



Available online at JECE (Journal of Early Childhood Education)
Website: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/jece>
Permalink/DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/jece.v3i2.23756>
JECE, 3 (2), Desember 2021, 127-137

CHARACTER BASED-AREA LEARNING MODEL IN YOUNG CHILDREN

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an effort to foster children from birth to the age of six, which is carried out by providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have further readiness. Character development is very important to start early. At the age of childhood or the golden age, it is proven to determine a child's ability to develop his potential greatly. Several early childhood learning models include classical, group, and area learning models based on activity angles and BCCT learning models. This study aims to develop the character of early childhood with the area learning model. This study uses a biographical approach, and the type of research used is a literature study. The results of this study provide opportunities for students to choose or carry out their activities according to their interests. Early childhood character development with the area learning model will be more interesting, interactive, and fun if teachers and students work together for the quality of learning that can be improved in a better direction.

Keywords: *Character Development, Learning Model, Area*

Abstrak

Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) merupakan suatu upaya pembinaan anak sejak lahir sampai usia enam tahun, yang dilakukan dengan memberi rangsangan pendidikan untuk membantu tumbuh kembang jasmani dan rohani sehingga anak memiliki kesiapan yang lebih lanjut. Pengembangan karakter sangat penting dimulai sejak dini. Pada usia kanak-kanak atau yang biasa disebut para ahli psikologi sebagai usia emas (*golden age*) terbukti sangat menentukan kemampuan anak dalam mengembangkan potensinya. Ada beberapa model pembelajaran anak usia dini diantaranya model pembelajaran klasikal, model pembelajaran kelompok, model pembelajaran area, model pembelajaran berdasarkan sudut-sudut kegiatan, dan model pembelajaran BCCT. Penelitian ini bertujuan pengembangan karakter anak usia dini dengan model pembelajaran area. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan biografi dan jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan kesempatan kepada anak didik untuk memilih atau melakukan kegiatan sendiri sesuai dengan minatnya. Pengembangan karakter anak usia dini dengan model pembelajaran area akan berlangsung lebih menarik, interaktif, dan menyenangkan jika guru dan siswa saling bekerja sama untuk kualitas pembelajaran yang dapat ditingkatkan ke arah yang lebih baik.

Kata kunci : Pengembangan Karakter, Model Pembelajaran, Area

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an effort to foster children from birth to the age of six, which is carried out by providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have further readiness. The success of ECE institutions in carrying out fun and play-oriented learning depends on the extent to which the institution can design and implement effective learning activities so that learning management is needed, known as the learning model.

The learning model is taken from two syllables, namely Model and Learning. A model is an object or concept used to represent something real and converted to a more comprehensive form. While learning is a conscious effort from a teacher to teach students (directing student interaction with other learning resources) to achieve the expected goals. According to Rusman (2010) in his book entitled *Learning Models Developing Teacher Professionalism*, he wrote that the learning model is a plan or pattern that can be used to form a curriculum (as a long-term learning plan), design learning materials, and guide learning in class or otherwise. So, the learning model is a form of learning illustrated from beginning to end, presented specifically by the teacher. In other words, the learning model is a wrapper or frame from applying an approach, method, and learning technique.

Early age is a likely age for character formation because children's growth and development at 0-5 is golden. In this period, growth and development occur in that age range. Character is the initial foundation in shaping the character of early childhood characters to determine their future. However, every early childhood child is unique physically, psychologically, socially, morally, and in other ways. Childhood is also the most important period of his life. As a period of coaching, directing, mentoring, and forming early childhood character, the golden age period is important in maximizing children's abilities and potential.

Character education is a long-term process that must be started early and continuously carried out. Character education is not instant education but requires stages of stimulation that need to be passed and an internalization process that will strengthen certain behaviors. If a child's character is formed well, he will have a good personality in the future. Likewise, if the child's personality character is not formed properly, later he too can have a bad personality as well. Character education aims to cultivate a positive attitude through habituation to grow into good individuals from an early age. Iswantiningtyas (2018) explains that character education is an education that aims to improve the quality of educational outcomes and is also intended to shape character, develop national character, and noble character. Therefore, a learning model is needed to optimize early childhood character formation, namely the area learning model.

The area learning model can make children active and provide more opportunities for students to choose or do their activities according to their interests and make children happy and comfortable in the learning process. Area learning aims to create a learning environment that builds a foundation for the attitudes, knowledge, and skills essential to face challenges both now and in the future. It is based on the belief that children grow well if they are naturally involved in the learning process encourage children to explore, experiment, pioneer, and create well. This Learning Model is designed to meet the specific needs of children and can respect cultural diversity and emphasize the principle, individualization of experiences for each child, helping children make choices through activities and activity centers in the learning process. Diana Mutiah (2010) suggests that "area learning models are designed to meet the specific needs of children, respect cultural diversity, and emphasize the child's experience."

Methods

The type of research used is library research, which collects data or scientific writings related to the object of research or data collection that is literature or a study that is carried out to solve a problem-focused on a critical and in-depth study of the materials and relevant library materials. According to M. Nazir (2011), a literature study is a data collection technique by reviewing books, literature, notes, and reports that solve the problem. Wahyudi et al. (2020) stated that literature review research is research conducted by collecting, processing, and concluding data following the supporting literature. According to Mestika (2004), library research is a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading and recording, and processing library collection materials without requiring field research.

Literature study is an important step, where after a researcher determines the research topic, the next step is to conduct a study related to the theory of the research topic. The researcher will collect as much information as possible from the relevant literature searching for theory. Library sources can be obtained from books, journals, magazines, research results, and other appropriate sources. When the relevant literature has been obtained, it is immediately compiled regularly for research. Therefore, a literature study includes general processes such as systematically identifying theories, finding literature, and analyzing documents that contain information related to the research topic.

Results and Discussion

Character development is very important. It needs to be formed and developed from an early age. At the age of childhood, or what psychologists call the golden age, it has been proven to determine a child's ability to develop his potential greatly. Iswantiningtyas (2018) explains that character education is an education that aims to

improve the quality of educational outcomes and is also intended to shape character, develop national character, and noble character. Therefore, a learning model is needed to optimize early childhood character formation, namely the area learning model.

The area learning model is a learning model that provides more opportunities for children to choose their activities according to their interests and prioritizes meaningful learning experiences (Suyadi & Dahlia, 2014). The Area Learning Model provides more opportunities for students to choose or carry out their activities according to their interests. This learning model was developed by Highscope in the United States and introduced in Indonesia by Children Resources International. The area learning model facilitates children's activities individually and in groups to develop all aspects. This learning model uses areas such as the following (Yusuf, 2018) is : 1) Block area facilitates children to develop knowledge and skills of mathematical thinking, patterns, geometric shapes, relationships with one another, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division through building activities with blocks. When children use blocks, they will feel lightweight, short length, without being forced by children to recognize shapes and other concepts; 2) Drama area - Victoria Brown and Sara Pleydell stated that playing drama is important for Early Childhood. It is a process of training cognitive functions such as remembering, self-regulating, developing language skills, improving focus, planning, determining strategies, setting priorities, developing ideas, and other skills needed to support success in school later; 3) Art area supports the development of children's creativity in using various materials and tools. The essence of art activities is that children express what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through the tools and materials they use; 4) Literacy area - the reading area does not mean teaching children to read and write like reading and writing activities in elementary school. The reading and writing area begins with recognizing simple symbols from objects around them, making scribbles on paper. Reading books or reading stories are activities carried out in this area; 5) Sand and Water Area. The sand and water area is more for sensory-motor development. However, this area is very rich in mathematical and scientific concepts. Children learn full-empty, lightweight, volume, and other concepts. Children can also learn about changing shapes, changing colors, and other phenomena. The area of sand and water is very attractive to children. Smaller groups of children are usually unable to control themselves, so it is necessary to bring a change of clothes to use after playing; 6) Motion and Music Area. Movement and music for early childhood are very important to build awareness of one's movements, train flexibility, follow the rhythm of music, recognize the sound of musical instruments, explore simple tools into free musical instruments. Movement activities and songs are daily needs for early childhood. Fun activities in movement and song will affect thinking and language skills, problem-solving skills, focus skills,

building spatial awareness, developing self-confidence, training strength, flexibility, physical coordination, and building social skills. 6) Science Areas. The Science Area provides many opportunities for children to use the five senses and direct their interest in natural events and manipulative activities. The Science Area can also be done outdoors with plants, animals, and objects around; 7) Mathematics Area. The area of mathematics is very thick with manipulative activities. Children can learn about shapes, counts, numbers, sums, grouping, sizes, patterns, and pairing in this area. In this area, also children learn language development, social, emotional, and other aspects of development; 8) *Imtaq* Area. In Indonesia, the *imtaq* (the belief) area is added. The *imtaq* area facilitates children to learn about worship activities according to the child's religion.

The area system emphasizes learning while playing or playing while learning. That is, aspects of the lesson are packaged in games to learn by playing. Play is a way to train children to focus their attention because when children are exploring play, children reach a high level of concentration. In addition, playing can create effective learning activities because it creates a sense of fun and without pressure. Given the characteristics of children who are actively playing, learning in kindergarten must involve many playing activities. Character is the initial foundation in shaping the character of early childhood to determine their future in future. However, every early childhood child has unique physical, psychological, social, moral, and other characteristics.

Each individual is different from one another. However, in general, early childhood has relatively similar characteristics. These characteristics are as follows: 1) Young children are unique. Every child is different from one another, and no two children are exactly alike even though they are identical twins. They have different traits, traits interests, preferences, and backgrounds; 2) Young children are in the potential period. Early childhood is often in the "golden age" or the most potential or best period for learning and developing. If this period is not passed well, it can affect the development of the next stage; 3) Young children are relatively spontaneous. At this time, the child will act and not be good at pretending. They will freely express their thoughts and feelings regardless of the reactions of those around them; 4) Young children tend to be careless and lack consideration. Early childhood does not consider the danger or not of action. If they want to do it, they will do it even if it can cause injury or harm; 5) Young children are active and energetic. Early childhood is always moving and can never be still unless it is asleep. So it is often said that early childhood "does not die."; 6) Young children are egocentric. They tend to see things from their point of view and based on their understanding. They also think that everything they want is theirs. In general, children are still egocentric. They see the world from their point of view and interests. It can be observed when children fight

over each other to play or cry when they want something but are not fulfilled by their parents. These characteristics are related to the cognitive development of children. According to Piaget, early childhood is in the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage; 7) Young children have a strong curiosity. Their curiosity is very high, so they do not get tired of asking "what is this and what is that" and "why is this and why is that." Children view that this world is filled with interesting and amazing things. It encourages high curiosity. Children's curiosity varies, depending on what interests them. This curiosity is very well developed to provide new knowledge for children to develop cognitively. The more knowledge based on the child's high curiosity, the richer the child is thinking power; 8) Young children are adventurous. Because his curiosity is big and strong, early childhood wants to explore various places to satisfy this curiosity by exploring objects and the surrounding environment; 9) Young children have high imaginations and fantasy. Children's imagination and fantasy power are so high that many adults or older people sometimes think of them as liars and like to brag. However, this is because they love to imagine things outside of logic. Children have their world, different from adults. They are attracted to imaginative things, so they are rich in fantasy; 10) Young children tend to frustrate easily. Early childhood tends to be easily discouraged and bored with everything difficult. They will soon leave activities or games that they have not finished yet; 11) Young children have a short attention span. Early childhood attention spans are not very long, so they are restless and difficult to focus on activities that require quiet. In general, children find it difficult to concentrate. He is always quick to shift his attention from one activity to another unless the activity is very pleasing to him. The concentration span of early childhood is generally ten minutes to sit and pay attention to something comfortably. Learning can be done using a varied and fun approach, so it does not make the child stay stuck and listen for a certain period.

As a period of coaching, directing, mentoring, and forming early childhood character, the golden age period is important in maximizing children's abilities and potential. In more detail, the characteristics of early childhood will be described as follows: first, Age 0 - 1 year In infancy, physical development experiences extraordinary speed, the fastest compared to the next age. Children learn various abilities and basic skills at this age. Some characteristics of infants aged children can be explained: 1) Learning motor skills ranging from rolling, crawling, sitting, standing, and walking. 2) Learn skills using the five senses, such as seeing or observing, feeling, hearing, smelling, and tasting by putting every object into his mouth. 3) Studying social communication. Newborn babies are ready to carry out a social contract with their environment. Responsive communication from adults will encourage and expand the baby's verbal and nonverbal responses. These various abilities and basic skills are important capital for children to undergo the process of

further development. Second, Age 2 - 3 years Children at this age have some characteristics in common with the previous period. Physically, children are still experiencing rapid growth. Some special characteristics that children aged 2 - 3 years go through include: 1) Children are very active in exploring objects around them. He has keen powers of observation and a great desire to learn. Exploration carried out by children on any objects encountered is a very effective learning process. Children's learning motivation at that age occupies the highest graph compared to all ages if there are no environmental obstacles. 2) Children begin to develop language skills. It begins with chattering, then one or two words and sentences with no clear meaning. Children continue to learn and communicate, understand other people's speech, and express their hearts and minds. 3) Children begin to learn to develop emotions. A child's emotional development is based on how the environment treats him because emotions are innate but more in the environment. Third, Age 4 - 6 years Children aged 4 - 6 years have the following characteristics: 1) Concerning physical development, children are very active in various activities. It is beneficial for developing small and large muscles. 2) Language development is also getting better. Children can understand other people's speech and express their thoughts within certain limits. 3) Cognitive development (thinking power) is very rapid, indicated by the child's extraordinary curiosity about the surrounding environment. It can be seen from the children often asking about everything they see. 4) Children's games are still individual, not social, even though children carry out activities together. Fourth, Age 7 - 8 years The developmental characteristics of children aged 7 - 8 years include: 1) Children's cognitive development is still in a brief period. In terms of ability, cognitively, children can think part by part. It means that children can think analytically and synthetically, deductively and inductively; 2) Children's social development begins to want to break away from the authority of their parents. It is indicated by the tendency of children to always play outside the house, hanging out with their peers; 3) Children begin to like social games. A form of training that involves many people interacting with each other; 4) Children's emotional development has begun to take shape and appears as part of the child's personality. Although they are still at the formation stage at this age, the child's experience has shown results.

Area Learning Model Steps or Strategies : 1) Initial activity. Activities carried out to train habituation, for example, begin by saying greetings, asking how the child is doing, and reading learning prayers. The children sing and introduce the theme or sub-theme. Based on this theme, the teacher conducts a question and answer process about the sub-themes to be studied. Next, the teacher directs the child into the area to tell them how to play and the rules for playing in the area provided; 2) Core activities. The core activity is a continuation of the initial activity. In the core activity, the teacher asks the children to observe the play equipment, namely the math area,

the art area, the block area, and other areas. The teacher also encourages children to ask questions about the themes discussed to improve children's abilities in the learning process; 3) Recess. Eating together inculcates good habits, such as washing hands, praying before and after eating, eating rules, introducing types of nutritious food, fostering a sense of sociality (a variety of foods), and cooperation. Involve children in cleaning up leftovers and tidying up used cutlery. After eating activities are finished, the available time can play with game tools to develop physical/motor skills. If it is considered that the time for rest is insufficient, the educator can increase the rest time by not taking time for other activities; 4) Closing activities. In this final activity, the teacher reflects and provides feedback on the learning that has been implemented. The teacher also makes conclusions from the activities that have been carried out. The teacher also carries out activities at the end of the lesson by singing a song, reading a prayer, and then saying hello.

The advantages of the Area System are the freedom of interest of students to play while learning something they want without any significant pressure. With that freedom, they can optimize the learning process with interests adjusted to the child's criteria and abilities. There are almost no limitations or pressures in this approach. If the teacher can facilitate every game that the students are interested in, they will get an in-depth learning experience for the game they choose.

The weakness of Area System learning which emphasizes interest-based learning, is that students only choose one or two game areas that are truly their interests. In comparison, other game areas that may be very important are not chosen because they are not in demand. Another weakness of this learning is that it opens up the possibility for the child to move the toy area many times before the child completes the initial play area. The area system makes it possible to carry out learning in a minimum of four areas at once.

The Area Learning Model is also called the interest-based learning model because it provides students opportunities to choose or carry out their activities according to their interests. However, children still have to be under the supervision of educators. This learning model teaches how to be responsible by tidying up the game after playing being independent creative so that children can make conclusions from everything they learn. This model is a very effective approach developed in individual learning. This approach is very helpful for children in collecting objects that have been arranged around one or more places where children can interact with the media. Thus the child's ability to learn is more optimal. The child is more busy moving or actively learning what he has chosen. Children can learn more experiences and become more creative with this area system.

Conclusion

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an effort to foster children from birth to the age of six, which is carried out by providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have further readiness. Character development is very important, starting early. The Area (interest) learning model provides more opportunities for students to choose or carry out their activities according to their interests.

Children's learning activities are based on interests or areas. Children individually choose activities that suit their interests and desires. This learning model uses nine areas: block area, drama area, art area, literacy area, sand and water area, motion and music area, science area, math area, and *imtaq* area.

This research suggests that the teacher helps shape the students' character. It includes examples of how teachers behave, how teachers talk during learning, tolerance, and other related things.

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