

Developing Independence Value in Early Childhood

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history</p> <p>Submission: November 2019</p> <p>Revised: February 2020</p> <p>Accepted: March 2020</p> <p>Keywords: Independence Value, Early Childhood</p>	<p>The study aimed to describe and analyze the implementation strategy of independence values in learning activities as well as its supporting and inhibiting factors through the application of a qualitative approach with a multi-site design. Data collection techniques used include interviews, observations, and document studies and the data obtained were individually analyzed before a cross-site data analysis was applied. The results showed the strategy to implement the development of children's independence value at TK Negeri Pembina Rantau and TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI was integrated into learning activities through habituations, both by teachers at school and parents at home. It was conducted through daily, weekly, monthly, and annual activities. As a result, children's independence values have been successfully well-developed. Several supporting factors for this development include parents, environment, facilities and infrastructure, qualified teachers, and collaboration with outside institutions. However, several factors also inhibit this development and they include less supportive parents, as well as children's particular emotions and conditions.</p> <p> © 2019 The Authors. Journal of K6, Education, and Management (j-K6EM). ISSN: 2580-2135. Published by Graduate Program of Educational Management, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin 70123, Indonesia. This is an open-access article under the CC-BY-SA license.</p>

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I. Introduction

Education is an important asset in the development of a country and every citizen is obliged to follow every level involved, starting from early childhood, elementary, secondary, and higher education. The period between 0-6 years is called a golden age and observed to be very critical in determining the next stage of growth and development of children in the future (Suyadi & Ulfah, 2015).

Early childhood is a unique process of growth and development characterized by a pattern of fine and gross motor, intelligence through power of thought, creativity, emotions, and spirit, social-emotional attitude, behavior, and religion, language, as well as communication (Mansur, 2014). The six development aspects needed to be stimulated for early childhood to grow optimally includes physical motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, religious, moral values, and art.

In the aspect of social-emotional development, independence is one of the important aspects to be trained and honed in early childhood. Parents and teachers are required to appropriately stimulate children by providing learning opportunities to individually conduct daily activities to optimally grow and develop their independence attribute. The goals of early childhood education also include instilling social aspects of children in having behaviors that reflect independence at a very early stage, especially at the primary stage (Safitri et al., 2018). In this regard, (Susanto, 2011) states that social development has several aspects including attitudes of tolerance, caring, mutual respect, cooperation, empathy, independence, etc. Meanwhile, emotional aspects include fear, happiness, sadness, and so forth.

Independence helps children build and take care of their lives without being dependent on others, especially in completing personal tasks (Latifah et al., 2019). This is in line with the opinion of (Susanto, 2017) that independence means the ability of children to perform several activities with their strength without depending on others. This self-reliance aids confidence and creativity for every child.

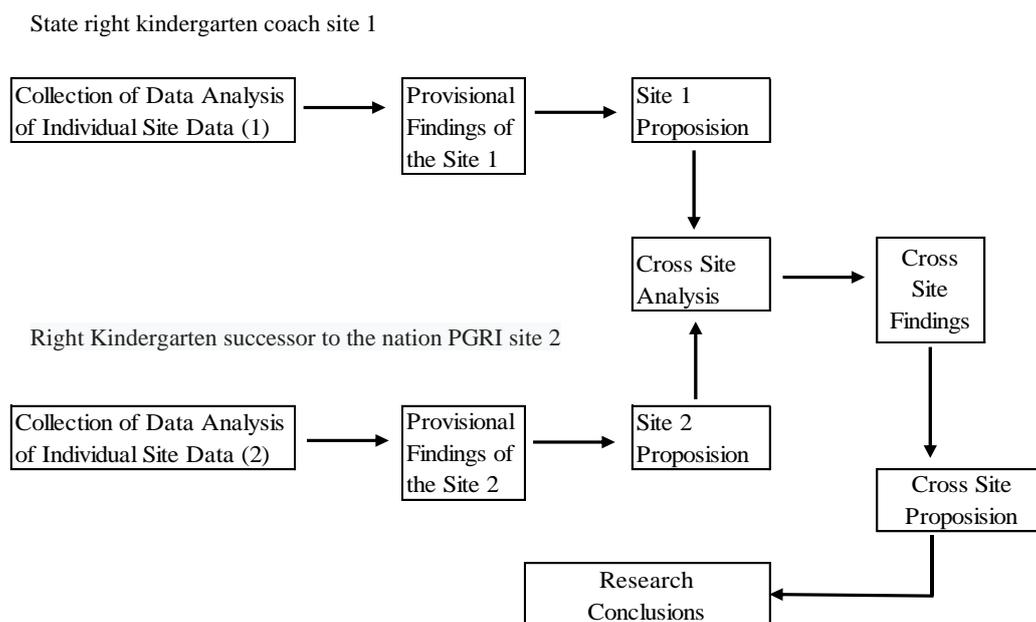
The objective of this study was to describe and analyze the successfully developed implementation strategy, learning activities, and the independence values, as well as their supporting factors and inhibitors in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau and TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI of North Tapin, Tapin District. These two kindergartens have been observed to be efficient at developing children's independence. TK Negeri Pembina Rantau is the first kindergarten in Rantau City, established in 1999 with the vision to make students intelligent, creative, healthy, agile, religious, independent, and has a good character. It was selected because certain strategies and programs have been developed by the school regarding early childhood independence. One of these is the integrative holistic program which involves integrating activities at the beginning, middle, and end of the learning activities.

Moreover, TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI is one of the private kindergartens in Tapin Regency, established in 2008 under the Tapin Regency PGRI Foundation. Even though it is still relatively early compared to other private kindergartens in Tapin District, it is quite more popular among the surrounding community. It was selected for the research due to its continuous vision of fostering children to be smart, agile, creative, independent, healthy, moral, and ethical. However, there is a need to understand more deeply about the development of early childhood independence value in the two schools.

2. Methodology

A qualitative descriptive approach with a multi-site design was used and data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2017). These include documents found in schools, interviews with school principals, teachers, and parents as research subjects.

The data were individually analyzed using descriptive technical analysis through the three steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification before a cross-site data analysis was conducted as shown in the following figure:



Picture 1. Cross-Site Analysis

The study aimed to clearly understand the development of early childhood independence values in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau and TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI Tapin.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study was conducted between March 25th, until June 29th, 2019, and data were collected using the two kindergartens as the research sites.

TK Negeri Pembina Rantau (Site 1)

The implementation process was integrated into the learning activities as an embodiment of several aspects of development, especially the social-emotional ones. It was conducted in every child's activity, starting from the daily learning program, a holistic integrative program to religious activities.

Based on the results of interviews with the principal, the curriculum planning and preparation process is usually conducted at the end of the school year through a review meeting attended by the teacher council. The principal, together with the teacher council, evaluates the implementation of the learning activity program, the obstacles encountered and manages to re-plan the activities for the next year. Meanwhile, the schedule arrangement of activities and annual work programs is conducted at the beginning of the new

school year through meetings with the teacher board and school committee. This shows they are all involved in the planning and drafting process by considering aspects of children's development according to age and school needs. This planning determines the success of the learning process. Therefore, its components should be arranged systematically (Susanto, 2017) and involve the teachers and school committees (Afifah et al., 2019).

The school also conducts socialization of vision, mission, school goals, and education calendar at the beginning of the new school year attended by all parents where teachers give examples and habits, as well as directly to their students. The direction is conducted both under school or learning programs containing rules of activity as well as spontaneously. For example, when students are playing in the yard, they are allowed to show an independent attitude by choosing which activity to participate as part of the social-emotional aspects. Learning activities are inseparable from the roles of the teacher and students due to their importance in the learning process (Hidayat et al., 2019).

To increase understanding of how to develop children's independence, the teachers in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau were also made to attend workshops, training, and seminars. Besides, they

also learn the learning guidelines in PAUD or early education and discuss it with other teachers.

One of the things observations on children in the school reading corner during the breaks include orderliness which involves the appropriate placement of the book after reading. This indicates they are accustomed to returning items to an appropriate place without being told.

The facilities and infrastructure available at this kindergarten are also very supportive of the process of developing the children's independence value. This is observed from the presence of learning tools and media in each class such as lockers and cupboards for storing, trash cans, cleaning equipment, shoe racks in front of the class, water faucets for handwashing, toilets and bathrooms, courtyards and playgrounds, outside APE, reading corner, and UKS room.

Parents' involvement in developing children's independence value in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau is implemented in the form of parenting by ensuring the learning program is continued in their respective homes.

Furthermore, there is also a collaboration with related institutions such as Regional Libraries, *Puskesmas*, Health Offices, District Police, etc. The whole process aids making children more independent such as being able to brush their teeth, choose books they like, etc. without any interference.

The data presented above shows the strategies to develop children's independence value in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau include the preparation of program activities to satisfy the needs of the children and the policy of the school as observed in the teacher's ability to use learning strategies, give examples, and direct children followed by supporting facilities and infrastructure, as well as collaboration with parents and related institutions. Moreover, communication is described as the heart of an organization without which it may not survive or develop optimally. It is also key to successful team effort (Suriansyah, 2014).

The development of early childhood independence value in the kindergarten was implemented through (1) daily activities such as welcoming, opening, core, resting/eating lunch, and closing, (2) weekly activities such as the flag ceremony and joint gymnastics usually conducted jointly once a week or routinely. However congregational prayer is mostly conducted in their respective classes, (3) monthly activities including

Puncak Tema or Top Theme and Weight and Height Measurement, and (4) some annual activities including National Holidays, Commemoration of Islamic Holidays, and graduation.

The successful development of children's independence values in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau is planned spontaneously through habituation. It involves attitude/behavior of children such separation from their parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up, etc. without the help of another person. The independence also reflects in habituation and intelligence developed in physical abilities, confidence, responsibility, discipline, being effective at getting along, willingness to share, and emotional control (Latifah et al., 2019). Factors supporting the development of children's independence in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau include the (1) participation of parents in school activities and programs such as the celebration of the Maulid Nabi Muhammad, (2) complete facilities and infrastructures, (3) collaboration with surrounding institutions such as *Puskesmas*, Health Service, Regional Library, and the Police, and (4) the teacher's knowledge such as participating in workshops, training, and seminars either in Tapin Regency or outside the city.

Therefore, the role of parents, environment, facilities, and infrastructure, collaboration with relevant institutions, and educators become supporting factors in the development of children's independence.

However, there are inhibitors to the development and these include parents' lack of trust in a child's ability due to the belief there is a need to help them in everything as well as parenting patterns not in line with school policies and regulations. Besides, several observations regarding independence categorized Indonesian children in a slow group due to the lack of self-awareness of parents in practicing independence (Latifah et al., 2019). Moreover, emotional and conditional children are also influential and become obstacles in the process of developing children's independence in kindergarten, especially for new students or school activities after a long holiday.

TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI (Site 2)

The process of implementing the development of children's independence values is integrated into learning activities and conducted every time, ranging from daily learning programs, integrated holistic programs to religious activities. This implementation process is an embodiment of children's character formation compiled in learning activities. It is also conducted with a thematic approach which is a learning strategy involving several aspects of development aimed towards providing meaningful learning experiences for children.

The integration process is designed to highlight the horizontal relationships of several student learning experiences, both in one subject and between subjects. Learning is more effective when the facts and principles of a subject are linked to other studies. Through integration, educators show a horizontal relationship between learning experiences that students have a comprehensive, wider, and deeper view, not only conceptual but also applicative knowledge, skills, and values (Torang, 2016).

The curriculum planning and preparation process in this school is conducted at the end of each school year through a curriculum review meeting attended by the teacher council. The principal, with the teacher council, evaluates the implementation of the learning activity program, obstacles encountered and arranges to re-plan the activities for the next school year.

In developing children's independence, teachers are expected to show good examples in conducting daily activities. There are several strategies to expand tolerance in children and these include the teacher (1) introducing the concept of good, (2) introducing the nature of religious tolerance, (3) stimulating children's thought about good characters, (4) stimulating children's thought about religious tolerance, and (5) making the children feel the benefits of religious tolerance (Saleh et al., 2018).

To increase insight and knowledge, TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI teachers also participate in workshops, training, and seminars, and learn guidelines in early education or PAUD and discuss the same with other teachers.

Furthermore, the facilities and infrastructures in the school are very supportive to develop children's independence. This is observed from the availability of supporting learning tools and media in each class, including lockers and cupboards for

storage, trash cans, cleaning equipment, shoe racks in front of the class, water faucets for handwashing, toilets, courtyards, and large playground which are used in the administration of education (Nugraha et al., 2012).

The development of children's independence values is implemented through habituation in daily activities at school which is also communicated to each parent to aid the continuation of the learning program at home to make the development stronger.

Therefore, the implementation process includes the preparation of programs that fit the needs of schools and children, the ability of teachers to guide, direct, and serve as an example for children, facilities and infrastructure, and collaboration with parents.

The strategy is conducted through the use of daily, weekly, monthly, and annual programs to determine and evaluate its level of success. The evaluation is conducted based on the results of daily observations of the children recorded and reported to parents through the contact book or at the end of the semester through the report book. It is also conducted based on the achievement of the indicators existing in the school curriculum. The child progress assessment procedure used serves to (1) design instructions for each child and group, (2) communicate with the child's family, (3) identify children requiring special treatment or intervention, and (4) inform the program development (Afifah et al., 2019).

The independence values successfully developed in this school include attitude/behavior such as the ability to live separately from parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up, etc. without the help of another person.

In line with TK Negeri Pembina Rantau, in this school, there are also inhibiting factors such as parents' lack of trust in a child's ability thinking there is a need to help them in everything as well as parenting patterns not in line with school policies and regulations. Moreover, students gain knowledge based on direct experience of some aspects of monotheism faith, especially if the elements of *aqeedah* are supported by character or

personality under Islamic law. Therefore, religious education is infiltrated into the learners, physically and mentally. This is in line with the research on the model of religion-based character education implemented by Islamic schools to show all components or community schools including parents can be a real example for all students (Asniwati et al., 2018).

Emotions and conditions of children also have some influence and become obstacles in the process of developing children's independence in TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI, especially for new students or when conducting school activities after a long holiday. However, schools also allow students with the inability to separate from their parents due to the prioritized aim of ensuring they feel comfortable. The process of comfortability makes it possible for a child to have a playmate and independently conduct learning activities without being accompanied by the parents.

Furthermore, the results of cross-site data analysis are depicted in the following explanation:

I. Proposition conclusions of Site I

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis, the development of early childhood independence in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau is being conducted by all school members including the principals, teachers/employees, parents, students, and support from the Regional Government. This is established on the assumption that achieving educational goals is determined by the foundation in learning and its elements such as the students, educators, interactions between the two, environment, and material/educational content (Salasiah et al., 2018). This school arranges the learning programs with reference to the 2013 PAUD Curriculum as well as environmental conditions, completeness of adequate infrastructure, and support from all school members make the development of children's independence effective. The strategy is being implemented in daily, weekly, monthly, and annual programs of the school as well as by integrating holistic programs in six aspects of child development, especially the social and emotional ones.

Besides having appropriate academic qualifications like Bachelor's Degree in Early Education or SI PAUD, teachers also have extensive knowledge, especially on how to educate young children to become intelligent, independent, and noble individuals by participating in training, workshops, and seminars. Teachers, serving as role models, needs to have attitudes and behaviors reflecting good personalities and noble character.

To realize the vision, mission, and goals of the school, the principal coordinates by dividing tasks between teaching groups, supervising and evaluating the teachers, and providing guidance and motivation to always improve knowledge and teaching abilities. Daily and weekly evaluations are also conducted to control the course of the learning process (Afifah et al., 2019). The formation of these characters is determined not only by the strength of management in the relevant organizational units of the school but also on the quality and strength of the principal as a leader (Suriyansyah, 2015).

Furthermore, value is implemented in daily activities such as welcoming, opening, core, resting/eating lunch, and closing. It is also integrated into weekly activities such as flag ceremonies held every Monday, gymnastics every Saturday, and the practice of congregational prayers every Thursday. Moreover, monthly activities such as *Puncak Tema* or the highlight of the theme and DDTK are also conducted, as well as annual activities like commemorating Islamic and National holidays.

The values successfully developed in this early school involves attitude/behavior of children such separation from their parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up, etc. without the help of another person. According to previous research, independence of early childhood includes the ability of children to be adapted to their developmental tasks such as learning to eat alone or interacting with others (Yamin, & Sanan, 2013).

Factors supporting this development of children's independence include parental contribution, facilities and infrastructure, qualified

teachers, and collaboration with outside parties while inhibiting factors include lack of parental support as well as emotions and condition of the child.

2. Proposition Conclusion of Site 2

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentary analysis at TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI, the development of early childhood independence in this school is being conducted by school members including principals, teachers, parents, students, and foundations. The strategies are implemented in the planned and spontaneous daily, weekly, monthly, and annual learning program concerning the 2013 PAUD Curriculum. Moreover, environmental conditions, completeness of adequate infrastructure, and support from all school members aid the effective implementation of the strategies.

The values successfully developed in this early school involves attitude/behavior of children such separation from their parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up, etc. without the help of another person.

Furthermore, the supporting factors include parental contribution, facilities and infrastructure, qualified teachers, and collaboration with outside parties while inhibiting factors include lack of parental support as well as emotions and condition of the child. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include lack of parental support as well as the emotions and condition of the child. However, parents form the character of students in elementary schools through effective communication (Suriansyah, & Aslamiah, 2015).

3. Cross-Site Analysis

The cross-site analysis conducted showed the implementation strategy is being conducted every day through both planned and spontaneous school and learning activities programs. TK Negeri Pembina Rantau and TK Penerus Bangsa

PGRI are both using the 2013 PAUD Curriculum contained in the KTSP, Semester Program, Daily Program (RPPH), and Weekly Program (RPPM). The development of early childhood independence is conducted by all school members including foundations, principals, teachers, students, parents, and the Regional Government. The teacher has the appropriate academic qualifications such as the SI PG PAUD of Bachelor's Degree in Early Education and the knowledge, insight, and ability to manage classes, communicate with children and parents, and arrange learning programs. They also serve as role models for the students.

Besides, the principal plays an important role in developing school programs, organizing teachers according to their duties, providing guidance and improving the quality of teachers by involving teachers in workshops, training and seminars, and managing cooperation/partnerships with parents and related institutions. This is in accordance with the regulation that the teaching and learning process (PBM) in the classroom or at school should be supervised by the principal to guarantee quality (Suhaimi, & Khalik, 2018). It is also confirmed by (Suriansyah, 2015) that the formation of character is determined not only on the strength of management in the relevant organizational unit of the school but highly dependent on the quality and strength of the principal as a leader. Moreover, the results also agree with the statement that schools need the community to provide support for the education process. On the contrary, the community also needs a school to educate their children (Suhaimi, & Khalik, 2018).

The implementations process in the two schools were found to be through (1) daily activities including welcoming, opening, core, resting/eating lunch, and closing, (2) weekly activities such as flag ceremony, joint gymnastics, and the practice of congregational prayer, (3) monthly activities such as *Puncak Tema* or Theme Highlight by walking around the school environment and visiting certain places following the school program, and (4) annual activities such as the Commemoration of the Republic of

Indonesia Independence Day, Mother's Day, Commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, and Graduation. These results are in line with the report of (Nugraha et al., 2012) that it is possible to implement learning material through a daily routine, spontaneous learning activities, examples, and activities included in teachers' planning notes.

Based on the results of the analysis, the values successfully developed in this early school involves attitude/behavior of children such separation from their parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up, etc. without the help of another person. These are in line with the report of the research conducted by (Susanto, 2017) that children's independence is characterized by self-confidence, high intrinsic motivation, ability, and courage to make choices, creativity and innovation, responsibility, adaptability, and not depending on others. This was further supported by (Yamin, & Sanan, 2013) that early age children independence is reflected in the ability to conduct all activities but with adult supervision, make decisions and choices according to views obtained from imitating the behavior or actions of those around, socialize with others without being accompanied by an adult, control emotions, and empathize with others.

Furthermore, the factors supporting the development of children's independence in TK Negeri Pembina Rantau and TK Penerus Bangsa PGRI include parental contribution by participating in the school committee, parenting activities, and school activities such as national holidays and religious holidays. The findings are in line with the argument that parents have three main functions concerning school and community and these include school partners, supporters, and education customers (Aslamiah, & Rizalie, 2015). Another factor is the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure and this is supported by the argument of (Masitoh et al., 2012) that they

provide convenience in the implementation of education.

Moreover, qualified teachers also play a supportive role due to their extensive knowledge and insight about learning in early education or PAUD, the ability to manage the class, communicate effectively, arrange the learning programs, and conduct learning activities properly. This is in line with the finding of (Masitoh et al., 2012) that a teacher is responsible for the implementation of education, guiding children's learning according to the needs and development, as well as creating fun learning activities.

Another factor observed is the cooperation with outside parties through collaborative/partnership programs with several parties or institutions such as *Puskesmas*, Regional Libraries, Health Offices, Regional Police Offices, etc. This finding is consistent with the statement that PAUD institutions or teachers are required to collaborate and hold special contacts with health institutions, such as *Puskesmas* or children's clinics. Furthermore, schools also can provide certain help to parents concerning the children by making contact with other professionals such as nutritionists, psychologists, etc. (Suyadi, & Ulfah, 2015). In agreement with this (Suriyannah, 2015) showed cooperation with several institutions has become absolute for schools to develop optimally since they are institutions of social interaction inseparable from the community.

However, some of the obstacles observed in these two schools include less supportive parents as evident in absence during parenting activities and meetings, the full commitment of children's education to the school, and the belief the children need help in everything. This is followed by different practices at home and in school, for example, students are accustomed to taking off and putting their shoes the appropriate place in school but are left to take off and put it carelessly anywhere in their homes. According to (Shohib, 2014), all efforts made by parents in helping children need to be preceded by showing attitudes of role models. This was also expressed by (Septiari, 2012) that parents are expected to always conduct themselves as embodiments of positive characters and those working from home focuses more on caring for children and other homework

which makes the children obtain love and attention. However, this does not rule out the possibility of the children being less independent due to be getting accustomed to the parents. Therefore, parents should not be overprotective to give the children the opportunity of being independent.

Another fact observed is the child's emotions and conditions. Unstable emotions such as anger, sadness, and crying because of something affects participation in learning activities. Moreover, negative health conditions affect emotions as reflected in the tendency to be lethargic, unexcited or even fussy, lack of focus and ineffectiveness in learning. These findings are in line with the opinion of (Yamin, & Sanan, 2013) that the factors negatively influencing independence include parent's descent, parenting patterns, education system at school, and the life system in the community.

It is important to state that the implementation of independence values in the children through learning activities is aimed at achieving the vision of the two kindergartens. This involves making the students intelligent, creative, healthy, agile, religious, independent, moral, ethical, and noble. Therefore, parents, teachers, and the community are expected to collectively produce the best generation with independence, morality, and nobility.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from this study include:

The principal plays a significant role in developing school programs, organizing teachers according to their duties, and managing cooperation/partnerships with parents and related agencies. Teachers play a role in showing good habituation and serving as a role model for students in developing independence values. Complete facilities and infrastructure also influence the development of children's independence. The involvement of parents in schools, as well as, school collaboration with relevant agencies greatly supports the development of children's independence. Learning activities in the development of early childhood independence value are implemented in daily, weekly, monthly, and annual activities. The values successfully

developed in this early school involves attitude/behavior of children such separation from their parents, taking responsibility for the tasks given, personally choosing sporting activities, putting the bag in the locker, taking off and keeping of shoes, cleaning of playing equipment, washing of hands, eating, brushing of teeth, cleaning of cutlery, going to the toilet, taking and using prayer equipment, daring to follow the activities, and waiting for their parents to pick them up by the parents without the help of another person. Supporting factors for the development include parental support, infrastructure, qualified teachers, and collaboration with outside parties. Inhibiting factors include less supportive parents as well as the emotions and conditions of the child.

Recommendation

It recommended that principals involve parents in the planning and preparation of further school programs such as annual events, integrative holistic programs, theme highlight schedules, and so on to create better learning strategies. The teachers should continue developing themselves by attending several kinds of training, workshops, and seminars to improve knowledge and skills and to also continually exchange information and work together with colleagues to advance early childhood education, especially regarding strategies and implementation of learning to develop independence. Parents should actively participate and support school programs, especially by applying early childhood independence taught in school in the home.

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