

The Stimulation of Sense of Community on The Early Childhood' Online Learning

Eka Sukmadewi, A.A.P.¹, Tirtayani, L.A.²

^{1,2}Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Singaraja, Indonesia

✉ aaputuekasukmadewi3@gmail.com¹

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 April 2021
Received in revised form
25 April 2021
Accepted 28 April 2021
Available online 8 July 2021

Keywords:

*Sense of Community,
Stimulation in Early
Childhood Education,
Teachers Performance,
Online Learning*

ABSTRACT

The change of conventional learning into online learning process due to COVID-19 pandemic had brought a significant change towards sense of community stimulation. Direct learning activities are needed considering that the early childhood education progress emphasize sense experiences in which a direct interaction between teachers and students. A dynamic interaction could improve roles as a part of society (sense of community). It was designed in the form of descriptive quantitative to find out a clear picture about the sense of community stimulation conducted by the teachers of The Early Childhood Education Program in North Denpasar, Bali. Proportional random sampling was used to choose the participants. Questionnaire was the instruments used in this study in which it was spread by using Google Form. The data were analysed quantitatively by using statistical descriptive in the percentage form. The findings showed that sense of community stimulation done by the early childhood teachers was positive in the percentage of 85,94 %. The other results were viewed from four indicators such as; teachers' knowledge categorized as positive (79,59%), the sense of community stimulation strategy in the positive category categorized in strongly positive (86,52%), the sense of community stimulation's planning, strategy categorized into strongly positive, and the collaboration and enrichment were strongly positive (92,16%).

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1. Introduction

Children's social development is really important for their growth and maturation process. A good social development is started from children's socialization process toward the environment that will provide them the future knowledge and skills. The skills of interacting and socializing with other people in order to be a part of community or society is called sense of community. Sarason as cited in Rahmadhan Umar and Suryanto (2019) defines that sense of community as a perception of several existent senses, such as; a sense of equality with others, a sense of independence with others, a desire of defending ourselves by giving or doing something with others, and there is a sense of being a part of a certain community that creates a close emotional social relationship. It is a nature that human cannot live alone which means that they need other's help. Therefore, the sense of community is essential to be stimulated for early childhoods, so children will have a skill of being a community's part.

A sense of community skill is defined as a habit of social-emotional relationships formed in the community. Children are social beings that will be a part of a community in which they should have basic social skills for establishing a strong relationships. McMillan and Chavis (1986) state that sense of community is a feeling or sense that shows that every member of the community has a bound sense, a mutual sense where every member is valuable in that community, and a belief of having similar needs that can be filled through a commitment of being together. It can be concluded that a sense of community is an early childhood skill of having an interaction and socialization dynamically to increase their self-values and roles as a part of a community.

The recent issue reveals that the sense of community skills of the early childhoods cannot be developed well due to the rapid changes in the society that is caused by COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesian government publishes a new regulation which is about a social distancing that causes a distance interaction and socialization occurs in the society. In addition, COVID-19 pandemic also affects another field such as

education. Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture publishes an instruction through the regulation number 1, 2020 as a prevention of COVID-19 in which it demands every stakeholder to conduct a distance learning or online learning.

The emergence of COVID-19 gives a significant changes toward the activities in stimulating children's abilities particularly in the early childhood education program. It is found that there is a new problem faced which is the lack of stimulation toward children's social skills that will be a forming basis of sense of community. The early childhood education program needs a more specialized and direct service than other educational levels. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic occurs, school is the best place for stimulating the social emotional skills of the early childhood students. Students can be free to socialize and interact with their friends and meet a lot of people in around their neighborhood. Pooley et al., (2008) found that primary school children spontaneously defined sense of community in terms of people, places for activities and interaction, and co-operation. The changes also occurs to the learning process. The conventional learning that is conducted before is effective for covering all the aspects such as; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor but now it is changed into a distance learning. It significantly influences the early childhood students' development. Further, several vital roles that schools played in supporting the community at large. These included being a source of community knowledge, supplying a common meeting place and offering a point from which to develop networks of support and friendship. More widely, it has been contended that communities should be understood as settings that can foster interdependence, mutual commitment, and provide support, with the notion of helping being the core element (Barrera, 2000).

Students tend to have an experience that build their knowledge and motivate them to be a better individual when they conduct a face to face activities at school. The early childhood education is an educational level which has a strategic role in developing children's early potential for fulfilling their growth and preparing them to be ready to join the next educational level (Sudrajat, 2020). Schools, as social institutions, have an important role to play in forming and maintaining constructive geographical and relational communities (Witten, McCreanor & Kearns, 2007). The early childhoods require others' assistance because they cannot manage their psychiatric in dependently particularly regarded to their social interaction and emotional.

There is a degradation toward some aspects of children's development during the distance learning. The observation shows that the religious moral, cognitive, physical psychomotor, language and art can be stimulated well through the assignments given by the teachers and it is done by the students at home with their parents' guidance. On another hand, the social development cannot be achieved well or it can be said that it experiences a significant degradation viewed from several aspects such as; self-awareness, responsibility, and their prosocial behavior during the online learning. It is influenced by the learning system used in the early childhood education program which is the task-based method used by the teachers, so the intensity and frequent of the task given by the teachers stabilize students' psychiatric (Sukatin, 2020). The lack of students' social skills emerges an inhibition toward the stimulation of sense of community that can be seen through the limited interaction done by the students during the online learning. It also significantly affects students' learning interest, motivation, and their social abilities. These distractions are logic consequents of online learning in which it can give a negative influence towards the early childhood students that cannot be controlled (Mashar, 2015).

The stimulation method used by the teachers should fulfill the students' development and increase their learning interest during the online learning. Effendi (2008) states that stimulation is an activity to stimulate children's basic ability to grow and develop optimally. Every child needs to have a routine stimulation as early as possible at every chance that can be done by their mother, father, caregiver, and other people who are close with them. Habituation method is one of methods that can be used to develop children's sense of community at home. It is stated that habituation is a way that can be done by familiarizing children to behave based on the value and norms in the society. Habituation is an effective way used as the early education to build children's social abilities considering that the early childhoods have a strong memory and it is an early stage to build their self-character which makes them easier to be stimulated at home. The values that have been embedded in the children selves will be invested for their adulthood. The habituation can form the sense of community for the early childhood which is really needed to be built in this modern era (Arief, 2002). Therefore, teachers have to concern on the many aspects particularly the early childhoods' characteristics and development in arranging online based-learning.

However, the online learning conducted in every school is still not optimal enough for stimulating the sense of community skills for the early childhoods in which it only develops students' cognitive skills, religious moral, physical psychomotor, and language and art. It is relevant to the daily facts where the early childhoods dominantly do an academic learning process which emphasizes students' skills at reading, writing, and counting. It shows that their sense of community is poorly trained during the learning process. The fact indicates that the learning process has to be developed into a relevant process of children which is

implementing the learning concept through a fun activity (playing) assisted by habituation method. This study is aimed at elaborating the sense of community stimulation for the students conducted by the teachers of the early childhood education program during the online learning.

2. Methods

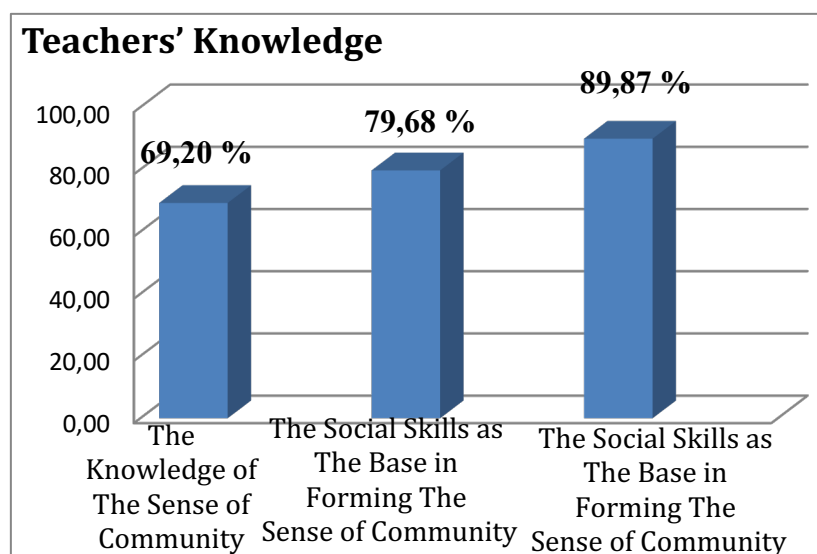
Descriptive quantitative was used as a designed of this study in which this study was purposed to show a systematic picture of the condition faced by the object or subject of this study. The approach used in this study was qualitative research (describing the findings in the form of numbers and sums (Sugiyono, 2013). The sample of this study was determined by using proportional random sampling from 11 sub-districts, such as; Pemecutan Kaja, Dauh Puri Kaja, Dangin Puri Kauh, Dangin Puri Kaja, Dangin Puri Kangin, Tonja, Peguyangan, Ubung, Ubung Kaja, Peguyangan Kaja, dan Peguyangan Kangin.

There were 179 teachers of the early childhood education program were involved in this study. They were asked to fill the instruments of this study which was questionnaire spread by using google form. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items which covered four aspects of sense of community; teachers' knowledge of sense of community, the stimulation strategy of sense of community, the sense of community planning and implementation, and collaboration and enrichment during the online learning process. Likert was used as the scale of the questionnaire in which the scale was started from 1 to 4. The questionnaire has been checked for the validity and it showed that the questionnaire was valid to be used. The obtained data were analyzed quantitatively.

3. Findings and Discussion

The data were gained from the answers of each variable in the questionnaire in which it consisted of 30 items. The following section was the discussion about the measurement of teachers' effort in stimulating the sense of community in the learning process conducted in the early childhood education program. The measurement was conducted descriptively by analysing the stimulation abilities of the sense of community done by the teachers of the early childhood education program in North Denpasar in which it involved 179 teachers with four indicator aspects, such as; teachers' knowledge of sense of community, the stimulation strategy of sense of community, the sense of community planning and implementation, and collaboration and enrichment during the online learning process. it was found 85,94 % in the scale which was categorized as strongly positive.

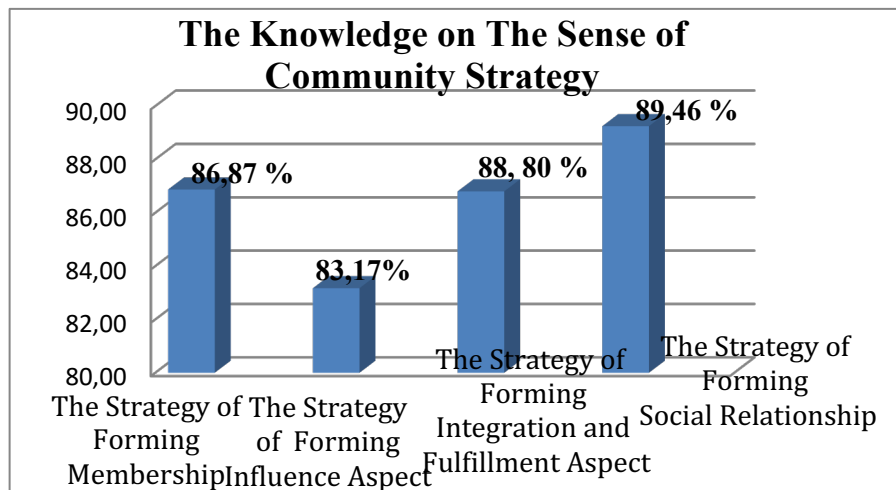
The calculation result of the sense of community stimulation data in the early childhood education program viewed from the four indicator aspects, can be seen as follows;



Picture 1.
The Histogram of Teachers' Knowledge on The Sense of Community in The Online Learning Process Conducted in The Early Childhood Education Program.

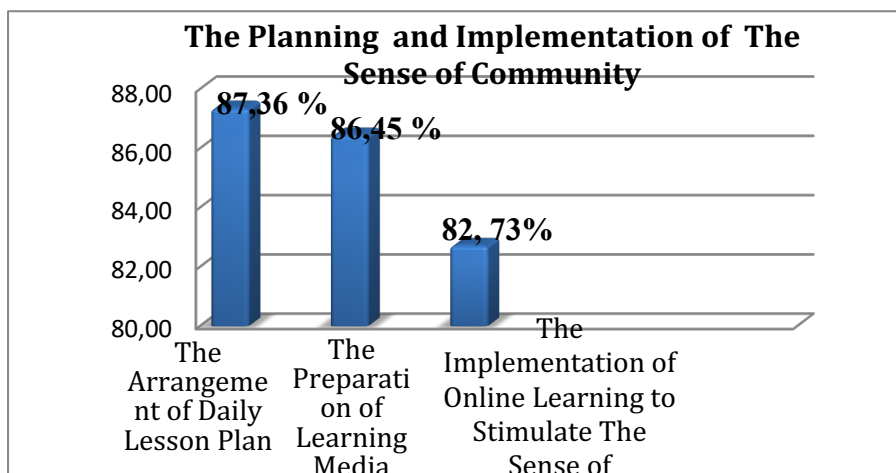
Based on the calculation from the indicator of teachers' knowledge related the sense of community stimulation toward the students in the online learning process conducted in the early childhood education

program, it was found the average number in the percentage of 79,59 %. It was converted into the criteria table to create the meaning. The finding was in the scale of $70\% \leq P < 85\%$ which showed a positive criteria.



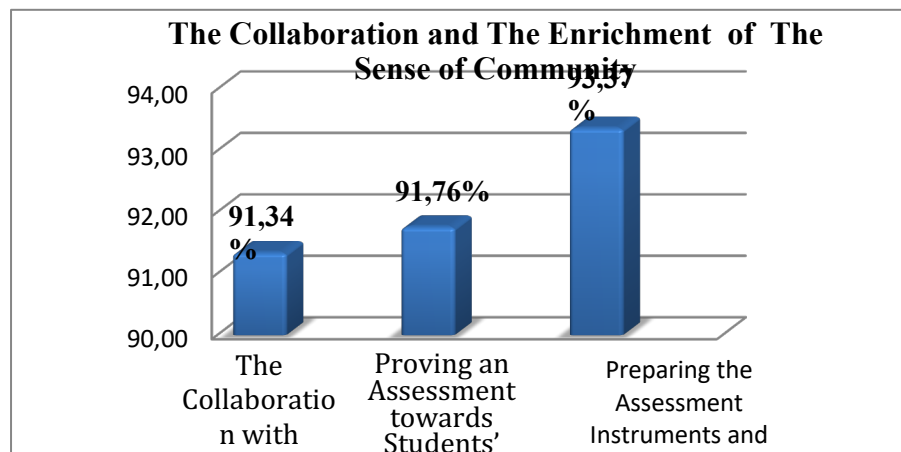
Picture 2
The Histogram of The Knowledge on The Sense of Community Strategy in The Online Learning Process Conducted in The Early Childhood Education Program.

Based on the calculation result on the teachers' strategy in stimulating the sense of community for the early childhood students during the online learning, it was found that the percentage was 86, 25% in which it was converted into the criteria table particularly the percentage was in the scale $85\% \leq$. It means that it was categorized in the strong positive criteria.



Picture 3.
The Histogram of The Planning and Implementation of The Sense of Community in The Online Learning Process Conducted in The Early Childhood Education Program.

Based on the calculation result on the planning and implementation of the sense of community during the online learning process, it was shown that the average number was in the percentage 85, 51 % and it was converted into the criteria table to get its meaning. It was found that the percentage was in the scale $85\% \leq P$ and it was categorized as a strong positive criteria.



Picture 4

The Histogram of The Collaboration and The Enrichment of The Sense of Community

Based on the calculation on the collaboration and enrichment of the sense community conducted in the online learning process, it revealed the average number in the percentage of 92.16% and it was in the scale $85\% \leq P$ in which it was categorized as strong positive criteria after it was converted into criteria table.

The setting of this study was the early childhood educational programs in North Denpasar on the academic year 2020/2021. This study aimed at investigating the efforts done by the teachers in stimulating the sense of community abilities. The percentage showed 79, 59 % in which it could be categorized as a positive result (good). It was relevant to the study conducted by Mashufaf et al (2019) conducted a research that focused on the perception of the early childhood teachers which covered the importance of social emotional development of children. If the children already had a social emotional readiness, then they would able to build a harmonious relationship with the society easily. Gagne (2013) mentions the organization or community is one of many ways to contribute to the society because it can provides an opportunity for individuals to develop prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior within the organization or community can improve academic achievement, positive self-esteem, positive relationships with others, even higher prosocial behavior than before (Penner et al., 2005). The stimulation strategy of the sense of community used during online learning in the early childhood education program was shown in the percentage of 86. 52 % in which it could be categorized as a strong positive. The planning and implementation aspect had a percentage of 85.51 % which meant that it had been categorized into a strong positive (very good). Teachers already had the prior knowledge in using an appropriate planning and implementation for the students. It would help them to increase the social values that would promote students to interact and socialize. The collaboration and enrichment showed the highest percentage with the scale of 92.16 % categorized into strong positive criteria. Teachers could not conduct a direct learning to their students due to the COVID-19 pandemic therefore a good collaboration between students and teachers in stimulating the sense of community for the students. It was essential considering that the early childhood students still faced a difficulty in accepting teachers' instruction.

This study found that the knowledge and efforts in stimulating sense of community done by the early childhood teachers during the online learning showed a positive. The finding was supported by Irwanto (2020) has what had been stated that a successful online learning was optimized by a good communication between teachers and parents. Teachers had a role in giving an instruction and the parents had a role in explaining and implementing the meaning of the instruction for the children. The stimulation efforts given by the teachers towards the early childhood students were conducting optimally and parents were supposed to assist it in achieving a successful learning process. A good collaboration between teachers and students are essential for the early childhoods' development considering that they are not ingenious enough in accepting and understanding teachers' instruction independently. It was caused by the lack of experience and knowledge related to online learning. This condition demanded the parents to guide their children during the online learning process. Nur and Sutoyo (2016) stated that parents had an important role in motivating their children to be engaged in the learning process, supporting their children, giving reward, and controlling their development, and building a good relationship with the schools' stakeholders.

The parents could report the picture or video which was about the learning process conducted by students when the teachers were giving an assignment to them. They could report their children's work through social media, such as; Whatsapp. Teachers gave a feedback in the form of praise and reward as a stimulation to increase their learning motivation. On another hand, the students who did not work optimally

would be given an enrichment and repairment. The parents also had a role as a facilitator in optimizing the collaboration during the online learning in which it was not created naturally but it was instructed and guided by the schools' stakeholders before conducting the learning process. The relevance between the studies above was the collaboration aspect between parents and teachers and the lesson plan determined into a strong positive criteria.

The sense of community abilities could not be formed naturally but it should involve other people and the environment. The sense of community ability was a skill that helped students to interact and communicate with other people in a certain community in order to build a strong social emotional relationship. In the early stage, children would face many experiences. Teachers' role influenced their social skills that would also affect their academic achievements. It was supported by Rachman and Cahyani (2019) who stated that social skills had a bigger impact than students' academic development. Social skills had a positive influence toward academic development in the early of elementary school. Parents and teacher are the people who involved the most in children's life. They have to synchronize the learning process to motivate students to behave as their ages and norms in the society. It could be denied that education in their family are the basic of their characters (Freeman & Munandar, 2000). It was relevant to the study conducted by Devi, et al (2017) which revealed that there is a positive relation that is significant between sense of community and social emotional skills. Graziano et al (2007) found that an individual who had a high social abilities would have a higher empathy, friendlier, generous, and tend to be cooperative and socialize. In addition, the individual were also warmer and love to help others. It was relevant to Hussain (2012) who stated that an individual who had a lower social skills would be related to the aggressive behavior, selfish, unconcerned, unfriendly, rude, and suspicious with others. While the absence of a sense of community can make people in the community feel isolated, alienated, and feel alone (Farrell et al., 2004). Therefore, sense of community stimulation was essential for the early childhoods. Children tend to imitate how their parents behaved. Moreover, the influence given by their family would be remained by the children. The collaboration of the parents in which they became a facilitator for their children in order to stimulate the sense of community. It is not created naturally but it was guided and instructed by schools' stakeholders before the learning process was conducted. The relevance of the study was the collaboration aspect done by parents and teachers and the arrangement of the learning process that determine the strong positive category.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that sense of community stimulation occurred in online learning process of the early childhood education program in North Denpasar was categorized as strong positive. Sense of community stimulation in the early childhood education program was conducted by involving the collaboration between parents and teachers. The positive stimulation activities were supposed to give a crucial influence toward the early childhoods' development particularly the ability to socialize and interact with others, so the children can be a part of community. Related to the sense of community stimulation during the online learning, it still needs a hard effort to give an essential impact toward their future. The ability of sense of community is a skill that assists children to interact and build a well communication with other people in the community in order to form a strong social emotional relationship. The impact can be viewed from the behavior that will be formed for the children in which they will have an empathy feeling, solidarity, friendly and love to help others, and they will socialize easily to create a good social emotional relationship in the community.

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