

Analysis of Elementary School-Age Children's Development and Its Implications for the Learning Process

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Abstract: This study analyzes the development of elementary school-aged children at SDN 55 Palembang and its implications for the learning process. Using qualitative methods (observation, interviews, and documentation), this study reveals variations in children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. Most children, according to Piaget's theory, are at the concrete operational stage, showing the ability to think logically about concrete objects but are limited to abstract reasoning. This variation in development is influenced by internal factors (talent, interest, motivation) and external factors (family environment, parental support, access to learning resources). Differences in development have implications for the need for differentiated learning strategies. The study recommends an inclusive and responsive learning approach to individual needs, emphasizing collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community in creating an optimal learning environment. The need for training for teachers to understand and apply teaching methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of children's development is also proposed, so that each student can reach their maximum potential.

Keywords: Children's Development, Elementary School, Learning Process

A. Introduction

Education encompasses three dimensions: the individual, the societal or national community, and the broader reality both material and spiritual---that shapes human nature and society. Education is a fundamental aspect of human life, inseparable from individuals, families, and communities. Learning is a process carried out consciously by each individual or group to change attitudes from not knowing to knowing. The process of teaching and learning activities, on the other hand, is a core educational activity programmed to be included in lessons. Changes in the level of knowledge, understanding, skills or attitudes of children as a learning process and the teaching and learning process takes place in it. Process education achieve goals education that not forming changes in student's behavior, but also increasing the existing knowledge of children. Education is a very important and decisive factor in efforts to organize and build Indonesian people towards a better, advanced and quality (Rifatun & Sukartono, 2022: 174).

Education should form people who are smart and have character, so that it will create a nation that excels in achievement and polite interaction in accordance with the noble values of the nation. This is also emphasized by Bung Karno, which states that, this nation must be formed by prioritizing the development of personality (character building) because this character building will make Indonesia a great nation, advanced and victorious and dignified. If this character building is not tried, until the Indonesian nation becomes a nation of coolies (Fajri & Mirsal, 2021: 2).

Through education, humans who inhabit this universe are not just demographic potential but are increasingly aware of fulfilling the duties and calls of their existence as cultural potential. In the position of realizing their existence as a cultural force, humans in general and educators in particular, should always develop a continuous understanding of education in it (Devie et al., 2020: 151).

Schools play an important role in improving the creativity of thinking in students. SD Negeri 55 in Palembang is a school that has implemented creative thinking in every activity. However, it has not been running well due to various obstacles. The principal always reminds teachers to always apply creative thinking in teaching and learning activities and in other activities. However, it turns out that this does not go according to what has been expected. Students are still afraid to express their ideas and opinions, so thinking skills are difficult to develop. The students also have low understanding so that their thinking creativity is also low. When conducting teaching and learning activities, teachers have great difficulty in testing the creativity of thinking in students. In addition, the existing infrastructure is still minimal, so it greatly affects the process of teaching and learning activities. This can be seen from the lack of interest of students to think creatively when the teacher conducts teaching and learning activities in the classroom. When the teacher explains, students are more silent than asking questions related to the material being taught. Therefore, the creativity of thinking needs to be improved.

SD Negeri 55 Palembang, like other elementary schools, has a diversity of students with different backgrounds, abilities and developmental levels. Understanding the development of elementary school-age children is essential to create an effective and meaningful learning process. An optimal child development will have a positive impact on their academic achievement and social-emotional development. However, if children's development is not fulfilled properly, this can hinder the learning process and have a negative impact on their future. Therefore, this study aims to analyze child development and its implications for the learning process.

B. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Qualitative research can be understood as a research method that uses descriptive data in the form of written or spoken language from observable people and actors. Descriptive

research, often also called taxonomic research, is said to be so because this research is intended to explore or clarify an existing symptom, phenomenon or social reality, descriptive research seeks to describe a number of variables related to the problem and unit under study, descriptive research does not question the relationship between existing variables, because descriptive research is not intended to draw generations that cause a symptom, phenomenon or social reality to occur so (Hasan & M.Syahran, 2023: 18).

This research described in detail the variation of child development at SD Negeri 55 Palembang and its implications for learning. Qualitative research is chosen because it allows for a deep understanding of complex phenomena and their contexts. This research will involve students in grades 4, teachers, and parents of students. The sampling technique will use purposive sampling, selecting participants who are considered the most informative to answer the research questions. The number of participants will be adjusted to the depth of data needed. Participant observation was conducted to observe students' learning activities in and outside the classroom, including students' interactions with teachers and peers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and parents to gain deeper information about children's development and implications for learning. Questions were tailored to the students' age and cognitive abilities. Relevant documents, such as students' grade reports, lesson plans, and photos of learning activities, will be collected as supporting data. Data analysis conducted using a qualitative approach, namely by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The data obtained will be analyzed thematically to identify emerging patterns and themes related to variations in child development and their implications for learning. Data analysis conducted iteratively. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development will be used as a framework for analyzing children's cognitive development. Other relevant developmental theories, such as the theory of social-emotional development and the theory of psychomotor development, will also be considered.

C. Results and Discussion

The findings revealed significant variations in the developmental progress of children. While some children exhibit optimal development, others face challenges across various areas of growth. Factors influencing these developmental outcomes include internal elements like talent, interest, and motivation, as well as external factors such as family environment, economic conditions, and social support. Through interviews, observations, and documentation, it became evident that students often hesitate to voice their ideas and opinions, which hinders the development of their critical thinking skills. Additionally, many students struggle with comprehension, leading to a lack of creativity in their thinking. Teachers encounter difficulties in assessing student's creative thinking during lessons, and the school's limited infrastructure further impacts the learning experience.

This lack of resources is reflected in the student's reluctance to engage in creative thinking during classroom activities. Often, when teachers explain new concepts, students remain quiet rather than asking questions related to the material. Despite these challenges, SD Negeri 55 Palembang has integrated thinking skills into its curriculum. Teachers employ various strategies to foster creative thinking habits among students. These include administering quizzes or question-and-answer sessions following lessons, encouraging students to engage in projects related to the subjects discussed, and organizing debate activities in the fourth grade to enhance their critical thinking skills.

Description of Children's Development at SD Negeri 55 Palembang

A critical component of children's development is cognitive development. Cognitive abilities are important because they form the basis for achievement in other spheres of development. Cognitive skills provide vital support for accomplishments in several other fields when they are nurtured and permitted to blossom. So, it can be concluded that cognitive development is the development of intellectual aspects that include the ability to think such as having a strong memory, the ability to reason, ideate, imagine, create and solve problems. One of the theories that discusses cognitive development in children is Piaget's cognitive theory. According to Piaget's theory, children experience a definite sequence in accordance with the stages of cognitive development that have been determined by Piaget's theory. And at each stage experienced in children, both the quantity and quality of their abilities will show an increase. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is a hypothesis that explains how children adjust and decipher the events that occur around them. Piaget also classifies the system and cycle of human intellectual improvement from the early stages, adolescent human thinking to adulthood. Basically, the purpose of cognitive theory regarding intellectual development by Piaget is to explain the various things that can affect the ability to think can develop (Rahmaniar et al., 2022: 532). Most children are at the concrete operations stage (according to Piaget's theory), able to think logically about concrete objects but still struggling with abstract thinking. Reading, writing and arithmetic skills vary, with some children showing above average ability and others needing additional help. These differences are influenced by internal (innate ability, interest in learning) and external (family environment, parental support, access to learning resources) factors.

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere in the learning process for students to actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves and society. Education in schools is a continuation or development of education that has been given by parents to their children in the family, which is due to several factors including, a) limited parental knowledge, b) time opportunities, c) child development, d) the school environment is a bridge for children, which connects life in the family with life in society later The role of parents

is very important in education, because the first and main education starts from the family environment and parents are the main key to the occurrence of an education in the family itself. The basic needs of children include physical-biomedical needs (foster), emotional needs / affection (*asih*), and the need for mental stimulation for the learning process in children (*asah*). In school education, it is necessary to have a good relationship with the parents of students so that there is harmony between learning at school and at home. Parent participation is very important for the creation of smooth learning (Oualeng et al., 2021: 76). Affective: Children show a wide range of emotional and social development. Most are able to interact with peers and teachers, but some children may exhibit shy, aggressive behavior or difficulties in socializing. These differences are influenced by personality factors, life experiences and social environment. Motivation to learn also varies, with some children showing great enthusiasm and others needing extra encouragement.

The psychomotor domain is part of individual development related to physical movements based on the results of processing between cognition and affection which results in physical movements in the form of behavior. The results of monitoring the achievement of children's psychomotor development can be used as a benchmark for meeting the needs of the child himself in facing education at the next level. The development of each characteristic of early childhood tends to be influenced by physical and psychological touches from their environment. This context is reinforced by Geldard, K. & Geldard, that the environment is the biggest part in influencing changes in the behavior of each child. This happens because the environment tends to touch every aspect of child development more dominantly. Based on this theory, it can be interpreted that the environment is the biggest aspect and can have an influence on child development (Hidayat & Nur, 2018: 30). Psychomotor: Children's fine and gross motor skills vary. Most are able to perform basic motor activities such as writing, drawing and playing sports, but some children may need additional practice to improve these skills.

Implications of Children's Development for the Learning Process

Observations and interviews show some implications of children's development for the learning process at SDN 55 Palembang:

Cognitive Development: Students with more advanced cognitive development tend to understand the subject matter more easily and perform better. In contrast, students with slower cognitive development require a more individualized and differentiated approach to learning. Cognitive aspects are an important part of elementary school-age children's development. Cognitive development can affect language skills, mental and emotional development. The influence of cognitive development also has an impact on children's attitudes and behaviors that are still related to their way of thinking. The development of elementary school-age children is different from adolescents and adults and cannot be equated because cognitive in elementary school-

age children is still limited and only capable in concrete or real things (Mubarok et al., 2023: 111).

Psychosocial development is development related to changes in individual emotions. Christiana Hari Soetjningsih J. argues that every individual development must be in line with the development of other aspects such as psychological, moral and social aspects. The most significant psychosocial development occurs in children aged (6-12 years) or more commonly known as school-age children, which means that school becomes the child's core experience. This school age is the time when children acquire the basics of knowledge. At this stage children begin to try to prove that they are "adults". At this stage the value of responsibility will begin to emerge. After the value of responsibility, indirectly the value of confidence, independence, cooperation will develop Social-Emotional Development: Students with good social-emotional development tend to participate more actively in learning activities, have positive relationships with peers and teachers, and are better able to manage their emotions. Students with social-emotional difficulties may have difficulty adapting to the school environment and keeping up with learning (Susila, 2024: 18).

Physical Development: Student's physical condition, such as health and nutrition, also affects their ability to participate in learning. Students who are unhealthy or malnourished tend to tire more easily and find it difficult to concentrate. Early childhood physical motor development has a very important role in supporting other aspects of development. This is due to the observable and predictable nature of physical motor development, such as changes in a child's body size (Hasibuan, 2025: 50)

The differences in children's development above have implication for the learning process at SD Negeri 55 Palembang:

Differentiated learning is important in the current educational context as it reflects the principles of freedom and an independent curriculum. In a differentiated approach, freedom of learning is given to students to explore and develop their potential according to individual needs and preferences. The concept of freedom in learning refers to giving autonomy to students to organize and direct their own learning process (Jahrir & Tahir, 2024: 10). Differentiated learning is a way or effort made by teachers to meet student's needs and expectations. This is in line with Tomlinson's opinion, differentiated learning is an attempt to adjust the learning process in the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of each student. It is not about giving different tasks to each child. Differentiated learning is also not a chaotic learning process. Simply put, differentiated learning is a series of common-sense decisions made by teachers that are oriented towards the needs of students. Varied learning strategies (play, group discussion, presentation, individual work) can accommodate children's different learning styles and abilities (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022: 35).

The current “*merdeka*” curriculum has brought fresh air in the world of Indonesian education, especially student-centered learning. Learning in elementary schools today prioritizes the active role of students. The concept of student-centered learning encourages children to learn through hands-on experiences, such as conducting experiments, projects and field trips. Thus, students not only passively receive information, but also build a deep understanding through active engagement and train students to think critically, creatively and collaboratively. In addition, through this approach, teachers can pay attention to the individual differences of each student, so that learning can be adapted to the learning style and needs of each child. So that elementary school graduates can become independent, creative individuals who are ready to face challenges in the global era (Hidayah et al., 2025: 5).

Child-Centered Approach: Child-centered learning is important to motivate and engage children in the learning process. Teachers can use active learning methods, such as inquiry-based learning and project-based learning, to encourage children’s active participation. Project-based learning (PBL) has been proven to be effective in increasing student’s PAI learning motivation at SD Negeri 55 Palembang. Through project-based learning, can build their own knowledge based on meaningful learning experiences. This learning not only trains technical skills such as cooperation, discipline, and responsibility, but also develops student’s democratic attitude, courage, and leadership spirit. Therefore, to increase motivation to learn PAI, teachers can apply a project-based learning model.

By using this model, students will be actively involved in the learning process and build their own understanding based on meaningful learning experiences. In addition, project-based learning can also help students develop 21st century skills needed in the world of work, such as cooperation, communication, and problem-solving ability. Although project-based learning has been proven effective, its implementation still needs support from various parties, such as schools, parents and communities. Schools need to provide adequate resources, such as facilities and training for teachers, so that project-based learning can be implemented well. In addition, parents and the community also need to be involved to support and facilitate projects conducted by students. With support from various parties, project-based learning can be an effective strategy to increase student’s motivation to learn mathematics (Rihyanti & Budiyati, 2024: 9199).

Primary learning problems are then commonly called “*gangguan belajar*” or in English we often refer to learning disabilities and commonly abbreviated to LD (now also called SLD or specific learning disability based on DSM-5). Learning disabilities are caused by neurological disorders (in the brain) that result in impaired development in one or more areas of intelligence (cognitive). This condition will cause the child to experience difficulties in his learning, which if not helped, will result in his achievement not being optimal, or even high intelligence (Tiel, 2017: 2).

According to Syarifan Nurjan, learning difficulties are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors such as students being in unhealthy conditions, body defect, intelligence possessed by children, talents and interest of children, motivation and mental health experienced by children. External factors such as family factors, family is the first place for children to learn. Parenting greatly influence children's mental development. Parents who are indifferent, do not pay attention to their children's learning progress, authoritarian and strict parents will cause an unhealthy mentality in children because children really need guidance from their parents. Economic factors are also very instrumental for the development of children, a poor economy will make children lack in learning tools, lack of cost used, and do not have a good place to study.

Usually, students whose socio-economic conditions are high, have more motivation than those who are low. They are fulfilled from the facilities provided by parents so that students are able to achieve high learning achievements. Economic situation of the family is closely related to children's learning. Children who are learning in addition to their basic needs met, for example; food, clothing, health protection and others. Also, facility is needed to learning so that children are more enthusiastic and more active in their studies, prevent them from working while in education. Children who experience learning difficulties need additional support from teachers, parents, and counselors. Remedial programs or tutoring can help these children improve their learning abilities (Cahyaningsih et al., 2024: 822).

The importance of positive discipline in schools is reflected in its positive impact on students, teachers and the school environment as a whole. Positive discipline helps improve student's well-being by creating a learning environment that is safe, inclusive and supportive of their social-emotional development. With an approach that reinforces positive relationship between students and teachers, positive discipline is able to increase student motivation, reduce unwanted behavior, and improve the quality of classroom's interactions. For teachers, implementing positive discipline helps to create a more conducive learning atmosphere, increase teaching effectiveness and reduce the stress level of managing the classroom. However, in implementing positive discipline, it is important to be aware of the challenges that may arise. One of the main challenges is that it takes time and consistency to build a school culture that supports positive discipline. In addition, teachers need to pay attention to student 's individual needs and backgrounds to design appropriate discipline strategies. Other challenges include building effective communication and conflict management skills, as well as dealing with resistance or disapproval from some parties in adopting this new approach. Nonetheless, with awareness of these challenges and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation, the implementation of positive discipline in schools can provide significant long-term benefits for the entire education community (Masduki et al., 2024: 11). Teachers need to pay attention to children's social-emotional development and create a safe, comfortable and inclusive learning environment. Activities that encourage cooperation, empathy and problem solving can help

children develop their social-emotional skills.

Not only do teachers at school have a significant role, but parents also have an important role in educating early childhood literacy. Parents' ability to educate their children will determine their success in parenting. They can support the development of children's language skills by establishing a solid literacy foundation. Through communicative interactions, parents can enrich their children's skills and abilities, understand their children's feelings, strengthen emotional bonds and exert a positive influence on their children (Wachidah & Putikadyanto, 2024: 209). Close collaboration between parents and schools is essential to support children's development. Open and supportive communication between teachers and parents can ensure that children receive consistent support at home and at school

Efforts to Improve the Thinking Creativity in Children's learning

Supriadi, stated that creativity is a person's ability to produce something new, either in the form of ideas or real work that is relatively different from what already exists. He further added that creativity is a high-level thinking ability that implies an escalation in thinking ability, characterized by succession, discontinuity, differentiation, and integration between each stage of development (Rachmawati & Kurniati, 2010: 13).

Differences in children's development have implications for different learning needs. Children with optimal development may require a higher level of challenge, while children with developmental disabilities require more specialized support and learning strategies. This points to the need for inclusive learning approaches that are responsive to children's individual needs. Teachers need to be able to identify differences in children's development and adjust learning strategies so that all children can learn optimally.

Teachers' efforts in improving thinking creativity in class IV student's learning at SD Negeri 55 Palembang. Effort is one of the efforts or conditions to achieve a certain purpose, effort, reason, endeavor can also be said to be an activity by directing energy, mind or body to achieve something. From the results of observations and interviews, it was found that there were several teacher efforts in increasing the creativity of thinking in class IV student's learning at SD Negeri 55 Palembang.

First, teachers can stimulate student's creativity during learning. School is one of the bridges for students in gaining knowledge. In the learning process there are many new things that are obtained. Starting from learning complex things to detailed things. This certainly requires the creativity of students. So that the presence of teachers is very important to stimulate students to be able to bring up new ideas or ideas through a learning and experience they have gone through.

Second, learning through play. Learning in elementary school is certainly very different from learning at the junior high school and high school levels. In elementary schools, which are synonymous with fun, interesting and exhilarating learning, educators must always be creative and innovate in the process of delivering material. It is intended that students do not feel burdened when doing learning. So that learning can be received by students happily and joyfully through learning while playing.

Third, respecting the ideas conveyed by students. Fourth grade students of SD Negeri 55 Palembang have different characteristics. Each child has their own characteristics or uniqueness. So that in bringing out the characteristics or uniqueness of each student, teachers need to use appropriate methods. For example, students are given the freedom to express opinions and innovate in learning.

Fourth, developing student's creativity requires supporting conditions, namely creative teachers which include creative teaching, creative principals (creative leadership) and a creative environment. The development of creativity in the context of the nation to prepare citizens in facing a highly competitive life (Yani et al., 2021: 98). Developing creativity in learning. In order to develop student's creativity, teachers need to have a learning strategy. Teachers need to provide a place for each student to develop their creativity. Through various events and events is one of the efforts in developing, honing and implementing the creativity of class IV students at SD Negeri 55 Palembang.

Fifth, respond well to questions and answers from students. Good learning is interactive learning. Interactive is a reciprocal relationship between one person and another. In this case, it means that there is interaction between the teacher and the students. Of course, with different backgrounds of students, teachers must understand each difference. During learning, students are found asking questions about the material being taught, of course the teacher in responding to student's questions must be with a pleasant expression and answer with enthusiasm. That is one of the most important things in fostering the creativity of thinking of students (Rifatun & Sukartono, 2022: 176).

D. Conclusions

This research shows that there is variation in child development at SDN 55 Palembang which are influenced by internal and external factors. This development mental difference has implications for different learning needs. Therefore, it is recommended that SDN 55 Palembang apply the approach of learning that is more inclusive and responsive to children's individual needs. Teacher needs training and support to identify and meet children's diverse learning needs. In addition, collaboration between schools, parents and communities is essential to create an environment conducive to children's development. The importance of this collaboration is that it strengthens teaching strategies and supports children in reaching their full potential

and ensures that every child has an equal opportunity to develop optimally. By involving all parties in the education process, it is hoped that a positive synergy will be created and improved the quality of the student's learning outcomes.

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