

# Quality Management In Semarang District Early Childhood Education Institutions

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**Abstract.** This research explores the implementation of Quality Management in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions in Semarang Regency with a focus on the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Based on the policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, this curriculum provides flexibility to ECD institutions to choose teaching tools that suit the needs and characteristics of learners, with the aim of improving the quality of learning in the 2022-2024 recovery period. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method, focusing on an ECD Institution Unit in Semarang Regency. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, with data validity testing using triangulation. The results showed that the implementation of Quality Management in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Semarang Regency includes aspects of curriculum planning, implementation, organization, and monitoring and evaluation. Strengths involve teacher flexibility in choosing learning methods, while weaknesses involve challenges in the organization of learning resources. This research provides a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of Quality Management in Semarang Regency PAUD institutions, providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The implications include contributions to the development of more effective, responsive, and quality early childhood education in the region.

**Keywords:** quality management, institution, preschool unit

## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECED) plays an important role in shaping the foundation of child development from an early age. Semarang Regency, as one of the areas with potential development, has a number of Early Childhood Education Institutions that aim to provide quality education services to young children. In the context of globalization and intensifying competition, it is important for Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions in Semarang Regency to ensure that they not only provide education services that comply with national standards, but also have an effective and sustainable quality management system in place. Good quality management will create a conducive learning environment, promote creativity, and provide opportunities for the optimal development of young children.

Reflecting the complexity and strategic importance of managing early childhood education in an era of globalization and intensifying competition. Semarang Regency, as an area of potential development, has a number of Early Childhood Education (ECED) institutions that play an important role in forming the basis of children's development from an early age. The important role of PAUD in providing quality education services is the basis for exploring aspects of quality management in these institutions. Quality management includes various

dimensions, such as learning planning, resource management, assessment of learning outcomes, and active involvement of parents in the early childhood education process.

In the context of globalization, the dynamic development of technology, knowledge and the demands of modern society pose challenges that need to be addressed in the provision of early childhood education. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate, identify and improve best practices in quality management of early childhood education in Semarang district.

Effective quality management not only includes aspects of learning within the institution, but also involves parents as partners in children's education. Parental involvement is considered a key factor in creating a conducive learning environment and building synergy between ECD institutions, teachers and families. In addition, this study will also consider the dynamics of educational curriculum development and national policies related to ECD. Efforts to constantly update and align the curriculum with the development of science, technology and community needs are integral in adaptive and responsive quality management.

The results of this study are expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the barriers, challenges and opportunities in quality management practices in Semarang District

PAUD institutions. The findings provide a basis for developing policies, training and resources that can improve the quality of early childhood education, creating a generation that is qualified and ready to face future challenges. As such, this research not only contributes locally but is also relevant in the context of improving early childhood education nationally.

## METHODS

This research is a type of qualitative research using a case study approach. Qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, for example, behavior, perception, motivation, action and others, holistically and by means of descriptions in the form of words. The data sources in this study are as follows: (1) Human, which includes institutional units and managers, East Ungaran, Semarang Regency. (2) Non-human, which includes documents and all relevant books words and language in a special context that is natural and by utilizing various natural methods. In the study of education, qualitative research can be conducted to understand the various phenomena of the behavior of educators, students in the process of education and learning.

The place of this research will be at the Unit PAUD Institution, East Ungaran, Semarang Regency. Primary Data Sources (a) Interview technique, namely by conducting direct questions and answers to sources, namely the Head of the Institution or related units; (b) Literature technique, namely by collecting data from books, journals or other writing materials that have relevance to the preparation of this research. Secondary Data, is data that has been collected by data collection agencies and published to the PAUD Institution Unit.

The stages in this study begin with identifying the problem first then making problem boundaries in qualitative research or research focus after that determining the focus of the research then collecting data after processing and interpreting the data and coming up with theories and finally reporting the results of the research. In qualitative research, theory is not used to build a framework for thinking in formulating hypotheses.

To obtain truly valid data in this study, it can be done by using the methods of interview, observation, and documentation. In this section researchers use triangulation techniques. Triangulation is defined as a data collection

technique that combines various data collection techniques and data sources that already exist, while the triangulation technique is a data validity checking technique that utilizes something else outside the data for the purpose of checking or comparing the data. There are four kinds of triangulation as a checking technique that utilizes the use of: sources, methods, investigators and theories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Education Quality Management in Early Childhood Education (ECED) involves a number of critical steps to ensure quality education services. First, PAUD institutions need to formulate a clear vision and mission as the main guide in directing early childhood education. In the strategic plan, focus is given to child development through a curriculum that suits their developmental needs.

Implementation of the quality policy is an important step. This process involves developing a quality policy that includes service standards, a relevant curriculum, and special attention to facilities and infrastructure. (1) First, in setting service standards, ECD institutions need to clearly specify the parameters that measure the quality of education services provided to young children. These standards may include aspects such as safety, health, social development, and inclusive learning approaches; (2) In designing a relevant curriculum, ECD institutions should consider the developmental characteristics of early childhood. The curriculum should be designed to stimulate children's creativity, curiosity and social-emotional abilities. The selection of learning materials appropriate to children's developmental level will be key to achieving optimal educational goals. (3) No less important, special attention to facilities and infrastructure is a determining factor in the successful implementation of quality policies. Supportive facilities and infrastructure, such as comfortable classrooms, libraries and safe play areas, will ensure that early childhood learning environments meet safety standards and provide a positive stimulus for their development.

Dissemination of the policy to all stakeholders, including teachers, parents and employees, is key to ensuring understanding and support for education quality goals. Continuous improvement is a principle that must be closely adhered to. Corrective actions should be taken in response to evaluation results, while training and development are provided to improve the competencies of

teachers and staff. Parent and community involvement plays a key role in supporting and enriching education programs, ensuring active participation in children's development.

The application of technology in early childhood learning is one important innovation. Technology integration can enhance the appeal of learning and prepare children for the challenges of the modern world. Finally, regular quality audits and efforts to obtain quality certification are concrete steps to ensure that PAUD institutions adhere to established quality standards. Thus, the implementation of education quality management in ECD institutions can create an optimal learning environment and have a positive impact on the holistic development of early childhood.

Based on the implementation of learning quality management at the Semarang Regency PAUD Institution that the researcher has observed, it can be seen that in the application of the management functions of the independent curriculum implemented at the Semarang Regency PAUD Institution, the researcher found conformity with George R Terry's theory which states that management is a different process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Quality management uses the Independent Learning Curriculum with Project-based learning teaching modules, with learning models tailored to children's interests, talents and developmental growth and using Loosepart media.

With the implementation of education quality management in PAUD institutions, it is expected to create an optimal learning environment and have a positive impact on early childhood development as a whole. The application of quality management principles will ensure that every aspect of education in PAUD institutions runs well and in accordance with the expected quality standards.

Human resource management (HRM) in early childhood education (ECED) institutions plays a crucial role in determining the quality of education provided to young children. The recruitment and selection process of teachers is a crucial early stage, where PAUD institutions must ensure that prospective teachers have the qualifications and competencies that match the characteristics of early childhood education. Criteria such as interpersonal skills, creativity and understanding of child development need to be carefully considered.

Furthermore, teacher training and development is an important aspect of maintaining the quality of learning. Continuous training is needed so that

teachers can adopt the latest approaches to learning and understand children's psychological development in depth. A regular performance appraisal system is an effective tool to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, provide constructive feedback and identify areas for development.

Conflict management is also a focus, both among staff and with parents. Effective communication skills and positive conflict resolution can create a harmonious working environment that supports children's development. In addition, teacher motivation and welfare must be considered. Incentives, recognition of achievements and emotional support are key factors in increasing teachers' motivation so that they can provide optimal education services to young children. By managing human resources well, ECD institutions can ensure that teachers have the competencies and motivation needed to create a positive learning environment that supports optimal early childhood development.

Evaluation is the final stage in quality management. Evaluation is used to measure the shortcomings of a program. In education quality management, evaluation is very important, seeing that PAUD institutions are a new starting place as a reference in the application of education for the younger generation. With an evaluation, it is expected to improve the process.

This evaluation can essentially include the overall content, objectives and learning methods used to determine the results produced. These results are then considered to make decisions to improve a curriculum guide in order to achieve the expected goals. Thus in terms of evaluation there is a mechanism which is used to improve the quality of learning.

Thus from the results of interviews supported by documentation and observation of the evaluation process carried out on the implementation of quality management of education in all PAUD institutions in Semarang Regency is done by formative and summative. As for the follow-up, it is hoped that there will be development, so that the independent learning curriculum becomes a good guide and is able to improve the quality of learning with students more active and characterized by Pancasila, as a guide to life and the basis of the State of Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study include (1) Planning, implementation and evaluation in

Semarang district institutions show a strong commitment to implementing education quality management; (2) The implementation of the independent learning curriculum reflects a structured approach with four stages, starting from the initial stage to the advanced stage; (3) The use of teaching modules as a learning reference shows an effort to present material according to the needs of each educator; (4) Evaluation of the independent learning curriculum is implemented formatively and summatively, creating a balance between assessment that focuses on the process and learning outcomes. In addition to institutions that still need to further improve learning quality management so that the learning process is maximized, all stakeholders also need to learn more about the implementation of the independent learning curriculum because it is a new curriculum so that the quality of education can be achieved holistically.

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