

ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS: A SURVEY STUDY IN CIBIUK DISTRICT

Fitria Ulfah ^{1*)}

¹Universitas Islam Bandung, Indonesia

^{*)} fitria.ulfah@unisba.ac.id

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Abstract

Effective professional development for early childhood education (ECE) teachers should be grounded in an accurate training needs analysis rather than the assumptions of training organizers. This study aims to map the competence-development needs of ECE teachers based on field data so that training programs can be designed precisely. A descriptive quantitative approach was employed through an online survey of 69 ECE teachers (class teachers and principals) from kindergartens and playgroups. Data were collected using an electronic questionnaire covering respondent profiles and nine training-topic options, then analyzed descriptively using percentages. The results show that most respondents were female (95.7%) and held the position of class teacher (62.3%), with academic qualifications ranging from senior-secondary level (34.8%) to bachelor's degree (56.5%). The training topic with the highest need was instilling manners and religious character in young children (59.4%), followed by developing instructional media (52.2%), lesson planning and Qur'an memorization methods (49.3% each), and microteaching (46.4%). The need for training in AI-based instructional media was also relatively high (39.1%), indicating a digital-literacy gap among ECE teachers. These findings provide practical recommendations for training providers and education offices to design competence-improvement programs grounded in teachers' real needs, prioritizing the integrated strengthening of pedagogical, spiritual-religious, and technological-literacy competence.

Keywords: Teachers; pedagogical competence; professional development; survey; training needs

Abstrak

Pengembangan profesional pendidik Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) yang efektif perlu dimulai dari analisis kebutuhan pelatihan yang akurat, bukan sekadar asumsi penyelenggara. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan kebutuhan pengembangan kompetensi pendidik PAUD berdasarkan data lapangan agar program pelatihan yang dirancang tepat sasaran. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif melalui survei daring terhadap 69 pendidik PAUD (guru dan kepala sekolah) yang berasal dari satuan Taman Kanak-Kanak (TK) dan Kelompok Bermain (KB)/Kober. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner elektronik yang memuat profil responden dan sembilan pilihan topik pelatihan, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif persentase. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas responden adalah perempuan (95,7%) berstatus guru kelas (62,3%) dengan kualifikasi akademik beragam, mulai dari jenjang SMA/SMK/MA sederajat (34,8%) hingga sarjana (56,5%). Topik pelatihan dengan kebutuhan tertinggi adalah metode penanaman adab akhlak anak usia dini (59,4%),

diikuti oleh pembuatan media pembelajaran (52,2%), penyusunan perencanaan pembelajaran PAUD dan metode hafalan Al-Qur'an (masing-masing 49,3%), serta microteaching atau praktik mengajar (46,4%). Kebutuhan pelatihan pembuatan media pembelajaran berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI) juga relatif tinggi (39,1%), menandakan adanya kesenjangan literasi digital pada pendidik PAUD di lapangan. Temuan ini memberikan rekomendasi praktis bagi pusat kegiatan gugus (PKG) untuk menyusun program peningkatan kompetensi yang berorientasi pada kebutuhan riil pendidik, dengan prioritas pada penguatan kompetensi pedagogik, spiritual-religius, dan literasi teknologi secara terintegrasi.

Keywords: analisis kebutuhan; kompetensi pedagogik; pendidik PAUD; pengembangan profesional; survei

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a crucial foundation in shaping children's learning readiness and character in the golden age of development, so the quality of early childhood education services is highly dependent on the quality and competence of its educators (Febrialismanto, 2017). The competence of early childhood educators includes pedagogical, professional, personality, and social aspects, all of which determine the quality of the learning process in the classroom. However, various studies still show a gap between the formal qualifications of early childhood educators and the practical competencies demanded in the field (Isnaini et al., 2020). This condition is exacerbated by the educational background of early childhood educators in many areas that are still heterogeneous, ranging from high school graduates to undergraduate study programs that are not always linear with early childhood education.

Professional development of educators through training is one of the main strategies to bridge this competency gap. Eliza et al. (2022) identified various types of professional improvement training for PAUD teachers in Indonesia, ranging from tiered training, workshops, to ongoing mentoring, each of which has different competency goals. However, the effectiveness of a training program is largely determined by the accuracy of the needs assessment before the training is designed. Guskey (2002) emphasized that

changes in teacher teaching practices through professional training will only occur meaningfully if the training program is designed based on the real needs of teachers in the field, not solely based on the assumptions of the organizers. Without an accurate needs analysis, training risks being irrelevant to the real problems faced by educators, so that its impact on the quality of learning is limited.

Several previous studies have confirmed the importance of strengthening the competence of early childhood educators in various dimensions. In the dimension of learning planning and management, Isnaini et al. (2020) found that education and training contribute significantly to improving the professional competence of early childhood educators. In the dimension of assessment, Sari and Setiawan (2020) revealed that teachers' pedagogic competence in carrying out early childhood learning assessments in the field still needs to be improved, especially in compiling instruments that are in accordance with children's developmental achievements. In the dimension of media utilization, Astriani and Alfahnum (2020) show that training on the development of innovative learning media is able to increase the creativity and confidence of early childhood education teachers in teaching. Meanwhile, the development of artificial intelligence technology (AI) has also opened up new opportunities as well as new challenges for early childhood educators, because Fauziddin and Agustin Ningrum (2024) found that the use of AI in early childhood learning in Indonesia is still very limited due to the low digital literacy of educators and the limited technological facilities in early childhood education units.

In addition to pedagogic-general competencies, religious-based PAUD units in Indonesia have special needs for strengthening children's religious values and character from an early age. Anwar and Cholimah (2023) explained that the strategy of instilling religious and moral values in PAUD is carried out through the provision of religious knowledge, example, habituation of manners, and the cooperation of teachers and parents, but its success is highly dependent on teachers' mastery of the right methods. Similarly, in strengthening the memorization of the Qur'an, Islamiah et al.

(2019) and Dahliani et al. (2019) emphasized that the success of the tahfiz program in early childhood requires special teaching methods and strategies that are in accordance with the characteristics of child development, so educators need to be equipped with training in tested methods, such as the talaqqi method (Sudibyo et al., 2023). Storytelling activities have also proven to be effective as a method of instilling moral values and character in early childhood if mastered well by educators (Gusmayanti & Dimiyati, 2021; Kartini et al., 2021).

On the other hand, mastering basic teaching skills through microteaching is also an urgent need, especially for PAUD educators who do not have a formal teacher education background. Ginting and Aulia (2024) stated that microteaching plays an important role in preparing candidates and active educators to manage the classroom systematically, while Sahroni (2022) reported that microteaching training in the field has been proven to improve basic teaching technique skills for PAUD teachers who previously taught without following standard learning concepts.

Based on this description, previous studies generally discussed the need for training on one dimension of competence separately (for example, only pedagogic competence, or only religious competence). This study provides novelty by mapping the training needs of PAUD educators comprehensively and simultaneously, which includes nine dimensions of competence at once, namely learning planning, classroom management, child development assessment, creation of conventional and AI-based learning media, storytelling methods, microteaching, instilling manners and morals, and Qur'an memorization methods, based on field survey data on PAUD educators in kindergarten and family planning units. The objectives of this study are (1) to describe the profile of PAUD educators based on gender, position, educational background, and length of teaching; and (2) to analyze the priority order of PAUD educator training needs based on the percentage of topic selection by respondents. The results of this study are expected to be an empirical basis for training institutions, professional organizations, and the education office in

developing a program to improve the competence of early childhood education educators that are more on target.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive design through a survey method. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to map and describe the conditions of the training needs of early childhood educators as they are in the field, without conducting intervention or testing of cause-and-effect hypotheses.

The research population is PAUD educators consisting of teachers and school principals in the Kindergarten (TK) unit and Play Group (KB)/Children's Play Group (Kober) in the research area. Sampling was carried out by a saturated sampling technique (total sampling) of all educators who filled out an online survey form distributed through the communication network between PAUD institutions in the period from 8 to 13 April 2026, so that 69 respondents were obtained who met the criteria as research data.

The research instrument is in the form of an electronic questionnaire (Google Form) which consists of two parts. The first part contains respondent profile data, including name, gender, school name, position at school, length of teaching, and last education. The second part contains multiple-choice items with multiple responses regarding training needs, which consists of nine topics, namely: (1) preparation of early childhood learning planning, (2) practice of classroom management models in early childhood education, (3) preparation of early childhood assessments, (4) creation of AUD learning media, (5) creation of AI-based AUD learning media, (6) storytelling method, (7) microteaching (teaching practice), (8) method of instilling AUD manners and morals, and (9) method of memorizing the Qur'an for AUD. The preparation of these topics refers to the dimensions of pedagogic and professional competence of early childhood educators which are widely discussed in the literature (Febrialismanto, 2017; Eliza et al., 2022), as well as the typical needs of religious-based PAUD units.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Categorical data on respondent profiles (gender, job title, and educational qualifications) were tabulated and presented in the form of frequency and percentage. Training needs data were calculated based on the frequency of selection of each topic by respondents, then converted into percentages against the total number of respondents (n=69), and sorted from highest to lowest percentages to determine the priority scale of training needs. Data processing was carried out using tabular data processing software to ensure the accuracy of the calculation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The survey was attended by 69 PAUD educators spread across kindergarten and KB/Kober units. The characteristics of the respondents based on gender, position, and last educational qualification are presented in Table 1.

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Women	66	95,7
Male	3	4,3
Positions in the School		
Teacher	43	62,3
Principal	25	36,2
Others (Educators)	1	1,4
Final Education		
Bachelor (S1)/Equivalent	39	56,5
SMA/SMK/MA Equivalent	24	34,8

Junior High School	3	4,3
Master (S2)	2	2,9
Diploma (D2/D3)	1	1,4

Table 1. Respondent Profile (n=69)

Table 1 shows that the research respondents were dominated by female educators (95.7%), in line with the general characteristics of the early childhood education educator profession in Indonesia which has historically been dominated by women (Febrialismanto, 2017). Based on position, the majority of respondents have the status of classroom teachers (62.3%) and the rest are principals (36.2%), so that the data on training needs obtained reflect the perspective of direct learning implementers as well as policy makers at the education unit level.

In terms of educational qualifications, more than half of the respondents (56.5%) have a bachelor's degree (S1) or equivalent, but a considerable proportion (34.8%) are still educated at high school/vocational/MA equivalent. These findings confirm the heterogeneity of the academic qualifications of PAUD educators which were also reported by Isnaini et al. (2020) in Sukabumi City, and by Febrialismanto (2017) in Kampar Regency, who found that some PAUD teachers do not have higher education qualifications that are in accordance with the demands of professional competence. This condition reinforces the urgency of continuous professional development training and development programs as an alternative path to improve competence for educators who have not yet taken formal PAUD education (Eliza et al., 2022).

The Need for Early Childhood Education Educator Training

The tabulation results of training needs based on the nine topics offered to respondents are presented in Table 2, sorted from highest to lowest selection percentage.

Yes	Training Topics	f	%
1	Methods of instilling manners and morals in early childhood	41	59,4
2	Creation of AUD learning media	36	52,2
3	Preparation of early childhood learning planning	34	49,3
4	Qur'an memorization method for AUD	34	49,3
5	Microteaching (teaching practice)	32	46,4
6	Practice of classroom management models in PAUD	28	40,6
7	AI-based AUD learning media creation	27	39,1
8	Preparation of early childhood assessments	23	33,3
9	Storytelling methods	20	29,0

Table 2. Distribution of Early Childhood Education Educator Training Needs (n=69, answers can be more than one)

Instilling Manners and Morals as the Highest Need

The topic of early childhood manners and morals instilling manners and morals occupies the highest position (59.4%), indicating that educators are aware of the importance of the dimension of religious character in AUD learning and at the same time feel the need to strengthen the right methods to make it happen. These findings are in line with Anwar and Cholimah (2023) who explain that the success of instilling religious and moral values in early childhood is highly dependent on exemplary, habituation, and cooperation strategies carried out consistently by educators, not just religious knowledge transfer. Thus, the training program designed needs to emphasize the practice of applying habituation and exemplary methods, not just conceptual material on moral values.

Learning Media and the Digital Literacy Gap

The need for training in the creation of conventional learning media (52.2%) and AI-based media (39.1%) shows that early childhood educators are aware of the important role of media in stimulating children's development, as well as indicating a competency gap in the use of cutting-edge technology. Astriani and Alfahnum (2020) prove that innovative learning media development training is effective in increasing the teaching creativity of early childhood education teachers. Meanwhile, the high interest in AI-based media training strengthens the findings of Fauziddin and Agustin Ningrum (2024) that the use of artificial intelligence in early childhood learning in Indonesia is still very limited due to the low digital literacy of educators and limited facilities in early childhood education units, so AI-based training programs need to begin with strengthening basic digital literacy before entering technical applications.

Learning Planning and Qur'an Memorization Methods

The need for training in the preparation of early childhood education planning and the Qur'an memorization method for AUD is both at 49.3%. The need for the preparation of learning planning is in line with the findings of Isnaini et al. (2020) that education and training contribute significantly to improving the professional competence of early childhood education educators, including in preparing planning tools such as semester programs, RPPM, and RPPH. The high need for training in the Qur'an memorization method reflects the distinctive character of the unit Religious-based early childhood education in the research area. Dahliani et al. (2019) and Islamiah et al. (2019) emphasized that the development of the ability to memorize the Qur'an in early childhood requires special methods that are appropriate to the child's stage of cognitive development, so mastery of methods such as talaqqi (Sudibyo et al., 2023) is crucial for tahfiz programs in early childhood education to run effectively without burdening children cognitively or emotionally.

Microteaching and Classroom Management

The need for microteaching training (46.4%) and the practice of classroom management models (40.6%) emphasized the importance of mastering basic teaching skills in practice. Sahroni (2022) reported that microteaching training in rural PAUD units has been proven to improve basic teaching techniques for teachers who previously taught without being guided by standard learning concepts. In line with that, Ginting and Aulia (2024) stated that microteaching equips educators with direct experience in managing and leading classes, so it is very relevant to be applied as a hands-on training method for early childhood educators who do not have a formal teacher education background.

Child Development Assessment and Storytelling Methods

The need for training in the preparation of early childhood assessments (33.3%) is relatively lower than other topics, but it is still important considering that Sari and Setiawan (2020) found that the pedagogic competence of early childhood teachers in carrying out learning assessments still needs to be improved, especially in compiling instruments that reflect children's developmental achievements authentically. The storytelling method occupies the lowest position (29.0%), which can be interpreted that most educators have been quite confident in applying this method, considering that storytelling is a relatively familiar practice in the daily learning of early childhood education. However, Gusmayanti and Dimyati (2021) and Kartini et al. (2021) reminded that the effectiveness of storytelling in instilling moral values is highly dependent on mastery of storytelling techniques, theme selection, and the ability of educators to relate the moral message of stories to the context of children's lives, so that advanced training on the technical aspects of storytelling is still relevant to be offered optionally.

Implications for Training Program Preparation

Overall, the results of this survey show that the training needs of early childhood educators are multidimensional, including general pedagogic

competencies (planning, classroom management, assessment, microteaching), technology-based professional competencies (conventional media and AI), and typical religious competencies (instilling manners and memorization of the Qur'an). Guskey (2002) emphasized that teacher professional development programs will have a greater impact on changing teaching practices if they are designed to be sustainable, contextual, and accompanied by post-training assistance, rather than just one-shot training. Therefore, training organizers are advised to develop a gradual program that prioritizes the three topics with the highest needs, namely the cultivation of manners and morals, the creation of learning media, and the planning and memorization of the Qur'an, while still providing companion modules for other topics so that the needs of early childhood educator competency development can be met comprehensively and sustainably

CONCLUSION

This study mapped the professional development needs of 69 early childhood educators through an online survey and found that the highest training needs in order were the method of instilling early childhood manners and morals (59.4%), the creation of AUD learning media (52.2%), the preparation of early childhood learning planning and the memorization method of the Qur'an (49.3 each), microteaching (46.4%), classroom management practices (40.6%), the creation of AI-based media (39.1%), the preparation of assessments (33.3%), and the storytelling method (29.0%). The profile of the respondents, which is dominated by female educators with teacher status with still heterogeneous educational qualifications, also confirms the urgency of continuous professional development programs as a path to improve competencies outside the formal education pathway.

These findings provide practical implications that PAUD educator training programs should be designed in a multidimensional and gradual manner, with priority given to strengthening the competence of religious

character cultivation, developing learning media, including basic artificial intelligence literacy, and practical teaching skills through microteaching. Further research is suggested to expand the scope of the sample to other regions, add variables of teaching length and type of educational unit as differentiating factors for training needs, and evaluate the impact of training programs on changes in educators' teaching practices longitudinally.

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