

Optimization of Play Facilities (Indoor and Outdoor) as a Media for Holistic Development Stimulation in Early Childhood at KB/TK Kartika V-12

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze and describe the optimization of existing play facilities at KB/TK Kartika V-12 in supporting the learning process and holistic development of early childhood. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method with data collected through in-depth interviews and observation, the study found that the facilities at KB/TK Kartika V-12 are well-organized and sufficiently complete, encompassing indoor areas (such as reading corners and technological facilities) and diverse outdoor areas (including seesaws, swings, climbing ropes, and slides). These facilities are proven to serve as vital stimulative media, effectively supporting children's motor, socio-emotional, and cognitive development through dynamic play activities. The analysis shows that the availability of varied and well-organized facilities, consistent with the developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, encourages active exploration, social collaboration, and knowledge construction. Although challenges remain regarding maintenance budgets and limited storage space, the play facilities are overall crucial in creating a learning environment that is safe, enjoyable, and maximally supportive of early childhood development.

Keywords: *Play facilities; Optimization; Holistic development; Early childhood.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), early childhood refers to children in the age range of 0–8 years (Afifah et al., 2023). Play facilities at KB-TK Kartika V-12 were selected as the focus because they are considered capable of supporting holistic child development. These facilities are tailored to the needs and developmental stage of young children, ensuring that learning through play is both safe and enjoyable. The provided play equipment also assists in developing children's motor, socio-emotional, language, and creative skills Bunga et al. (2019), suggest that facilities can be managed creatively to introduce and arrange media, making the classroom environment more appealing and inviting for children to engage in play and learning.

Educational facilities encompass all tangible assets, such as equipment, materials, and furniture, directly utilized in the school's learning process. Educational infrastructure refers to all assets that indirectly support the educational

process. Facilities are intended to simplify the delivery of instructional content, while infrastructure facilitates the overall execution of education. Thus, the facilities and infrastructure at KB Kartika V-12 are deemed crucial as the school possesses educational play equipment that is safe, healthy, and appropriate for children’s needs.

The benefits of the outdoor play facilities at KB/TK Kartika for children include developing gross and fine motor skills, enhancing body coordination, balance, and agility. Furthermore, play fosters self-confidence, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, and teamwork. For teachers, these activities are valuable for increasing their understanding of play safety and their vigilance in supervising children. For the institution, outdoor facilities improve the quality of learning, diversify play areas, and reduce queuing time among children (Muhammad Akhlis Rizza et al., 2021).

Outdoor play at KB/TK Kartika serves as a vital platform for children to grow actively and healthily. The school features various play structures, including a globe climbing frame, swings, climbing ropes, slides, rainbow stairs, tunnel slides, seesaws, a wobbly bridge, complex ladders, and a letter snake-and-ladders painted on the floor. All these activities involve physical movement that trains gross motor skills, body coordination, and social abilities. Through outdoor play, children can exercise, interact, collaborate, and express joy in a safe and pleasant environment (Khadijah, 2022).

Outdoor play is instrumental in child development. Activities like running, jumping, climbing, and balancing develop coordination, muscle strength, and endurance. Outdoor play also stimulates intelligence and curiosity, enriching cognitive abilities and critical thinking. Furthermore, interactions during play, such as on swings or seesaws, nurture empathy, independence, and social skills. The environment encourages imagination, creativity, and enthusiasm for learning in a free and fun atmosphere (Ramdhani et al., 2022). It stimulates the development of physical-motor aspects, language (by practicing speaking and vocabulary), intelligence (through the recognition of sounds, sizes, shapes, and colors), and socio-emotional aspects (particularly in peer interaction and practicing turn-taking) (Agustriani et al., 2022).

METODE

Subjects of Research

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative method, aiming to understand in depth the selection and use of play facilities at KB-TK Kartika V-12 in supporting early childhood development. Data collection was conducted through interviews with teachers, the school principal, and educational staff directly involved in the use

and management of the play facilities. Interviews were conducted in a calm yet focused atmosphere to allow informants to share their experiences and perspectives. Questions covered topics such as the criteria for choosing play locations, the rationale for facility selection, benefits for child development, encountered constraints, and strategies used by educators to ensure safe and enjoyable play. Interview results were then analyzed by selecting and grouping related information, presenting it in a narrative format, and drawing conclusions from the data. To ensure data accuracy, the researchers compared information from multiple sources and verified it with the informants.

Instruments And Interview Questions

The research interviews employed a descriptive qualitative approach. By examining the existing play facilities at TK Kartika V-12, this study sought to address specific issues within the school. Accordingly, four questions were developed to guide the research and obtain the necessary data: (1) What are the play facilities available at TK Kartika V-12 Samarinda? (2) What are the benefits of play for children? (3) What is the impact of the play facilities at TK Kartika V-12? (4) What factors support and hinder the play facilities? The interview data collection between participants and the researcher took place indoors. The interview sessions were recorded, as the information obtained was considered essential for answering the research questions regarding the play facilities at TK Kartika V-12.

Data Collection

Data collection primarily utilized in-depth interviews and direct observation. The interviews between participants and the researcher were conducted in a dedicated indoor space. The interview sessions were recorded to ensure the capture of all necessary information pertinent to the research questions regarding the play facilities at TK Kartika V-12. Direct observation was conducted within the school premises to verify the physical condition, arrangement, and actual utilization of the indoor and outdoor play facilities by the children and teachers during learning activities.

The data analysis followed a qualitative methodology focused on generating meaning and understanding. The initial step involved selecting and grouping the information obtained from the interview transcripts and observation notes, focusing specifically on themes related to facility types, utilization benefits, impact, supporting factors, and constraints. This information was then processed and presented in a narrative format (descriptive narrative) to facilitate comprehension and analysis. Conclusions were drawn by synthesizing the grouped data, identifying recurring patterns, relationships, and the overall significance of the play facilities in supporting holistic child development at the institution. Verification was performed

by cross-referencing information from various sources (triangulation) to ensure the accuracy and validity of the final findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews conducted with the Principal of TK Kartika V-12 provided extensive information regarding the school's identity and the role of its play facilities:

Table 1. Institutional Profile of TK Kartika V-12

Institution Name	TK Kartika V-12
Address	Jl. Awang Long NO. 5, Bugis, Kec. Samarinda Kota, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan.
Contact	0812-5444-4440
Institution Tyoe	TK/RA
Principal	Ida Nuryanti, S.Pd.
Total Students	62 Students
- Male	28 Children
- Female	32 Children
Jumlah Pendidik	7 Teachers
Vision	To develop students with noble character.
Missions	1) Developing the intellectual potential of early childhood. 2) Preparing qualified students. 3) Preparing children for entry into basic education.
Goals	Fostering a generation with noble character, quality, and development consistent with their age level.

Analysis of Available Play Facilities

TK Kartika V-12 utilizes numerous facilities that actively support child development (Nur et al., 2019). These facilities include various forms of educational play equipment, each serving a specific developmental function:

1. **Globe Climbing Frame:** This apparatus supports the comprehensive development of gross motor skills, strengthening muscles and training balance. It also serves as a context for learning teamwork and coordination as children climb and push together.
2. **Swings:** A classic play item that stimulates the vestibular system, enhancing balance and body control. It is crucial for developing motor coordination and spatial orientation.
3. **Climbing Rope:** This challenges children's physical strength and courage. Climbing requires reliance on hand and leg strength and intensive coordination between the upper and lower body, boosting endurance and balance.

4. Traditional 'Asin' Game (Local Tag Game): This team-based game involves strategy, agility, and speed, promoting teamwork and developing quick reflexes and concentration in a group setting.
5. Slides: Highly popular, slides train courage, balance, and motor coordination. Climbing the stairs requires hand-foot coordination, while sliding down involves controlling body position for safety and stability.
6. Rainbow Stairs: The brightly colored steps encourage climbing while simultaneously promoting color recognition, motor coordination, and focus/attention span.
7. Tunnel Slides: A variation offering a distinct sensory experience. It develops balance and coordination while fostering courage and curiosity in exploring confined spaces.
8. Seesaws: Played by two or more children, seesaws teach balance and cooperation. The activity emphasizes the importance of communication and mutual assistance for smooth play.
9. Wobbly Bridge: This apparatus is excellent for training balance and motor agility as children must maintain stability while crossing an unstable surface, promoting focus and physical confidence.
10. Compound Ladder: A complex structure with multiple routes that challenges children's coordination and movement planning as they select routes and adjust their steps, enhancing gross motor skills and creativity.
11. Letter Snake-and-Ladders: This is an educational modification of a traditional board game. It helps children learn and memorize letters, numbers, and numerical sequences in an interactive and fun way (Fauzan, 2020).

Impact of Facilities on Learning Quality and Development

The active utilization of these school facilities is essential for children's holistic development, particularly their fine and gross motor skills. TK Kartika V-12 provides robust resources, including indoor facilities such as reading corners, APE, a projector, and a sound system, which are actively used in lessons. Based on research (Br Nasution et al., 2023), the adequacy of facilities directly affects student motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers at TK Kartika V-12 are encouraged to utilize every facility effectively to introduce new concepts. Furthermore, the use of technology-based facilities supports varied, creative, and enjoyable learning (Novita Sari & Miyono, 2023), enhancing learning efficiency and fostering digital literacy among both teachers and students.

The outdoor play facilities are critical in supporting early childhood growth. Outdoor play provides opportunities for free movement, environmental exploration, and physical development (running, climbing, balancing), which directly trains gross motor skills and coordination (Milky et al., 2024). Beyond

physical benefits, outdoor activities foster cognitive and language skills, as children learn rules, solve simple problems, and communicate with peers. Natural settings enhance physical endurance, happiness, and psychological well-being by providing a relaxing environment (Fanhas et al., 2020). Through social interaction during play, children acquire social and moral abilities, such as cooperation, discipline, and empathy, leading to the early internalization of character values. Effective outdoor facilities management thus reflects sound ECE institutional management, ensuring a safe, healthy, and fun learning environment that stimulates holistic development, self-confidence, and positive character traits.

Supporting and Constraining Factors

Analysis of the implementation of play facilities at KB/TK Kartika V-12 reveals several supporting and constraining factors:

1. **Supporting Factors:** The strong supporting factors include the diversity of outdoor play equipment, which is crucial for developing gross motor skills and social competence. The combination of teacher-made and commercially purchased APE provides varied and meaningful learning. Furthermore, indoor facilities (reading corners, projector, sound system) enhance learning activities. Financial support from the government (BOP Fund) and parental contributions (SPP), managed through the foundation, ensures maximal allocation for facility procurement and maintenance.
2. **Constraining Factors:** Constraints include safety risks associated with some equipment, necessitating strict supervision. Limited funding for new facilities and maintenance, due to reliance on the foundation and parental fees, poses a challenge. Limited storage space for APE, leading to the use of the main hall for storage, restricts common activity areas and increases the risk of damage. Finally, the varied educational background of educators means that the capacity of some teachers to design optimal play-based learning activities needs further enhancement. These issues require systematic planning for maintenance, capacity building for teachers, and reorganization of play areas for greater safety and developmental support.

Theoretical Alignment (Piaget and Vygotsky)

The facilities at TK Kartika V-12 align significantly with developmental theories. Vygotsky's theory (1969) posits that play is a primary source of cognitive growth, asserting that knowledge acquisition stems from active interaction with the environment. The varied facilities—from the Globe Climbing Frame to the Letter Snake-and-Ladders—provide rich opportunities for exploration, social interaction, and motor skill development, consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on supportive social tools and environments. This implies that the facilities function as essential social and educational spaces (Hum, 2020).

Similarly, the environment supports Piaget's theory (1952), which states that children actively process experiences by developing and reorganizing mental structures. The outdoor playground, with its dynamic equipment, allows children to learn while moving and exploring. Activities like balancing, collaborating, taking turns, and self-regulating naturally promote the development of cognitive and social skills. In essence, the comprehensive environment at TK Kartika V-12 ensures that learning is meaningful and enjoyable, fostering physical, intellectual, and better social character (Purwulan, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings at TK Kartika V-12, it is concluded that the available facilities are sufficiently complete and optimally support children's holistic development. Resources such as the reading corner, projector, sound system, and diverse outdoor play equipment (swings, climbing ropes, rainbow stairs, and seesaws) provide enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Consistent with the theories of Vygotsky and Piaget, the safe and engaging play environment encourages children to be active explorers and to learn through real-world interaction. Teachers play a critical role in utilizing facilities to ensure activities remain both educational and safe. Nonetheless, challenges such as limited budget and storage space require more optimal management to ensure the sustainable use of these crucial resources.

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