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The Efforts of Early-Childhood Education Managers in Achieving Accreditation to Improve the Quality of Education Organization

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Abstract

The background of this research is that less than 10 per cent of the 846 ECE institutions in West Bandung District have accreditation of institutions, so the implementation quality doesn't meet the education national standard. Accreditation, although it is an intermediate goal that must be achieved by each institution, has a great influence on the quality of implementation, the quality of graduates and the credibility of the institution. The purpose of the research is to describe the efforts and obstacles of ECE managers in achieving accreditation to improve the quality of education organization according to national education standard. The research uses descriptive qualitative for research method with case study approach in West Bandung District. Research results of the study: (1) the efforts of ECE managers in achieving institution accreditation; joining socialization, learning accreditation documents, consulting with the supervisors, taking discussions and workshops with fellow institutions that will participate in the accreditation, inviting resource persons and arranging infrastructure, and (2) the obstacles faced by managers in achieving accreditation are limited sources and infrastructure, and weak management. The research concludes that ECE management requires a serious effort by mobilizing various available resources to achieve accreditation because the implementation doesn't pay attention to eight education national standards.

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INTRODUCTION

Early-Childhood Education (ECE) is an education service for children before entering elementary school (Santrock, John W., 2011: 33). There are three ECE service lines (Sofia L.T., 2013: 18), namely formal ECE (Kindergartens and Raudhatul Athfal), non-formal ECE (playgroups, children care and similar non-formal ECE units) and informal ECE (ECE in community and family environment) (Badan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia, 2013). Many studies have proven that the impact of ECE on children's development is very influential for the success of children's education later and when a child enters the workforce. Children's age in ECE (0 to 6 years old) is a golden age to the development of children's intelligence (Helmawati, 2015:4). With the increasing awareness of the public about the importance of ECE, the ECE institutions, especially playgroup has been increasingly growing in the community. Awareness, enthusiasm and community participation to organize playgroup institutions need to be addressed wisely because they have not been matched with the fulfilment of ECE eight national education standards as an effort to improve the quality of implementation, the quality of graduates, and the credibility of the institution. The research is taken to describe the efforts and obstacles faced by playgroup managers in achieving institution accreditation to improve the quality of implementation according to national education standards.

METHODS

The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with case study approach in three institutions which have been taking the accreditation process. Data is collected by interview, observation and documentation study. Validation data is taken by triangulation and member check. Data analysis is done by taking data reduction, data display and conclusion withdrawal

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The accreditation of playgroups is an activity of collecting documents needed based on the criteria, refers to eight education national standards. Documents consist of program planning, formats, forms, guidelines, work instructions, procedures, administration books, track records, process and results of institution's work which can consist of notes, progress charts, photo-

graphs, awards, trophies and products produced by students, teachers and education personnel.

The accreditation process is not only oriented to fulfil the administration but also has some benefits: (1) to determine the vision, mission, goals, targets, strategies and programs of playgroups. Playgroup institutions are supposed to have a clear direction as the commitment to implementing ECE. Because it involves the fate and future of students. Education is not only about the implementation of learning process according to the rules of instructional, but also has to have the spirit that overshadows all the activities of the implementation process in the institutions; (2) Accreditation is an effort to improve the quality of management. Managers and teachers must have commitment that the fulfilment of the terms and conditions in the accreditation instrument is an effort that is actually carried out in the implementation of playgroups; (3) Accreditation is a feedback effort for managers, teachers and parents of learners about the strengths and limitations in implementing the playgroups. If it has strength, then it is maintained and utilized for the development of the institution, but if there are some limitations and obstacles, it should be improved, refined and overcome so that the implementation of playgroups will be better; and (4) Accreditation is the accountability and credibility of the institution, so it is proportionally recognized and appreciated by the government and communities (Fitzsimons, Camilla, 2017: 11), (Aqib, Z, 2011).

Based on the study of three playgroup institutions which has carried out the accreditation process of playgroup institutions, it was found that the efforts made by the managers included participating in the socialization about the description of the accredited process and substances, studying accreditation forms, consulting with similar institutions which had already obtained accreditation, inviting resource persons who understand accreditation, which is coordinated by the group of educators and education personnel for ECE (Himpaudi) and playgroup groups, and preparing documents required to meet the accreditation forms according to accreditation formats. The role of managers or owners and the chairperson of the playgroup is very dominant in the accreditation process because to fulfil and complete the accreditation documents cannot be carried out quickly. The documents presented are not only those relating to formal legal forms of buildings, facilities and administrative books, but also displays a track record of what has been done and what achievements have been achieved.

Playgroup institutions are generally established based on initiatives to provide the widest possible ECE services to early-childhood in the surrounding communities. The enthusiasm to teach to children, unfortunately, has not been matched by adequate qualifications and competencies of managers and teachers. In fact, many playgroup institutions are held in buildings and rooms that are not specifically for the provision of education, which can be taken over at anytime and utilized for other activities of buildings and room owners, such as village hall buildings or rooms, citizen association halls, community houses, mosques/ Islamic prayer rooms and meeting halls. The situation hinders the efforts of managers in carrying out accreditation due to wrong conditions in accreditation concerning the existence, status, licensing and completeness of the building and room for the implementation of playgroup activities.

The efforts by managers to achieve institutional accreditation require hard work to meet the established criteria, namely eight national standards for non-formal education of ECE. Based on my observation, it refers to the education national standard, the obstacles of managers in achieving the accreditation of playgroup institution are: (1) *Graduate Competency Standards*. Managers haven't been fully understood the concepts, substances and assess the learners in achieving the Graduate Competency Standards in playgroup, because the manager's educational background is not from the bachelor of ECE study, but the majority of high school graduates. Document of graduate competencies documented is available at the institution, but the managers still don't understand deeply about the content and substance of Graduate Competency Standards and its relation to the content standards, process standards, and other standards. However, I found that there were managers who had attended basic education and training as ECE managers and attended various technical meetings with supervisors and organizations of ECE, so they began to understand more about the substance of Graduate Competencies Standards; (2) *Content Standards*. As in the case of understanding Graduate Competency Standards, the managers have not yet thoroughly understood the materials and scope in details about content standards. So it has an impact on learning planning activities and learning process (Wijana, Widarmi D.dkk. (2010); (3) *Process Standards*. In general, managers understand the sequence of the learning process and how to organize learning centres that support the materials to be learned, but haven't had

adequate insights into various learning methods, motivation strategies and handling of learners with special needs; (4) *Educator and education personnel standards*. Criteria that are required in the National Education System Law and national education standard that teachers must qualify for a bachelor degree and managers of at least a senior high school graduated. (Wahyuningsih, dkk., 2015:47); (5) *Facilities and infrastructure standards*. Of the three institutions studied, only two institutions had met the criteria, the other one was still below the standard, so it was necessary to fulfil it before accreditation by the team of The Accreditation Board for ECE and Community Education; (6) *Management Standards*. In general, the three institutions have managed well, but the obstacles of managers are more preoccupied with learning activities, while the administration of institutions is less handled in an orderly manner. Some documents are already available, but more are not filled (Wahyuningsih, dkk; 2015); (7) *Financing Standard*. Three institutions in the research have financing factors as the main obstacle. Managers still rely on sources of funding from learners. There is even an institution that does not target the number of monthly fees but only relies on voluntary giving, with a daily or monthly system to help with the cost of running. Wages or transport fees for managers and teachers are very inadequate and very far from the minimum wage standard (Zedan, R. F; 2012); (8) *Educational assessment standards*. The three institutions studied have implemented learning assessment, but it has been done in a planned manner. The assessment result documentation has not been done well and the analysis of the learning achievement of the minimum criteria standard has not been carried out.

Based on the description above, managers need serious efforts to achieve institutional accreditation. This is done by strengthening teamwork between managers and teachers, building cooperation with supervisors and fellow managers, preparing adequate funding sources, adequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as perseverance in documenting routine and complete activities.

Another thing that should be done by the managers is that the managers must be carried out in a professional manner, which adheres to the principles of good management. Many theories that reveal about management, but in general consist of four main elements, namely planning, actuating, evaluating and developing (Abdul Majid, 2018).

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Planning activities are the main and first element in the management of the institution. Planning activities are very important, so if planning has been designed, then the goal has been achieved in half. The planning element implies that a playgroup manager must have a vision, ideas or future outlook to guide the direction of the playgroup. Based on the vision, the managers are required to have a working document regarding the steps to be taken. It is not only in the form of vision in dreams but also realized in a clear, planned, measurable and realistic framework to be realized by considering the potential possessed or can be achieved to realize organizational goals.

In planning, there are other activities, such as identifying prospective learners, partnership network, funding resources, facilities and infrastructure, teachers and educational personnel, analyzing potential obstacles, as well as potential challenges and threats changes managers are ready to anticipate them well, without meaningless loss (Chrysa Pui Chi Keung, Hongbiao Yin, Winnie Wing Yi Tam, hanChink Sing Chai, Clement Ka Kit Ng, 2019).

In planning, there are socialization, promotion dan publication strategies to be carried out. Especially with the development of information technology these days, it is common for educational institutions to be located in remote areas or far from the capital of districts/cities, or sub-districts and villages, but are known and have many learners because of their good socialization, promotion and publication strategies.

Planning activities include division of roles and tasks regarding what work must be done by teachers and education personnel at the playgroup institutions. The division of roles and tasks should be detail, operational and measurable to make it easy to control and evaluate its performance. Unclear roles and tasks can lead to many problems in the implementation. Besides, the division of roles and tasks should be balanced with rights and obligations. So it is not only enough on the roles and tasks, but also the managers must regulate what are the rights of teachers and education personnel in addition to their obligations. Do not let the roles, duties and obligations be demanded, but their rights are not heeded. Both the right to work safely, comfortably, also the right to get incentives or adequate income.

But in this study, it was found that the incentives or income of teachers and education personnel of playgroup institutions which were used as study locations were far below the regional general wage standard. This is because the main funding source that comes from learner contributions is very minimal. Some of them even pay voluntarily. To cover the operational needs of management of the playgroups is very limited and even experiencing shortages. On the other hand, operational funding assistance from the government is not always received by playgroup institutions, and if the funds obtained are limited, they cannot meet the overall operational needs.

The second management element is actuating. Actuating is to realize all that has been planned. Actuating activities is not a trial and error process. So actuating is well planned, systematic and measurable activities. In playgroup institutions, a manager delegates the task of conducting the learning process to teachers to deliver learners according to the learning plans that have been prepared, namely learning plans that refer to graduate competency standards, competency standards, basic competencies, indicator, syllabi, annual work plans, semester work plans, weekly work plans and daily work plans. Managers should make sure that the teachers take the planning activities, so the implementation can be monitored, guided, and controlled well (Zedan, R. F, 2012).

In actuating activities, a manager of a playgroup delegates the tasks to education personnel to take institution administration, such as mailing administration, finance, infrastructure, academics, cooperation, literature, documentation, security, cleanliness and comfort. So that the institution functions as the other institutions. I observed that almost all of the playgroup institutions studied were weak in the aspect. The administrative function that should be performed by education personnel is currently held by teachers, who are also manager so that the administrative function is not carried out seriously. As a result, the administrative management of the institution was not carried out regularly, and at the time of applying for accreditation, there were many difficulties. Because the accreditation process needs the completeness of good documents.

Conducting administrative management of playgroup institutions is not an easy task to do, but requires perseverance, regularity, discipline, systematic and ongoing. If this is concurrent or done by existing teachers, it will experience many obstacles. It is better to take administrative management in the playgroup institutions with their

education personnel. Especially at this time the submission for the accreditation of playgroup institutions and other non-formal educational institutions by applying information and communication technology, namely the submission of the required documents, besides having to be complete, but also in the form of soft-files, are sent online. With this condition, the education personnel who manage the playgroup must have the ability to apply information technology and computers in education.

All institutional documents are not only sufficient in hardcover or printed form but must be converted into soft files, which are then uploaded on the National Accreditation Board for ECE and Community Education (BAN PAUD dan Dikmas) pages. Furthermore, if this process has been taken, visitation has been carried out by the National Accreditation Board for ECE and Community Education to the location of the playgroup institution to verify and match between what is uploaded and the actual conditions that occur in the field.

In the evaluating activities, the manager evaluates the progress of the learning process, the final evaluation of learning, and the overall evaluation of the institution. Learning evaluation is carried out by teachers concerning the curriculum that has been spelt out in the learning activities. Learning success will be able to prepare learners to enter basic education, with the mastery of certain skills. The success of learning is also shown by several achievements achieved by learners from the institution when participating in various competitions and championships organized by the partners. The more achievement, it will bring a good image to the community in the playgroup institutions, which in turn will increase the trust of surrounding community to entrust their children to study in playgroup institution (Prendergast, S., & MacPhee, D, 2018).

The manager of playgroups must keep taking self-evaluation periodically to recognize the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threat. If the institution has many weaknesses and a large threat, then the institution must consolidate inward, do self-improvement, correction, learning, structuring and strengthening to teachers and education personnel. It is better if the playgroup institution has enough strength and opportunities that can be achieved, then the institution can expand and develop for the progress of the broader institution.

The ability to analyze playgroup managers is a professional requirement, that managing playgroup is not a part-time or side job. The bad

effect is not the low quality of the organization but the low quality of ECE learning. Education for young children is the main foundation to lay the foundations of education, in addition to family education at home. So that ECE in the playgroup must be done professionally. Unfortunately, in Indonesia, the appreciation and attention of the government and communities towards ECE is not seriously taken into account, both in terms of policies, teacher pieces of training, education personnel, funding and infrastructure.

It is very sad if we pay attention to the fact on the field regarding the attention of communities towards reward given to the teachers in ECE institutions, especially the playgroups, for example in providing education operational assistance from parents of learners. Its contribution is so low that it is not sufficient to help with educational operations. Attention from the central and regional governments on teachers, education personnel and ECE institutions is still lacking. Although some local governments provide adequate incentive assistance for teachers, in general, it is still lacking.

Some time ago the organization of teachers and ECE personnel (Himpaudi) conducted the material test to the Constitutional Court to examine the reward of teachers (educators) of ECE in the non-formal education to be aligned with the teachers (educators) in the formal education. But the judicial review was rejected by the Constitutional Court. So that the appreciation of teachers in non-formal education remains different from the teacher's informal education. As a result, the provision of incentives, salaries and welfare are also different.

The fourth element of management is developing. An organization regardless of its field of work, certainly expect progress in the broadest sense. No organization wants to be static or monotonous. A playgroup manager should have the will and hope for the progress of the institution by making various possible efforts. In this condition manager's credibility is at stake in managing the institution. A credible manager will appear from his movement to bring institutions in a better direction. Some credible managers invest their asset personnel and personal funds for the progress of the institution regardless of assistance from the government and the community. Such managers are those who have soul's calling to devote themselves voluntarily, sincerely, selflessly and with appreciation. It they later receive attention and appreciation from other parties, then, in fact, it is a gift from their dedication.

Nowadays in the development of play-

roup, managers must keep abreast of developments in technology. It is very recommended that the institutions have their website to conduct various promotions, socialization and publications on the existence of the institution, so they will be more known to open networks of cooperation for their progress. Supports will flow if transparency, accountability, and achievement are demonstrated by the institutions. If the relevant institutions do not have education personnel who can do this, then the managers can invite partners or other parties to help develop the institution by utilizing information and communication technology.

I observed that almost all playgroup managers studied stated that they established and managed playgroups were based on a soul's call to contribute to educating children as early as possible. These are the basic values that should be emulated by the managers of other educational institutions. It's not profit that wants to be achieved, but social piety to educate Indonesian children.

The explanation above requires that to achieve the accreditation of playgroup institutions, managers must carry out the best management that starts from the planning, actuating, evaluating and developing activities. The accreditation process is essential to improve the quality of education delivery following established standard. Accreditation is only an intermediate goal, and the final goal is the quality of graduates.

The study also revealed that playgroup institutions will experience many obstacles when conducting the accreditation process if administrative management is concurrently held by teachers. Administrative management should be carried out by education personnel to organize administration and requirements following national education standards. Because now the regulation (policies) established by the National Accreditation Board for ECE and Community Education (BAN PAUD dan Dikmas) required accreditation process by uploading the documents first, so the education personnel must have the ability to operate information technology and communication to do the task.

Education personnel must also be equipped with an understanding of the accreditation policies of ECE institutions following National Education Standards, which enables the education personnel to have insight and ways of working to realize the institution achieving accredited status.

CONCLUSION

The implementation quality of playgroup education can be achieved according to national standards if taken seriously by managers by involving many parties. The accreditation process is an intermediate goal, to make the implementation of education better, orderly, systematic and accountable that produces quality graduates.

Studies in three playgroup institutions have proven that managers face many difficulties in meeting the criteria according to the ECE national standard. It is because the managers haven't fully implemented management system well, which starts from the planning, organizing, evaluating and developing.

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