The Effect Learning Community on Early Childhood Communication Skills

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the effect of learning community on Early Childhood Communication Skills. The research method used quasi-experimental design, the research location was in kindergarten. The research subjects consisted of 60 early childhood divided into two groups, experimental and control groups. Data collection techniques through observation and questionnaire, data analysis used normality test, homogeneity test and independent sample t test. The results showed that the Sig value of communication skill in the experimental group was 0.00 ($p \leq 0.05$), the mean learning community in the experimental group was better at 54.57 compared to the learning outcomes of the control group at 48.73. It can be concluded that learning community has an effect on early childhood communication skills.

Introduction

Education in Indonesia is always improving and developing to keep up with the era and the needs of the country's society, mainly to develop the quality of education of its citizens by training and growing the skills or abilities of students. The government has implemented several changes, including adjusting the circumstances, conditions, time, and the needs and characteristics of students, the solution is to innovate the learning curriculum. Designing a curriculum is so important to be adjusted to the circumstances and needs of the existing community because it is the basis of reference or guidance for the entire series of learning activities at educational institutions (Vhalery et al., 2022). The curriculum currently implemented in Indonesian educational institutions is the Merdeka curriculum. Merdeka Curriculum is an independent learning program designed to improve the quality of learning and have a positive impact on various aspects of life. Starting from the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects within the scope of education (Kemendikbud, 2022). The merdeka curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning that will be optimized so that students have sufficient time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the flexibility to choose a variety of learning tools so that learning can be adapted to students' learning needs and interests (Rizaldi & Fatimah, 2022).

There are many benefits and advantages to implementing this independent curriculum in learning activities. The utilization of merdeka curriculum is based on efforts to create a quality educational climate so that it can produce a generation that is ready to adapt to the times (Priantini et al., 2022). The advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum focus on

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essential material and the development of student competencies in the phase so that students can learn more deeply, meaningfully and enjoyably, making learning much more relevant and interactive through project activities, providing wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual and other issues to support the development of character and competence of the Pancasila Learner profile (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). In the Merdeka Curriculum, the Pancasila Learner Profile is a guide for educators and students so that all learning, programs, and activities in education units. The final purpose of the Pancasila Learner profile is that every Indonesian student must have competence and character in accordance with the values of Pancasila (Zulaiha et al., 2020).

The existence of Merdeka Curriculum provides an opportunity for schools to develop and manage curriculum and learning according to the characteristics of education units and students. In the development of the world today into the 21st century era and accompanied by the development of information and communication technology, many changes in the learning paradigm follow these developments, these two things provide an impetus for schools to immediately prepare themselves to walk together to improve the quality of learning by reviewing the development of information and communication technology and 21st century skills that must be trained for students. Learners must be competent in skills such as using technology, collaborative working, effective communication, digital literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and productivity and acquiring knowledge from a variety of sources (Cevik & Senturk, 2019). In addition to skills such as communication, critical thinking, and creativity, which were considered essential in the past, new skills comprise of such as collaborating, keeping up with information technology innovations with advancements in information technology, and having technological literacy in order to adapt and use them appropriately (Özer & Kuloğlu, 2023). Education for 21st century skills aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills should they encounter unexpected situations in their daily lives (Duygu, 2023). 21st century skills emerged due to technological development, globalization, and rapidly changing labor market conditions. Basic skills such as reading, writing, and math are sought to have new skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, digital literacy, and cultural awareness. These skills are considered essential for increasing individual productivity, supporting global cooperation, and capitalizing on opportunities provided by digital technologies (Yurt, 2023).

Training 21st century skills requires a lot of time to be formed in students and will continue to develop along with the level of education they undergo. the journey of training these skills can start from early childhood. Even from an early age, it would be better to introduce and encourage these skills in learning but still adapted to the needs of students, subject matter and the desired learning objectives. This preparation can be started by following the curriculum reference as a guide to learning activities, which is currently implemented is the Merdeka Curriculum. The concept of Merdeka Curriculum is understood as freedom of play in Early Childhood Education. The Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the seminar "Physical Motoric Stimulation of Early Childhood" said that freedom of learning in the context of early childhood education means freedom of play (Kemendikbud, 2020). Based on the explanation above, early childhood activities must be designed to meet the needs of children who are still in the play stage. Play is not only how young children spend their time, but also how they learn. Play and fun are at the core of early childhood education (Vogt et al., 2020). Play serves to enhance children's academic, social and emotional abilities, and engages and motivates children in ways that cannot be achieved through didactic learning. Especially when teachers guide and facilitate it with play, it has a significant role in developing children's cognitive and academic skills, including building other abilities (Resnick & Johnson, 2020).

The current reality shows that there are still differences in understanding in the community about the importance of play activities in early childhood. People understand that early childhood education is an activity that only focuses on reading, writing and counting without paying attention to other aspects of development. Parents and teachers often direct children to learning that tends to be academic. However, it is different from the science of early childhood education which should strengthen the developmental aspects through play activities. This shows the need for wider socialization and a better understanding of how play is the main medium of early childhood learning. One way teachers and parents can address the above issues and improve early childhood development is through learning community.

Learning community can be applied to early childhood because it has compatibility with the learning function in early childhood. The functions of learning in early childhood include: developing all abilities possessed by children according to their stage of development, introducing rules and instilling discipline in children, and providing opportunities for children to enjoy their playing time (Fadlillah, 2016). A learning community is an association where members have the same learning goals and interact with each other to realize those goals and interact with each other to realize those learning goals. Because they have the same goals, each member participates in every learning process in it. Every individual can learn faster and have a good learning attitude in a participatory environment (Sekar & Kamarubiani, 2020). The findings of previous research prove that teachers who use the learning community model get various experiences so that teachers can continue to improve the quality of learning (Sari et al., 2018). Likewise, the results of other studies show that the learning community model can improve the competence, attitude, and psychomotor abilities of natural science students at Pakuan University (Setyaningsih, 2018). The results of the research showed that learning community has a positive impact on learners' interest in learning (Ramli & Sirojjuddin, 2018).

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that learning outcomes with the learning community model are obtained from collaboration with others. Learning results are obtained from sharing between students, groups, and students who already understand to students who still do not understand. This cannot be separated from the communication skills between students and their teachers. Communication is one of the characteristics that need to be applied in learning in early childhood because it is one of the 21st century skills, therefore it must be optimized to be trained in early childhood.

Communication skills in early childhood can be stimulated through a variety of fun activities, play activities that familiarize to communicate among children continuously and ultimately provide even learning outcomes, especially learning objectives are achieved. The implementation of learning community at this age level shows the awareness of the importance of communication skills among early childhood students in the learning process. In this study, what will be investigated is the effect of learning communities on communication skills aimed at early childhood.

Literature review

Learning community

Learning community is a concept of creating a school community, which is a process of learning to teach between teachers and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and even between the school community and the community outside the school, so that student learning achievement can be improved. Learning community are defined as groups of individuals engaged in collaborative learning and reflective practices engaged in transformative learning. In the context of communities of practice, community-based learning involves the process of becoming full participants in socio-

cultural practices. Thus, individuals learn through shared practice with community members who are more experienced, knowledgeable and insightful and can share with each other in the hope that the outcome will be that all members have a shared understanding, expertise and skills that can be improved. Learning community should foster a sense of connection and shared passion, as well as a deepening of knowledge gained from ongoing interaction in learning activities. The pattern of knowledge development can be continuous, cyclical and changing between members (Fontainha et al., 2015). A learning community is broadly defined as a group of people who share common values and beliefs and are actively engaged in each other's learning (Wagner et al., 2014). Learning community is a mechanism of academic and social assimilation that enables meaningful experiences for students (Hurtado et al., 2020). Learning community is based on social constructivism. Social constructivism is a learning paradigm initiated by Vygotsky, learning focuses on processes and interactions in a social context. Social interactions and processes are a concern in achieving learning goals (Tantomas, 2021).

There are many advantages that learning community offer in learning activities. Learning community provides needed support and structure, allows for faculty and peer feedback, guides meaningful reflection, and can intentionally avoid limiting student focus to the completion of specific class assignments (Flinders, 2013). Learning community is characterized by common academic and social tools to help students become more integrated learners, build community, and become more connected to institutional resources. These tools are intended to support the growth of intellectual abilities and to strengthen social relationships among students using cooperative learning techniques (Baier et al., 2019). Learning community participation addresses deficiencies in learning activities by providing a strong network of support that can serve as a reinforcement or springboard for student self-efficacy and achievement (Virtue et al., 2019). The main advantages of learning community are that it promotes interaction between students and interaction between educators and educational institutions and provides a number of opportunities for students to build strong support systems. The majority of learning communities incorporate active and collaborative learning activities and encourage engagement in complementary academic and social activities that extend beyond the classroom (Solanki et al., 2019). Learning communities offer by facilitating knowledge acquisition by emphasizing students into learning experiences and processes of collaboration and active engagement actively, which results in good social knowledge construction (Jaiswal et al., 2021).

Learning community in learning is very helpful for learners in increasing social interaction, scientific discussion, knowledge exchange, collaboration, story exchange and many other benefits. Learning community has a positive relationship with student engagement and is positively associated with learning outcomes, so learning community can indirectly relate to student learning. may be indirectly related to student learning (Kern & Kingsbury, 2019). Learning community is usually built to bring students together collaboratively through common academic and/or social experiences around a goal or question (Varty, 2021). Learning community is characterized by common features that bring students together through related studies and/or through frequent interactions, both socially and intellectually (Gonzales et al., 2022).

Communication Skill

Communication is the process of transferring information from one individual to another or from an individual to another group to another group. Communication in the learning process builds relationships or interactions between teachers and students who share thoughts, knowledge and understanding. So, communication is very important in transferring knowledge and exchanging ideas (Chung et al., 2016). Communication as a relational process in which individuals create and interpret messages that generate responses. As the motivating power in any relationship or situation, communication is the process of sending and receiving messages that enhances the dissemination of knowledge,

attitudes and skills (Çelik & Alpan, 2023). To improve educational communication, teachers should have a great deal of responsibility for involving all parts of the educational process in the presentation and interpretation of the curriculum (Ogbo et al., 2020).

Communication skills are one of the soft skills that students must have. Communication skills are learned behaviors that enable an individual to listen effectively with respect and empathy, to open up by speaking concretely, to communicate his feelings and thoughts with his language without hiding anything, to protect his rights without embarrassing others, to use verbal and nonverbal messages harmoniously, to build satisfying relationships with others, to get positive reactions and to help the individual to live in society (Çaybas & Ordu, 2022). Communication skills accommodate a variety of competencies related to delivering information, facilitating the effective and efficient exchange of information, ideas and emotions with individuals. Communication skills are essential in the 21st century, so students should be familiarized with good communication (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Communication skills are essential for success in family life, school, and business. Communication is an essential competency for us to live a social life individuals can realize themselves and understand their environment only by communication, so communication skills are considered a prerequisite for empathizing in the approach to human relationships (Avci & Faiz, 2020).

Good communication is how the delivery of messages can be understood by the recipient of the message well, communication is the most important factor in education because the classroom is a space of communication. it is expected that many messages in the learning process must always be well connected so that the delivery of teaching materials can be maximally obtained by students and the achievement of learning objectives. To construct good and effective communication, individuals should sincerely respect themselves and others, be empathetic, ensure active listening, speak concretely, express themselves, send complete and one message, use verbal and non-verbal messages harmoniously and display empathic and trustworthy behavior (Çaybas & Ordu, 2022). Effective communication skills are the first requirement of a great persuasive teaching process, in order for people to express themselves, share their thoughts and emotions, and understand and build empathy with others, they need to train themselves to be good listeners and speakers (AlKhamaiseh, 2022). Students' communication skills are improved when they conduct discussion sessions, activities during these discussions can improve students' emotional and social maturity as well as intellectual abilities (Angganing et al., 2022).

There are several types of communication skill categories that exist. The categories of communication skills consist of verbal communication: which includes the ability to express oneself clearly and effectively through speech and non-verbal communication: which includes the use of body language and facial expressions to communicate messages (Sergeeva et al., 2023). Communication can also be classified into two categories: formal communication and informal communication. Formal communication is communication that follows established standards or rules. Informal communication involves casual conversations between family members, friends, or individuals around us (Kiong et al., 2022).

Method

The research method used is a quasi-experimental design. The term quasi-experiment refers to a research strategy that includes a control group but does not function fully in controlling various variables (Sugiyono, 2013). Because researchers could not build a new class for this study, the existing class at school was used as the research subject. The researcher did not use randomization in the experimental group or control group. The nature of quasi-experimental research findings is more suitable for application in real-world learning (Creswell, 2014). This study involved 60 early childhood children aged 5

to 6 years. The research was conducted at "Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Wage Taman Sidoarjo" Kindergarten, East Java, Indonesia. The subjects will be divided into two groups, one group without intervention and one group with intervention.

The activity process with the learning community model aimed at early childhood (5-6 years old) in this study. 1) The teacher divides students into groups based on their learning styles (visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles). 2) The teacher explains the learning activities that will be carried out. 3) The teacher and students prepare the necessary media and learning resources. 4) Students participate in group-based learning activities. Early childhood cognitive capacity (5-6 years) in this study is as follows: Teachers discuss activities to be carried out; Students work in groups; and Students work on activity sheets individually.

This research data was collected using observation and interviews. Taryono's (2016) communication skills instruments are: 1) presentation timing; 2) explaining ideas; 3) speaking clearly (clear voice); 4) eye contact with the audience; 5) responding to audience statements; 6) using presentation aids; and 7) participating in group presentations (Dewi & Kustiarini, 2022). The data collection process was assisted by teachers in the educational institution. Data is described using data analysis using normality test, homogeneity test and independent sample t test. Variables related to early childhood communication skills (aged 5-6 years) are described using pretest and posttest data.

Result

To determine the effect learning community by testing the results of posttest data obtained during the study. From the data, hypothesis testing will then be seen using the normality test, homogeneity test and t-test, using the SPSS Statistics application. The results of the posttest data normality test are described in table 1.

Table 1. Output Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Experiment Questionnaire	Control Questionnaire
N		30	30
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	54.57	48.73
	Std. Deviation	4.289	4.891
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.207	.082
	Positive	.119	.082
	Negative	-.207	-.081
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.133	.451
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.153	.987
a. Test distribution is Normal.			
b. Calculated from data.			

Based on Table 1, the data distribution is normal. This can be seen at the posttest significance levels, Experimental Posttest got 0.153 and Control Posttest got 0.987, more significant than 5% significance or > 0.05.

Table 2. Output Homogenity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Posttest			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.151	1	58	.288

Based on Table 2, the data distribution is homogen. This can be seen at the posttest significance levels, both groups got 0.288, more significant than 5% significance or > 0.05. After all data qualify for normal distribution and homogeneity. The results of posttest data analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Output Independent Sample T Test

Independent Samples Test				
			Posttest	
			Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		F	1.151	
		Sig.	.288	
t-test for Equality of Means		df	4.911	4.911
		t	58	57.025
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		Mean Difference	5.833	5.833
		Std. Error Difference	1.188	1.188
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	3.456	3.455
		Upper	8.211	8.212

Based on Table 3, data testing through the independent sample t test obtained a significance value of 0.00 <0.05, meaning that there is a significant effect, so that the application of learning community has an effect on communication skills in early childhood.

Table 4. Mean Between Groups

Group Statistics			
	Groups	N	Mean
Posttest	Experimental	35	54.57
	Control	35	48.73

Based on Table 4, shows that the mean learning community in the experimental group was better at 54.57 compared to the learning outcomes of the control group at 48.43.

Discussion

This research shows that learning community impacts on early childhood communication skills. Learning community supports young children to communicate with their peers in learning groups during the learning process. Members of the learning community work together by sharing ideas and experiences through communication that may be a little different from the adult communication that young children do, sometimes some are serious, some are laughing, some are quietly doing something with their closest friend in the group and many others. But overall they were very happy to carry out learning community activities in their learning activities in the experimental group, in the control group even though they did not apply the same learning activities but they were still happy during the learning process, the only difference was the effect on their communication skills.

Based on the results of data analysis, it is found that the application of learning community has an effect on early childhood communication skills. This is based on the results of the independent sample t test on posttest data obtained a significance value of 0.00 <0.05. The results of this study have similarities with previous research, namely the results show that learning community activities have a positive effect on improving communication skills (Lee & Kim, 2015). Another research shows that the application of Auditory Intellectually Repetition (AIR) through Lesson study for learning community can improve students' communication skills (Koimah & Rachmawati, 2019).

Based on observations during the research, students can communicate well with each other in expressing their opinions about something they understand, sometimes expressing with play gestures, providing mutual support, making the group active, but still educators must control and guide the learning community process in each group so that they always stay on an orderly track. This is consistent and supported by the explanation that shows advantages of the learning community model are that it can increase interaction in the classroom, can increase positive relationships between students, and can develop students' knowledge and experience from diverse sources, both from the teacher and from other students (Rai, 2018). Other advantages of the learning community model include:1) there is a more intimate relationship between students and tutors; 2) it is efficient; 3) it is an enrichment activity; and 5) it can increase the sense of responsibility. In addition, educators must escort students who have more understanding, and supervision must be done well. The learning process will be hampered when there are learners who feel inferior to others (Fahmi & Wuryandini, 2019). Learning community participation addresses deficiencies in learning activities by providing a strong network of support that can serve as a reinforcement or springboard for student self-efficacy and achievement (Virtue et al., 2019). Learning communities offer by facilitating knowledge acquisition by emphasizing students into learning experiences and processes of collaboration and active engagement actively, which results in good social knowledge construction (Jaiswal et al., 2021).

In this learning, early childhood has many opportunities to communicate with their friends who have a variety of characters, personalities, learning styles, motivation or interest in learning, whether they are smart or not and many others. Not only between learners, but also to their educators who are always there to help and guide during the learning process. Among them are expected to help and support each other in improving understanding and quality of learning. All of this is expected to achieve learning objectives with good communication in delivering learning materials. Early childhood learning community recognizes that the best way to learn is through active engagement and following interests and experiences with strong relationships with caring adults. This

encourages their social-emotional development and prepares them for lifelong learning. The learning community was chosen in order to develop students' ideas and exchange ideas and opinions with peers in one group (Zunarni et al., 2022). Learning community can occur if there is active, effective, and communicative interaction between educators and students or between students and other students. The learning process will run significantly if done in learning groups. There will be sharing problems, sharing information, sharing experience, and sharing problem solving (Franscy & Siahaan, 2023).

Conclusion

The results of research on the application of learning community show that there is an influence on early childhood communication skills. Thus, learning community can be an alternative learning model to improve early childhood communication skills in learning activities at school.

Acknowledgment

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