

RESEARCH ARTICLE

HOLISTIC TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH IN DAYCARE: AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PARENTS' ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the implementation of teaching and learning approaches for infants and toddlers in TASKA that meet the aspirations of parents today. Through library research methods, this study examined various scholarly sources, government reports and early childhood education policies in Malaysia. The results of the analysis found that the implementation of teaching and learning in TASKA plays an important role in shaping the overall development of infants and toddlers in shaping the overall development of infants and toddlers in terms of cognitive, social, emotional and physical. Parents' aspirations now emphasize development-based education, safety, the value of love, and fun learning. The study also discusses the challenges in implementing teaching and learning approaches and recommendations to strengthen the country's early education in line with the National Early Childhood Education Policy (DPAKK) and the National PERMATA Curriculum (KPN).

Keywords: TASKA, teaching and learning, babies, toddlers, parental aspirations, early childhood education

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is an educational program that provides care, nurturing and guidance to children from birth to eight years of age (NAEYC, 2011). Meanwhile, early childhood education in Malaysia is known as an educational program provided to children aged 0 to 6 years. However, the early childhood education program has been divided into two phases, namely the nursery phase involving children aged 0 to 4 years and the kindergarten phase involving children aged 4 to 6 years.

Early childhood education is an important factor in shaping the overall development of an individual. At the infant and toddler stage, which is 0 to 4 years old, the learning process occurs through sensory experiences, movement, and social interaction. Therefore, the teaching and learning approach

implemented in Child Care Centers (TASKA) plays a major role in stimulating the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of children in a balanced manner (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2022).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are various initiatives that have been implemented by the government to strengthen the quality of early education. However, there are differences in the implementation of teaching and learning approaches between TASKA in urban and rural areas (Azizah, 2022). This is said to be so because there are some TASKA that emphasize solely the care aspect and less emphasis on the cognitive and social aspects.

The impact of changing lifestyles in increasingly modern society, especially among working parents, has increased the dependence on TASKA as an early care and learning institution for their children. Parents hope that their children will receive stimulation in their early development and ensure safe care for their children. However, not all TASKA have trained teachers who understand the principles of early childhood pedagogy (Hassan & Zulkifli, 2018).

Therefore, this study is important to evaluate the teaching and learning approach in daycare centers in Malaysia to ensure that it meets the aspirations of parents today who want a balance between care and education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the teaching and learning approaches applied to infants and toddlers in nursery schools.
2. Analyze the extent to which the implementation of this approach meets the aspirations of today's parents.
3. Identify challenges and suggestions for improvement in the implementation of teaching and learning approaches at TASKA.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What teaching and learning approaches are used in TASKA for babies and toddlers?
2. How does this approach meet the aspirations of today's parents?
3. What are the challenges faced in this approach and what are the appropriate improvement suggestions?

This study is important because it provides a clear and detailed picture of the implementation of teaching and learning approaches in TASKA which plays a role as the foundation for the development of the country's early education system. The results of the study can be used as a reference for TASKA operators, early childhood educators and the government to improve the curriculum and professional training for caregivers.

In addition, this study also helps parents understand the importance of choosing a TASKA that emphasizes development-based learning, love, and not just focusing on daily care.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study focuses on the implementation of teaching and learning approaches for infants aged 0 to 12 months and toddlers aged 1 to 4 years in Malaysian nurseries based on the National PERMATA Curriculum. Therefore, reference sources are more focused on government policies, early education journals, and reports related to parental aspirations in the local context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching and learning approach in TASKA should be holistic and based on the natural development of children (PERMATA, 2013). According to Nor Hashimah (2020), the main principles that need to be emphasized include child-centered learning, play activities, positive interactions, and diverse sensory stimulation.

This is because parents today are more inclined towards fun and creative early education. For example, learning that uses play-based techniques and sensory activities can improve children's concentration and communication skills (Siti Norazian et al., 2021). Therefore, most parents today are more likely to choose TASKA that can provide a balanced program between care, education, and the value of love for their children (Yusoff & Abdullah, 2019).

In addition, caregivers also play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of teaching and learning approaches. This is said to be so because TASKA educators need to have knowledge, especially in early childhood pedagogy, have communication skills, and always be sensitive to the needs, especially the emotions, of babies and toddlers (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016).

METHOD

This study uses library research methods. Library research methods are qualitative methods that involve collecting and analyzing data from

secondary materials. Examples of sources obtained include scholarly journals, official government reports, academic books, and websites of early childhood education institutions.

The analysis was conducted through content assessment of themes such as teaching and learning approaches, parental aspirations, and implementation challenges in TASKA. Thus, this method helps researchers evaluate various views and findings without conducting field research (Ahmad, 2020).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study found that the implementation of teaching and learning approaches in TASKA in Malaysia varies according to the institutional background and the level of training received by the educators. In general, the implementation of teaching and learning in TASKA must follow the guidelines determined by the PERMATA Curriculum, which is based on holistic development (PERMATA, 2013). This is said to be so because teaching and learning must be balanced between care and learning. Therefore, infants and toddlers can directly learn through direct experience, play and creating positive social interactions with caregivers.

Among the most widely applied approaches in teaching and learning at TASKA is play-based learning. This is said to be so because play-based learning provides children with opportunities to explore and learn according to their own developmental level.

This has proven that play-based learning methods can increase children's cognitive and social development levels and help improve their ability to communicate and empathize with peers (Hassan & Zulkifli, 2018). Examples of activities that can be implemented include sensory games such as touching, observing, listening, and feeling which can help in the natural development of fine and gross motor skills among infants and toddlers (Siti Norazian et al., 2021).

In addition, the study findings show that parents today have very high aspirations for their children's early education. This is said to be because most parents prefer an environment that is able to provide fun, meaningful learning experiences and is not only focused on a safe and clean environment. According to a study by Yusoff and Abdullah (2019), parents today tend to choose nurseries that emphasize the value of love, positive communication between educators and children, and are able to provide clear progress reports about their children. Therefore, most parents are beginning to realize that TASKA is a strategic partner in the growth process of their children and is not only focused on care alone.

However, there is a major challenge that has been identified, namely the lack of trained educators in the field of early childhood pedagogy, especially among caregivers in private daycare centers that operate on a small scale (Azizah, 2022). This is said to be because most caregivers are still not skilled in planning learning activities that are appropriate for the developmental level of infants and toddlers. This is also due to time constraints and workload which are factors that limit quality interaction between educators and children in care.

In addition, physical facilities and learning environments are among the factors that also influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning approaches. Based on the established guidelines, a nursery should have a spacious, clean, safe, and brightly colored space to be able to stimulate children's senses to increase their interest in learning (KPWKM, 2019). However, a cramped nursery with a lack of educational equipment can limit opportunities for active learning and exploration. Therefore, the implementation of a quality teaching and learning approach must have a balance between professional training, a conducive environment, and ongoing parental involvement.

Overall, the study findings show that the implementation of teaching and learning approaches in Malaysian nursery schools shows positive developments. However, the implementation of the approach must continue to be refined to be in line with the aspirations of

parents today who want quality, safety, and a love-based approach.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of teaching and learning approaches for infants and toddlers in TASKA plays an important role in forming the foundation of children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. This study also found that TASKA is not just a place of care, but an early education institution that needs to implement appropriate learning activities according to the child's developmental level in line with the National PERMATA Curriculum (PERMATA, 2013). Therefore, the aspirations of parents today demand that TASKA can provide a learning environment that is fun, safe, flexible, and based on love, while also emphasizing the development of the child's potential as a whole.

Therefore, to ensure that the implementation of this approach is effective, several aspects need to be given attention. Among the aspects mentioned are that the professionalism training of TASKA educators needs to be improved through short-term courses or specific certification in the field of early childhood education. Trained educators will be able to understand the development of infants and toddlers, be able to implement creative pedagogical approaches and be responsive to their emotional needs (Nor Hashimah, 2020).

In addition, the TASKA management and the government must ensure regular quality monitoring so that the implementation of the curriculum and teaching and learning activities follow official guidelines. Parental involvement is also highly encouraged through continuous communication, progress reports, and joint activities to further strengthen the relationship between families and schools (home-centre partnership) (Noraini & Fauziah, 2020).

Finally, efforts to strengthen the implementation of the teaching and learning approach in TASKA should be seen as a joint responsibility between the government, TASKA operators, and parents. Through a systematic approach, adequate training, and strong policy support, early childhood

education in Malaysia is able to achieve the aspirations of modern families and contribute to the formation of a quality, competitive, and humane future generation.

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