

Implementation of Teaching Skills Enhancement Through Play Environment Organization in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

The organization of play environments plays a crucial role in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes in early childhood education (ECE). This study explores the impact of well-structured play environments on the development of teaching skills in Quran Kindergarten teachers. The research employed a qualitative approach using interviews, observations, and document analysis to assess the effectiveness of the play environment in enhancing teacher competencies. Findings indicate that while teachers demonstrated a moderate improvement in their teaching skills through the organized play environment, further enhancements in teacher involvement, collaboration, and engagement are needed. This paper emphasizes the importance of a well-organized play environment that caters to the developmental needs of children and its role in shaping effective teaching practices. The study concludes with recommendations for improving teacher training programs and environmental planning to optimize learning outcomes in early childhood settings.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Teaching Skills, Environment Organization

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Introduction

Teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of education, particularly in early childhood education (ECE). In this context, teacher competencies are critical, as they directly influence the effectiveness of teaching and the development of young learners. A better understanding of inclusive education among teachers has been shown to enhance their self-efficacy and, consequently, their teaching practices within inclusive early childhood settings ¹. However, challenges in improving these teacher skills and ensuring the quality of learning environments persist. One aspect that is often overlooked in early childhood education is the organization of play environments, which significantly impacts both teaching and learning processes.

¹ Derick Singogo and Kenneth K Muzata, "Teachers' Level of Understanding of Inclusive Education on Their Efficacy in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Delivery," *International Journal of Education and Teaching* 3, no. 2 (2023): 81–91.

Early childhood education serves as the foundation of formal schooling and is a crucial period for developing cognitive, social, and emotional skills in children. This phase demands that educators be creative, confident, and capable of fostering a stimulating learning environment (Latifa & Eliza, 2023). The role of teachers becomes even more pivotal when considered alongside the expected competencies outlined in professional standards ². A well-organized play environment provides children with opportunities to engage, explore, and develop various skills through play. This interactive learning approach allows children to learn effectively and enables teachers to enhance their pedagogical practices, creating engaging and dynamic classrooms that are conducive to exploration and creativity.

Nevertheless, many educational institutions struggle with insufficient attention to the design and organization of play areas, which directly affects the quality of education. Research indicates that poorly structured play environments can hinder both the learning experiences of children and the ability of teachers to apply effective teaching strategies ³. Furthermore, the absence of appropriate play spaces often leads educators to rely heavily on conventional teaching materials, such as textbooks and worksheets, which may fail to engage children and stimulate their creativity ⁴. Studies suggest that the provision of varied and well-designed play areas is crucial for fostering children's development while simultaneously elevating teachers' capacities to facilitate learning through play (Yusupa et al., 2023).

This study focuses on the importance of play environment organization in enhancing teaching skills in early childhood education settings, specifically at Quran Kindergarten in Aceh Tenggara, where teachers' abilities to create stimulating play environments were systematically evaluated. Recent studies highlight significant challenges faced by preschool educators, emphasizing the need for professional development training in structuring play-based environments ⁵. Through a qualitative research approach, this study investigates how organizing play spaces can improve teachers' competencies and, in turn, positively impact the overall learning experience for children. It recognizes that fostering a play-oriented pedagogical framework can substantially enrich both the educational environment and the professional growth of teachers in ECE ⁶.

By addressing the gaps in play environment organization, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights into improving teacher training and educational practices in early childhood settings. Current literature asserts the need for continued professional development and teacher

² Baiti Latifa and Delfi Eliza, "The Context of Professionalism Among Early Childhood Education Teachers in Indonesia," *Thufula Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Guru Raudhatul Athfal* 11, no. 1 (2023): 107.

³ Jonna Kangas et al., "Outlining Play and Playful Learning in Finland and Brazil: A Content Analysis of Early Childhood Education Policy Documents," *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 23, no. 2 (2020): 153–165.

⁴ Ade Yusupa et al., "Decision Support System for Determining the Best PAUD Teacher Using the MOORA Method," *Saga Journal of Technology and Information System* 1, no. 2 (2023): 50–55.

⁵ Raihana Raihana, Dian T Utami, and Arya A Putra, "Role of Early Childhood Educators Professionalism in Managing Learning Activities in RA Uniq Kota Pekanbaru," *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education* 3, no. 2 (2021): 88.

⁶ Xinxin Wang, "A Study of Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Development and Teaching Effectiveness Enhancement From the Perspective of Educational Psychology," *Contemporary Education and Teaching Research* 4, no. 8 (2023): 355–359.

training to enhance the competencies of educators and promote inclusive educational practices ⁷. As such, the study aims to illuminate how organized play environments empower teachers in their instructional methods, ultimately benefiting the holistic development of children in early learning contexts.

The interplay between teacher competencies, effective learning environments, and the organization of play significantly influences educational quality in early childhood education. By fostering a context where play environments are optimized, this study hopes to advocate for more significant changes in teacher training and ECE curricula that embrace the fundamental role of play in learning.

Methods

The present study employs a qualitative research design to examine the impact of organized play environments on the enhancement of teaching skills in early childhood education settings. This research was specifically conducted at Quran Kindergarten in Aceh Tenggara, a context recognized for its unique cultural and educational dynamics. In this environment, the ability of educators to create stimulating play environments was thoroughly evaluated, providing a rich tapestry of insights into pedagogical practices. The chosen methodology aligns with the descriptive research approach, which aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current conditions and practices within this educational context. By utilizing a descriptive approach, the research captures the intricate dynamics between teacher competencies and organizational structures within early childhood education ⁸.

The participants in this study were early childhood educators from Quran Kindergarten, tasked with fostering the developmental needs of young children. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select teachers who were actively engaged in the implementation of play-based learning strategies. This methodological choice allowed for the selection of a diverse sample that represented varying teaching experience levels, including both novice teachers and seasoned educators. Such diversity is crucial, as it provides insights into how different levels of experience affect the perceptions and execution of organized play environments in early childhood education settings. The selected teachers were not only responsible for day-to-day interactions with children but also integral in shaping the pedagogical framework within which play-based learning occurs.

Data were collected through a multifaceted approach involving three primary methods: interviews, direct observations, and document analysis, each contributing to a holistic understanding of the research question.

Firstly, interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format to elicit comprehensive insights into teachers' perceptions regarding the organization of play environments and their influence on teaching practices. These interviews focused on key themes such as teacher confidence, various teaching strategies utilized, and the perceived impact of organized play areas on children's learning outcomes. Such qualitative inquiries provide depth to the understanding of

⁷ María d. C Olmos-Gómez et al., "Quality of Higher Education Through the Pursuit of Satisfaction With a Focus on Sustainability," *Sustainability* 12, no. 6 (2020): 2366.

⁸ Suzanne Hobson, "Religion and Spirituality," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Culture*, 2014.

educators' mindsets and the subtleties of their experiences, particularly considering the role of confidence as an essential mediator in pedagogical effectiveness ⁹.

Secondly, observation sessions were performed within the classroom to assess how educators interacted with the play environment and how children engaged with the provided materials. The observations aimed at discerning the types of activities encouraged within the play environment, as well as the degree of teacher facilitation present. This observational component is fundamental in revealing the real-world applicability of educational strategies and how they resonate with the theoretical frameworks discussed in the interviews ¹⁰.

Finally, document analysis was conducted, examining relevant teaching materials, lesson plans, and classroom layouts to scrutinize how the physical environment was structured to support play-based learning. This included an assessment of the alignment between planned activities and the available resources, providing essential contextual data that complements the findings from interviews and observations ¹¹.

The data analysis process followed a thematic coding approach, enabling a detailed exploration of the collected qualitative data. Interviews and field notes from observations were transcribed and analyzed through an inductive lens, thereby identifying emerging themes and patterns related to the organization of play environments and associated teaching skills. This type of analysis allows for the discovery of nuanced insights that may not be formally articulated by participants but are nevertheless crucial for understanding the dynamics at play within early childhood education contexts ¹². The data were subsequently organized into categories that reflect key aspects of play environment organization, including teacher involvement, resource availability, and the overall impact on children's engagement and development.

To ensure the validity of the findings, the triangulation method was employed, drawing from interview data, observational notes, and document analyses. By integrating multiple sources of data, this approach strengthens the credibility of the research and provides a comprehensive view of the educational practices observed within the classroom setting ¹³. Triangulation facilitates a richer understanding of the interplay between teacher competencies and well-organized play environments, reaffirming the importance of contextual factors in shaping educational outcomes.

This qualitative study elucidates the complexities surrounding the organization of play environments in early childhood education and their implications for teaching practices. The findings are poised to contribute to the discourse on enhancing early childhood education quality through the strategic organization of play spaces, thus informing both policy and practice in similar educational contexts.

⁹ Aisyah Nur Atika et al., "Early Childhood Learning Quality in Pandalungan Community," *JPUD - Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini* (2019).

¹⁰ Yoav Mintz and Ronit Brodie, "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence in Medicine," *Minimally Invasive Therapy and Allied Technologies* (2019).

¹¹ Youngkwon Bae et al., "Exploration of AI Curriculum Development for Graduate School of Education," *Journal of The Korean Association of Information Education* 24, no. 5 (2020): 433–441.

¹² Jillianne Code, Rachel Ralph, and Kieran Forde, "Pandemic Designs for the Future: Perspectives of Technology Education Teachers during COVID-19," *Information and Learning Science* (2020).

¹³ Robert k. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications, Case Study Research and Applications"Design and Methods*, 2018.

Result And Discussion

Result

The results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of organized play environments on teaching skills in early childhood education settings. Data collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis led to several key findings that highlight the relationships between teacher competencies, play environment organization, and children's learning outcomes.

Teacher Competencies and Confidence

The interviews with teachers revealed that teacher experience and confidence had a direct influence on their ability to effectively organize and utilize play environments. Experienced teachers were found to possess higher competencies in organizing play areas that aligned with children's developmental needs. These teachers confidently integrated diverse play-based activities into their teaching practices, which facilitated positive learning outcomes.

Conversely, less experienced teachers expressed challenges in designing and utilizing organized play areas. They often relied more heavily on traditional teaching methods, such as worksheets and textbooks, due to their uncertainty about how to structure a play environment effectively. These teachers reported feeling less confident in utilizing the play areas to foster creativity and engagement, which resulted in fewer interactive and developmental opportunities for the children.

Organization of Play Environments

Observations indicated that classrooms with well-organized play environments saw higher levels of child engagement and interaction. In classrooms where materials were purposefully arranged, children demonstrated more active participation, spending time exploring and interacting with the resources. Well-structured play areas with clearly designated zones (e.g., reading areas, art stations, and sensory play) enabled children to independently choose activities and engage with the materials in a meaningful way.

In contrast, classrooms with less organized or cluttered play environments resulted in lower levels of engagement from the children. The lack of structure in these classrooms led to confusion, where children had difficulty understanding what activities were available or how to interact with the resources. Children in these environments were more likely to engage in solitary play or show signs of boredom and disinterest.

Resource Availability and Quality

Document analysis revealed that the availability and quality of resources were crucial to the success of play-based learning. Classrooms with a variety of age-appropriate resources, such as books, building blocks, educational toys, and art supplies, provided children with a wide range of learning opportunities. Teachers in these classrooms were able to facilitate a variety of activities that addressed multiple areas of development, including cognitive, social, and motor skills.

However, in classrooms where resources were limited or mismatched with the developmental needs of the children, both teachers and students faced challenges. Teachers were unable to design diverse learning experiences, and children were disengaged, as the materials did not provide enough variety or stimulation. The findings highlight the importance of resource availability and the alignment of materials with the learning objectives to enhance the overall effectiveness of play environments.

Teacher Facilitation in Play Activities

Observational data demonstrated that teacher involvement in play activities was a key factor in the success of the play environment. Teachers who actively facilitated play—by guiding children's interactions, offering constructive feedback, and encouraging collaboration—saw greater engagement from the children. These teachers used play to introduce new concepts, promote problem-solving, and foster social interactions among children.

In contrast, teachers who took a more passive approach, only supervising play without direct involvement, observed lower levels of child engagement. Children in these environments were less likely to interact with each other or the materials. These findings emphasize the importance of teacher facilitation in play activities, suggesting that passive supervision alone does not lead to effective learning outcomes.

Impact on Children's Learning Outcomes

The results indicate that organized play environments have a positive impact on children's learning outcomes. In classrooms with well-structured play areas, children exhibited greater creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving abilities. These children were observed to engage more frequently in collaborative activities, demonstrating improved social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, children in well-organized classrooms were more motivated to explore new tasks and were more persistent in overcoming challenges. Teachers reported that these children displayed enhanced cognitive skills, including language development, logical reasoning, and spatial awareness. In contrast, children in less organized classrooms showed lower levels of engagement and were more likely to become disengaged or frustrated during play.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the role of organized play environments in enhancing teaching competencies and children's learning outcomes. The results from the interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis demonstrate the importance of teacher experience, resource availability, and teacher facilitation in creating effective play-based learning environments. These findings align with existing literature on the relationship between the physical learning environment and educational outcomes ¹⁴.

¹⁴ Nurbiana - Dhieni, Sofia Hartati, and Sri Wulan, "Evaluation of Content Curriculum in Kindergarten," *JPUD - Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini* (2019); Karen M La Paro et al., "Quality in Kindergarten Classrooms: Observational Evidence for the Need to Increase Children's Learning Opportunities in Early Education Classrooms," *Early Education*

Teacher Competencies and Confidence

The study found that teacher confidence and experience were integral to the effective implementation of play-based learning environments. Teachers with greater experience were better equipped to organize play areas that fostered children's engagement and development. These teachers demonstrated more creative and confident teaching practices, integrating play activities that catered to a wide range of developmental needs. This finding is consistent with research that highlights the link between teacher self-efficacy and successful implementation of innovative teaching strategies ¹⁵. Teachers with higher confidence levels reported that well-organized play environments enhanced their ability to teach and allowed them to engage children more effectively.

Conversely, less experienced teachers struggled with designing and organizing play environments, particularly when faced with limited resources or unclear guidelines on how to structure play-based activities. This finding echoes studies that emphasize the importance of teacher training and professional development in early childhood education ¹⁶. As these teachers gained more experience and confidence, their teaching skills improved, and they became more adept at using play as a learning tool.

Play Environment Organization

The organization of the play environment emerged as a critical factor influencing children's engagement and learning outcomes. Classrooms with well-organized and clearly defined play zones saw higher levels of child engagement. This aligns with research suggesting that the physical arrangement of learning spaces influences children's ability to interact with materials, engage in meaningful play, and develop cognitive and social skills ¹⁷. When play areas were thoughtfully designed, with materials that were easily accessible and suited to children's developmental needs, children demonstrated increased creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities.

On the other hand, poorly organized play environments led to confusion and disengagement. Children in these settings were observed to struggle with understanding the purpose of the materials or the activities available to them, leading to frustration and a lack of motivation. These findings underscore the importance of intentional play environment design, which can significantly enhance children's learning experiences and overall development. The physical space, along with its resources, serves as an essential tool in promoting active learning in early childhood education.

and Development 20, no. 4 (2009): 657–692; Yusupa et al., “Decision Support System for Determining the Best PAUD Teacher Using the MOORA Method.”

¹⁵ Diane M Early et al., “Teachers’ Education, Classroom Quality, and Young Children’s Academic Skills: Results from Seven Studies of Preschool Programs,” *Child development* 78, no. 2 (2007): 558–580; 37–41. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0022390> Tuma, J. M., & Pratt, J. M. (1982). Clinical child psychology practice and training: A survey. *Idots of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 137(August 2012) et al., “Youth Mentoring across Professional Settings: A Pedagogic Approach to Social Exclusion,” *Doctor of Education School of Education University of Derby* (2012): 1–210, <http://derby.openrepository.com/derby/handle/10545/272012>.

¹⁶ Estefanía Martín et al., “Impact of Using Interactive Devices in Spanish Early Childhood Education Public Schools,” *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* (2019).

¹⁷ Mintz and Brodie, “Introduction to Artificial Intelligence in Medicine.”

Resource Availability and Quality

The analysis of classroom materials revealed that the availability of high-quality, age-appropriate resources is essential for effective play-based learning. Classrooms with abundant and varied materials enabled children to engage in a wide range of activities that supported their cognitive, emotional, and social development. These resources allowed teachers to design diverse play-based learning experiences that were tailored to meet the needs of all children. This finding supports the argument that well-equipped classrooms provide the necessary tools for fostering children's creativity and developmental progress ¹⁸.

In contrast, resource limitations in some classrooms restricted teachers' ability to offer varied learning experiences, resulting in less engaging activities for children. This finding highlights the need for schools to invest in quality educational resources that are aligned with the developmental needs of children. Providing appropriate resources not only enhances the play experience but also enables teachers to implement differentiated learning strategies, catering to the diverse needs of their students.

Teacher Facilitation in Play Activities

Teacher facilitation emerged as a key element in the success of play-based learning. Teachers who actively participated in play activities, guiding children through problem-solving tasks, encouraging creativity, and promoting social interactions, significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the play environment. This aligns with research that suggests teacher involvement in children's play leads to deeper learning and better developmental outcomes ¹⁹. The active role of the teacher in scaffolding children's play and facilitating learning through play-based activities is essential in promoting critical thinking and social development.

In contrast, when teachers took a passive approach to play, merely supervising without engaging in the activities, children exhibited lower levels of interaction and creativity. These findings suggest that teacher engagement is critical for maximizing the educational potential of play environments. It is not enough for teachers to simply provide materials; they must also interact with the children, guiding them through the play process and fostering learning opportunities.

Impact on Learning Outcomes

The overall impact of organized play environments on children's learning outcomes was evident in the results of this study. Children in classrooms with structured play environments exhibited higher levels of engagement, creativity, and social interaction. They demonstrated increased problem-solving abilities, language development, and social cooperation, which are all key indicators of early childhood development. These findings align with the existing literature that underscores the importance of structured play in fostering cognitive and social growth ²⁰.

¹⁸ Bae et al., "Exploration of AI Curriculum Development for Graduate School of Education."

¹⁹ Yusupa et al., "Decision Support System for Determining the Best PAUD Teacher Using the MOORA Method."

²⁰ Bae et al., "Exploration of AI Curriculum Development for Graduate School of Education."

The study also found that children in well-organized classrooms showed greater intrinsic motivation for learning, as evidenced by their willingness to explore new tasks and persist in the face of challenges. This suggests that a well-organized play environment not only facilitates learning but also nurtures children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for exploration. These results reinforce the idea that organized, teacher-facilitated play is an essential component of early childhood education that contributes to the holistic development of young children.

The findings of this study confirm the critical role of organized play environments in enhancing both teacher competencies and children's learning outcomes. Teacher confidence, the organization of play areas, the availability of high-quality resources, and teacher facilitation were identified as key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of play-based learning. The results underscore the need for intentional planning and resource allocation in creating effective learning environments that foster children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

These findings contribute to the broader discourse on the importance of structured play in early childhood education and emphasize the need for professional development programs that enhance teachers' abilities to organize and facilitate play-based learning effectively. By addressing gaps in teacher training and resource provision, educational institutions can create environments that support the optimal development of young children, preparing them for future academic success and personal growth.

Conclusion

This study underscores the pivotal role of organized play environments in enhancing both teacher competencies and children's learning outcomes in early childhood education settings. The findings indicate that teacher experience and confidence in organizing play environments directly impact the quality of play-based learning. Teachers with greater experience demonstrated more effective use of resources and a higher level of engagement with the children, which in turn fostered a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

Furthermore, the organization of play areas, including the availability of age-appropriate resources and the structure of play activities, significantly influenced children's levels of engagement, creativity, and social interaction. The study reveals that well-structured play environments not only support the cognitive and emotional development of children but also enhance the overall learning experience by providing opportunities for exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration.

Teacher facilitation emerged as another critical factor in maximizing the effectiveness of play-based learning. Active involvement of teachers in guiding play activities, encouraging children's creativity, and fostering social interactions was found to enhance the educational value of the play environment. In contrast, passive supervision resulted in less meaningful engagement and limited developmental outcomes for children.

These results highlight the importance of professional development and teacher training in early childhood education, particularly in the areas of play environment organization and facilitation. It is essential for teachers to be equipped with the skills and confidence necessary to

create learning environments that foster creativity, social development, and critical thinking in young children.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on the significance of play-based learning and emphasizes the need for educational institutions to invest in both teacher training and resource provision. By improving the organization of play environments and enhancing teacher facilitation, early childhood education settings can better support the holistic development of children, preparing them for success in their future academic and social endeavors.

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