualified students and realize the goals of early childhood education. However, not every early childhood teacher develops professionally through training. This finding was obtained during initial observation data related to funding for self-development. Salary is often used as the standard for an employee's welfare, but it is not the only one. The definition of teacher welfare is much broader than just salary. Factors typically related to welfare include: 1) Adequate facilities and infrastructure, 2) employment compensation (salary) that meets living standards, 3) a conducive, safe, and comfortable work atmosphere, 4) a fair, transparent, and collaborative work system, and 5) the ability for aspirations and creativity to thrive (Nuraeni, 2021).

In its simplest definition, a teacher is someone who imparts knowledge to students. In the view of society, a teacher is someone who carries out education in certain places, not necessarily in formal educational institutions, but also in mosques, prayer rooms, homes, and so on. Indeed, teachers occupy a respected position in society. It is authority that causes teachers to be respected, so society does not doubt the teacher figure. Society believes that teachers can educate their students to become individuals with noble personalities. One of the main factors determining the quality of education is the teacher. Teachers are at the forefront of creating quality human resources. Teachers directly interact with students in the classroom through the teaching and learning process. High-quality students will be produced by teachers, both academically, in skills, emotional maturity, and moral and spiritual aspects. Thus, future generations ready to face the challenges of their time will be created.

Teacher performance is essentially the output or work demonstrated by a teacher in carrying out their duty as an educator. The quality of teacher performance determines the quality of educational outcomes because teachers are the party most directly involved with students in the education or learning process within the educational institution. Formally, a teacher aims for optimal performance in realizing a quality and high-achieving school (Dewi & Suryana, 2020). Learning motivation in early childhood is vital for increasing their success in obtaining quality education and preparing them for the future (Julaiha et al., 2023). Young children tend to have high interest in learning, but they are also easily distracted by enjoyable things, causing them to lose focus. Therefore, early childhood education

management must be designed to enhance these children's learning motivation. One factor that can increase learning motivation in early childhood is by paying attention to their individual characteristics and needs (Haerani et al., 2024). Every child has different interests, needs, and abilities, so the teaching approaches and strategies used must be adapted to their individual needs (Setiawan et al., 2021). This can help increase children's interest and motivation in learning because they feel valued and understood. Furthermore, learning success in early childhood is also heavily influenced by a positive and supportive learning environment.

Early childhood education includes activity-based learning, concept understanding, social skills, creativity, and moral knowledge. PAUD can also help develop physical abilities, such as motor coordination and manipulative skills, as well as help develop language and cognitive abilities (Kholifatul Aulia & Pratama, 2025). Through effective early childhood education, children can be helped to understand the world around them, improve cognitive abilities, and learn in a fun and engaging way. In addition, PAUD can also help prepare children for formal education in the future. Children who already have the fundamentals of early education will adapt more easily to the formal school environment and possess the ability to comprehend the subject matter taught there (Susilahati et al., 2023).

The guidelines that can be used in managing school institutions are the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education. This regulation includes several important aspects in managing educational institutions, starting from the Standard for the Level of Achievement of Early Childhood Development (STPPA). Additionally, there are several other standards: content standards, process standards, assessment standards, standards for educators and educational staff, management standards, infrastructure standards, and financing standards. All these standards must be present in a school institution as an effort to improve the quality of education.

Generally, PAUD management is not significantly different from the management of other formal education, both in terms of the management functions executed and the domain or scope of the management object. From the perspective of management functions, it broadly includes: planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation functions. Meanwhile, the management objects include: personnel management (HR), budget (funding), curriculum and learning, administration (governance), infrastructure, public relations, and environment (Rahmalia & Agustina, 2025).

Furthermore, educational management is a dynamic process. This is understood because education must always be adapted to the spirit of the times to remain relevant to constantly evolving demands. Educational reform is both a

proactive and reactive response, as well as a necessity, to global demands, serving as an effort to adapt the education system to develop human resources capable of meeting the demands of the evolving era. In this regard, we conducted observations to gain deeper insights into the influence of the PAUD management system on improving the quality of early childhood education. This observation was carried out at TK Darul Falah 3, a PAUD institution in Samarinda city. This institution has a vision and mission to form students who are devoted, intelligent, cheerful, and environmentally conscious. By conducting this observation, the students (researchers) gained an understanding of how the institution executes learning activities and school management to optimally support the children's growth and development.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is qualitative, which is an approach aimed at understanding social phenomena in depth from the perspective of the participants or research subjects. The data collection techniques utilized were observation and documentation. Observation was used for both conducting interviews and direct field scrutiny, guided by a pre-designed list of questions that served as the evaluation instrument. Observation is defined as the systematic scrutiny and recording of the phenomena under study. The observation sheet was a structured format used throughout the data collection period. Specifically, this was a systematic observation, where the observer utilized a predetermined instrument guide. The key focus of the observation was the teacher's conduct and attitudes during the learning process (Suwaryaningrat, 2023).

Subject of Research

The subjects of this study were the teachers and students at TK Darul Fallah 3 for the 2025/2026 academic year. The key interviewee subject was the Principal of TK Darul Fallah 3. The overall objective of selecting these subjects was to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of the PAUD management system on improving the quality of early childhood education at the institution. The research was conducted at Jl. P Antasari Gang TK, Tlk. Lerong Ulu, Kec. Sungai Kunjang, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan.

Instruments

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation and documentation. Observation was used for interviewing and direct field scrutiny with the aid of a pre-prepared set of questions. The interview session involved two individuals: the Principal and one teacher of TK Darul Fallah 3. The following research-relevant questions were posed: (1) What is the Vision and Mission of this Institution in educating young children?; (2) Who is involved in the management of

this Institution?; (3) What curriculum is used here, and what teaching approach is employed?; (4) What facilities are available to support the children's learning process?; and (5) How does the institution involve parents in the children's education process?.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the observation conducted at TK Darul Falah 3 indicate that the institution has effectively and systematically implemented early childhood education management, particularly in practices aimed at Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education centered on the child. TK Darul Falah 3 is a private early childhood education institution located in Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province. The institution's vision is to foster students who are faithful and devout, possess Islamic character, are intelligent and cheerful, physically healthy, and environmentally conscious.

TK Darul Falah 3 operates under the auspices of the Yayasan Muslimat Pendidikan Adat Ulama Foundation, which serves as the organizing body and primary party responsible for the school. This foundation provides direction, policies, and support to ensure educational activities align with the established vision and mission. The organizational structure includes the Head of the Foundation, followed by the Principal, who is responsible for regulating all school operational activities. The Principal is assisted by administrative staff for data and general school administration. Furthermore, the school fosters a partnership with the school committee, referred to as the "Ayah Bunda Forum" (Father Mother Forum), which acts as a platform for cooperation between the school and parents in supporting educational programs and student development.

A school treasurer manages finances, ensuring transparent and effective fund usage. At the level of educational execution, the teachers are directly responsible for the teaching-learning process and the students' character development. The students constitute the bottom layer of the organizational structure and are the center of all educational activities at TK Darul Falah 3. All elements within this organizational structure coordinate and cooperate to create a safe, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment for the children.

TK Darul Falah 3 currently utilizes the Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) as the basis for implementing learning activities. This curriculum provides children with the freedom to learn actively, joyfully, and independently, according to their interests and developmental needs. In its application, children are given the autonomy to select activities they prefer across various play and learning centers (*sentra*). However, this freedom is supervised by teachers, ensuring the activities remain goal-directed and meaningful. The teacher functions as a facilitator

who mentors, observes, and stimulates children during the process of play and learning.

The facilities are designed to support children's play and learning activities through a center-based approach. Play activities take place both indoors and outdoors, utilizing diverse media and educational play tools (APE) appropriate for the early developmental stage. The school features several learning centers, including the Block Center, Role-Playing Center, Preparation Center, and Imtaq (Faith and Piety) Center. Each center is equipped with varied APE, allowing children to explore, imagine, and learn through direct, hands-on experience. These tools are arranged to be safe, attractive, and easily accessible for children to choose activities based on their interests. In addition to the play tools provided by the school, teachers and the school administration also collaborate with parents to provide various materials and media for play..

In efforts to improve the quality of learning and the competence of educators, TK Darul Falah III regularly conducts various human resource development activities, especially for its teachers. These activities are implemented both within the school environment and externally through training programs and professional forums. One of the routine activities conducted is the Learning Group Meeting (Kelompok Belajar - Kombel), which serves as a platform for teachers within the institution to discuss, share experiences, and deliberate on effective learning strategies tailored to the children's needs. These meetings are usually held at the school and function as a means for reflection and enhancing the teachers' ability to design creative and meaningful activities. In addition, teachers also participate in various external forums and activities such as the PKG (Teacher Activity Center) meetings and IGTKI (Indonesian Kindergarten Teacher Association) meetings.

Parental involvement is one of the crucial aspects supporting the success of the educational process at TK Darul Falah III. The school consistently builds strong cooperation between the school and parents through various programs and activities designed to ensure parents can actively participate in their children's development. At the start of the academic year, the school conducts a school program socialization event. During this activity, the school presents various information related to the learning process, annual programs, and the forms of parental involvement scheduled throughout the year. One of the key programs involving parents is the parenting program..

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the observation we conducted at TK Darul Falah 3, it can be concluded that the institution possesses a clear and well-coordinated organizational structure, ranging from the foundation, principal, administrative staff, treasurer,

teachers, and the students as the center of all learning activities. The curriculum used, such as the Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum), provides children with the space to learn in a way that is enjoyable, active, and aligned with their interests and developmental stage. The implementation of shared rules and agreements between teachers and children indicates that the school strives to build children's character from an early age through positive habits, values of discipline, and cooperation. Furthermore, the teacher's role as a facilitator strongly supports the creation of a democratic and meaningful learning atmosphere. In addition, TK Darul Falah III possesses adequate and safe facilities, along with strong parental support for providing learning media and school activities. The school assists teachers and parents through teacher training, professional forums, and parenting programs. By working together, we can create an innovative, unified, and child-centered learning environment that optimally supports the children's development in every aspect. Overall, TK Darul Falah 3 demonstrates efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education through structured management, the implementation of a child-centered Merdeka Curriculum, the provision of adequate and creative facilities, continuous teacher HR development, and active collaboration with parents. These management aspects are mutually supportive in creating a learning environment that is innovative, child-centered, and meaningful. In summary, the improvement in the quality of early childhood education at TK Darul Falah 3 is driven by the synergy between the quality of the learning process (Merdeka Curriculum), the quality of execution (teacher HR development), and the quality of the educational ecosystem (parental collaboration and adequate facilities).

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