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Managing Teacher Competency Development to Improve Learning Quality at TK Nurul Fatah

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive qualitative case study examines how TK Nurul Fatah manages teacher competency development and how the process relates to classroom learning practices. Preliminary observation occurred on August 10, 2026, with principal and teacher interviews and observations on August 14–15, 2026. The participants were one principal and two classroom teachers; evidence came from interviews, observation, and documents. Findings identify a connected cycle of needs assessment through supervision, participation in practical training, informal sharing of new ideas among colleagues, monthly PKG discussions, classroom application, and follow-up feedback. Teachers described training in storytelling, drawing, counting, and learning activities using origami. Observations indicated varied activities involving stories, songs, games, and learning media, although the short observation period and small group preclude attributing changes to the training itself. Training costs and limited educational play equipment constrained implementation. The case suggests that school-level sharing and sustained feedback can help teachers use professional learning in daily practice; longer observation and direct child-level measures are needed to assess effects on learning outcomes.

Keywords: Teacher Competency; Professional Development; Early Childhood Education; Learning Quality; School Management

ABSTRAK

Studi kasus kualitatif deskriptif ini menelaah pengelolaan pengembangan kompetensi guru di TK Nurul Fatah dan kaitannya dengan praktik pembelajaran. Observasi awal dilakukan pada 10 Agustus 2026, kemudian wawancara dan observasi pada 14–15 Agustus 2026. Informan terdiri atas seorang kepala sekolah dan dua guru kelas; data berasal dari wawancara, observasi, dan dokumen. Temuan menunjukkan siklus identifikasi kebutuhan melalui supervisi, pelatihan praktis, berbagi pengetahuan antarguru, diskusi PKG bulanan, penerapan di kelas, dan tindak lanjut melalui umpan balik. Guru menjelaskan pelatihan mendongeng, menggambar, berhitung, dan kegiatan menggunakan origami. Observasi memperlihatkan variasi cerita, lagu, permainan, dan media pembelajaran. Namun, singkatnya pengamatan dan terbatasnya informan tidak memungkinkan penarikan kesimpulan kausal tentang hasil belajar anak. Biaya pelatihan dan terbatasnya alat permainan edukatif merupakan kendala utama.

Kata kunci: Kompetensi Guru; Pengembangan Profesional; Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini; Mutu Pembelajaran; Manajemen Sekolah

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1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of learning in early childhood education is closely related to teachers' competence in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities. At this level, learning is not only directed toward the delivery of knowledge but also toward providing meaningful experiences that support children's development through play, interaction, exploration, and creative activities. Therefore, teachers need adequate pedagogical and professional competencies to create learning environments that are appropriate to the characteristics and developmental needs of young children. Continuous professional development is an important effort to strengthen teachers' competencies and improve the quality of learning practices in early childhood education (Abeywickrama, 2024; Dunekacke et al., 2024; Kamil & Munastiwi, 2023; Pinya-Medina et al., 2024).

Based on the initial conditions at TK Nurul Fatah, learning activities tended to be monotonous and were dominated by the lecture method. Teachers explained the learning materials, wrote on the board, and then asked the children to come forward one by one to repeat what had been written or explained by the teacher. Learning activities also lacked variety in teaching methods, such as discussion and other learning activities. Although learning media were available, their use was not optimal because some teachers had limited understanding of how to use learning media and lacked confidence in developing more varied learning activities.

In this study, learning quality refers to the quality of classroom learning practices observed during learning activities. It is reflected in the variety of learning methods and media, the use of educational games and creative activities, and the opportunities provided for children to participate, explore, interact, and express themselves. Thus, learning quality is examined through

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observable classroom practices rather than standardized learning outcomes or measurable changes in children's achievement.

Teacher competency development cannot be viewed merely as participation in occasional training activities. It should be managed as a continuous process involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Through appropriate management, schools can identify teachers' development needs, provide relevant professional development opportunities, monitor the application of acquired competencies, and evaluate their contribution to learning practices. Previous research has shown that professional development can contribute to improvements in teaching quality and classroom practices among early childhood teachers (Markowitz & Seyarto, 2023; Dunekacke et al., 2024).

In this study, the management of teacher competency development is understood as an interconnected process in which planning identifies teachers' competency needs, implementation provides relevant professional development activities, evaluation examines the application of acquired competencies, and follow-up supports the continued development of teachers' classroom practices. This framework is used to examine how teacher competency development is managed at the institutional level and how the process is reflected in classroom learning practices.

In early childhood education, professional development is particularly important because teachers' professional learning can influence the quality of educational practices provided to children. Professional development experiences can support teachers in developing their instructional practices and responding to children's learning needs. Previous research has also examined professional development among early childhood educators and highlighted the importance of continuous professional learning in strengthening teachers' professional capacity (Maria et al., 2023). Other research has demonstrated a relationship between early childhood teachers' professional development experiences, the quality of early childhood education, and children's development (Yang et al., 2024). Therefore, professional development needs to be implemented continuously and supported by the educational institution.

The Indonesian context also demonstrates the importance of teacher competence and professional development in improving educational quality. Teacher competence is related to the quality of instructional and learning processes, while professional development provides opportunities for teachers to strengthen their knowledge and skills. In early childhood education, professional development remains important because teachers require continuous support to improve their pedagogical and professional competencies. Previous studies have highlighted both the importance of teacher development and the challenges associated with access to professional development opportunities in Indonesia (Mukti & Noviafitri, 2024; Istiana, 2024).

Although previous studies have examined teacher competence, professional development, and learning quality, studies that specifically examine the management of teacher competency development as a continuous institutional process remain limited, particularly in the context of individual kindergarten institutions. Previous research has often focused on the effectiveness of

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specific professional development programs or the relationship between teacher competence and learning outcomes. Less attention has been given to how planning, implementation, supervision, professional sharing, and follow-up are integrated within the daily management of a kindergarten Taken together, these studies suggest that professional development is relevant to teaching quality, but they provide less explanation of how schools continuously manage, monitor, and follow up teacher development after training activities.Therefore, the specific mechanisms through which institutional management connects teacher competency development with classroom learning quality remain insufficiently explored, particularly at the level of an individual kindergarten institution (Admiraal et al., 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in identifying a continuous management mechanism that connects external professional training with classroom practice through internal knowledge sharing, classroom supervision, feedback, and monthly PKG activities. In this mechanism, teachers who participate in external training share their knowledge and experiences with other teachers, which are then applied in classroom learning. The principal subsequently monitors the implementation through classroom supervision and provides feedback and direction for further improvement. Thus, teacher competency development is not viewed as an isolated training activity but as a continuous process in which knowledge gained from external training is transferred, implemented, monitored, and improved within the school.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of teacher competency development management in improving learning quality at TK Nurul Fatah. The study specifically examines the planning, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of teacher competency development, its contribution to learning quality, and the challenges encountered in the process.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth description of the implementation of teacher competency development management in improving learning quality at TK Nurul Fatah. The initial observation was conducted on August 10, 2026, followed by data collection through interviews and documentation on August 14–15, 2026

The informants consisted of the principal and two classroom teachers. The principal was selected because of her role in managing teacher competency development at the school. The two classroom teachers were selected because they were directly involved in classroom learning activities and had long-term teaching experience at TK Nurul Fatah. One teacher was the classroom teacher for the small kindergarten group, while the other was the classroom teacher for the large kindergarten group. Both teachers had served at the school since 2011. Each informant was interviewed once. The interviews with the two classroom teachers were conducted on August 14, 2026, while the interview with the principal was conducted on August 15, 2026. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The adequacy of the information was determined by considering the

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consistency and relevance of the information obtained from the three informants in relation to the research focus. The three informants were considered adequate for this study because they represented the school leadership and teachers directly involved in teacher competency development and classroom learning activities.

Interviews were conducted with the principal and two teachers using interview guidelines covering the planning, implementation, evaluation, follow-up, and challenges of teacher competency development. Classroom observations focused on teachers' learning activities, including activities in the small and large kindergarten groups, the use of learning media and educational games, and the principal's supervision of teachers. Documentation included relevant school records and supporting materials related to teacher development and learning activities.

observation focused on the opening activities, teacher explanations, play activities, use of learning media, writing activities, singing, and other classroom learning activities. Documentation was used to complement the interview and observation data and included teaching modules, theme books, attendance lists, and activity documentation. These data sources were used to examine the implementation of teacher competency development, classroom learning practices, and the contribution of teacher competency development to learning quality.

The researcher served as the main research instrument and developed the interview and observation guidelines based on the focus of the study. The researcher maintained reflexive awareness throughout the data collection and analysis process by distinguishing between information obtained from participants and the researcher's own interpretations. Interview and observation notes were reviewed during the analysis process to minimize assumptions and maintain consistency with the participants' accounts. The interview questions focused on the planning, implementation, evaluation, follow-up, and challenges of teacher competency development, while the observation indicators focused on classroom learning practices, including teaching methods, learning media, play activities, writing activities, singing, and other learning activities. The guidelines were developed specifically for this study and were not formally reviewed or piloted by other parties before data collection. To minimize interpretive bias, the researcher compared information obtained from the principal and the two classroom teachers and cross-checked it with observation and documentation data.

Data analysis was conducted through a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. Interview, observation, and documentation data were first coded according to the research focus. Similar codes were grouped into categories, which were then organized into five main themes: planning, implementation, evaluation and follow-up, learning quality, and challenges. The deductive process was used to organize the data according to the predetermined research focus, while the inductive process was used to identify recurring patterns and findings that emerged from the data. The themes were subsequently compared across data sources to develop the final interpretation.

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The study contrasts statements from the principal and two teachers with observations of classroom activities and the available documentation. The brief collection period and the small number of participants limit the strength of temporal and causal claims. Training participation was not assigned or compared experimentally. Changes in classroom activity are therefore described as observed and reported practices, rather than measured effects of a specific training program.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The planning of teacher competency development at TK Nurul Fatah is primarily carried out by the principal based on the needs observed in teachers' learning practices. The principal regularly monitors classroom activities to identify aspects of teaching that need to be strengthened and to determine appropriate professional development opportunities. The school actively participates in training programs offered by relevant institutions, particularly training organized by the local education office. When a training opportunity is available, the principal initially offers teachers the opportunity to participate. If no teacher volunteers, the principal selects a teacher to represent the school. In general, the school sends one or two teachers to training activities depending on the relevance of the training and the school's circumstances (Partee et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). The planning of competency development covers various training topics that are directly related to early childhood learning, including storytelling, drawing, counting, and developing learning activities using origami paper. The selection of these activities indicates that teacher development is directed toward strengthening practical skills that can be applied in classroom learning. The principal's involvement in determining participation also ensures that opportunities for professional development are distributed according to the school's needs.

The selection of teachers to participate in training was also influenced by the invitation letter, which generally specified that the school should delegate two teachers. When the school received a training invitation, the principal arranged the delegation by considering the teachers' opportunities to participate. The teachers were delegated on a rotating basis so that participation was not limited to the same teachers. This rotation system provided more equal opportunities for teachers to access professional development. Teachers who participated in training also shared the knowledge and experiences they gained with other teachers, allowing the benefits of training to be extended within the school. A concrete example of the needs-assessment process was identified through classroom supervision. The supervision indicated that teachers needed to improve the variety of learning methods and the use of learning media because classroom activities were still dominated by teacher explanations and routine activities. Based on this identified need, the school supported teacher competency development through activities such as storytelling, drawing, counting, and developing learning activities using origami paper. Thus, the planning of teacher competency development was not only based on the principal's general assessment but was also related to specific needs identified from classroom learning practices.

In addition to external training, the school supports continuous professional development through regular monthly PKG activities. These activities provide opportunities for the principal and

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teachers to discuss developments in learning, problems encountered during classroom activities, and possible solutions. Thus, teacher competency development planning at TK Nurul Fatah is not limited to identifying external training opportunities but also includes internal professional learning through supervision and teacher discussion. The implementation of teacher competency development at TK Nurul Fatah is carried out through participation in various professional training activities and the application of knowledge and skills gained from these activities. The school actively participates in training programs provided by the local education office and other relevant institutions. Depending on the type and relevance of the training, one or two teachers are usually delegated to participate. The principal also plays an active role in facilitating teachers' participation and ensuring that the knowledge obtained from training can be applied in classroom activities. This finding is consistent with Partee et al. (2024), who emphasized that effective professional development should support teachers not only in gaining knowledge but also in refining their teaching skills and applying them in classroom practice (Partee et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024; MacDonald et al., 2023; Hooper et al., 2023)

The training activities attended by teachers cover various practical aspects of early childhood education, including storytelling, drawing, counting, and the development of learning media using origami paper. After participating in training, teachers are encouraged to practice the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their classroom activities. For example, teachers who participate in storytelling training apply storytelling techniques in learning activities, while training related to learning media encourages teachers to use learning aids and creative activities that are appropriate for young children. T Knowledge sharing occurs informally among teachers when they gather in the school office. Teachers who have participated in training share new knowledge, experiences, and teaching ideas with other teachers during their daily interactions, including during limited break times. This process occurs almost every day when teachers meet at the office and does not depend on a formal sharing session or a designated facilitator. Teachers receive the shared knowledge positively and are willing to learn and apply new ideas in their classroom activities. Through this informal and regular interaction, knowledge gained from professional training can be transferred to other teachers and contribute to the use of varied learning methods, educational games, learning media, and creative activities in the classroom (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2023; Yang et al., 2023; Admiraal et al., 2021).

The evaluation of teacher competency development at TK Nurul Fatah is conducted through continuous supervision and monitoring by the principal. The principal regularly observes teachers during the learning process to assess how teachers implement the knowledge and skills obtained from training activities. The observations are used to identify teachers' strengths, difficulties, and areas that still require improvement. The principal also provides suggestions and direction after observing the learning process so that teachers can improve their classroom practices. The feedback provided during classroom supervision mainly focused on encouraging teachers to make learning activities more varied and engaging. The principal suggested that teachers should not rely on the same type of classroom activity but should vary the methods and activities according to the

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children's needs. The teachers responded positively to the feedback by accepting the suggestions and trying to apply them in subsequent learning activities. This follow-up indicates that classroom supervision was not only used to monitor teachers' performance but also served as a mechanism for improving classroom practice.

Evaluation is not only conducted through classroom observation but is also supported by regular monthly PKG activities. The PKG provides a forum for the principal and teachers to discuss the development of learning activities, problems encountered during teaching, and possible solutions. Teachers can share their experiences and provide suggestions to one another based on their classroom experiences and knowledge obtained from professional development activities. The follow-up of teacher competency development is reflected in the application of training experiences to classroom learning. Teachers who have participated in training are encouraged to implement the knowledge and skills they have acquired, such as storytelling techniques, creative learning activities, and the use of learning media or educational games. The principal then monitors the implementation through classroom observations and provides feedback, direction, and suggestions for improvement.

The findings indicate observed and reported improvements in the variety of learning activities and classroom practices at TK Nurul Fatah following teacher competency development activities.The application of knowledge and skills gained through professional development activities has encouraged teachers to develop more varied and innovative learning experiences for children. Teachers do not only rely on textbooks but also use educational games, learning aids, and self-developed learning media according to the needs of the children and the learning activities. The observation provided direct evidence of these changes in classroom practice. During the observation, teachers were observed using varied learning activities, including storytelling, educational games, singing, writing activities, and learning media. The observation also showed that teachers did not rely solely on verbal explanations but involved children in activities that required participation and interaction. These findings were supported by the teaching modules, theme books, and documentation of classroom activities examined by the researcher. The consistency between the observed classroom practices and the available documentation strengthens the finding that the knowledge gained through teacher competency development was reflected in actual learning activities.

The development of teacher competencies at TK Nurul Fatah also faces several challenges. The main challenges identified in this study are related to the cost of participating in training activities and the limited availability of educational play equipment (APE) and learning media. Some training activities require registration fees and other expenses, which can become a consideration for the school when determining teacher participation. Therefore, the school needs to consider the relevance of each training activity and the available resources before sending teachers to participate. These resource limitations also shape the school's strategy for teacher competency development. Limited funding means that the school must prioritize training activities that are considered relevant to teachers' needs and feasible within the available resources. At the same time,

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limited APE and learning media encourage teachers to make use of available materials and develop simple learning media themselves. This practice shows that professional learning at TK Nurul Fatah is not dependent entirely on external resources. Instead, limitations encourage teachers to adapt their learning practices, share ideas with colleagues, and use their creativity to develop learning activities based on available resources. In this context, resource constraints become part of the professional learning process, as teachers learn to adapt training knowledge and classroom practices to the conditions of their school.

4. DISCUSSION

The case portrays competency development as a management cycle rather than a list of workshops. The principal identifies needs in classroom practice, chooses feasible training, encourages sharing, and observes subsequent lessons. This order helps explain how an external course may enter daily teaching. Research on effective professional development likewise emphasizes a link between teachers' learning opportunities and instructional needs (Desimone, 2009; Markowitz & Seyarto, 2023). The present evidence is qualitative and local, so it cannot estimate the effect of the cycle.

Supervision has a practical function when it identifies specific teaching decisions. At TK Nurul Fatah, the principal reportedly noted repeated activities and limited use of media, then encouraged storytelling, play, and other approaches. Such feedback gives training a purpose that can be discussed with teachers. The study does not describe a validated classroom observation instrument or repeated scores; a fuller assessment would document what teachers attempted and how children responded at several points in time.

External training was supplemented by teachers' informal exchange in the school office. This sharing can spread a useful idea to teachers who could not attend a course, particularly when delegation is limited. A professional learning community develops when colleagues jointly examine an instructional problem and revisit classroom evidence (Admiraal et al., 2021). Informal conversation at TK Nurul Fatah is a promising channel, although the study does not establish how often or consistently every teacher applied a shared practice.

Monthly PKG discussions create a recurring setting for planning and follow-up. They can help staff decide which methods fit the available play equipment and which adaptations children need. Their regularity is relevant because a single workshop provides little evidence of sustained change in practice (Guskey, 2002). The source describes the PKG as a forum for discussing problems and solutions; it does not include minutes or a longitudinal record showing whether actions agreed there were completed.

The observed mixture of storytelling, songs, games, writing, and learning media indicates more variety than the preliminary description of teacher-led explanations alone. In early childhood settings, variety is useful when activities allow children to participate and connect experiences with developmental goals. Variety itself should not be equated with quality: the suitability of a

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task, the quality of interaction, and children's involvement also matter (Dunekacke et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024). The brief observation limits assessment of those dimensions.

The study connects training content to visible classroom possibilities: storytelling can support oral engagement, while drawing, counting, and origami may offer varied ways to explore ideas. These examples show a plausible route from teachers' learning to changed activities. They do not show that a given workshop caused an improvement in children's achievement or development. Following particular lessons from planning through implementation and pupil response would provide stronger evidence for this proposed mechanism.

Resource constraints shaped what could be implemented. Training fees limited participation and a shortage of educational play equipment restricted some activities. The principal's choices and teachers' creation or reuse of materials partly addressed those constraints, but staff time and materials remain necessary. A workable development plan could combine targeted external opportunities with internal demonstrations and a modest inventory of reusable media, with decisions guided by observation rather than the mere availability of a training invitation.

The study is based on one principal, two teachers, and data gathered over a short period in August 2026. Participants may have emphasized successes when discussing school practices, and there are no direct child-level outcome measures or systematic before-and-after observations. Future work should follow several classrooms across a term, include teachers who did not attend training, and document how PKG feedback changes the next lesson. The findings are most persuasive as a detailed account of how this school organizes professional learning.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

At TK Nurul Fatah, teacher competency development was organized through classroom needs assessment, practical external training, colleague-to-colleague sharing, monthly PKG meetings, supervision, feedback, and application in lessons. This connected sequence is the central finding of the case.

The study observed and reported more varied learning activities, including storytelling, games, singing, and the use of learning media. It also identified training costs and limited educational play equipment as constraints. Because the study involved three informants and a short observation period, it cannot establish the size or cause of changes in children's learning outcomes.

School leaders can record specific needs found in observation, ask trained teachers to demonstrate techniques, and review their use in subsequent lessons. Future research should track teachers and children over a longer period and document implementation and learning outcomes with suitable measures.

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