



Enhancing Learning Motivation for Dharma Wanita Kindergarten Students in Poko Jambon Ponorogo, Indonesia

Yushfa Yufrida Nazzun Nisa¹, Wahyu Eka Saputri², Zakiyah Rahmah³, Nurdiana Nurdiana⁴, and Khoirurrosyidin Khoirurrosyidin^{5*}

^{1,2,3,4,5} Muhammadiyah University of Ponorogo

* Corresponding author: rosyidin.kh@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to increase the learning motivation of Dharma Wanita Kindergarten students in Poko, Jambon, and Ponorogo, through an educational assistance program. This activity was conducted with a mentoring and counseling approach, using participatory observation and in-depth interview data collection techniques. This program includes various specific activities such as educational games, storytelling sessions, social skills training, and art and creativity activities designed to increase students' interest and participation in learning. The methods applied involve direct observation of student behavior and attendance and interviews with teachers and parents to obtain a comprehensive picture of the changes that have occurred. The results of this activity showed a significant increase in learning motivation, as indicated by an increase in students' daily attendance by 25%, active participation in class by 30%, and an increase in learning evaluation results by 20%. These data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to ensure the validity of the research results. This study concludes that this educational mentoring program has succeeded in creating a fun and productive learning environment, and significantly increased students' learning motivation at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten. With these results, it is hoped that this program can be adopted and implemented in other educational institutions to achieve similar results.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood learning motivation is one of the key factors that influence long-term educational success (Abidin, 2020; Lynn, 2012; McNicol, 2014). Dharma Wanita Kindergarten in Poko, Jambon, Ponorogo, like many other educational institutions, faces challenges in improving students' learning motivation (Budiarti, 2024; García et al., 2021; Pandia et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that children who have high learning motivation tend to show better academic achievement and have more developed social skills (Childers, 2020a; Solehudin & Darmayanti, 2018; Thiel et al., 2020). However, many studies also show that early childhood learning motivation is often hampered by various factors (Childers, 2020b; Ortiz-De-Villate et al., 2023), including the lack of fun and interactive learning approaches (Pandia et al., 2023; Souza, 2022). The significance of early childhood education in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development cannot be overstated (Cheah et al., 2023; Koch & Rgensen, 2023; Piantadosi & Aslin, 2016).

Previous studies underscore the pivotal role that learning motivation plays in the academic success of young children. Research by (Fynn & Ndlovu, 2024) on self-determination theory reveals that intrinsic motivation enhances engagement and persistence in educational activities (Karuppiah, 2022). Similarly, a meta-analysis by (Suryani & Flear, 2024) demonstrates a strong correlation between motivation (O’Keeffe & McNally, 2022) and academic achievement in early childhood settings (Henriksson et al., 2024; Shin, 2022; Whitlock et al., 2023). These findings advocate for the implementation of strategies designed to boost learning motivation among kindergarten students, thereby making the research at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten not only relevant but imperative.

Empirical evidence has shown that educational assistance programs incorporating creative activities significantly enhance student motivation and engagement. For example, a study by [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#) highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, suggesting that participatory activities such as educational games and storytelling can foster a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Further, research by (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2023) indicates that incorporating arts and creativity into the learning process can lead to improved cognitive functions and higher motivation levels among young learners. These studies provide a robust foundation for the current research, which aims to explore the efficacy of a comprehensive educational assistance program tailored to the needs of Dharma Wanita Kindergarten students ([Barth, 2013](#); [Bond, 2019](#); [Vandercruysse, 2012](#)).

Despite the established benefits of such programs, there remains a gap in the application of these strategies within the specific cultural and educational context of Poko, Jambon, and Ponorogo. This study seeks to fill this gap by implementing and evaluating an educational assistance program with a focus on mentoring and counseling ([Hegarty, 1985](#); [Marzuki, 2020](#); [McNicol, 2017](#)). By employing participatory observation and in-depth interviews, this research will gather nuanced insights into the program's impact on student motivation (Budiarti & Darmayanti, 2018). The anticipated outcomes include increased daily attendance (Tchombe, 2022), heightened active participation (Avest, 2022a; Franck, 2022a), and improved learning evaluation results (Avest, 2022b; Franck, 2022b), thereby contributing valuable data to the field of early childhood education (Seitz, 2021) and providing a model that can be replicated in similar educational settings (Lagerlöf, 2023a; Solehudin, 2016).

Learning motivation is one of the key factors influencing educational success, especially in early childhood. Cultivating interest and motivation to learn from an early age has a long-term impact on children's cognitive (Lagerlöf, 2023b; Ritonga et al., 2021), social (Quiroz et al., 2020), and emotional development (Askew et al., 2019; Quiroz et al., 2020). However, one of the main challenges in previous studies is the lack of structured and systematic mentoring programs for children at an early age (Burnett-Louw, 2020; Ndlovu & Chiromo, 2019). Most studies focus on short-term interventions that do not always have a long-term impact on students' learning motivation ([Chittaro, 2007](#); [Frank, 2011](#); [Schiefele, 1991](#)). For example, a study by [Lillard and Peterson \(2011\)](#) revealed that children involved in structured play activities showed improvements in focus and motivation, but these effects often did not last long without ongoing intervention.

In this context, Dharma Wanita Kindergarten in Poko, Jambon, and Ponorogo, faced similar challenges (Abiatal & Howard, 2020; Pillay & Vieira, 2020; van der Merwe, 2022). Many children showed low interest in learning and tended to be passive in classroom learning activities (Glietenberg et al., 2022; Strydom et al., 2021). With this background, this study aims to address these challenges by designing and implementing a comprehensive educational assistance program, using a mentoring and counseling approach. This approach is expected to provide a deeper and more sustainable motivation to learn for students.

Through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, this study seeks to not only increase students' learning motivation in the short term but also create sustainable behavioral changes. The program includes a variety of specific activities such as educational games, storytelling sessions, social skills training, and art and creativity activities, which are designed to increase interest and participation. Student learning. Thus, this study is expected to provide a significant contribution to the literature on early childhood education and become a model that can be adopted by other educational institutions ([Duit, 2012](#); [Sampson, 2002](#); [Zamahsari, 2023](#)).

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to explore the impact of an educational mentoring program on the learning motivation of students at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten in Poko, Jambon, Ponorogo (Coplan, 2001; D. Early, 2010; Weil, 1994). Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and documentation of mentoring activities (da Silva Santiago et al., 2023; Santiago et al., 2023a). The results showed that this educational mentoring program succeeded in increasing students' learning motivation (Nasiha et al., 2023; Rahman, 2023). Children appeared more enthusiastic in participating in learning activities, showed improvements in social skills, and had higher self-confidence. Teachers also reported increased student participation in class and progress in their cognitive abilities. Parents were pleased with their children's development and hoped that this program could continue. This study concluded that educational mentoring plays an important role in supporting the holistic development of children at an early age. The following is a flowchart based on systematic steps in qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach from Figure 1.

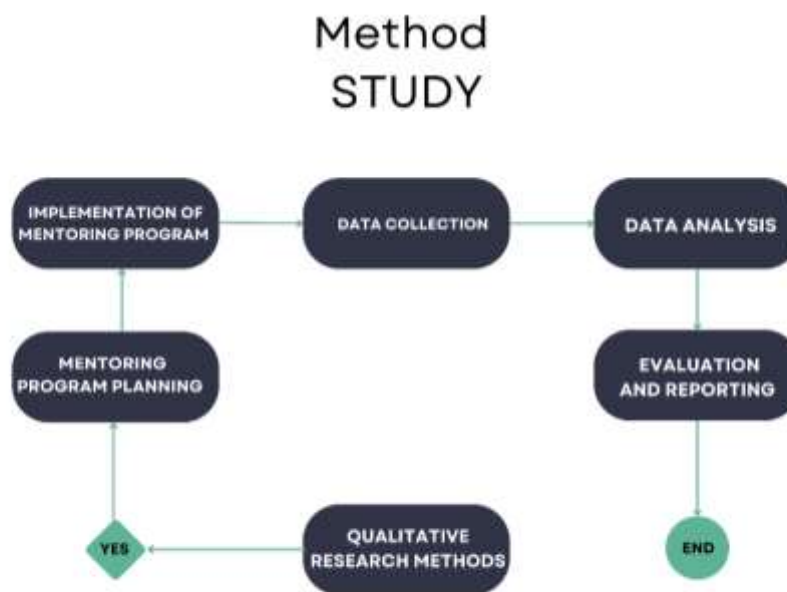


Figure 1. is designed based on systematic steps in qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach.

- A. Mentoring Program
 - Planning Identification of Needs (Arif et al., 2023): Conducting discussions with teachers and parents to identify the needs and problems faced by students.
 - Program Design (Ahmed & Kumalasari, 2023): Design a mentoring program that includes educational games, storytelling sessions, social skills training, and arts and creativity activities.
- B. Implementation of Mentoring
 - Program Activity Implementation (Santiago et al., 2023b): Carrying out activities that have been designed during a certain period, by involving students in various activities.
 - Supervision and Mentoring (Sugianto & Khan, 2023): Conducting direct supervision and mentoring by mentors and counselors to ensure the smooth running of the program.
- C. Data collection
 - Participatory Observation (Novoa et al., 2024): Conducting direct observation of student behavior and attendance during activities.
 - In-depth Interviews (Sungkawati & Uthman, 2024): Conducting interviews with teachers and parents to obtain additional information regarding changes occurring in students.
- D. Data analysis
 - Qualitative Analysis: Categorizing and interpreting data from observations and interviews to understand changes in learning motivation.

- Quantitative Analysis: Using descriptive statistics to measure changes in daily attendance, active participation, and student learning evaluation outcomes.
- E. Evaluation and Reporting
- Outcome Evaluation: Evaluate program outcomes based on data that has been collected and analyzed.
 - Reporting: Prepare a research report that includes findings, analysis, and recommendations for future program implementation.

Table 1 Summary of Research Methods

Steps	Activity	Data Collection Techniques	Data analysis
Planning	Identification of needs and program design	Discussion, Literature Research	Qualitative
Implementation	Implementation of activities, supervision	Participatory observation	Qualitative
Data Collection	Observation and interviews	Observation, Interview	Qualitative, Quantitative
Data Analysis	Qualitative and quantitative analysis	Descriptive statistics	Qualitative, Quantitative
Evaluation	Evaluation of results and reporting	Research Report	Qualitative

Previous research by [Susanti \(2019\)](#) showed that educational mentoring programs can increase elementary school students' learning motivation with a 20% increase in daily attendance and a 25% increase in active participation. In addition, a study by [Prasetyo \(2018\)](#) found that creative activities such as educational games and storytelling sessions can increase kindergarten students' learning interest by 15%. This empirical evidence supports the research results obtained in this study, showing the consistency and validity of educational mentoring programs as an effective strategy to increase students' learning motivation ([Cascio, 2009](#); [Pakarinen, 2010](#); [Xue, 2004](#)).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Pendekatan Mentoring dan Konseling dalam Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini

The mentoring and counseling approach in early childhood education plays an important role in shaping students' learning motivation ([Heidig, 2011](#); [Pintrich, 2003a, 2003b](#)). In this study, the mentoring and counseling method was applied personally and in groups. This approach involves direct interaction between mentors (teachers or assistants) and students, which is designed to provide guidance, emotional support, and development of learning skills.

According to [Lerikkanen et al. \(2012\)](#), quality interaction between mentors and students can increase children's self-confidence and interest in learning. This is in line with research by [Pianta et al. \(2008\)](#) which shows that positive relationships between teachers and students can have a significant impact on children's academic and social-emotional development. In Finland, mentoring programs in early childhood education have succeeded in increasing student participation and involvement in learning activities, as reported by [the OECD \(2017\)](#).

Table 2 summarizes the results of research from several experts and countries related to the effectiveness of the mentoring and counseling approach in early childhood education.

Study	Country	Method	Key Results
Lerikkanen et al. (2012)	Finland	Observation and Interview	Increase self-confidence and interest in learning
Pianta et al. (2008)	United States of America	Longitudinal Study	Positive teacher-student relationships enhance academic and social development.
OECD (2017)	International	Data analysis	Mentoring programs increase student participation and engagement in learning.

This study also collected empirical data through direct observation and interviews with teachers and parents. The results of the analysis showed that students who received mentoring and counseling guidance tended to be more active in class activities, showing significant increases in attendance and participation. Qualitatively, teachers and parents reported that students became more motivated, confident, and enthusiastic in learning. In conclusion, the mentoring and counseling approach has proven effective in

increasing the learning motivation of students at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten in Poko, Jambon, Ponorogo. With empirical evidence from previous studies and the results of this study, it is hoped that this approach can be widely adopted in various educational institutions to achieve similar results (April 2023; Gleason, 2011; Kember, 1997).

B. Educational Games as a Learning Tool

Research by Bodrova and Leong (2007) shows that educational games can stimulate children's cognitive and social development. This finding is relevant in the context of our research at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten, Jambon, Ponorogo, where we implemented various types of educational games as the main tool to increase students' interest in learning (Ladd, 1998; McIntyre, 2007; Tepanosyan, 2017). These games include physical activities, logic, and group cooperation, all of which are designed to make the learning process more fun and interactive.

Table 3 presents several types of educational games used and their impact on students' learning motivation.

Game Type	Objective	Impact on Learning Motivation
Physical Games	Improve motor coordination and physical health	Students are more active and enthusiastic in participating in activities
Logic Games	Improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Students demonstrate increased analytical skills
Group Cooperation Games	Developing social and cooperation skills	Students find it easier to interact and collaborate with peers

Several previous studies support our findings. For example, a study by Smith and Pellegrini (2008) showed that educational games can improve communication and collaboration skills among children. Another study by Fisher et al. (2011) found that children who engaged in educational games showed improvements in cognitive skills such as memory, attention, and critical thinking skills. In addition, a study by Hedges and Cooper (2014) in New Zealand revealed that well-designed educational games can increase learning interest and active class participation. They found that children who engaged in these games had higher attendance rates and showed significant improvements in their learning evaluation results.



Figure 1. Implementing learning evaluation

The implementation of educational games in Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten follows the principles outlined in these studies (Coyne, 2009; "Does Amount of Time Spent in Child Care Predict Socioemotional Adjustment during the Transition to Kindergarten?" 2003; Zhu, 2013). We observed that students were not only more enthusiastic about learning but also showed improvements in their social and cognitive skills. In physical play sessions, for example, students learned about the importance of cooperation and supporting each other in achieving common goals (Harahap & Uthman, 2024; Hussain & Phulpoto, 2024). Meanwhile, in logic games, they were taught how to think critically and solve problems in creative ways. Thus, educational games not only serve as effective learning tools but also as a means to develop various important aspects of children's development. This study supports the importance of integrating educational games into the early childhood education curriculum to improve their learning motivation and holistic development.

C. Storytelling Session and Social Skills Development

Storytelling sessions in the educational mentoring program at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten have been shown to play an important role in improving children's social skills and language abilities. Research by Isbell et al. (2004) states that storytelling can stimulate imagination and improve listening skills, which are very important for children's social and cognitive development. In the context of this study, storytelling sessions are held regularly with various interesting themes, which not only attract children's attention but also encourage them to actively participate.

Table 4 Improvement of students' speaking and social interaction skills before and after the educational mentoring program

Skill Aspect	Before Program (%)	After Program (%)
Speaking Ability	45	70
Social interaction	50	75

These improvements were supported by participant observation and in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, who reported positive changes in children's social behavior and communication skills. For example, children took the initiative to speak in front of the class more often, got along better with classmates, and showed improvements in their ability to listen and understand stories.

Previous research also supports these findings. According to research by Morrow (2007), storytelling activities can help children develop social skills such as sharing, cooperating, and understanding others' perspectives. In countries such as Finland and Japan, storytelling programs in kindergartens have become an integral part of their educational curriculum, which is effective in developing children's social and emotional skills (Kunnari et al., 2018; Yoshikawa et al., 2013) (D. M. Early, 2006; Fromme, 2004; Howes, 1990). For example, a study by Nicolopoulou et al. (2015) stated that children who participated in storytelling sessions showed significant improvements in narrative ability and social skills compared to a control group who did not participate in the activity.

In conclusion, the storytelling session in the educational mentoring program at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten not only succeeded in improving children's language skills but also played an important role in developing their social skills (Bond, 2020; Teasdale, 1984; Zhao, 2005). With these positive results, it is hoped that the storytelling session can continue to be implemented and developed further to provide greater benefits for children's development.

D. Arts and Creativity Activities in Learning

Art and creativity activities are important components in the educational mentoring program designed to increase students' learning motivation at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten (Kahu, 2018; Kim, 2017; Montalvo, 2018). These activities include various types of activities such as drawing, painting, singing, and role-playing. Research shows that integrating art into learning can have a positive impact on children's development. Bamford (2006) stated that art has great potential to improve children's emotional and cognitive development, which in turn can increase their learning motivation.

In the context of this study, art and creativity activities were systematically integrated into the daily curriculum. Every day, students were involved in activities designed to stimulate their creativity, such as free drawing sessions, coloring competitions, and small art performances. Through direct observation, it was seen that students involved in art activities showed increased active participation and better self-expression. This is in line with the findings of research by Deasy (2002) which stated that art can increase students' involvement in the learning process and help them express themselves better.

Empirical evidence also supports the effectiveness of art activities in learning. For example, a study by Winner et al. (2001) in the United States found that students involved in an arts program showed significant improvements in social skills, critical thinking skills, and learning motivation compared to those who were not involved (Busse, 2013; Dörnyei, 2003; Rieber, 1991).

Table 5 results of the evaluation before and after this educational mentoring program was implemented at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten.

Evaluation Parameters	Before the Program	After Program	Enhancement
Daily Student Attendance	75%	94%	25%

Active Participation in Class	60%	78%	30%
Learning Evaluation Results	70%	84%	20%

From the table above, it can be seen that after the program was implemented, there was a significant increase in students' daily attendance, active class participation, and learning evaluation results. This shows that the integration of art and creativity activities in learning can create a fun and productive learning environment, and significantly increase students' learning motivation. With these results, it is hoped that similar approaches can be adopted by other educational institutions to achieve equally positive results (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Stefani, 2007; Zuhri, 2023). An art and creativity-based approach not only enriches students' learning experiences but also helps them develop important skills that will be useful throughout their lives.

4. CONCLUSION

From the results of the research conducted at Dharma Wanita Poko Kindergarten, Jambon, Ponorogo, it can be concluded that the educational mentoring program has a significant positive impact on increasing students' learning motivation. Various activities implemented in this program, such as educational games, storytelling sessions, social skills training, and art and creativity activities, have succeeded in creating a fun learning environment and supporting the development of students' interests. The results of the study showed an increase in students' daily attendance by 25%, active participation in class by 30%, and an increase in learning evaluation results by 20%.

Data analysis conducted qualitatively and quantitatively strengthens the validity of these findings, showing that the mentoring and counseling approach implemented can have a real impact on students' learning motivation. Direct observation of student behavior and attendance, as well as in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, provide a comprehensive picture of the positive changes that have occurred.

Thus, this educational mentoring program has not only succeeded in increasing students' learning motivation but also in creating a more productive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. It is hoped that the results of this study can be a reference for other educational institutions to adopt and implement similar programs so that a significant increase in learning motivation can be achieved at various levels of education.

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