



Challenges and implementation of assessment in early childhood: A case study at PAUD BA Banyuaeng

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Abstract

Assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) serves to monitor children's development, but various obstacles are still encountered in the field. This research aims to identify challenges, analyze assessment techniques and instruments used by early childhood education (ECE) educators. This study employs a qualitative approach with subjects being teachers at PAUD BA Banyuaeng Klaten. Data were collected thru observations, interviews, and document analysis related to assessment practices in early childhood education (ECE). The research results show that the application of various assessment techniques, such as formative assessment, portfolios, and direct observation, can enhance educators' understanding of child development. In addition, observation sheets and assessment rubrics have proven effective in providing a comprehensive picture of children's progress. These findings indicate that educators need to receive training to develop skills in applying appropriate assessment techniques and instruments, so they can address existing challenges and support the optimal development of early childhood.

Keywords: child development, early childhood education assessment, techniques and instruments.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the process of providing comprehensive developmental stimulation to children from birth to six years of age. At this stage, a child's growth and development are greatly influenced by the roles of parents, family, and educators. The family, as the first environment, has a strong emotional closeness with the child, thereby making a significant contribution to the foundation of development. As children grow older and begin attending early childhood education services, the role of educators becomes increasingly crucial in continuing and optimizing the process of developmental stimulation (Habsy et al., 2023). Early Childhood Education (ECE) not only provides basic knowledge but also plays a role in developing social, emotional, and cognitive skills that impact a child's future success.

Optimizing child development requires appropriate stimulation thru directed, planned activities that align with early childhood characteristics. The stimulation is carried out by stimulating, guiding, facilitating, and developing the child's potential thru meaningful learning experiences. Positive experiences during early childhood education (PAUD) have been proven

to enhance academic readiness and minimize the risk of behavioral problems. In this context, the learning process in early childhood education (PAUD) is not only oriented toward play activities but also includes monitoring children's development thru an assessment system that aligns with the principles of early childhood education. Assessment conducted accurately allows educators to obtain comprehensive information regarding children's developmental achievements, while also serving as a basis for designing learning strategies that meet the individual needs of each child (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2022; Nisa et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of assessment in early childhood education (PAUD) is not without various challenges. Educators are required to conduct authentic assessments continuously thru various techniques, such as direct observation, anecdotal records, portfolios, and documentation of children's work. This approach is necessary so that the assessment can depict the child's development holistically, not limited to academic aspects alone (Hafizi et al., 2025). However, field practices show that the implementation of assessments often faces obstacles, such as the diversity of children's characteristics, time constraints, and the lack of educators' understanding of appropriate assessment techniques and instruments.

Various studies also reveal that educators face difficulties in determining appropriate assessment techniques, developing systematic instruments, and consistently documenting children's development. The limitations in assessment competencies, high workload, and time constraints are the main factors hindering the optimization of assessment implementation in early childhood education (Aisyah et al., 2025; Nordin et al., 2021). Moreover, the low involvement of parents in monitoring their child's development also affects the effectiveness of the assessment, considering that information about the child's development in the family environment is often not adequately documented (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2022; Sari, 2020).

Although several studies have discussed the importance of assessment in early childhood education (ECE), most still focus on conceptual aspects or literature reviews regarding assessment techniques. Research that empirically explores the assessment practices carried out by teachers in the field, particularly related to the challenges of implementing assessment techniques and instruments, is still relatively limited. However, understanding the real conditions in the field is essential to formulate assessment strategies that are contextual, applicable, and aligned with the needs of educators.

Based on these issues, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of assessments and to analyze the assessment techniques and instruments used at PAUD BA Banyuaeng Klaten. This research is expected to contribute to the development of

more effective assessment practices and serve as a foundation for enhancing educators' competencies in conducting assessments that meet the developmental needs of early childhood.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of early childhood education (ECE) and the assessment practices applied in the institution. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can comprehensively explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by the research subjects (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). The research was conducted at PAUD BA Banyuaeng located in Klaten.

The research subjects consist of early childhood education teachers who teach at the institution. The selection of subjects was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, considering the direct involvement of teachers in the learning process and the assessment of children's development. This technique is used to ensure that the selected informants are relevant to the research objectives and capable of providing in-depth data (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection was conducted thru in-depth interviews. This technique was chosen because it provides researchers with the flexibility to explore detailed and contextual information from informants regarding learning practices, challenges faced, and the implementation of assessments in early childhood education (Kvale, 2009).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques that include three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). This analysis process is conducted systematically to identify patterns, themes, and meanings that emerge from the research data. To ensure the validity of the data, this research employs source triangulation and member checking techniques. Source triangulation is used to compare and verify data from various informants, while member checking is conducted by requesting confirmation from informants regarding the research findings. Both techniques aim to enhance the credibility and accuracy of the data (Denzin, 2017).

By using a qualitative approach, this research is expected to produce a deep and holistic understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives in the implementation of assessments in early childhood education (ECE).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment Challenges in Early Childhood Education

The implementation of assessments in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions is not without various complex challenges. These challenges are related to aspects of human resources, parental involvement, time constraints, and the management of assessment administration. This is in line with the following research findings (Nordin et al., 2021).

Educator Competence

One of the main challenges in the early childhood assessment process is the limited competence of educators in understanding and applying child development concepts accurately. Although some teachers have basic qualifications, these skills are often insufficient for conducting comprehensive assessments. Educators are required to understand developmental milestones, appropriate observation techniques, and relevant follow-up strategies. However, the limitations of ongoing professional training have caused teachers' assessment abilities to not develop optimally. This condition is generally more evident among teachers with relatively short work experience.

Parental Cooperation

Parental involvement in the assessment process also poses a significant challenge. Some parents do not yet understand the importance of their role in supporting the monitoring of their child's development at home. Practices such as filling out communication books or development checklists are often not carried out optimally, resulting in incomplete data. As a result, the information on child development is not comprehensive and can affect the validity of the assessment results. Furthermore, there is still a perception that early childhood education (ECE) only serves as a daycare center, rather than an educational institution with a developmental assessment function. This lack of awareness makes it difficult for teachers to make follow-up decisions for the child's development (Pusat TA Anak Usia Dini, 2017)

Time Constraints

Assessment of young children is generally conducted thru continuous observation that requires precision and sufficient time. On the other hand, early childhood education teachers also have various operational responsibilities, such as managing daily activities for children, maintaining cleanliness, and meeting children's basic needs. The workload causes a limitation of time in conducting assessments in a thorough and systematic manner, so the evaluation process cannot be carried out optimally (Black, 2019).

Record Management

Managing children's development documentation is another challenge often faced. Every aspect of a child's development needs to be recorded systematically to ensure continuous monitoring. However, the manual recording system that is still widely used tends to be time-consuming, prone to errors, and difficult to manage, especially when the number of students is quite large. In addition, preparing progress reports for parents also adds an administrative burden for teachers. Therefore, the integration of technology in assessment data management has become an important necessity to improve efficiency and accuracy (Saquin & Marcial, 2016).

The Right Assessment Techniques

The selection of the right assessment techniques, according to the PAUD BA Banyuaeng Klaten teacher, is a key factor in obtaining an accurate picture of a child's development. Meanwhile, according to the Pusat TA Anak Usia Dini (2017), here are two main types of assessment in the context of education, namely formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment is conducted during the learning process with the aim of providing continuous feedback, allowing educators to identify children's development and adjust teaching strategies according to their needs. Summative assessment, on the other hand, is carried out at the end of a certain period to determine the overall developmental achievements of children, which in the context of early childhood education remains important as a basis for providing parents with an overview of their child's development.

In addition, other techniques such as peer assessment and self-assessment can also be used by educators to add variety to assessments, both formative and summative, as they can train self-awareness, reflection skills, and increase children's engagement in the learning process (Saeed et al., 2018). In its implementation in early childhood education (PAUD), peer assessment can be adjusted to the age characteristics of children, for example, thru the use of emoticons or simple symbols that make it easier for children to choose, provide assessments, or appreciate their peers' work.

The Right Instruments

To address various challenges in assessment, the use of appropriate instruments and strategies is necessary. One approach that can be taken is to proportionally combine formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is conducted during the learning process to provide continuous feedback to educators and children. Thru this assessment, educators can identify aspects that need improvement and adjust teaching strategies before the end of the

learning period. Meanwhile, summative assessment is carried out at the end of the period to provide a comprehensive overview of the child's developmental achievements or learning outcomes. By combining both types of assessments proportionally, the evaluation process not only focuses on the final outcome but also on the child's developmental process.

Implementation of Assessment Strategies to Improve Assessment Effectiveness in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The implementation of assessments to improve the effectiveness of evaluations in early childhood education can be carried out thru several practical strategies. First, the implementation of authentic assessment is carried out by having teachers directly observe children's activities in natural situations, such as during play and interaction, so that a holistic picture of the child's development is obtained, covering aspects of attitude, knowledge, and skills. Second, the enhancement of parental involvement is implemented thru regular communication and the use of media such as daily reflection forms or linking books to gather information on the child's development both at school and at home.

Third, the use of official guidelines from the Ministry of Education is applied as a reference for teachers in conducting assessments that align with the principles, techniques, and reporting formats relevant to the characteristics of Early Childhood Education (PAUD). Fourth, the assessment results are implemented as a basis for lesson planning by having teachers analyze children's developmental achievements to design activities that meet their needs, interests, and potential. Thus, assessment not only functions as an evaluation tool but also serves as a foundation for optimally and sustainably stimulating children's development (Yusuf, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This article emphasizes the importance of assessment in early childhood education (ECE) as a means to evaluate children's development comprehensively, covering cognitive, socio-emotional, and other skills. However, the implementation of assessments in early childhood education (ECE) still faces various challenges, including the limited understanding of educators regarding the concepts and practices of effective assessment, time constraints in conducting assessments, and the lack of resource support and professional training for educators.

The results of the research conducted at PAUD BA Banyuaeng indicate that assessment techniques such as direct observation and documentation thru serial photos are quite effective in recording and monitoring children's development contextually. These techniques enable educators to obtain authentic data regarding the process and achievements of children's

development in daily activities. Nevertheless, its implementation is not yet optimal due to the limited competencies of educators in applying authentic and comprehensive assessments. Moreover, parental involvement in the assessment process is still relatively low, so information on children's development at home has not been fully integrated.

Based on these findings, this study recommends the need for improving educators' competencies thru continuous training, particularly in the use of relevant assessment techniques and instruments, such as formative assessments and portfolios. Additionally, strengthening collaboration between educators and parents should also be enhanced so that the assessment process can provide a more comprehensive picture of children's development.

Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of implementing structured and contextual assessment techniques, supported by the enhancement of educators' capacities and parental involvement. These efforts are expected to overcome various challenges in the implementation of assessments in early childhood education and support the sustainable optimization of early childhood development.

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