MENTORING MODEL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (PAUD) TEACHERS IN TRAINING ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS (LPD) IN BANTEN

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Abstract. *Efforts to improve the professionalism of teachers must be carried out by enhancing their abilities and competencies. This improvement refers to initiatives aimed at supporting teachers in achieving quality development through training programs, seminars, workshops, and other professional development activities related to their educational duties. The development of various forms of intelligence in learning requires adequate knowledge and skills from educators to effectively reach learning objectives and optimize the growth potential of their students. The role of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers is clearly seen in their success in nurturing, educating, and protecting children, as part of maximizing the brain connections that are formed at birth. PAUD educators are professionals with comprehensive responsibilities, including planning, implementing, and evaluating learning processes, as well as caring for, guiding, and safeguarding their students. Therefore, it is essential for PAUD teachers to meet required qualifications and competencies before carrying out their roles and responsibilities. This research aims to describe the mentoring model carried out by training providers (LPD) in Banten. The study uses a case study method focusing on the mentoring of PAUD educators in LPD Banten, involving interviews with key informants who conduct tiered training programs for PAUD teachers in the region. The findings show that improvements in professional competencies among participants of the basic training program are evident not only through high post-test results but also in long-term changes that require time and opportunities for participants to apply the knowledge gained during the training. The analysis concludes that PAUD teachers' professional competencies improve through the tiered training program. The "Tiered Training" model, which includes Basic, Skilled, and Advanced levels—must address the specific needs of PAUD educators by focusing on practical skills and applicable knowledge. This structured approach is not only essential for improving educator competencies but also equips them with the necessary tools to effectively mentor and educate young children.*

Keywords: *Mentoring Model, PAUD Educators, Training Provider Institutions*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education and training must be continuous programs or, at the very least, integral parts of life and organizational efforts to achieve specific goals. These may include field discussions, seminars, conferences, role play, simulations, case studies, and more. When an organization or institution organizes training and higher education programs for its staff, the objectives of such training must first be clearly defined. The aim of education and training is to guide the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of programs. In every program, such as this tiered training (Diklat Berjenjang), program evaluation is essential to assess its effectiveness. According to Gronlund (in Riza, 2014, p. 91), evaluation is a systematic process used to determine the results achieved in accordance with predetermined objectives. Furthermore, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (in Riza, 2014, p. 91) define evaluation as a systematic measure of the usefulness or quality of an object.

The mentoring system emphasized in this study refers to the systematic implementation of efforts and initiatives, whether manual or system-based. A mentoring system is a form of supporting structure provided by an institution or other parties where institutional culture has shifted towards appreciating educational rights and inclusivity for learners. This approach moves away from traditional remedial assistance models and toward supporting learning success. Learning support that is integral yet targeted at specific needs will be more readily accepted and appreciated by students (Ogata & Yano,

2004). Hann and McGill (1985), in their journal article "A Nurturing Environment and Effective Teaching," also state that effective teachers not only provide information but also share how they acquire, understand, and utilize that information themselves.

A mentoring system may include any activity beyond the set academic curriculum that contributes to students' attendance, retention, learning, and individual achievement. In some cases, these are part of the core program; in others, they are supplemental. Mentoring systems must involve the institution in addressing all learning needs identified through both initial assessments and ongoing student progress reviews. These systems are defined by their current scope and practices and shaped by their history and expertise. Each institution develops strategies to respond to combined and sometimes conflicting the effects of national initiatives, institutional culture, and local needs, including early childhood educator (PAUD teacher) training.

Early childhood educator training is an effort to support the growth and development in term of physically and mentally of children from birth to age six (Etivali & Alaika M, 2019). The goal of early childhood education (ECE) is to prepare children for further education. Young children undergo unique growth and development processes, including cognitive, emotional, social, language, and communication aspects. Educational media can be any tool used to deliver messages or lesson material and stimulate children's thoughts, emotions, attention, and abilities.

ECE is a comprehensive process for children from birth to six years, addressing physical and non-physical aspects. It aims to provide appropriate stimulation for children's physical, mental, motor, intellectual, emotional, and social development so they can grow and develop optimally. In a competency-based curriculum, ECE emphasizes stimulating, guiding, nurturing, and providing learning activities that build children's capabilities and skills.

ECE is designed to facilitate the overall growth and development of children, emphasizing all personality aspects. Experts such as Bredecamp & Copple (1997) state that kindergarten-level education aims to enhance children's intellectual, emotional, social, language, and physical development. Similarly, Becher & Snowman (1993) argue that preschool education should optimally facilitate child development based on societal norms and values. Bredecamp & Copple (quoted in Masitoh et al., 2011, p. 1.14) also highlight that early childhood learning should prioritize learning through play and play through learning to foster children's active, free, and creative participation in activities.

Tiered training (Diklat Berjenjang) providers must be institutions that aim to improve educator quality, especially PAUD teachers, supported by national or local budgets or other sources. Non-government institutions must have legal status, official training provider licenses (LPD), competent PAUD staff, experience in conducting training, capable facilitators, and the ability to develop training programs based on central guidelines (Sumitra et al., 2018, p. 16).

Data from tiered training programs in Banten Province show 78 PAUD educators trained by various LPDs. The local education office partnered with Rumah Asah Asuh Asih and Bergema, the organizations acting as LPDs providing mentoring and digital competency strengthening. Participants came from various educational backgrounds: 35.9% with Architecture degrees, 12.8% Law degrees, 5.1% from PGPAUD & high school, and 2.5% from vocational schools and Islamic high schools. Most participants were teachers (46.2%), with others as principals, administrative staff, and tutors. The shortage of PAUD teachers has led to individuals from unrelated educational backgrounds filling PAUD teaching roles. According to Suryadi et al. (2016), Banten faces a 60% rate of honorary teachers, leading to uneven teacher distribution.

According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers must possess academic qualifications, competencies, certification, physical and mental health, and the ability to fulfill national education goals. Required competencies include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional skills, acquired through professional education (Suparno, 2005). Professionalism greatly contributes to student achievement, highlighting the need for teacher training models like tiered training for PAUD educators.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a case study approach, which is an empirical inquiry investigating phenomena in real-life contexts, providing a comprehensive explanation related to individuals, groups, organizations, programs, or societal situations (Yin, 2023). Case studies aim to describe, analyze, and interpret the uniqueness of individuals and real situations. Cohen et al. (2018) state that case study research seeks deep analysis of cases, events, activities, or processes, either individually or in groups.

This research was conducted at Banten's tiered training provider institutions (LPD) over nine months, from July 2024 to April 2025. Preparation involved research permissions, grand tour, instrument development, and validation. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The study aimed to portray mentoring activities by LPDs and their partners in Banten, identifying the tiered training model and challenges faced by trainers and organizers in preparing PAUD educators.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the Directorate General of GTK PAUDNI (2011, p. 28), only a small proportion of PAUD teachers have bachelor's degrees; most hold only high school diplomas or less (60.4%). Many PAUD educators work beyond their qualifications, in violation of Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137/2014 on ECE Standards. Professional competence entails teachers possessing the knowledge, experience, and skills to support their profession. Therefore, PAUD teachers must be professionally competent to stimulate and support children's growth and development from birth to age six.

During the pandemic, teacher competency development continued. The government introduced tiered training programs such as basic, advanced, and expert levels which some of it were delivered online. The Ministry of Education's technical service units (UPT) pioneered online delivery of basic tiered training as part of its PAUD development efforts. Professional teachers understand their role as educators, including designing, implementing, and evaluating learning. Tiered training helps underperforming teachers grow and improve their skills.

Training content includes PAUD fundamentals, special needs identification, child learning methods, communication, ethics, development assessment, lesson planning, and child nutrition and health. These align well with PAUD teaching needs, as evidenced by participants' high engagement during direct practice, discussions, pre- tests, and post-tests. This shows that tiered training significantly enhances PAUD teacher professionalism.

Kindergarten teachers must be professional, skilled, competitive, and adaptable in global contexts. According to Government Regulation No. 19/2005, Article 28 (Dirjen PTK PPAUDNI, 2011), educators must meet academic and professional qualifications, be physically and mentally healthy, and be capable of achieving national education goals. The government is thus obliged to advance and develop educational personnel in public education institutions.

Despite the pandemic, LPD Banten continued delivering tiered training to enhance teacher professionalism. Teachers lacking professional competencies must remain committed to teaching and improving themselves. Tiered training is an effective tool to increase PAUD teacher competence, particularly professionalism. According to Wahjosumidjo (2013), education and training should be ongoing programs that support achieving organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

Observations, interviews, and documentation revealed that tiered training has been effectively implemented. Increases in teacher professionalism were not only reflected in post-test scores but also in long-term behavioral changes that allow participants to apply new knowledge. The data confirms that tiered training significantly boosts PAUD

teachers' professional competence.

"Diklat Berjenjang," comprising Basic, Advanced, and Expert training, must address the specific needs of PAUD educators, focusing on enhancing practical skills and knowledge. This structured approach is vital in equipping educators to foster young children's development effectively. The findings underscore the need for continuous professional development programs aligned with teachers' career levels.

Basic training prepares teachers for entry-level roles, advanced training equips them with mid-level competencies, and expert-level training aims to meet the highest standards of PAUD teaching competence.

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