



# STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LEARNING INTEREST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores effective strategies to enhance young children's engagement in learning, focusing on approaches used at Bangli State Kindergarten. Through qualitative analysis based on interviews with teachers and parents, the research identifies key methods that promote children's interest and active participation. Findings indicate that interactive learning techniques—such as games and creative activities—significantly increase children's motivation by making learning experiences enjoyable and engaging. Additionally, the study underscores the role of a vibrant classroom environment, rich in decorations and visual stimuli, in sparking children's curiosity. Parental involvement also emerges as a vital component in bolstering children's motivation, highlighting the importance of a cohesive support system between educators and families. These insights underscore the value of a collaborative approach to fostering a nurturing and stimulating learning environment, benefiting early childhood development.

**Keywords:** Learning Strategies, Interest in Learning, Early Childhood Education, Qualitative Study, Parental Involvement

## INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Indonesia is regulated by the Republic of Indonesia's Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that early childhood education aims to support the holistic physical and intellectual development of children. PAUD focuses on the development of children aged 0-6 by providing opportunities for them to learn and explore through enjoyable and educational activities, such as games, experiential learning, and interaction with their surroundings (Ismi et al., 2021). At this early stage, children are in a "golden period," experiencing rapid physical and mental growth, making this time crucial in establishing the foundation for their future abilities and character (Hasnawati, 2017).

Young children have a unique learning characteristic, engaging with their surroundings through experiences in their social environment. Through these experiences, they develop observational skills, object categorization, and problem-solving abilities. This learning process requires good concentration, enabling children to find creative solutions to problems, thereby enriching their learning experiences (Eleti et al., 2021). Additionally, the environment and experiences play an essential role in stimulating children's brain development, whether through language stimulation, social interaction, or physical activities that contribute to forming a healthy and optimally functioning brain (Permendiknas, 2009).

The role of PAUD in facilitating early childhood development encompasses various aspects, including cognitive, motor, socio-emotional, and moral growth. During this period, children's ability to absorb information

and acquire new skills develops rapidly and efficiently. Consequently, early childhood education should be designed to meet their need for diverse and engaging stimulation, aligning with their developmental stage. According to child development theory, appropriate stimulation during early childhood can optimize brain development, particularly in areas of thinking, language, and creativity, which are essential for their readiness for subsequent educational levels (Santrock, 2018).

Moreover, early childhood education plays an important role in shaping children's foundational character. At this age, children typically learn through imitation and interaction with their social environment, including family, peers, and teachers at school. Providing a positive and supportive environment enables children to develop good social attitudes, such as empathy, cooperation, and responsibility (Berk, 2014). Educators and parents play a key role in creating a conducive learning environment where children feel valued, are encouraged to ask questions, and are invited to explore and think critically. In this way, children can grow into confident individuals ready to face future challenges.

Research also shows that children who receive adequate emotional and intellectual support in PAUD have a greater likelihood of achieving academic and social success in adulthood. They are more likely to have a strong interest in learning, good social skills, and strong emotional resilience (Suherman, 2020). Therefore, the learning strategies used in early childhood education should be designed to be enjoyable and aligned with children's interests. Learning activities, such as role-playing, drawing, and group activities, can stimulate their social and cognitive development naturally.

Learning interest among young children, especially in kindergarten environments, is a crucial factor supporting their learning process. Classroom observations and interviews with teachers have shown that a less engaging learning environment can lead to a loss of interest and participation in learning activities among children. This situation is exacerbated by limited family support and restricted teacher-student interaction, which can reduce children's motivation to actively participate in class (Hasnawati, 2017). This condition presents a significant challenge for early childhood education institutions, especially in TK Negeri Bangli, to create a learning environment that can captivate children's interest and encourage active engagement.

This research focuses on exploring effective strategies for increasing early childhood learning interest at TK Negeri Bangli. By utilizing enjoyable, varied approaches tailored to children's developmental characteristics, it is expected that children will engage emotionally and intellectually in the learning process. Some strategies to be examined in this study include game-based learning, the integration of visual and interactive media, and enhancing the frequency of positive interactions between teachers and students. Game-based learning, for example, has proven to be an effective method for increasing children's engagement as it taps into their natural play instinct, a core characteristic of early childhood. Thus, children can learn while playing, developing their critical thinking, creativity, and social skills simultaneously (Eleti et al., 2021).

Furthermore, family support also plays a crucial role in fostering children's learning interest. When children feel attention and support from parents in their learning activities, they tend to have higher motivation to learn. Therefore, this study will also examine ways to enhance collaboration between the school and family, through programs involving parents in children's learning processes, both inside and outside of school. This collaboration is expected to create a conducive learning environment for children at home and school and strengthen the bonds between teachers, students, and parents (Suherman, 2020).

This research is expected to yield practical strategies that teachers at TK Negeri Bangli can apply to enhance children's learning interests, enabling them to learn more enthusiastically and stay motivated. This approach not only

aids children's cognitive and social development but also establishes a strong foundation for future learning stages.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing early childhood learning interest. Qualitative methods enable researchers to delve into phenomena and interpret the meaning of data collected within specific contexts (Creswell, 2013). Direct observation was conducted to assess the classroom environment, learning activities, and interactions between teachers and students, with the aim of understanding how the learning atmosphere can impact children's interest in learning. Participant observation provided the researcher with an opportunity for direct involvement, allowing for detailed and contextual insights into classroom dynamics (Patton, 2015). Through this approach, the researcher also had the flexibility to identify interaction patterns that might contribute to children's learning motivation and engagement.

Data collection involved in-depth interviews with teachers and parents to gather their perspectives on factors influencing children's learning interests. Interviews with teachers aimed to provide insight into the teaching techniques they employed, their challenges, and their views on students' development of learning interest in the classroom.

According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative interviews are an effective method for gaining respondents' subjective understanding of the phenomena under study, enabling the collection of rich descriptive data. Key informants, such as kindergarten administrators, were also interviewed to gain a broader perspective on the learning context and the role of institutional settings in either supporting or hindering children's learning interest. The study involved 16 kindergarten children from Group B at TK Negeri Bangli, aged between 5 and 6 years. The selection of research subjects was based on inclusion criteria, specifically children who actively participated in learning activities. Data collection took place over three months, allowing for in-depth observation of the dynamics of children's learning interest and engagement. Observations were conducted periodically during classroom learning sessions, with the researcher recording interactions and children's behavior during learning activities. Field notes served as the primary documentation tool for observations, focusing on children's interest in learning, levels of active participation, and responses to teaching approaches used by teachers.

The participant observation method applied in this study offered the researcher the advantage of directly and thoroughly recording children's behaviors and understanding how teaching strategies employed could either enhance or diminish their interest in learning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using this approach, the study aims to provide a holistic view of the contextual and social interaction factors that affect children's learning motivation, and to generate strategic recommendations for educators to foster learning interest among young children.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that essential components, such as an engaging classroom environment, interactive learning strategies, and parental involvement, significantly influence the increase in children's learning interest in Group B at TK Negeri Bangli. Data collected through interviews and participant observations identified that interactive learning approaches, such as games, music, storytelling, and other creative activities, effectively stimulate active participation among children in the learning process and enhance their interest. This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of active participation and direct experience in learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1964).

An engaging classroom environment is fundamental for stimulating

children's interest in learning. Such an environment is often characterized by vibrant visuals, organized spaces, and accessible resources that encourage exploration and active engagement. Research indicates that well-designed classroom environments not only help children feel safe and interested but also contribute to sustained attention and curiosity. Fisher et al. (2014) found that children are more motivated to engage with learning materials in visually stimulating environments, highlighting the classroom's role in maintaining children's engagement over time.

Interactive learning strategies, including games, music, storytelling, and creative activities, provide hands-on experiences that are integral to constructivist learning. Constructivist theory, as outlined by Piaget (1964), advocates for learning as an active, constructive process where learners build upon their existing knowledge through experience. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory further emphasizes that learning is inherently social and most effective when children interact with their environment and others, such as peers or facilitators. According to Gee (2003), using interactive media and collaborative methods allows children to immerse themselves in learning, resulting in a more profound engagement with educational content.

Parental involvement is another critical component. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory argues that a child's development is profoundly influenced by interactions between the home and educational contexts. Parental engagement, through open communication and participation in school activities, can enhance a child's motivation and sense of support, bridging the gap between home and school. Epstein (2001) also supports this by noting that family-school partnerships are crucial for fostering children's motivation, as they create a continuous support network around the child's educational experience, reinforcing their commitment and enthusiasm for learning.

McWayne et al. (2004) highlight that parental involvement is associated with greater social competence and positive behavior in children, factors that are closely linked with academic motivation. Similarly, Pianta et al. (1997) found that children whose parents actively participate in their education tend to feel more secure and motivated in school settings, as parental involvement fosters emotional and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, this study reveals that a visually stimulating and engaging classroom environment—with decorations like posters, pictures, and simple objects—provides visual stimulation that enriches children's experiences and fosters their interest in learning. Research by Fisher et al. (2014) supports these findings, showing that a well-designed classroom can contribute to higher student engagement and motivation to learn. Additionally, parental involvement in children's learning activities both at home and school is identified as a critical factor in supporting children's motivation and interest in learning. Bronfenbrenner (1979), in his theory of child development ecology, emphasizes the importance of the relationship between home and school contexts in child development. Parental support through open communication and active participation in school activities can enhance children's learning motivation and build their confidence.

Fisher et al. (2014) argue that a well-designed classroom positively impacts students' engagement and motivation. A thoughtfully arranged classroom with visual elements like posters, colorful decorations, and accessible resources can help sustain students' focus and interest, thus supporting better learning outcomes. This idea is also aligned with the theory of environmental psychology, which suggests that physical surroundings can influence cognitive processes and behaviors. Research in educational settings shows that classrooms that stimulate visually yet maintain organization encourage children to explore and interact with learning materials, ultimately fostering a more engaging educational experience (Barrett et al., 2015). Aesthetically appealing and interactive classroom environments not only make learning enjoyable but also contribute to a child's cognitive engagement,

which enhances the intrinsic motivation to learn. This is crucial in early childhood settings, where young learners often respond more positively to environments that spark curiosity and excitement.

In this study, various strategies were applied to increase children's learning motivation in Group B. The use of interactive media, such as multimedia technology adapted to children's ages, and collaborative learning that allows children to interact with each other, proved effective in enhancing their learning motivation. Using these strategies enriches children's learning experiences, making learning more relevant and enjoyable (Gee, 2003; Papert, 1993). The application of these strategies has shown a positive impact on children's learning behavior. Children became more enthusiastic, actively participated in class, and showed a greater interest in the learning material. These findings highlight the importance of creating a conducive learning environment where children feel motivated and interested in learning. Implementing appropriate learning strategies and a supportive environment can help Group B children at TK Negeri Bangli achieve optimal learning development.

Interactive media, particularly multimedia technology like age-appropriate educational games and digital storytelling, enriches the learning environment by appealing to young learners' interests and aligning with their developmental needs. Gee (2003) highlights that well-designed digital games promote active learning by allowing children to explore, solve problems, and make decisions in a virtual setting. For children, this can make learning feel less like a passive activity and more like an engaging, real-world experience where they take an active role. Similarly, Papert (1993) argued that multimedia applications enable children to learn by doing, encouraging experimentation, exploration, and interaction with the material, all of which lead to higher engagement and motivation. Research supports these findings by showing that when children engage with interactive media tailored to their learning level, they are more likely to participate actively, show enthusiasm, and retain information better (Wartella, et al., 2016). Children learn best when they can connect learning content with real-life experiences, and multimedia learning tools allow for this connection by making abstract concepts tangible and relevant.

Collaborative learning, where children work in groups to solve problems, share ideas, and interact with peers, also enhances learning motivation and fosters social skills. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism emphasizes that learning is a social process, and when children learn together, they benefit from observing others, discussing ideas, and receiving feedback. This type of learning interaction supports not only cognitive development but also emotional and social growth.

Children in collaborative settings tend to exhibit positive learning behaviors, such as patience, empathy, and cooperation, which contribute to a more supportive and enjoyable learning environment. When children participate in collaborative activities, they experience a sense of achievement that boosts self-esteem and intrinsic motivation. Studies have shown that collaboration in early learning environments leads to improved engagement and performance (Slavin, 2011). Moreover, it builds a foundation for lifelong learning skills, as children learn how to work with others, negotiate, and understand diverse perspectives, making the learning experience richer and more enjoyable.

The strategies employed in this study, interactive media and collaborative learning help create a conducive learning environment by keeping children actively involved and excited about learning. This approach aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, which asserts that when learners feel autonomous and connected to what they're learning, they are more likely to exhibit intrinsic motivation. In practice, these strategies have led to positive changes in the children's learning behaviors at TK Negeri Bangli, with children demonstrating more enthusiasm, greater participation,

and increased interest in learning materials. When children are motivated to learn, they not only perform better academically but also develop a love for learning that can have long-term benefits. A supportive learning environment that values children's interests and encourages active involvement contributes to a holistic educational experience, addressing cognitive, social, and emotional development.

The study found that learning relevant to children's daily experiences plays an essential role in increasing their interest and desire to learn. A contextually relevant approach, in which learning materials are adjusted to children's lives and interests, helps them feel that what they learn has tangible benefits and directly relates to their world (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Using contextual learning methods, children are not only more interested in learning but also find it easier to understand the concepts being taught.

This study confirms that collaboration between school and parents is crucial in creating a learning environment that supports the development of children's interest and motivation to learn. Parents actively involved in their children's learning process are likely to inspire interest and curiosity about the world around them. This leads to better school engagement, where children feel supported not only by teachers but also by their families. Epstein (2001) states that partnerships between family and school increase children's motivation and academic achievement because they feel ongoing support from their surrounding environment.

Furthermore, the use of media and technology in learning has been shown to have a positive effect on children's learning interest, especially when the technology is designed to meet their developmental needs. According to Mayer (2009), interactive learning media can help children understand abstract concepts through enjoyable direct and visual experiences. In this context, multimedia such as educational applications, educational games, and videos supporting learning become effective tools to enrich early childhood education, where children are more engaged and motivated due to the attractively presented material.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide in-depth insights into various effective strategies for enhancing children's interest and motivation to learn in Group B at TK Negeri Bangli. The findings indicate that implementing interactive learning approaches, creating an engaging classroom environment, ensuring the relevance of learning materials to daily life, encouraging active parental involvement, and utilizing interactive media contribute significantly to creating a joyful learning atmosphere that stimulates children's curiosity. Through the application of these strategies, a learning environment is fostered that supports not only cognitive development but also the positive emotional and social growth of children.

It is expected that with the implementation of these research findings, the learning environment at TK Negeri Bangli can continue to improve, nurturing a strong interest in learning and helping children optimally develop their potential. Suggestions for future research include conducting long-term studies to evaluate the lasting impact of the strategies applied on children's development. This could involve continuous measurements of cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Future research could also explore variations in learning approaches, such as the use of the latest technology and project-based learning methods, to assess their impact on learning interest and motivation. With this approach, it is hoped that future research can contribute even more significantly to creating an optimal learning environment for children and yield more innovative and effective strategies in early childhood education.

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