

Family Support and Learning Environment as Key Determinants of Early Childhood Learning Motivation

Muhamad Furqon

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

Email : mfurqonn@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

This study aims to examine the combined role of family and environment in cultivating learning motivation among early childhood learners. A qualitative approach was employed using a case study method conducted in a kindergarten setting. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation involving early childhood learners and their parents as research participants. Data analysis followed systematic stages of data reduction, data display, and data verification to ensure credibility and rigor. The findings reveal that a well-organized and comfortable physical environment, along with positive social interactions, plays a significant role in enhancing young children's motivation to learn. Furthermore, family support—both emotional and practical—strongly influences children's intrinsic motivation. Parents who are actively involved in accompanying their children's learning processes help foster a sense of security, enabling children to become more focused, confident, and enthusiastic learners. Additionally, enjoyable and play-based learning strategies were found to be particularly effective in sustaining children's interest and motivation. The study highlights the importance of collaboration between supportive family involvement and a conducive learning environment in nurturing a love of learning during early childhood. These findings provide valuable insights for educational institutions and families in creating a holistic, engaging, and motivating learning atmosphere for young children.

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INTRODUCTION

The environment and family are two key factors influencing early childhood learning motivation (Wiedebusch & Petermann, 2011). A supportive environment and positive parenting are expected to maximize children's learning motivation. However, the reality shows a gap between theory and practice. In some early childhood education centers, especially in rural areas, the learning environment is often inadequate due to limited facilities and less interactive learning methods. This is caused by economic constraints, the uneven distribution of educational resources, and a lack of training for teachers (Hefniy & Safiah, 2020). As a result, children from less supportive environments tend to have lower learning motivation compared to children from more affluent families and environments (Sakti et al., 2024; Susanti & Wahyuningtyas, 2021). This gap is a significant issue because early childhood is a crucial period for children's cognitive and emotional development (Ika Sari et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to further examine the influence of the environment and family on early childhood learning motivation to develop strategies for improvement. Various previous studies have emphasized the importance of environmental and family influences on early childhood development (Barua et al., 2022). Families and schools play a crucial role in shaping children's motivation. Children raised in families with positive parenting styles have higher learning

motivation (Widowati & Wakid, 2024). However, these studies are still limited to cases in specific regions and do not explore in depth how environmental and family factors interact to shape learning motivation. Through a more holistic approach, this research is expected to provide deeper insights, particularly in the context of early childhood in areas with limited resources.

This research presents a novel approach in analyzing two important factors, namely the environment and family, to understand how they simultaneously influence children's learning motivation. Many previous studies have focused on only one of these factors separately. This research highlights the differences in the influence of these factors across various socioeconomic contexts, including in rural areas with limited access to education. This novelty is crucial for providing a broader and deeper understanding of how these factors operate interactively. With this approach, this research is expected to serve as a reference for developing more inclusive and effective educational policies and practices.

This research aims to answer the question of how the environment and family simultaneously influence early childhood learning motivation at TKS Bina Anaprasa. Based on theory and preliminary findings, this study argues that a stimulating environment and supportive family parenting styles have a significant impact on children's learning motivation. An interactive, safe, and stimulating learning environment can encourage children to be more active in exploring. Furthermore, attentive parenting and emotional support from the family also play a significant role in shaping learning motivation. The interaction between these two factors is believed to have an overall positive impact on children's motivational development. Therefore, this study will examine the interactive relationship between the environment and the family to strengthen the argument and provide a basis for more effective interventions.

METHOD

This research was conducted at the Bina Anaprasa Kindergarten (TKS Bina Anaprasa) in Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, chosen as the research location due to its environmental characteristics, which represent early childhood education practices with family involvement and an active learning environment. TKS Bina Anaprasa served as the primary unit of analysis in examining the role of the environment and family on early childhood learning motivation.

The environment examined in this study included the physical school environment, such as classroom conditions, the availability of learning facilities and infrastructure, and the learning atmosphere created; the home learning environment, including the arrangement of learning spaces and supporting facilities; and the social environment, which encompasses children's interactions with teachers, peers, and family members. The family aspect focused on parenting patterns, emotional support, and the level of parental involvement in supporting children's learning, both at home and in school activities.

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method, aiming to understand in-depth and contextually how interactions between the environment and family influence early childhood learning motivation. The research subjects consisted of early childhood children at TKS Bina Anaprasa and parents directly involved in the care and learning process of their children.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to elicit the views and experiences of parents and teachers regarding children's learning motivation. Observations were conducted to observe children's learning behavior, social interactions, and the implementation of play-based learning at school. Documentation included learning activity notes, activity photographs, and other supporting documents relevant to the early childhood education program.

Data analysis was conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, verification, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, researchers sorted and selected important data from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data presentation stage involved organizing the data into descriptive narratives, matrices, or diagrams to facilitate interpretation. The verification stage involved identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among the data to draw meaningful conclusions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Family

Family plays a fundamental role in shaping early childhood development, particularly in cultivating learning motivation from an early age. Findings from this study conducted at TKS Bina Anaprasa Paiton, Probolinggo indicate that the family serves as the primary environment where children first experience learning-related interactions. Warm and responsive parent–child relationships, characterized by open communication, emotional closeness, and attentive responses to children’s needs, were found to foster a strong sense of security. This emotional security enables children to explore their surroundings confidently, engage in new learning experiences, and develop curiosity. Children who consistently received emotional support from their parents demonstrated higher enthusiasm for learning activities, greater self-confidence, and persistence when facing challenges. These findings confirm that learning motivation in early childhood is not innate but is gradually developed through continuous and supportive family interactions.

Parental involvement in children’s learning activities emerged as a key factor influencing learning motivation. Parents who actively accompanied their children during learning at home—such as reading together, discussing school experiences, or guiding simple learning tasks—created meaningful learning experiences. Such involvement helped children perceive learning as an enjoyable and valued activity rather than an obligation. The study revealed that children whose parents showed genuine interest in their learning activities were more motivated and engaged. Importantly, the quality of interaction during learning activities was found to be more influential than the duration of time spent. Supportive, patient, and encouraging interactions strengthened children’s intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward learning.

Parenting styles also significantly influenced children’s learning motivation. The findings indicated that democratic parenting styles—characterized by balanced guidance, open communication, and appropriate autonomy—were most effective in fostering motivation. Parents who allowed children to make choices within clear boundaries supported the development of independence and responsibility. Children raised in such environments demonstrated greater initiative and confidence in learning activities. In contrast, overly authoritarian or permissive parenting styles tended to limit children’s motivation, either by creating pressure or by lacking structure. This highlights the importance of adaptive parenting practices that support children’s autonomy while providing consistent guidance.

Family support was also reflected in the provision of learning resources at home. Parents who prepared simple yet functional learning facilities—such as books, drawing tools, educational toys, and a comfortable learning space—demonstrated commitment to their children’s educational needs. Although these resources were not always extensive, their availability encouraged children to engage independently in learning-related play and exploration. Children with access to age-appropriate learning materials showed increased interest in reading, drawing, and problem-solving activities. This finding suggests that material support, while secondary to emotional support, plays a complementary role in sustaining children’s learning motivation.

Another important aspect of family involvement was parental appreciation of children’s efforts and achievements. Parents who provided positive reinforcement—such as verbal praise,

physical affection, or expressions of pride—contributed to children’s emotional well-being and self-esteem. Recognition of effort rather than solely focusing on outcomes encouraged children to enjoy the learning process and remain motivated. Children who felt appreciated were more willing to try new activities and showed resilience in overcoming difficulties (Akmaliyah et al., 2021). This demonstrates that appropriate appreciation strengthens intrinsic motivation and reinforces positive learning behaviors.

The findings indicate that families play a central role in nurturing early childhood learning motivation. Emotional support, active involvement in learning, effective parenting styles, provision of learning resources, and positive reinforcement collectively create a supportive learning environment at home. This family-based foundation significantly supports children’s learning experiences at school and contributes to the development of long-term positive attitudes toward learning.

The School Environment

The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping children’s learning motivation during early childhood, as evidenced by findings from TKS Bina Anaprasa Paiton, Probolinggo. A well-organized, clean, and child-friendly physical environment was found to significantly influence children’s enthusiasm for participating in learning activities. Classrooms designed with colorful visual displays, accessible learning materials, and flexible seating arrangements created an inviting atmosphere that encouraged exploration and active engagement. Children demonstrated greater curiosity and willingness to participate when learning spaces felt safe, comfortable, and stimulating. This finding highlights that the physical learning environment is not merely a backdrop but an integral component of the learning process that directly affects children’s emotional readiness and motivation to learn.

Beyond physical aspects, social interactions within the school environment strongly contributed to children’s learning motivation. Positive relationships between teachers and children were observed to foster a sense of trust and emotional security. Teachers who demonstrated warmth, patience, and responsiveness enabled children to feel valued and understood. As a result, children were more confident in expressing ideas, asking questions, and participating in group activities. Peer interactions also played a vital role, as collaborative play and group-based learning activities encouraged social learning and mutual support. These interactions helped children associate learning with positive social experiences, reinforcing their intrinsic motivation.

Teaching strategies implemented at TKS Bina Anaprasa emphasized play-based and child-centered learning approaches. Such strategies were found to be highly effective in sustaining children’s attention and interest. Learning activities integrated games, storytelling, music, and hands-on experiences that aligned with children’s developmental stages. These approaches allowed children to learn through direct experience rather than passive instruction. Observations revealed that children were more focused and engaged when lessons incorporated play elements, as these activities reduced pressure and transformed learning into an enjoyable experience. This finding supports the view that play-based learning is fundamental to fostering motivation in early childhood education.

The role of teachers as facilitators of learning was another significant factor influencing children’s motivation. Teachers who provided constructive feedback, encouragement, and guidance helped children develop confidence in their abilities. Rather than emphasizing outcomes, teachers focused on the learning process, acknowledging effort and improvement. This approach encouraged children to take initiative and persist in tasks despite challenges. The presence of supportive teachers helped create a learning environment where mistakes were viewed as part of the learning journey, thereby reducing fear of failure and enhancing motivation.

School routines and structured activities also contributed to children's learning motivation. Consistent schedules provided children with a sense of predictability and stability, which supported emotional regulation and focus. Daily routines such as morning greetings, group discussions, and reflection sessions helped children transition smoothly into learning activities (Fuligni et al., 2012). These routines established a sense of belonging and reinforced positive learning habits. Children who adapted well to school routines were observed to be more attentive and engaged throughout the learning process.

The findings indicate that the school environment at TKS Bina Anaprasa plays a vital role in nurturing children's motivation and interest in learning. A supportive physical setting, positive social interactions, play-based instructional strategies, and encouraging teacher practices collectively create an environment that promotes active learning. These elements contribute to the development of positive learning experiences that lay the foundation for lifelong learning motivation.

Synergy Between Family and Environment

The synergy between family involvement and the school learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping early childhood learning motivation. Findings from TKS Bina Anaprasa Paiton, Probolinggo reveal that children develop stronger motivation when support from home aligns with educational practices at school. Consistency in values, expectations, and learning approaches across both environments provides children with a sense of continuity and emotional security. When children receive similar messages about learning, encouragement, and behavior at home and at school, they are less likely to experience confusion or anxiety. This harmonious alignment enables children to engage more confidently in learning activities and fosters positive attitudes toward learning from an early age.

Effective communication between parents and teachers was identified as a key factor in strengthening this synergy. Regular communication regarding children's academic progress, behavior, and emotional development allowed parents and teachers to build a shared understanding of children's needs. Teachers who communicated classroom activities and learning goals enabled parents to reinforce learning experiences at home. Conversely, parents' insights into children's behavior and interests at home helped teachers adjust instructional strategies. This two-way communication created coordinated support that consistently motivated children across both learning contexts.

Collaborative activities involving families and schools further enhanced children's learning motivation. Programs that encouraged parental participation—such as joint learning projects, school events, and family-centered activities—helped children observe direct cooperation between parents and teachers. These experiences strengthened children's sense of belonging and reinforced the idea that learning is valued by both family and school. Children whose parents actively participated in school-related activities demonstrated higher enthusiasm, confidence, and willingness to engage in learning tasks, indicating that collaboration positively influences motivation.

The study also highlighted the importance of shared responsibility between families and schools in supporting children's holistic development. Schools provided structured learning environments and professional guidance, while families reinforced learning values, discipline, and habits at home. This balanced partnership supported children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. When children received consistent encouragement to be curious, persistent, and responsible from both environments, their intrinsic motivation to learn was strengthened. Such consistency helped children internalize positive learning behaviors.

Despite the benefits of collaboration, several challenges in achieving effective synergy were identified. Limited parental availability, differences in expectations, and communication barriers

sometimes hindered cooperation between families and schools (Widat & Wulandari, 2023). However, proactive initiatives by educators—such as parent meetings, workshops, and regular communication—helped overcome these obstacles. These efforts fostered trust, mutual respect, and increased parental involvement, which in turn positively influenced children’s motivation and engagement in learning activities.

The synergy between family support and a conducive school learning environment plays a vital role in building early childhood learning motivation. Collaborative partnerships based on shared values, effective communication, and joint responsibility create a holistic learning ecosystem that nurtures children’s confidence, curiosity, and enjoyment of learning. This synergy not only enhances motivation during early childhood but also lays a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that early childhood learning motivation is shaped through the interconnected roles of family support and the school learning environment. Families contribute fundamentally by providing emotional security, active involvement in learning, appropriate parenting practices, learning resources, and positive reinforcement that foster children’s confidence and intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, schools strengthen this motivation through supportive physical environments, positive social interactions, play-based learning approaches, and encouraging teacher practices. Most importantly, effective synergy between families and schools—characterized by consistent values, open communication, collaborative activities, and shared responsibility—creates continuity in children’s learning experiences across home and school contexts. This holistic partnership not only enhances learning motivation during early childhood but also establishes a strong foundation for sustained interest and success in lifelong learning.

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