Teacher's Strategy to Stimulate Cognitive Development of Early Children in the New Adaptation Period

Umi Hani1*, Na’imah2
1,2 Piaud Uin Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
*Corresponding author: 20204031011@student.uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

Changes in the implementation of learning by combining online and offline models during the new adaptation period require a new strategy for kindergarten institutions. The impact of change requires teachers to carry out effective and fun learning strategies in stimulating all aspects of early childhood development. This study was conducted to analyse the strategies that have been carried out by kindergarten teachers to stimulate the cognitive development of early childhood in the new adaptation period. This type of research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach. Sources of data in the form of documents (learning, photos, and videos) and credible sources. Qualitative data was collected through observation, documentation and in-depth interviews. The analysis was carried out inductively, continuously until the final findings of meaningful research were found. The results showed that the teacher's strategy stimulated early childhood cognitive development by: 1) presenting interesting themes and activities that are packaged in the form of stories (one of which is child adventure), 2) using a scientific approach and playing, involving family members, prioritizing learning resources for school and local wisdom based on projects at home, 3) using procedures and effective methods, 4) the application of norms for the success of children's achievements through process and outcome. The conclusion shows that the teacher's strategy in stimulating cognitive development is by preparing a clear plan of learning objectives and activity programs, implementing adaptive, effective and collaborative learning, normative evaluation and counselling guidance services.

Keywords: Teacher strategy, cognitive development, early childhood, new adaptation, covid-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teacher's strategy to stimulate the cognitive development of early childhood during the new adaptation period is a post-COVID-19 demand. The impact of changes in the implementation of transitional education from offline, online, blended learning and back to...
offline learning is maximal (Amin & Sundari, 2020; Dinh & Nguyen, 2020). The government, schools, and teachers continue to make efforts to realize a learning process that is appropriate, effective, meaningful, and friendly. Teachers are the most important educational component in the learning process in schools. The learning system that must be developed demands attention, hard work, and synergy with parents, the community, the government, and appropriate learning technology by changing traditional face-to-face learning to conventional learning models towards learning with technology that is not limited to the industrial revolution 4.0 (Arora et al., 2021; Onyema, 2020). Distance learning requires teachers and students to interact and transfer knowledge online using various platforms in the form of applications, websites, social networks or learning management systems (Basiliaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Zaccoletti et al., 2020). The reality is also able to solve the problem of student delays in acquiring knowledge. Online learning perceived by teachers is different from distance learning for early childhood. Early childhood does not yet have independence in accessing and communicating directly with teachers. Early childhood still needs a lot of adult assistance and guidance. Some of the teaching obstacles experienced by kindergarten teachers in general during the COVID-19 pandemic were found such as communication problems, learning methods, materials and costs as well as the use of technology (Agustin et al., 2020; Antara & Dewantara, 2022), inadequate facilities and infrastructure, less than optimal delivery of material, the burden of buying internet quotas, internet connections that sometimes become sluggish, learning styles that tend to be visual, and the teacher's lack of flexibility in controlling children's activities (Harahap et al., 2021; Pertiwi et al., 2021). The teacher must prepare interesting activities and adjust the activity materials around the child, stand by monitoring the activities carried out by the child via WhatsApp, and the assessment is only through videos/photos (Astuti & Harun, 2020). Teachers also experience stress and difficulty preparing learning videos (Purnomosidi, 2021; Safrizal et al., 2021), should work more creatively and extra in preparing lesson plans (materials, methods and daily lesson plan), implementation, and evaluation used during the online learning process which is different from before being affected by COVID-19, so that it can attract students' interest and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers must also pay attention to several things that are considered important such as the condition of the family environment.

The full online learning policy is slowly finding new solutions along with various government policies to conduct face-to-face meetings. Online distance learning has been passed and currently requires teachers to change strategies and adaptations towards blended learning, face-to-face combinations of offline and online, and home visits (Mahartini & Tristaningrat, 2021; Suhendro, 2020; Sulha, 2020). Responding to the above phenomenon so that it does not have a systemic impact and so that early childhood teachers are better prepared to implement learning activities based on the new normal concept, the teacher must implement a new strategy, ways, steps, patterns used in implementing learning during a pandemic so that the objectives and aspects of learning can still be achieved properly and effectively (Suhendro, 2020). Research studies on teacher strategies in maximizing early childhood development during the COVID-19 pandemic include, firstly, research at the Al-Azhar 41 Islamic Kindergarten in Palembang in learning science that involves parental activity which begins with socialization, science tutorials and mentoring in the learning process starting from the process, preparation and evaluation and strengthened by environmental observation material (Zulaiha & Rohman, 2020). Similar research in several kindergartens in Yogyakarta was dominated by teacher strategies by giving assignments at home and activating collaboration with parents (Harlistyarintica & Harun, 2021). Second, research at Omah Dolanan Kindergarten YWKK Yogyakarta which focuses on local wisdom to maximize language skills by enriching Javanese language through teacher video tutorials (Nurkhasyanah & Sri, 2021). Seeing the background above, the researcher is interested in
conducting further research. The novelty of this research is the uniqueness of Darussalam Plus Kindergarten Tempelsari, Maguwoharjo Depok Sleman, which during the new adaptation of the COVID-19 pandemic applied a combination of online and offline learning with shifts. This case certainly demands a strategy that is in accordance with the characteristics of the school curriculum and the needs of the child. A strategy that requires a lot of precision in stimulating children's development, especially cognitive development abilities.

2. METHODS

The researcher uses a qualitative descriptive research method with a case study research approach. Case study is a research method that carefully investigates an event, program, activity of a group of people and is limited by time and the activities of the informant (John, 2020). In this case is focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the teacher's strategy in stimulating the cognitive development of early childhood which is located in Darussalam Plus Kindergarten, Maguwoharjo, Depok, Sleman. The research has been carried out for a period of 3 months, namely August 2021 to October 2021. Data collection techniques with in-depth interviews and documentation. In-depth interviews aim to dig up the necessary data. Researchers prepared a number of questions to respondents related to teacher strategies, various learning activities, learning processes and evaluation of children's cognitive development. Respondents interviewed were principals and teachers of Darussalam Plus Kindergarten Maguwoharjo. Documents used in the form of semester programs, weekly programs, assessment results, photos, videos, and writings that provide an overview of the concept of teacher strategies in optimizing children's cognitive development during the new adaptation period. Documentation analysis is managed to help check correctness and facilitate description. The data analysis technique uses the qualitative data analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1992), where the researcher consistently performs data reduction, categorizes data, presents data and repeats data collection if necessary to arrive at conclusions. Checking the data using triangulation, where the data obtained are compared with one another to reach a data validity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Darussalam Plus Kindergarten has a unique plus program in assisting the Koran with the Iqra' method. This program is a flagship program and individual mentoring that gets special attention, so during the COVID-19 pandemic, a policy of mentoring was decided through a combination of online and offline learning with a limited group model. In addition to mentoring the Koran, the institution also provides assistance with learning difficulties in the development of knowledge of Islamic religious education and six aspects of child development. Departing with a vision of intelligence, creativity and noble character, the Darussalam Kindergarten institution shows the intention to actualize intelligent concepts in logical thinking, problem solving, acting and making decisions in line with the stages of early childhood cognitive development. During the new adaptation period, the Darussalam Kindergarten institute adopted a shift of offline learning policy starting in January 2021 with an allocation of 1 hour, and each child received services twice a week. Because offline activities are widely used to maximize the Koran Iqra, the development activities for the six aspects of early childhood development are carried out online and become a shared responsibility between schools and families. The strategy taken by the teacher in stimulating children's cognitive development is clearly described in Table 1.
Table 1. Teacher Strategies in Stimulating Cognitive Development During the New Adaptation Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Learning strategies</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Qualification of the goal must be achieved</td>
<td>The teacher chooses an interesting theme and activity name according to the child's needs, the child's cognitive development stage, close to the child, challenging, fun and not burdensome to parents. The teacher determines the competencies and indicators needed according to the specified theme and the expected goals in developing logical thinking skills, problem solving and symbolic thinking.</td>
<td>Children's cognitive qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The right approach</td>
<td>The teacher uses a home and school-based approach, a scientific approach, a play approach, involving family members, a home project approach, using textbook learning resources and local wisdom sources.</td>
<td>Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Effective procedures and methods</td>
<td>The teacher carries out the initial procedure by setting a time, sending learning videos, guardian RPPM sheets and practical instructions on how to accompany children methods using demonstrations, assignments, role playing, experiments, conversations, and projects.</td>
<td>Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Application of the norms of success</td>
<td>Teachers control the success of children with parents, motivation, rewards for children and parents, providing counseling services for developmental achievement difficulties and observing children's achievements through videos, photos, assignments and conversations in class.</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the Table 1, 4 main things for teachers to stimulate early childhood cognitive development during the new adaptation period are cognitive quality, approach, procedure, and success. The teachers at Darussalam Kindergarten carry out a good planning strategy in choosing themes, the quality of cognitive development is adjusted between themes, competencies, indicators and stages of the child's age. Theme is a tool that contains activity materials to develop competence as a whole, chosen by the teacher from the closest things, starting from simple things, interesting for children and adapted to children's interests. Among the themes prepared are myself, my family, my environment, animals and plants, which are then developed into interesting and fun activities. Activities are presented in an activity story like I am a resident of my house, The teacher's strategy in the cognitive learning approach is carried out in a combination at home by involving parents as companions and learners and is carried out in schools with limited time to share with other aspects of developmental ability assistance. The involvement of parents in Darusslam Plus Kindergarten at home and at school appears to be manifested in 1) the readiness of people to prepare facilities and infrastructure for learning needs at home such as learning resource materials and infrastructure to complete children's health protocols while at school and provide adequate nutritional intake for children, 2) supervising learning activities at home, 3) supervising and communicating with schools and 4) providing motivation.
Exploration of children's cognitive abilities at home and at school is carried out collaboratively with parents and teachers through a scientific approach in the form of observing, asking questions, gathering information, reasoning and communicating. Cognitive development activities at home are packaged in play activities such as playing sand tracing footprints of the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, playing with limb shadows, playing grouping clothes. Utilization of learning resources in schools uses a lot of teaching aids at school and assignment assignments through textbooks to stimulate the ability to number objects, while learning resources for activities at home pay attention to local wisdom that is easy to find and get at home, such as recognizing all objects in the house. The learning procedure by the teacher is carried out by sending an activity plan with the guardian formatted in the Weekly Learning Plan which contains 2-3 cognitive activities, with learning tutorials through videos and teacher guidance orally and in writing via WhatsApp and voice notes, dividing cognitive activities that need to be accompanied by the school and parents at home. The activity guide includes activity objectives, learning resources, methods used, inspiring activities that can be carried out and parental support for children. The last teacher's strategy is controlling or assessing the achievement of children's cognitive development through observation, assignments, and apperception conversations in class with children with a process and outcome approach. Assistance at home with process and outcome assessments through videos of children's activities and photos combined with follow-up conversations by the teacher in person. While activities at home are not always optimal, many parental obstacles are found by teachers such as maintaining the child's mood, parental opportunities and the way parents provide assistance, the strategy used is to strengthen it with motivation and counseling services for adventure models and Adrelian therapy (An Integrative Model of Adrelian Play Therapy). Teachers also give rewards to children and parents for their cooperation in assisting children's development at home.

Discussion

Learning strategies are generally interpreted as strategies that have an understanding as a course of action to achieve predetermined goals. Strategy can be interpreted as general patterns of activities between teachers and parents in early childhood education to achieve the expected educational goals (Rachman, 2021). Research findings indicate that during the new adaptation period, Darusslam Plus Kindergarten teachers carried out cognitive development stimulation strategies which were supported by several previous studies. The strategies taken include determining the planning of themed learning concepts. Interesting theme planning will facilitate the process of absorption of knowledge and be effective in improving students' abilities (Apriyanti, 2017; Arimbi et al., 2018). Then affirmation of learning objectives by selecting indicators of cognitive development. The goal of being a specific and measurable development marker to monitor children's development according to their stages is part of the teacher's strategy that must be thought out carefully (Tatminingsih, 2019). Children's cognitive development during the new adaptation period will not run optimally without a strategy that activates the involvement of parents and family members. The existence of online and offline learning that is different from usual requires all parties from teachers, parents, family members and students to work together. This collaboration positions teachers as activity planners and assessors of learning outcomes while parents act as mentors for children at home in monitoring the learning process (Hewi & Asnawati, 2020; Yulianingsih et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the family is the part that contributes to the development of cognitive and neurocognitive, personality and effective and perfect educational functions (A’yun et al., 2016).
An equally important strategy is the selection of a scientific approach and play that clearly provides space for children to use their senses to explore, are trained to think critically at home and at school. Previous research has proven that the scientific approach provides full opportunities for children to explore, provide experiences for children. learn through the scientific process and are interested in doing it at home (Astuti & Harun, 2020; Utami, 2017). Packaging cognitive activities through play will train cognitive structures, master abilities and skills in a fun way and be liked by children (Fadillah, 2019; Heru Kurniawan, Marwany, 2020; Rahmatika, P., Hartati, S., & Yetti, 2019). In addition to the selection of the accuracy of the method used by the teacher (Sofia, A., & Syafrudin, 2020), The selection of learning resource strategies according to the value of local wisdom is also the right way for the new adaptation period because it does not burden parents, provides a very close experience with children, is easy to accept and provides direct experience, activates everyday problem solving at home, is sensitive to the environment, easy met and very friendly (Ramdani & Sapria, 2017; Sudarwiyani, 2020; Yuniatari & Suyadi, 2021) and become an optimal learning resource in stimulating children's development (Rahmawati et al., 2022). While establishing communication with children and parents is a substantive strategy in helping students achieve success in learning (Duta et al., 2015; Khan, A., Khan, S., Zia-Ul-Islam, S., & Khan, 2017) mentions that the social intelligence of teachers will facilitate the learning process in the classroom and eliminate the saturation of class students, especially communication with parents in online learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to continue to hone their communication intelligence. Teacher competence as a reflection of the professionalism of educators is not only adept at communicating with students, but also to parents/guardians and the community (Suhandani, D., & Kartawinata, 2014). This fact is confirmed by research which indicates that communication is an important variable in learning interactions and is directly related to learning objectives (Awang & Daud, 2015; Duta et al., 2015). In order for the cognitive development process to be achieved effectively, meaningful learning can be built, then the communication between teachers and students needs to be built properly (Wisman, 2017).

Strategy in the assessment process requires clear media and commitment. The assessment process at Darusslam Plus Kindergarten is good and effective through video observations and photos. This media not only has many features but is also very easy because it has a very easy to understand interface (Hewi & Indari, 2021; Riadil et al., 2020). Agreement on the use of media at the beginning of learning. To understand the achievements that need to be developed by children, standards are needed by setting activities that are easier to understand, easy to do and the school program is well achieved. This concept is in line with previous study that stated the success of online and offline learning evaluations is supported by training at the beginning of learning (Oktarina & Fatonah, 2021). The strategy of conducting guidance at the beginning of the school year and the beginning of weekly activities proves that another task of the teacher is as a counsellor (Prawitasari, 2020; Purwaningsih, 2021) While in the middle of implementing teacher learning counselling with techniques that combine adventure and play therapy. This technique is very effective because it provides an opportunity to integrate the needs of the child, the characteristics of the child and the involvement of the parents (Izzaty et al., 2017). Success the development of cognitive abilities is characterized by the ability to think abstractly and the ability to think deductively-hypothetical. Individual development in cognitive abilities cannot be measured in general, because there are still determinant factors that determine cognitive abilities, such as culture and social environment (Khiyarusoleh, 2016). Cognitive development, competence and expected learning outcomes in children are children who are able and have the ability to think logically, think critically, can give reasons, be able to solve problems and find causal relationships in solving problems (Anggreani, 2015). The achievement of cognitive abilities
can be maximized in learning through appropriate learning strategies and appropriate, continuous and sustainable stimulation. Stimulation that was initially recognized by children in their family environment can be developed by the teacher through play activities, games, modelling and fun assignments. Stimulation is also needed as a means of mental development and the readiness of children to adapt to an environment that is in tune with their cognitive development. Follow-up efforts need to be conducted research or continuous evaluation of the school to determine the level of success of the strategies used, supporting factors and obstacles found.

4. CONCLUSION

The strategy carried out by Darussalam Plus Kindergarten teachers in stimulating early childhood cognitive development through a combination of online learning with mentoring that activates parental involvement and offline is limited in number and time. The teacher’s strategies include clarity of goals and programs through interesting themes and activities packaged in the form of children's adventure stories, choosing a learning approach that activates parents through play, a scientific approach, learning resources for school and local wisdom, project-based at home, selection of procedures and methods. that is effective and applies the norms of success for children's achievements through process and outcome assessment, motivation, counselling services and rewards to children and parents.

5. REFERENCES


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