

Using Social Media Whatsapp Group in Parental Involvement to Improve Child's Independence at Kindergarten

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Abstract

Social media in Indonesia is currently growing rapidly. Almost all adults have mobile phones equipped with social media applications, especially in urban areas. Including the mothers, on average also has a mobile phone equipped with social media applications, such as whatsapp applications. Social media such as whatsapp can be designed to be improving early child hood education. This research aims at describing the use social media of whatsapp group in parental involvement to improve child's independence at kindergarten. The method used in this research was quasi-experimental. Research subject was 20 mothers of children with 5-6 years old at Group B Kindergarten in South Tangerang, Indonesia. The research conducted from March-April 2017. The research finding revealed that whatsapp group can improve parental involvement in carrying out child care at home, because with whatsapp group parents can consult directly with teachers or share experiences with other parents who have similar problems. Whatsapp group also help the parents to know about strengthness and weakness from her nurturing at home. Research recommendation is proposed to kindergarten teachers who should provide whatsapp or other social media group as one of ways to communicate with parents and improving parental improvement program.

Keywords: social media, whatsapp group, parental involvement, independence

1 INTRODUCTION

The responsibility for children's education is primarily with parents. When children are 4 or 5 years old and begin to be introduced to kindergarten, children also receive instruction and guidance from their kindergarten teachers. One of the usual kindergarten teacher training for students is to train children's independence, according to the level of development. The form of independence that can be trained in children for example is in: training children to eat, drink, dress, and cleanse themselves.

Besides being trained in kindergarten, of course the more important thing is to practice independence at home by being guided by parents. Self-independence training given by parents at home should be in harmony with the training given by the teacher in kindergarten, both the stages and the level of difficulty. Therefore, kindergarten teachers need

to communicate the independence training to parents, so that they can continue the trainings at home so that they become habits.

One way to communicate that is often done in this digital era is by utilizing social media, among others through whatsapp. The teacher can create a group of whatsapp members consisting of all parents in one class that she guides, so that good communication can be established about education and childcare. This paper will discuss the use of social media in the form of Whatsapp Group (WAG) in involving parents to train the independence of kindergarten children. The form of independence that is trained is in the case that children can wear and release clothes without being helped.

Sosial Media dan WhatsApp Group

Social media is an internet-based application that allows each user to share various kinds of

content according to their supporting features, and WhatsApp Messenger is part of social media (Sindang, 2013:1). WhatsApp Messenger, better known as WA, is a popular digital technology and has the potential to be used as a learning tool (Deartsyne, 2011:38-44), because WA is a powerful tool for sending and receiving messages via electronics, which is an improvement from previous generations, namely SMS (short message service).

The WA application can be used as a tool in learning in the digital era. This is because whatsapp has more complete features than SMS, namely the Gallery to add photos, Contact to insert contacts, Camera to take pictures, Audio to send voice messages, Maps to send various map coordinates, as well as Documents to insert files in the form of documents . All files can be sent instantly through the free application. These features add to the ease and convenience of communicating through online media.

In the WA application, there is a Whatsapp Group (WAG) which is able to build enjoyable learning related to various discussion topics managed by the teacher (Al Saleem, 2014: 32-47). This WAG service is most widely used through the WA application. WAG is a discussion group service that can accommodate up to 256 participants. Very large amounts participants can be collected in just one application. Susilo (2014:10) said, through the WAG its members can share discussions and information online through the virtual space.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement plays an important role in improving children's success in school. Parents often want to be more involved in the education of their children, but are not sure how to do it. Instead the teacher wants to involve parents in school but needs guidance and support in promoting it (Gianzero, 1999).

One of the ways teachers build partnerships and communicate with parents is to show pride in their children, to build positive relationships with parents (Dodge & Colker, 2000)

Independence

Independence is a behavior whose activities are directed at themselves, do not expect much help from others, and even try to solve their own problems (Bathi, 1977).

Children's independence can be seen in five aspects of early childhood development according to

Indonesia Government regulation number 58 of 2009, namely religious aspects, social emotional, language, cognitive. The independence that is trained through the involvement of parents in this kindergarten is in the physical aspect that the child can take care of himself without the help of others

This research focuses on independence in wearing unaided clothing and shoes, including: wearing and undressing, pulling and pushing zipper pants, removing and attaching buttons, attaching and removing hooks, opening and removing shoes, opening and removing socks.

2 METHOD

This paper is the result of a quasi-experimental study involving 20 parents of children in group B at Al-Hikmah Kindergarten in South Tangerang, Indonesia. There is no sampling because the entire population becomes sampling. Research time is March-April 2017.

The experimental design is made with the following stages: (1) Ensuring all parents (one parent, father or mother) have a smart phone that has an application whats app, (2) The teacher creates whatsapp groups, and invites all parents of children in their class to join the group. The teacher is the administrator of the group, and all parents in the class are members of the group, (3) The teacher explains the rules in the whats app group. Topics that can be discussed and images or videos that can be uploaded, (4) The teacher and parents are involved in a conversation in whatsapp group for 3 months as an experiment. All conversations are archived by teachers and researchers, and (5) After 3 months, the teacher dissolves the group so that the researcher can analyze the experiments carried out.

3 RESULT & DISCUSSION

Result

Parents take advantage of whatsapp groups to find out what tasks or activities the teacher is expected to carry out by parents at home. The teacher will post the details of activities in the group through dialogue, for example as follows.

Teacher: Moms, for monday, please bring me one set of clothes, trousers / skirt. His clothes if he can hem the front button. Zippered pants and skirts. The topic began Monday, 'I can wear my own clothes'

M. Zahra: Okay miss. It will be exciting, learn to insert buttons

Teacher: We're learning to fold clothes too

M. Fauzan: Haha, can my kids fold a shirt?

Mama Afif: Okay, Miss.

Fig 1. Dialogue about information from teacher to parents

The teacher can also send details of activities in the form of pictures, to clarify the understanding of parents.

**Kegiatan 2
Aku Bisa Memakai Baju Sendiri**

Tujuan	Anak mampu melepas dan memakai baju sendiri dengan benar	
Alat & Bahan	1. Baju anak berkancing cepret 2. Baju anak berkancing lubang 3. Kaos dalam 4. Kaos anak lengan panjang	5. Kaos anak lengan pendek 6. Celana/rok anak beresleting 7. Ikat pinggang anak
Kegiatan Pendukung di TK	Membawakan jenis pakaian anak tertentu sesuai isi surat dari guru untuk orangtua ke TK	
Relawan	-----	
Tindak Lanjut di Rumah	1. Menyiapkan pakaian (baju, celana, kaos dalam dll) setiap anak selesai mandi. 2. Memotivasi anak untuk dapat mengenakan dan melepaskan bajunya sendiri, setiap hari. Minimal selama tiga hari dalam masa ujicoba. 3. Mengawasi kegiatan anak saat mengenakan dan melepas bajunya. 4. Mengisi jurnal kegiatan PKHBKO yang telah disiapkan. 5. Membuat dokumentasi kegiatan di rumah dan mengirimkannya ke grup ujicoba.	



Fig.2. Picture about activity at home

Parents can also post photos of their children's activities at home, as proof of documentation. This evidence will usually get a response from the teacher or other parents. For example in the following dialog.



M. Talha:

Teacher: Wah Talha diligently amazes. Good job Mom Talha. Later I also hope all moms can send photos of their children according to the schedule of habituation activities in the house that we have planned.

Fig.3. Parents posted about their child activity at home

Parents can also share suggestions or motivate each other. Examples of sharing advice or motivating fellow parents



M. Seno:

Teacher: Well, Seno has just practiced it. Great

M. Zahra: Wow seno stole the start

M. Seno: Seno is practicing open the button and fold the clothes so that later Monday, moms. Let's friends, this weekend we practice with children!

M. Seno: Miss, if the clothes have been worn, Seno is still a bit difficult to install and unbutton.

Teacher: It's still learning, it's okay.

M. Talha: When did the trial end? I met full with children just at the weekend.
 Teacher: Oh yeah, Mom talha? Talha doesn't have to be with mama, but accompanied by a father or grandmother or grandfather is also permissible.
 M.Talha: I tried as much as I could ... ðŸ˜~ "
 Teacher: Sip Mom Talha ðŸ˜??
 M. Talha: Okay Miss

Fig.5. The teacher provides an explanation related to the practices at home

In general, through WAG parents conduct various activities with teachers and other parents. Parent activity data at WAG can be seen in the following diagram.

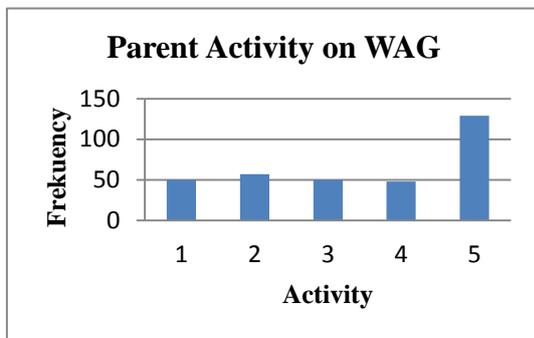


Chart 1. Parent Activity on WAG

Note:

1. Posted or provided information about your child's activities at home
2. uploaded child's pictures/videos about their activity at home
3. Asked for parenting to teachers or other parents
4. Gave advice on parenting or motivation to teachers or other parents
5. Commented or answered to questions in every activity that did by teachers

Discussion

Child independence needs to be trained by adults from an early age. Sa'diyah (2017) states that if a child is not given the opportunity to learn certain skills where development is possible, then the child not only lacks basic skills but also lacks motivation to learn various life skills. The importance of the role of parents in training independence is confirmed by Hurlock (1991), in which democratic parenting

style strongly stimulates children's independence, because parents act as mentors who pay attention to children's needs and activities.

If the child has entered kindergarten, independence training can be done either at home or in kindergarten. Teachers and parents play a role together in stimulating children's independence. Therefore teachers and parents really need to communicate intensively. One of the communication tools that is currently easy to use is through WAG.

Based on the dialog that is in the group, there are some benefits when parents join WAG in the class. These benefits include: (1) Parents can motivate each other on child development posts in WAG, (2) Evidence of activities can be archived by all group members and for teachers can be part of each child's portfolio and documentation of parental program activities, (3) Parents feel happy if their children appear in the documentation of activities in the group to get comments from other parents, adding enthusiasm in educating children. (4) Teachers can more quickly give or get responses from parents through WAG than if communication is done through books.

Based on the chart above, it can be seen that the biggest percentage of parental activities are commenting or answering questions. This is possible because the characteristics of the WAG application program are able to provide instant response, unlike the use of ordinary communication books.

Another advantage of WAG as a tool of communication in kindergarten is that parents do not hesitate to immediately ask the teacher who is also in the group. Parents don't have to wait tomorrow when picking up children to kindergarten. Questions from one parent also often encourage other parents to ask questions or discuss. Thus, parents can learn from each other through the WAG so that their children get progress in their growth and development.

However, based on the table also seen there are some parents who tend to be passive, not commenting on the group. It seems that some parents are still not confident in commenting on groups, and choose to communicate directly or use a private network (not in groups) to ask questions or discuss, either with teachers or other parents. This kind of handicap is often the case with the involvement of parents. This is consistent with the opinion of Gianzero (1999) who said that parents often want to be more involved in the education of their children, but are not sure how to do it.

One type of involvement expected by parents to collaborate with the school according to Epstein (2002) is communication. Epstein's communication in this case is two-way communication between home and school, or vice versa. Schools are expected to be able to communicate about school programs as well as education, development and children's health in order to improve the cooperation and understanding of parents and teachers about children.

The use of WAG has proven to be able to increase the intensity of this type of communication involvement. Every time parents can ask or express their opinions in the group. Parents also do not need to be present at school hours to meet with teachers, if the problems to be discussed are not too personal. The advantage that seems very prominent is the ease of uploading photos or videos in WAG. So that parents who rarely have the opportunity to be able to see directly their children's learning in kindergarten, can find out their children's activities through photos or videos sent by the teacher. Conversely, parents can also upload photos or videos of activities with their children at home quickly, and it is a pride for parents if their children have been able to do something and then be known by teachers and other parents.

4 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The use of social media applications 'WhatsApp Group' can increase the involvement of parents in kindergarten in developing children's independence. especially in the aspect of communication between parents and teachers and between parents. The improvement can be seen from several things, namely: the number of photos of children's activities sent by parents, sharing opinions between parents, and the enthusiasm of parents to ask the teacher. The handicap of using WAG in the involvement of parents is that there are still awkwardness or lack of confidence from some parents so that they only become listeners, never comment. Another handicap that might occur is if there are parents who do not have a smart phone.

Recommendation

Recommendation of this study is that kindergarten teachers can develop various alternative ways of good communication with parents by utilizing the latest technological developments.

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