

Improving Social Competence for Early Childhood Educators through In House Training

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the social competence of early childhood education educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten through the in-house training (IHT) program. Social competence is one of the four basic competencies that teachers must have, which includes the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, and involve parents and the community in the learning process. Although online training has previously been conducted, the results have not shown significant improvement. Therefore, IHT is designed to provide training that is more focused and relevant to the needs of educators. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the implementation of IHT at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten successfully improved educators' understanding and social skills. The program involves three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation, which are carried out systematically to ensure the effectiveness of the training. A training needs analysis was conducted to identify gaps and find appropriate solutions. The research shows that although there is progress in educators' social competencies, continuous training is still needed to achieve optimal competencies. IHT proved to be an effective solution to improve educators' social competence in ECD settings, with an emphasis on collaboration and involvement of parents and communities. This study provides recommendations for the implementation of a more structured and sustainable training program to support teachers' professional development in the future.

Keywords: *Social Competence, In-House Training, Early childhood's Educator*

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INTRODUCTION

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers in Chapter I Article 1 explains that "Teachers are professional educators whose main tasks are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in early childhood education through formal education, primary education, and secondary education". This shows that teachers are one of the important components in the education system and play a crucial role in achieving educational goals. The quality of teachers who interact directly with learners greatly affects the quality of their learning

outcomes (Heni Ribut Handayani, 2019).

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia No. 16 of 2007 on Standards for Academic Qualifications and Teacher Competencies, educators must have four main competencies: pedagogic, personality, professional, and social competencies, which are obtained through professional education. These four competencies should be integrated into teacher performance. However, the reality is that not all teachers have mastered all four competencies optimally, which has an impact on the lack of effectiveness in carrying out their duties. Therefore, teachers must continuously strive to develop their knowledge and skills in accordance with the demands of the curriculum. One competency that is important in the implementation of learning is social competence (Wahyuni et al., 2021). Social competence includes an understanding of collaboration to improve learning, parent/guardian and community involvement in the learning process, and participation in professional organizations and wider networks to improve learning outcomes. The ability of social competence is very important for a teacher because it affects the success of the learning process. However, in practice, there are still many educators who have not implemented social competence optimally. For example, educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten have not fully implemented collaboration to improve learning, parent/guardian and community involvement, and participation in professional organizations and wider networks (Nurbayenti, 2021).

Based on the results of the principal's supervision and observations in the 2023/2024 academic year related to the less than optimal social competence of educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, the principal decided to direct educators to attend free online training and similar training on teacher social competence through Zoom. However, this training has not shown a significant improvement in social competence (Hasbi et al., 2012). To overcome this problem, the principal planned an alternative in the form of in-house training (IHT) activities with the aim that the social competence of educators can increase to the maximum, in accordance with the standards of teacher academic qualifications stipulated in Permendiknas Number 16 of 2007.

A teacher must have four basic competencies, namely pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence (Sudarwan, 2010: 22). Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teacher competencies consist of: pedagogical competence, which involves the ability to manage student-centered learning in order to achieve learning objectives; personality competence, which includes having a stable personality, noble character, wisdom, and being a role model for students (Akhmad Riadi et al., 2019). This competence is reflected in self-reflection when carrying out duties as a teacher in accordance with the professional code of ethics and is student-oriented; Social competence, which involves the teacher's ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, fellow teachers, parents, and the community; and Professional competence, which involves mastering subject matter in depth to set learning objectives and organize student-centered knowledge content (Dewi & Suryana, 2021).

According to Akmad Sudrajat (2007), teacher competence reflects teacher behavior in carrying out their duties, both in terms of behavior and results achieved. Nana Sudjana (2002:17) adds that teacher competence is the basic ability that every teacher must have. Thus, teacher competence includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values acquired through education and training to perform their duties well. The quality of a teacher's teaching is largely determined by his or her basic competencies. To achieve the success of quality education and learning, educators must have competencies, including technical competencies (Lestarinigrum et al., 2019). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoEC) has developed an educator competency model through Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel Regulation Number 2626/B/HK.04.01/2023 on Teacher Competency Model. This model includes a description of the focus areas or coverage of each teacher competency sub-indicator that is appropriate to the context of early childhood education. This guide is expected to be a reference for formal and non-formal early childhood education, as well as for grade 1 and 2 primary school teachers to improve their competence in carrying out their duties and roles properly (Paramita et al., 2019).

According to experts, Griffin & Epstein (2001) define social competence as the ability of individuals to act in accordance with their values and participate appropriately in social life. Caldarella & Merrel (1997) argue that social competence is reflected in the behavior of individuals who are able to organize themselves properly to interact effectively in the existing social environment. Gullotta (1990) and Ferdy (2014) concluded that social competence is an individual's skill in relating and interacting effectively with others, so that it is socially accepted in various situations and establishes positive relationships in accordance with applicable cultures, values, and norms. Socially competent individuals can understand changes in situations and behave accordingly (Astuti et al., 2017).

Smart and Sanson (2003) explain social competence as socially acceptable behavior, which is a way of behaving that can be learned and allows a person to interact effectively with others and produce appropriate social behavior and responses. Semrud and Clikeman (2007) define social competence as the ability to understand other perspectives of a situation, learn from previous experiences, and apply these learning outcomes in changing social situations. Rahman (2010) defines social competence as a relatively stable ability to achieve personal goals in social interactions while maintaining positive relationships with others in various situations. Goleman (2006:30) assesses social intelligence as an important aspect of intelligence that includes our relationships with others and the relational aspects of these. Social competence is a major part of social intelligence (Riggio & Reichard, 2008:17).

Based on the Operational Guidelines for Implementing the Educator Competency Model for Early Childhood, educator competencies include key behaviors that are essential in education. Social competence consists of several indicators and sub-indicators as follows: (1) Collaboration for learning improvement, including: effective communication with school members to improve learning, organization of tasks with colleagues to

support learning, initiative to contribute to the achievement of common goals in learning; (2) Parent/guardian and community involvement in learning which includes: parent/guardian support in student-centered home learning and use of parent/guardian and community knowledge, expertise and perspectives in learning; (3) Involvement in professional organizations and wider networks, including: participation in various roles to solve learning problems in professional organizations and networks and sharing good practices and work for the improvement of learning in organizations and wider networks (Maolana, 2018).

Conceptually, social competence is the ability to communicate and interact effectively in the context of learning and self-development. In its operational definition, social competence involves collaboration for learning improvement, parent/guardian and community engagement, and participation in professional organizations and wider networks. In-house training is training that is held at the participant's place, such as school, by utilizing existing resources to address relevant problems and improve the quality and performance of participants. Basri and Rusdiana (2015) state that in-house training helps participants absorb material more easily, while Danim (2012) emphasizes that this training can be done internally in the work environment and not always external implementation, so that it can save time and costs (Nurwahidin, 2022).

These two views show that IHT aims to improve the performance of educators in accordance with their fields. However, Basri and Rusdiana focus more on the location of training in schools and the impact on performance that can be directly seen. Meanwhile, Danim explains that IHT can be carried out in various locations and presenters can come from more competent colleagues, which allows participants to learn at low cost and in a shorter time than further study. From these explanations, IHT can be concluded as internal training that aims to improve the competence of employees, especially teachers, by promoting collaboration within the agency. The objectives of IHT include increasing interaction between participants, strengthening the sense of community, and increasing motivation in creating a culture of continuous learning. It also enables employees to support each other in solving teaching problems, thereby improving the overall quality of education. IHT therefore plays an important role in the development of human resources in educational institutions (Farida Nurbaiti, 2021).

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METHOD

The researcher used a qualitative approach to describe the results of data collection obtained in the field. This research, which is a type of field research, was

conducted at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten to explore the improvement of social competence for PAUD educators through in-house training. This approach is based on the philosophy of postpositivism and is designed to study natural object conditions. Data collection techniques involve triangulation or combination with inductive or qualitative data analysis and focus on meaning rather than generalization. This research aims to understand the reality that occurs in society related to certain problems (Mahmud, 2011). Based on the data sources obtained, this research is field research that targets the community, both in general and specifically (Marzuki, 2011). The purpose of this research is to study the background, current status, and environmental interactions in the context of social units such as individuals, groups, institutions, or communities (Muhadjir, 1996). Thus, this study used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe naturally the improvement of social competence for PAUD educators through in-house training without involving statistical analysis. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, where the researcher functions as a recorder who sees and hears without participating in the activities that take place.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to initial information from researchers regarding the social competence of educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, it is known that the social skills of educators are still in the process of development. This social competence is a crucial aspect of a teacher's competence, so teachers are expected to master and develop their social skills optimally. Planning to improve social competence for PAUD educators through in-house training is conducted by the school to improve teachers' understanding and skills in terms of social competence. This includes an understanding of collaboration in learning, parent/guardian and community engagement, and participation in professional organizations and wider networks. In-house training is an internal training held by the school with the school's own facilities and presenters from the school's educators.

At An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, in-house training activities are carried out in the school environment with various stages to ensure that this program achieves the expected goals. The program aims to improve the quality of education through comprehensive interventions, actively involving principals and teachers. To achieve optimal student learning outcomes with educators who have good social competence, teacher competency improvement activities such as training, sharing, or peer tutoring are needed.

Training program management (IHT) needs to be carried out so that the activity runs well and according to plan. In this case, it consists of three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The first step that must be done is program planning. Thus, the planning process for improving social competence for PAUD educators through

in-house training goes through several stages as follows: Training needs analysis is at the planning stage, where this needs analysis is carried out to analyze gaps and validate them, identify needs, and find appropriate solutions. Based on the results of the recommendations above and observations made by researchers at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, prioritize activities to improve educators' competencies that support social competence with in-house training activities. This considers that so that educators get the same understanding related to improving social competence in order to achieve cohesiveness in teamwork in achieving goals. Determining the purpose of IHT is done to determine the solutions needed to overcome the problems faced by teachers. The results of problem validation show that there are deficiencies in improving social competence for educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten.

This teacher competency improvement program was established with clear objectives to overcome the obstacles faced by educators in schools. The accuracy of the determination of a program can be assessed as appropriate or not seen from the output or impact felt by participants and schools as institutions where teachers work. The determination of the material delivery system is carried out by the resource person by considering characteristics such as suitability for training participants, flexibility, and providing opportunities for trainees to actively participate and consider the experience of the participants. Based on the results of the interviews, it can be concluded that the material delivery system is determined by the individual resource persons themselves, taking into account several factors such as experience and characteristics of the trainees. In this case, An Nash Islamic Kindergarten IHT resource persons consider that the characteristics of the participants are teachers with diverse experiences, so the method of delivering the material more often uses an in-on-in system with a directed discussion method while still referring to the main points of the material presented.

Compiled based on data obtained by researchers through observation, interviews, and documentation at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten. The following will present research findings relevant to the research focus on improving social competence for PAUD educators through in-house training. Supervision at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten At An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, the principal applies supervision as a way to improve the social competence of educators. This supervision is carried out with the main purpose of identifying and correcting errors.

Work evaluation by the principal aims to improve educators' social competence through meetings and supervision. Meetings led directly by the principal focus on evaluating teacher performance in running existing programs. While work evaluation through supervision aims to provide direct feedback and support to teachers.

In-House Training (IHT) is a training held by An Nash Islamic Kindergarten to

improve the competence of educators. This activity is carried out annually and covers topics related to teacher competence and its application. Presenters for IHT usually come from the school itself. The principal at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten consistently provides role models and direct examples of good behavior and communication. This is done when interacting with students, fellow educators, and parents, with the aim of strengthening good communication and manners.

Parent/guardian and community involvement in learning at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten includes regular meetings and important socializations that strengthen two-way communication between the school and parents. These meetings help teachers develop good and ethical communication skills. Teacher meetings are also an effective way to improve communication skills among peers through deliberation and exchange of opinions. Principals provide coaching through supervision by motivating and encouraging teachers to always behave well in their social environment. This approach includes frequently asking for input and opinions from teachers so that they feel comfortable discussing directly with the principal if they face problems.

To improve social competence, principals include teachers in various workshops. This workshop activity aims to expand the social skills of educators and provide material that is relevant to the competencies needed. By looking at the theory and the results of the researcher's analysis, it can be concluded that the IHT evaluation process carried out by An Nash Islamic Kindergarten is in line with the theory, because almost all the steps applied during the IHT evaluation process are the same as the theory above. However, the evaluation stage is not fully carried out by the resource person, but at the stage of analyzing the evaluation data and preparing the report is carried out by the principal. As a follow-up to the implementation of IHT at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, classroom supervision activities are carried out with supervision from the principal to evaluate whether the mother teachers have implemented the results of the in-house training assignments.

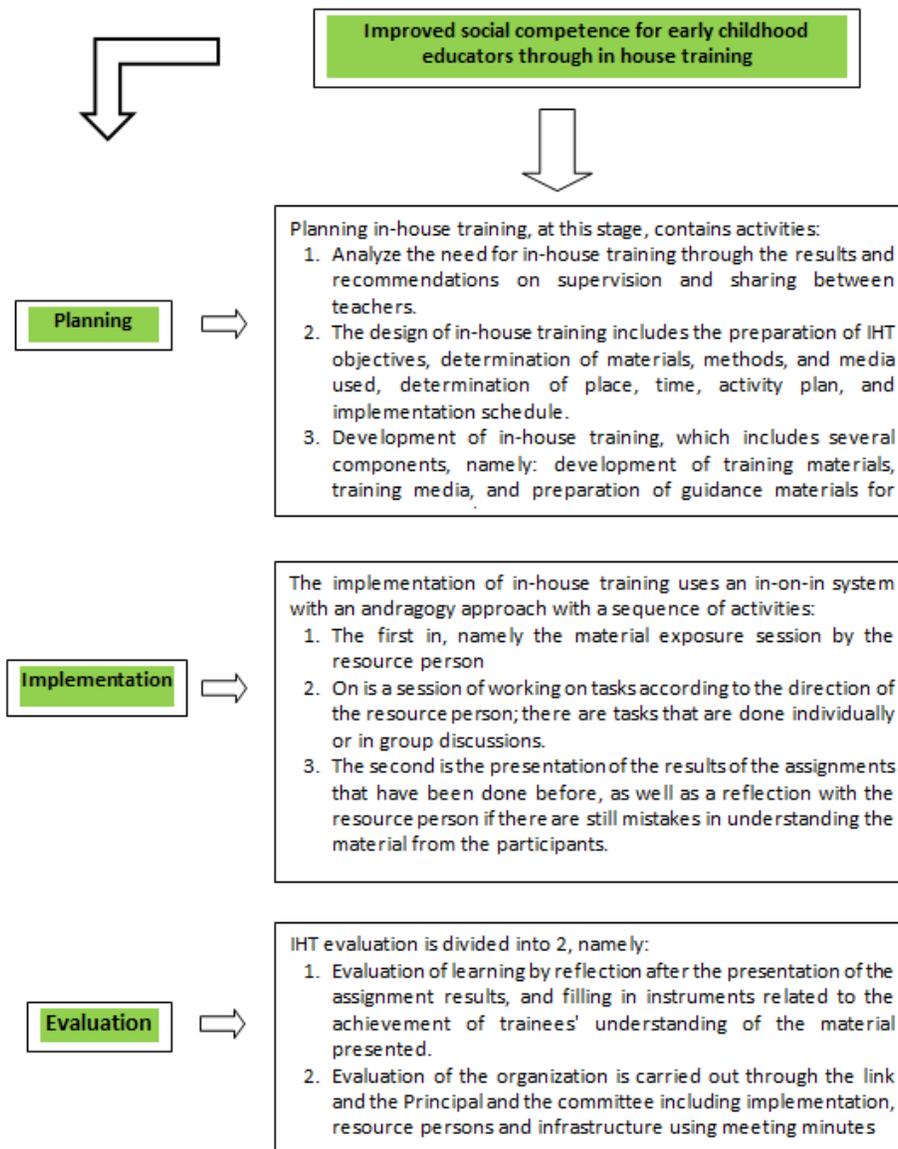


Figure 1. Flow of Implementation of In-House Training

The findings of previous research by (Hariadi, 2021) show that at the monitoring and evaluation stage, the resource person makes observations using planning instruments and observation instruments to measure participants' abilities and fills out questionnaires on the responses to IHT activities by participants. The results of this study show that monitoring and evaluation activities are divided into 2, namely learning evaluation and organizational evaluation. Learning evaluation is carried out by the resource person by means of reflection after the presentation of the results of the participant's assignment, filling in the pre-test and post-test by the participants through the link prepared by the

committee, filling in the instruments prepared by the committee to determine the level of knowledge and skills of the participants after the implementation of IHT, and legalizing the results of the IHT assignment by the school principal before being included in the activity report. While the evaluation of the implementation is carried out by the committee by filling out the instrument and all participants fill in the monitoring and evaluation through the link related to the evaluation of IHT activities and resource persons.

CONCLUSION

The social competence of educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten PAUD, which includes an understanding of collaboration for learning improvement, parent/guardian involvement, and participation in professional organizations and wider networks, shows better progress. Nonetheless, the social competence of teachers in KB-TK still requires strengthening and continued training. Therefore, a solution is needed to further improve the social competence of educators. The planning of the in-house training program was based on the needs analysis of educators at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten, starting with initial observations that showed less than optimal implementation of social competence. The implementation of the in-house training program at An Nash Islamic Kindergarten aims to improve teachers' social competence through training that focuses on teachers' understanding of social competence.

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