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The Strategic Role of HIMPAUDI in Advancing Early Childhood Education Educators

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Abstract:

This study explores the role of HIMPAUDI in supporting Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Indonesia. It focuses on promoting S1 qualifications, fostering educator development through tiered training, advocating for welfare improvements, and facilitating national-level training. Using observation, interviews, and documentation, the findings reveal HIMPAUDI's success in raising awareness of higher education, organizing skill-enhancing programs, securing government-backed incentives, and providing access to professional training. HIMPAUDI plays a crucial role in improving educator quality and welfare, contributing significantly to the advancement of PAUD services nationwide.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education (ECED); HIMPAUDI.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is done through providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter the next level of education both formal, non-formal and informal.

However, although the importance of ECD has been recognized by the Indonesian government, its implementation still faces various challenges. One of them is the lack of quality PAUD institutions and the inadequate number of educators. Based on data obtained in 2020, in Bandar Lampung City there are a number of non-formal PAUD institutions that are still experiencing difficulties in providing educators with adequate qualifications. Most PAUD educators have a high school education, while to meet the quality standards of PAUD education, educators who have higher education in the field of PAUD are needed.

In addition, there is still a lack of public understanding of the importance of quality PAUD. Many parents are not fully aware of the benefits of early childhood education, so the number of children attending PAUD education has not reached the expected level. These constraints are further exacerbated by the lack of coordination between the various parties involved in early childhood education, including local government, educational institutions, and educational support organizations such as HIMPAUDI.

According to Subroto & Tarigan, teachers as a profession are required to have a set of competencies in carrying out their professional duties, a professional job requires special requirements, including: (1) demands skills based on in-depth scientific concepts and theories, (2) emphasizes expertise in accordance with the field of the profession, (3) demands an adequate level of education, (4) sensitivity to the societal impact of the work he does, (5) allows work that is in line with the dynamics of life. Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel (HIMPAUDI) is a professional organization that has a central role in fostering educators and education personnel in the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) sector. ECD, which includes formal and non-formal education for children aged 0 to 6 years, has a major impact on children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.

Therefore, the quality of educators at the PAUD level determines the success of the education process. HIMPAUDI as an organization that accommodates PAUD educators in Indonesia has various roles that support the improvement of the quality of early childhood education through coaching, training, and developing the professionalism of educators.

HIMPAUDI (Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel) is here to answer these challenges. As an organization gathered by PAUD educators and education personnel, HIMPAUDI plays an important role in fighting for the improvement of the quality of early childhood education. Established in 2005, HIMPAUDI aims to be a forum for PAUD educators to share knowledge and experience, and strengthen their capacity in

carrying out educational tasks. With HIMPAUDI, it is expected that there will be better coordination between educators, educational institutions, and government in developing PAUD throughout Indonesia.

One of HIMPAUDI's main roles is to socialize the importance of educational qualifications for PAUD educators. Higher education programs, such as the S1 PAUD program, are one solution to improve the quality of PAUD educators in Indonesia. HIMPAUDI not only plays a role in providing information to educators about the importance of S1 education, but also facilitates them to continue their education to universities that offer PAUD study programs. The S1 PAUD program is an important step in improving the competence of educators, so that they are better prepared to face the challenges of educating early childhood.

In addition, HIMPAUDI also plays a role in coaching and developing PAUD educators through tiered training. Tiered training is one way to improve the quality of educators through training that is carried out in stages. HIMPAUDI encourages PAUD educators to participate in this training independently, with the hope of improving their skills and knowledge in carrying out their duties as educators. This tiered training program is one of the important efforts to ensure that PAUD educators have competencies in accordance with established standards.

In addition to improving quality through formal education and training, HIMPAUDI also has a role in fighting for the welfare of PAUD educators. One of the major challenges facing PAUD educators is their low level of welfare. Most PAUD educators work with relatively low salaries and lack of incentives. HIMPAUDI strives to fight for the rights of PAUD educators, including the provision of incentives both from the government and from efforts developed by HIMPAUDI itself. By fighting for the welfare of educators, it is expected that they will be more motivated to work better in educating children.

On the other hand, HIMPAUDI also facilitates training for PAUD educators through the delivery of national level training. National level training is important to ensure that PAUD educators have a broad insight into the latest methods and approaches in early childhood education. HIMPAUDI works closely with regional and city administrators to send PAUD educators who meet the criteria to attend this training. This national level training not only provides new knowledge to educators, but also strengthens the network between PAUD educators in various regions.

Early childhood education (ECE) has a vital role in shaping the basics of child development, which will affect their lives in the future. Qualified PAUD educators are needed to create an effective and enjoyable learning process for children. In this context, the Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel (HIMPAUDI) plays a strategic role as a professional organization responsible for fostering and improving the quality of early childhood educators in various regions, including in Bandar Lampung City.

Seeing the various challenges faced in the development of PAUD in Indonesia, especially in Bandar Lampung City, more intensive efforts are needed in facilitating the education and development of PAUD educators. One way to achieve this is through programs conducted by HIMPAUDI, both in terms of improving the qualifications of educators, tiered training, and empowering PAUD educators.

This study aims to explore further the role of HIMPAUDI in supporting the development of early childhood education, particularly in Bandar Lampung City. The main focus of this study was to determine the extent to which HIMPAUDI plays a role in improving the quality of PAUD education in the area, including in terms of socialization of the importance of S1 PAUD education, coaching through tiered training, educator welfare struggles, and facilitation of national level training for PAUD educators.

By conducting this research, it is hoped that a clearer picture of HIMPAUDI's role in improving the quality and quantity of PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung City can be obtained. This research is also expected to provide recommendations for improving the PAUD education system in Bandar Lampung City and other areas, by involving various related parties in improving the quality of early childhood education in Indonesia.

Through this research, it is expected to identify the various problems that exist in the development of ECD in Bandar Lampung City, as well as the efforts that have been made by HIMPAUDI to overcome these problems. The results of this study are expected to make a positive contribution to the development of ECD in Indonesia, especially in improving the quality of ECD educators who are the main key to the success of early childhood education.

This objective is intended to obtain data and information about the role of HIMPAUDI in the organization of PAUD. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to obtain data and information about HIMPAUDI's role in: 1) Socializing the importance of quality ECD; 2) Conducting coaching and organizational development in stages; 3) Accommodating, fighting for, and realizing the aspirations of early childhood educators and education personnel; and 4) Facilitating the training of early childhood educators and education personnel.

Methods

This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach allows researchers to explore in-depth information about social phenomena that occur in the field, namely the role of HIMPAUDI in the development of early childhood education (PAUD) in Bandar Lampung City. Qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena from the perspective of participants, obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation. Researchers sought to explore the meanings and views held by informants related to HIMPAUDI's role in improving the quality of PAUD in the region.

This qualitative method is conducted with several basic principles, namely sensitivity to context, in-depth observation, and commitment to data transparency and accuracy. Researchers do not only see the object of research from one point of view, but try to see it holistically. Through direct observation in the field, researchers can observe how HIMPAUDI activities are

implemented in PAUD development. In addition, researchers are also committed to ensuring that the data collected is valid and accountable by conducting an independent audit of the results of data collection.

This research involved various data sources, both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from informants involved in this study, such as the operator of the Education and Culture Office of Bandar Lampung City, the Daily Chairperson and Management of HIMPAUDI Bandar Lampung City, and the Management of HIMPAUDI Sub-districts in Bandar Lampung City. These informants provided information about the programs and activities undertaken by HIMPAUDI in the development of PAUD. Secondary data sources in the form of documents, reports, and related references were also used to strengthen and support findings from primary data.

To collect data, researchers used three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by directly observing activities related to the role of HIMPAUDI in PAUD development. Researchers used notebooks and cameras as tools to document relevant symptoms. Interviews were conducted with key informants using a pre-prepared interview guide. This technique aims to explore deeper information about the perceptions and views of informants related to the role of HIMPAUDI. Documentation was used to collect data in the form of writings or documents related to the object of research, such as activity reports or policies issued by HIMPAUDI.

Data analysis is done in a descriptive way, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data will be selected, grouped, and focused on things that are relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation is done in the form of narratives, tables, or charts that facilitate understanding of existing data. After the data is analyzed, researchers draw conclusions that describe the role of HIMPAUDI in the development of PAUD in Bandar Lampung City. The conclusions drawn based on the analyzed data will provide a clear picture of the impact of HIMPAUDI on the development of PAUD in the area.

To ensure data validity and objectivity, this study used triangulation techniques. Triangulation is the process of checking data by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation that has been done. This step aims to verify the accuracy of data obtained from various sources. By using triangulation, researchers can ensure that the results of this research are more objective and accountable. Triangulation also allows researchers to see data from various perspectives and ensure consistency between data obtained from various data collection techniques.

Results and Discussion

Early childhood education (ECED) is an important foundation in developing children's character and basic skills that will influence their future success. For this reason, the quality of education at the PAUD level needs serious attention, both from the government, the community, and various organizations that play a role in increasing the capacity of PAUD educators. One of the efforts made by HIMPAUDI (Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel) in improving the quality of PAUD is by

opening a Bachelor's Degree (S1) PAUD education program in universities. This step originated from a discourse that emerged in the HIMPAUDI National Workshop on June 17-19, 2007 in Bandung, which aims to meet the minimum standards of qualifications of PAUD educators, as stipulated in Permendiknas No. 58 of 2009. With this S1 PAUD program, it is expected that PAUD educators can improve their competence and meet the requirements that have been set to carry out their duties professionally.

As an effort to socialize the importance of early childhood education and the qualifications of PAUD educators, HIMPAUDI has also carried out various activities at the national level to the sub-district level. These socialization activities often coincide with the commemoration of National Children's Day, National Education Day, or the PAUD Jamboree with the aim of educating the public about the importance of early childhood education. HIMPAUDI plays an active role in disseminating information about ECD education, either through training, seminars, or discussions involving various parties, including the government and the community. The President of the Republic of Indonesia has even launched the implementation of ECD throughout Indonesia, which was also encouraged by the culmination of the commemoration of National Children's Day, signifying the importance of the participation of all elements of society to develop ECD.

The support provided by the government, especially from the Department of Education and Culture of Bandar Lampung City, as well as the appreciation from related parties, including the Mayor of Bandar Lampung, were very important in ensuring the smooth running of this program. The opening of educational opportunities for PAUD educators and the motivational encouragement to improve their professionalism were greatly appreciated, especially when they attended the opening of the lectures and received motivating remarks to continue learning and developing.

However, the limited number of quotas for students in this program, as well as age and teaching experience in PAUD, are obstacles that need to be overcome in an effort to improve the quality of PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung. Thus, HIMPAUDI continues to strive to provide wider access for educators to follow further education to achieve higher competency standards.

To conclude this paper, it is important to emphasize how crucial the role of triangulation is in qualitative research. Although this method may require additional time, money and effort, the benefits are enormous. Triangulation enriches the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study as well as the context in which it occurs, resulting in deeper insights. This is the main goal of qualitative research: not to prove relationships between variables or show cause and effect, but to capture meaning or understand the complexity of a phenomenon in depth.

Through triangulation, researchers can get richer data and diverse views, allowing the phenomenon being studied to be portrayed from various points of view in a comprehensive manner. This is important, especially because deep understanding will only emerge if the

research involves a diversity of perspectives that provide a full picture of the problem under study. It also shows the fundamental difference between “understanding” and “explaining” - two concepts that, although equally important, have different scopes in the research domain.

From the research data on the academic qualifications of PAUD teachers in Bandar Lampung City, it appears that most teachers still do not meet the educational requirements of Strata 1 or D4 in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECED). Out of a total of 2,404 formal and non-formal PAUD educators, only about 50% have a Bachelor's degree. This means that there are still many educators who have a high school level education and need to improve their competencies.

This situation emphasizes the important role of HIMPAUDI Bandar Lampung City in improving the capacity of PAUD educators. HIMPAUDI plays a vital role in facilitating the development of the four main competencies of PAUD educators - including pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. Through continued support from HIMPAUDI, it is hoped that the quality of ECD education services in Bandar Lampung City can continue to be improved, so that it meets the expected standards.

Conclusion and suggestion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that HIMPAUDI plays a very important role in the development of PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung City. Through various activities such as training, certification, network development, welfare advocacy, and further education, HIMPAUDI not only improves the competence of PAUD educators, but also supports the overall improvement of the quality of early childhood education. HIMPAUDI's role in ensuring PAUD educators receive the necessary support in terms of competency, welfare and career development opportunities demonstrates their great contribution to early childhood education in Bandar Lampung City. HIMPAUDI (Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel) has an important role in improving the quality and welfare of early childhood educators (ECE) in Bandar Lampung City.

First, HIMPAUDI supports the professional development of PAUD educators through the facilitation of S1 education programs at several local universities, such as UNILA, UIN, and STKIP. This program aims to meet the requirements of the law that requires educators to have appropriate academic qualifications and competencies. With HIMPAUDI's support, more and more PAUD educators are continuing their education to the undergraduate level, thus significantly improving their qualifications.

Second, HIMPAUDI is active in coaching and developing PAUD educators through tiered training. This training is organized with assistance from the government as well as independently, in collaboration with the Office of Education and Culture of Bandar Lampung City. The training aims to increase the number and quality of educators, as well as develop the four main competencies that PAUD educators must have, namely pedagogic, personality, social and professional competencies. These competencies are very important so that educators can organize PAUD learning well.

Third, HIMPAUDI also has a role as an advocacy forum to improve the welfare of PAUD educators. HIMPAUDI strives to fight for the provision of incentives to educators, in collaboration with education supervisors and the local education office. This effort paid off,

with the government providing incentives through bank accounts for PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung.

Fourth, HIMPAUDI seeks to send PAUD educators to attend national level training. This training is supported by the Directorate of Education and Education, with the aim of improving the competence of PAUD educators to meet national standards. Although only a few educators had the opportunity to attend this training, HIMPAUDI ensured that the knowledge and skills gained were shared with other PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung so that their competencies could develop.

Overall, HIMPAUDI plays a key role in the coaching and professional development of PAUD educators in Bandar Lampung City, covering aspects of improving qualifications, competencies, welfare and professional capacity.

The conclusion from the above discussion is that HIMPAUDI plays an important role in advancing the quality of PAUD educators through formal education and various trainings. HIMPAUDI encourages its members who do not yet have an S1 degree to join the S1 PAUD education program, in the hope that they will not only improve their competence but also meet the requirements for welfare provided by the government, such as incentives and certification.

In addition, educators who are already members of HIMPAUDI are advised to actively participate in tiered training and other development activities, such as workshops and seminars. This training provides an opportunity for educators to improve their knowledge, skills and obtain a certificate of recognition from the Ministry of Education and Culture, especially for those who have not had the opportunity to continue to the S1 PAUD level.

Educators are also expected to improve their skills in information technology, which is one of the important requirements in participating in national-level training. These IT skills are very helpful in reporting and registering for training, which can increase their chances of further recognition as outstanding PAUD educators.

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