

Indonesian Preschool Teachers Beliefs in Scaffolding Early Writing Development

Wili Astuti^{1*}, Junita Dwi Wardhani¹, Annisa Nur Wahyuningsih²

¹ Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

² Master's Program in Early Childhood Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta Indonesia

*Corresponding author: Email: wa265@ums.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purposed of the study is to investigate the preschool teachers' beliefs in giving proper stimulation to development early writing in preschool children. As we know, that writing ability can assist children to master other literacy skills, so the beliefs of the teachers, who taught the children was very crucial point to success teaching learning process. The 50 preschool teachers were participated in the study, by answering a 30-question questionnaire in developmental of early writing. The participants came from various background of specialisation, long experience time in teaching toddlers, and the level of preschools. The instrument of the study contains many components, as follow: writing mechanism ((4.27), writing concepts (4.05), writing convention (3.53) and writing composition (2.52). Based on the responds that given by preschool teachers, it shown that the preschool teachers have a strong belief about their stimulation in development of early writing. The study also gives some recommendation to flourish children ability in early literacy, especially writing.

Keywords: *writing development, early writing, teacher's beliefs, preschool children*

1. INTRODUCTION

Preschool children's early writing skills (name writing, letter writing) are critical to their multiple simultaneous and later literacy development. A prior literature looked at how adult-child writing relations at home and in the classroom affected children's early writing development from a sociocultural point of view. Children's interest in writing activities, on the other hand, may have a significant impact on their self-construction of writing attempts, according to constructivist theory. Children's writing interests influence their play choices, as well as their interactions with people, materials, and activities while writing. [1]

Children's early writing which occurs in the preschool years [2], is an important predictor of later literacy outcome Despite its significance, early writing is a relatively unstudied area of literacy development. The limited research that trying to investigate early composing reveals little shared understanding of the nature of composing or the most effective methods for assessing this skill in young children. [3].

Because the emergence of writing ability aligns with the stage of children's motoric development, learning to write is recognised as a developmental process. Beginning writing is closely linked to early language development, which supports the literacy development process. Literacy development will assist children in becoming successful students in formal school. [4]. The preschool teacher may possess a considerable amount of knowledge that contributes to the foundations needed for early reading, the teacher seems lack of skill to scaffold or contribution to young children's early writing. If children are given opportunities to engage in early writing activities, they can gain a wealth of knowledge about the functions of written language for themselves. [5].

1.1. Early Writing Development

Early writing is a critical early literacy skill that is connected to later reading accomplishment in the short and long term. (NELP, 2008). Early writing refers to the competencies and knowledge that come up with the acquisition of beginning writing ability, which include understanding of the specific symbols and conventions

involved in the creation of writing as well as emerging abilities in using early writing to explore and record ideas [6], [7],[8]. As a result, it is critical for preschool teachers should provide opportunities for writing as well as writing instruction. The teacher must provide a variety of writing opportunities as well as a print-rich environment. When teachers encourage children's writing abilities, they may focus on various areas that are important for learning to write, such as composing, spelling, and letter formation. Supportive strategies, for example, could revolve around a child's ability to generate ideas for writing, sound out and write words, or make letters. [9]. It is critical to encourage the development of all three of these components in children by scaffolding their writing performance at their current developmental level.

Some researchers discovered that children who graduate from preschool with a strong literacy base tend to acquire writing ability quite quickly in the first years of schooling than their classmates who lack literacy experience. Since the early days of a child's life, writing has been associated with academic success. Preschool children's development of early writing skills forecasts later reading and writing success [10]. Many scientific studies highlighted the importance of early writing in helping children master reading and other reading skills. Unfortunately, existing reports tend to focus on letter formation transcription skills such as name writing and spelling.

The preschool years emerge to be the most natural time for young children to develop those certain early literacy elements. According to studies, the earlier an adult can guide and motivate younger children, the more successful they will be in their reading and writing strengths during the primary education years. As stated by national Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) the reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout a person's life, however, the early year are the most important period of literacy development.

Handwriting also assists in the development of a child's fine motor skills. When teaching a child to write, the first thing they should learn is appropriate pencil grip and letter formation. Pre-schoolers' little hands and finger muscles will become stronger as they practice. These fine motor skills will improve, and the child will eventually choose a dominant hand for writing, either left or right. However, with time and experience, these fine motor skills can be developed. Then, they become familiar with the alphabets and number which leads to reading and counting. The bottom line is, handwriting is a solid foundation for children future development. Because writing and drawing develop at the same time, it is important not to wait until children can read to focus on teaching them how to write. Playing with printed language besides the

drawing provides pre-schoolers with the firm foundation they should become good readers. That is why preschool teacher should prepare the method a teaching material that suit with the children needs.

1.2. Teacher Beliefs in Stimulate Writing Development

Teachers' views in their role in facilitating learning in a diverse selection of task and context-specific cognitive and metacognitive, affective, and social ways are referred to as teacher beliefs. [11]. We define belief as an individual's appraisal of the truth or falsity of propositions [12]. Pajares discussed about the importance of teachers' beliefs and emphasised the work of some scholars who emphasize and provide evidence for the examination of beliefs, such as Bandura 1986, Clark 1988, and Cole 1989.

These beliefs about the completion of specific tasks are significant, as Bandura stated as among the types of thoughts that affect actions, none is more central or persuasive than people's decisions of their abilities to deal with different realities.[13]. Teacher beliefs are a complex subject with no single definition, but there is a common understanding that the beliefs that teachers hold about education influence initiatives because "a teacher's beliefs system can nearly affect the actions she takes in the classroom." Teacher beliefs have an impact on teacher practices on a daily basis [13], [14]

Teachers' beliefs and perceptions about education, teaching, learning, and student achievement have been shown to influence not only their pedagogical practices, but also student efficacy and success, according to research. This is particularly strong because teachers' beliefs and perceptions about a student's achievement can be formed regardless of prior knowledge or experience with that student's ability. Furthermore, teacher attitudes and beliefs about students can vary depending on factors such as race, social class, age, and gender. The teacher's perceptions and beliefs about his or her own abilities can influence the children's perceptions and beliefs about their own abilities. Many studies provide evidence to back up their claims.[15]. There have been studies that prove the relationship between teacher belief and student success. Such as the social and psychological processes of self-fulfilling prophecy and the role of teacher expectation in influencing student performance, effective schools are defined as those in something that teachers maintain a strong belief that the student can achieve.

The belief that early attempts at writing are superfluous until children are ready to write must have led researchers to abandon the field of early writing. [7]. Morgan and Pytash pointed out in this context that preparing teachers to teach writing is not a prospering avenue for future research in education programs when

compared to preparing teachers to teach reading. [16]. Another possible reason for this decline, according to Bowie, is that teacher educators are uncertain of their own writing abilities and how to teach writing to children. [17]. With the realization of the importance of early writing experiences to children writing development, early writing research has recently begun to accept attention [5]. If children are given opportunities to participate in writing activities, they can optimize many functions of written language on their own. The role of the early childhood teacher in early literacy is critical, because children in preschool will not write conventionally, nor will their written work be nearly as good as that of adults. As a result, the primary goal of this study was to investigate preschool teachers' perspectives on the development of early writing in toddlers.

The degree to which early writing is understood in preschool classes is determined by the teacher's perspective, belief or attitude toward its value, and its appropriate place. According to several studies, due to a lack of knowledge and expertise, early childhood teachers may not promote children's early literacy skills. According to educational documents, teacher beliefs about early literacy learning not only influence classroom practices, but also influence young children's perceptions of the nature of reading and writing. The research question for this study was, "What are preschool teacher beliefs about early writing?" in order to gain a better understanding of preschool teacher beliefs about early writing.

2. METHODS

2.1 Population and Sample

The study's target population was all preschool teachers working in early childhood education institutions in Sukoharjo, Middle Java, one of Indonesia's provinces. During the academic years of 2019/2020, the accessible population for this study consisted of approximately 741 preschool teachers. The study's sample consists of 76 preschool teachers who signed up to take part. The questionnaire was done by 50 (out of 76) teachers. This study had a 65.8 %. The preschool teachers in this study are teaching preschool children in groups A (children 4 to 5 years old) and B (children 4 to 5 years old) (children 5 up to 6 years old). The preschool teachers were chosen at random, with knowing their knowledge in giving stimulation in writing instruction or their interest in writing among the children.

Table 1. respondent's informational background (N=50)

Variable	Frequency	percentage
Qualification		
Diploma degree	27	54%
Bachelor degree	23	46%
Area of specialisation		
General education	12	24%
related specialisation to early year ed.	20	40%
Unrelated specialisation to Early year ed.	18	36%
Years of teaching		
Less than 5 years	15	30%
5-10 years	10	20%
Up to 10 years	25	50%
Preschool teaching level		
Group A	26	52%
Group B	24	48%

2.2 Instrumentation

To know the preschool teacher's belief in early writing in Indonesian early childhood education institution, a survey questionnaire was compiled by researchers There are two sections to the survey questionnaire. Respondents' demographic information, such as qualifications, years of teaching experience, and areas of specialisation, are asked for in the demographic section...

The second section contains 30 questions about kindergarten teachers' perceptions on the development of early writing skills. On a 5-point Likert-type scale, the 30 items were rated as follows: 5 = always, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = seldom, and 1 = never. These components were as follows: mechanisms of writing (seven items), concepts of writing (eight items), conventions of writing (eight items), and composing (seven items).

In order to validate the instrument, the researcher, who are bilingual in English and Indonesian, used translation and back-translation to ensure the similarity

of meaning of the items between the Indonesian and English versions of questionnaire.

Table 2. Sample questionnaire on teachers' belief on children development of early writing

Variables	No	Sample items of Questionnaire
Writing mechanism	4	Permit children to use different variety types of writing materials
	6	Encourage children to draw straight line, curl line or connect the dots
	7	Encourage children to write freely, regardless the examples given
Writing Concepts	9	Develops children awareness of direction in language (right to left, bottom to up)
	13	Develops children awareness of adding space after word or sentence
Writing convention	17	Identified the form of children writing (draw picture, make letter, make mark, number)
	23	Create supporting environment for children in order to achieve or learn to became better readers
Composing	27	Permit children to choose their writing topic
	30	Support children to write on purpose (give name on their belongings, timetable, list)

The goal of the action was to ensure that the meaning of the items was as close to the original version as possible. After translation process was done, the instrument was shown to a group of under graduate students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta to assess it validity. Finally, the instrument was launched to be tested, with 10 preschool teachers in Surakarta and these people were not involved in the sample study in this research.

2.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The research was done over one academic semester (May – July 2019) at private childhood institution and government funded early childhood institution. They were asked to participated in the study, talked about the purpose of the research, and encouraged to respond truthfully to all items in the questionnaire. Each question in the instruments were explained in details in avoid the misunderstanding.

The data analysis in this research was descriptive statistics employing the means score and standard deviation, to answer the research question.

3. RESULT

In order to answer the research question about preschool teacher's beliefs in development of early writing in preschool children, means and standard deviations were used.

As shown in table 3, the total mean score for the scale is 3.59. The number represents the preschool teacher's positive beliefs concerning early writing development in children. The writing mechanism get the highest mean (4.27), followed by writing concept (4.05) and the writing convention (3.02). the lowest means score is the composing (2.52). Those numbers represent that the preschool teachers have consideration and confident in giving stimulation in development of early writing in children.

Table 3. Means and standard deviation for development of early writing

Component	Mean	Standard deviation
Writing Mechanism	4.27	.81
Writing Concept	4.05	.71
Writing Convention	3.53	.76
Composing	2.52	.71
Total	3.59	.47

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the study There is no reason to think that preschool teachers' beliefs in facilitating early writing development have a serious influence on children's writing abilities. Across the sample of the questionnaire in development of early writing components, the result indicated that preschool teachers have a strong view about the development of writing in

early years of children school life. This result is in line with Muzevich which stated that there was a strong bond between preschool teachers' belief and teacher perceptions about the importance of early writing stimulation and emergent writing oriented in supporting children literacy development. [18].

Indonesian Government, especially the Education and Cultural Ministry, launched the Indonesian early childhood curriculum in 2003, has experienced some changes and emergent literacy component were included in it. By the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, Republic Indonesia, No 146/2014 articles 5 states that the structure of the early childhood education curriculum, contain six aspects of children growth and development. One of the six aspects is language. This guidance curriculum was absorbed and later reflected in preschool teachers' beliefs.

The preschool teacher belief concerning the development of early writing were higher when related to writing mechanism, followed by writing concept and writing convention. Mostly, the preschool children are exposed to words, sentences, letters and books in order to increase children awareness in early writing skill It might be because prevalent opinions about teaching writing in the early years retained that in order for children to learn to read, they would need to attain pre-reading and writing skills, such as writing concepts and mechanisms. [5], [19].

Preschool teachers, on the other hand, consistently rated composition as the least essential attribute. This evidence reflects the fact that, when compared to other developmental writing components, teachers place little prominence on composing. It's feasible that it is because maintained a positive to teach writing in the same way that children are taught in primary school, trying to put a greater emphasis on academic skills. Preschool teachers, on the other hand, may continue to highlight the importance of children perfecting some preparedness abilities prior to actually engaging in the process of writing. Even when children participate in writing activities, they are limited to letter formatting, with some reading readiness capabilities being taught in a developmentally inappropriate manner. (e.g., writing on the line, copying teachers or textbook models through worksheets).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although the preschool teachers in this study came to an agreement that children should have early writing experience, they opposed about which developmental writing components should be used the most. In early childhood settings, the organizations that administer early childhood education (in this case, the Minister of Education and Culture) should play a critical role in

focusing all factors in development of literacy components. The preschool teachers highlighted the importance of commencing to prepare their students to write at a young age, but they do not appear to have a consistent theoretical background for what their children require to proceed their writing journey. Professional development for teachers is crucial at this stage to guarantee that kindergarten teachers have appropriate understanding of beginning literacy practices. Furthermore, university course plans for early childhood education should be reviewed to ensure that these programs include all development of writing elements, such as composing, to help children develop their writing skills. It's critical to determine when and how each component should be introduced to children.

As recommendation of this study, more qualitative research is needed to get a complete picture of the development of children's emergent writing skills as perceived by teachers, principals, and the children themselves. Another important area of research could be to use experimental methods to examine the impact of teachers' beliefs on children's writing abilities. This study could be carried out by assessing the writing abilities of children in an experimental group.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All Authors have an equal contribution in finishing this article.

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