

UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' MOTIVATION: PROFILES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS CONTINUING THEIR STUDIES

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Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze the motivation of early childhood education (ECE) teachers in pursuing higher education. The research method employed is descriptive qualitative, involving students from semesters 1 to 7 who meet the criteria of being ECE teachers and continuing their studies in the PIAUD Department at Ibrahimy University Situbondo. Data collection was carried out using three methods: interviews, observations, and document studies. Subsequently, the researcher analyzed the collected data through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. After conducting the research steps mentioned above, the researcher concluded that the dominant motivation for teachers to continue their studies is primarily driven by external factors, such as educational alignment, institutional demands, and improving their quality of life. Internal motivations include enhancing personal quality as educators and support from their families. Lastly, the university's easy learning system and affordable tuition fees also contribute as motivational factors.

Keywords: *Motivation, Learning, ECE Teachers*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the supporters of national development. The hope of education is productive and broad-minded human resources. So the education process is very important to assess the quality of the results of education. A structured learning process, professional teaching staff, and an appropriate curriculum are components of educational success (Selvi, 2010). Teacher professionalism is an important factor in the educational process.

Transfer of knowledge by teachers to students is a process that determines the success of learning. Teachers are people with full dedication. The existence of teachers can be seen since ancient times with evidence of heroes and national leaders. However, the characteristics of each teacher are different, related to how teachers carry out their duties and functions as educators. This is partly influenced by the motivation possessed by each teacher (Tembang et al., 2017).

Early childhood education teachers are educators who specifically teach young children, between the ages of 3 and 6 years. Early childhood education teachers focus on the development of basic skills, such as language, motor, social, and emotional, through various play methods and creative activities (Bredekamp & Joseph, 2023). The role of early childhood education teachers is very important in building the foundation of children's education, as well as supporting children's development during the golden age period (Bredekamp & Joseph, 2023).

The phenomenon that occurs, early childhood education teachers in developing countries still have needs and challenges in human resources, infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and the need for training (Hannaway et al., 2019). In Indonesia, most of the data on ECE (Early Childhood Education) teachers do not have a bachelor's degree and although some have a bachelor's degree, it is not linear with Early Childhood Education. The cause of the low percentage of teachers who have ECE bachelor's certificates is influenced by

internal factors, such as: lack of motivation and interest of students who want to study in early childhood education programs, the number of people to become early childhood teachers is sufficient with a high school diploma (Andika & Hambali, 2021).

On the other hand, the Early Childhood Education Study Program is a Study Program that aims to produce professional and Islamic Early Childhood educators. Human resources who are able to provide expert services to the community, and conduct studies to support the development of science related to early childhood development. So, every student of the Early Childhood Education Study Program must have the ability and motivation to achieve good learning achievements and achieve the expected goals.

There is an increase in ECE teachers continuing their undergraduate studies at the Early Childhood Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah, Ibrahimy University, Situbondo. The age data of students is between 25-35 years, but they have the enthusiasm to continue their education. Based on the development data, the number of students in the PIAUD study program until 2024 has increased quite significantly. In 2021 there were 10 students, in 2022 there were 11 students, in 2023 there were 10 students, and in 2024 there were 16 students.

This is interesting for researchers related to the factors that motivate teachers so that they continue their education. While in this study, researchers believe that each teacher has individual motivation to study in the Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program. So researchers are interested in knowing and analyzing the things that motivate teachers to continue their S1 Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah UNIB Situbondo.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Definition of Motivation

Motivation is viewed as a mental drive that encourages and directs human behavior, including learning (Idzhar, 2016: 3). Learning motivation refers to the drive within an individual engaged in learning to bring about behavioral changes (Uno, 2017: 23). Motivation can provide direction for students in their learning process (Sardiman, 2014: 75). Learning motivation serves as the driving force to facilitate learning activities. Basic theories about motivation have been proposed by several experts, such as McDonald and Maslow. McDonald explains that motivation is a change in energy within an individual, characterized by the emergence of feelings and reactions to achieve a goal (McDonald in Sardiman, 2014: 73). According to Maslow (1970), motivation is an internal drive that encourages individuals to do something or fulfill their needs. Based on the definitions provided by the experts above, it can be concluded that learning motivation is the overall driving force in the learning process to achieve learning outcomes within an individual, whether it arises from internal or external factors. Learning motivation is the desire that grows within a person to engage in activities related to what they aim to achieve. It represents the feeling or aspiration to accomplish something, which inspires a person's enthusiasm for learning.

2. The Function of Learning Motivation

The function of motivation in learning is crucial. Motivation is an essential requirement in the learning process. Someone with low learning desire or lacking motivation will not achieve optimal results (Suharni & Purwanti, 2018). Motivation triggers an energy-driven action in a person, leading to emotions that prompt them to act and do something (Sardiman, 2014; Hamzah Uno, 2017). Motivation serves as a driver, a

guide, and a selector for actions to be undertaken (Sardiman, 2014: 85). The motivational drive can take various forms, such as threats, rewards, or expectations of achieving something (Khairani, 2017: 240). Therefore, motivation is recognized as a fundamental driving force (Rahman, 2021).

3. Types of Motivation

Motivation, according to Juwono in Setiawan, is divided into two types (Yulfita & Aini, 2019): a. Internal Motivation is motivation that comes from within oneself, where employees are able to work because they are interested and enjoy their work, finding satisfaction and happiness within themselves. Included in internal motivation are: Needs, Desires, Cooperation, Job satisfaction, Employee conditions, and Drives. b. External Motivation is motivation that comes from outside. Included in external motivation are: Rewards (salary), Expectations, and Incentives (bonuses).

METHOD

The method used by the researcher is a qualitative descriptive research method. This descriptive research method aims to explain an event. Descriptive research is research with the aim of explaining a condition or phenomenon that is currently occurring by using scientific procedures to answer problems in an actual manner (Sugiyono, 2010). This descriptive research is a long process of collecting facts and interpreting data.

The subjects in this study were early childhood education teachers who continued their studies in the PIAUD department of Ibrahimy University (UNIB), Situbondo. The researcher used data collection techniques including interviews, observations and documentation studies. The analysis refers to the qualitative descriptive data analysis model consisting of three flows: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

RESULTS

The results of this study are the motivation underlying ECE teachers to continue their studies at the Higher Education level of the PIAUD Study Program. The presentation of the research results begins with a description of each individual participant which is continued with findings according to the results of the field analysis.

In this study, a description of the motivation of ECE teachers who have taught and are actively pursuing a Bachelor's degree in the Early Childhood Education study program was obtained. The general description is that students of the Early Childhood Education study program, Faculty of Tarbiyah, UNIB Situbondo have taught at an educational institution, but most of them have a high school education. The description of all subjects is that they are married. However, they have high motivation to continue their studies.

The results of the analysis and data processing in this study show that several motivations for subjects to decide to continue their studies are as follows:

a. Linearity of Education

The background of the participants continuing their education is because of the need for linear education as early childhood educators. According to several participants interviewed by the researcher, they continued their ECE undergraduate education because they wanted it to be linear with their profession.

b. Institutional Demands

Participants who have mostly been educators, even some participants who have been teaching for more than 10 years have demands for the teaching profession from the heads of institutions or foundations and school principals. This is for institutional interests because the requirement for the sustainability of an early childhood education institution is one of the teachers who have a bachelor's degree from an early childhood education study program.

c. Improving Self-quality

Participants aim to improve their quality as Early Childhood Education teachers to provide the best learning experience for children. Many Early Childhood Education teachers want to improve their competence and skills in order to provide better education for children.

d. Improving the Welfare of the Teaching Profession

Additional degrees are often associated with increased salaries and benefits, which are financial motivations to continue their education. This is the reason why participants continue their studies in order to improve their welfare and increase their salary.

DISCUSSION

According to Petri, as quoted by Nyayu Khodijah, motivation is described as a force acting on an organism that drives and directs its behavior. Furthermore, Nyayu Khodijah cites Morgan et al., defining motivation as a force that initiates and drives behavior toward specific goals. Additionally, Nyayu Khodijah references Eggen and Kauchak, who define motivation as a force that energizes, sustains, and directs behavior toward a goal (Nyayu Khodijah, 2016). In conclusion, motivation is a psychological condition that drives a person to take action. Learning motivation, on the other hand, is a psychological condition that drives a person to learn.

In this study, learning motivation refers to the motivation of early childhood education (ECE) teachers to pursue and continue their education. With many students who are also ECE teachers motivated to attend higher education institutions, society places high hopes on their ability to improve their quality of life. In the context of learning, motivation is crucial for individuals as it encourages them to engage more enthusiastically in the learning process. Motivation is an essential prerequisite for learning. In learning activities, motivation can be described as the overall driving force within students that initiates learning activities, ensures the continuity of these activities, and

provides direction to achieve the desired learning goals. The motivation of ECE teachers who continue their education in the Faculty of Tarbiyah, PIAUD Program at Ibrahimy University is driven by both external and internal factors.

Several factors influence students' motivation to pursue higher education (college). According to the research by Khoiriyah et al., there are eight factors: location, cost, programs offered, socioeconomic background, motivation, facilities, references, promotions, and reputation (Khoiriyah et al., 2013). The external motivations include educational alignment, institutional demands, and improving quality of life. Internal motivations encompass enhancing personal qualities as educators and support from family. Lastly, the university's accessible learning system and affordable tuition fees also serve as significant motivational factors.

CONCLUSSION

ECE teachers pursuing further studies are strongly driven by motivation as their key impetus. Particularly for those who are already teaching, the dual role of being both a teacher—responsible for managing learning activities—and a student adds to their academic burden.

There are several factors that motivate ECE teachers to continue their studies at the PIAUD program of the Faculty of Tarbiyah, Ibrahimy University, Situbondo. The researcher concludes that these factors can be categorized into two types: external and internal. External motivations include educational alignment, institutional demands, and improving quality of life. Internal motivations involve self-improvement as educators and support from family. Additionally, the accessibility of the university's learning system and affordable tuition fees serve as significant motivational factors.

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