

High Scope Model: A Solution to Improve Early Childhood Communication Skills

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Abstract

Communicating from an early age is the right first step in developing good language skills in children. Difficulty in communication can hinder a person from expressing ideas, thoughts, and opinions, which prevents good interaction between children, parents, teachers, and society in general. Good communication is built starting from parent-child, teacher-child, and parent-teacher collaborations to observe each child's development. This is because young children are very sensitive to stimuli in various aspects such as physical motor skills, cognitive, social-emotional, and language. This research aims to provide an overview of the application of the High Scope model in the communication skills of early childhood. This type of research is qualitative descriptive research. The use of qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon and provide a clear picture of the implementation of the high scope model in early childhood education learning. Data were obtained through observation and documentation methods. The research results indicate that the communication skills of early childhood children in the implementation of the High Scope model are in the very good development category (BSB) and in the expected development category (BSH). This research implies an increase in the communication skills of early childhood children, making it important for teachers to develop this High Scope model in the development of every aspect possessed by early childhood children.

Keywords: Communication, learning, Early Childhood Education, High Scope Model.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the foundation for shaping a child's growth and development. Early childhood is in a golden age, which is the primary foundation for language and communication development. Communication skills are crucial for children as a means of conveying ideas, needs, feelings, and developing social relationships. Lack of appropriate stimulation and teacher-centered learning methods often lead to children

being passive, lacking in self-confidence, and having difficulty speaking in front of parents and teachers. Therefore, children need to be stimulated early by their parents, as parents are their first teachers in receiving education. Wiyono and Nursyahid (2013) state that educating children begins from birth because children gain their first experiences from their parents, not from teachers. In this regard, parents are able to provide the best education for children before they enter school. Hariwijaya (2010; p. 13) states that children need effective parents to educate them responsibly. Children are essentially born with potential that is ready to be developed and stimulated by their environment according to their interests and learning needs. Marisson (2012; p. 60) states that learning is the process of acquiring experience, knowledge, and skills to foster quality children in the future. Of course, children cannot simply acquire these skills without adequate early childhood education (PAUD) services in the community. Fattah and Darmiyanti (2024) state that improving the quality of PAUD can be achieved through the implementation of effective management standards.

Every child's development is inseparable from the family environment, the community, and especially the parents, who are responsible for their lives. This golden age significantly influences the quality of a child's subsequent development. The golden age and environmental manipulation are determining factors in a child's development. Children need to be understood and accepted by every parent, teacher, and community member involved in education. The need for quality human resources is growing among parents, teachers, the community, and the government to provide services to children. PAUD services, including Child Care Centers (TPA), Playgroups (KB), and Kindergartens (TK) or Raudhatul Athfal (RA), are important strategies for stimulating child development from an early age. These services aim to provide targeted educational stimulation so that children are ready to enter primary education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has been proven to help optimize the development of all aspects of children through play-based learning and quality interactions (Mahmudin & Wiyani, 2023). Furthermore, research shows that PAUD services have a significant impact on children's academic, social-emotional, and independence readiness for elementary school (Hanifa, Hartati, and Nurjannah, 2023). Teachers and parents need to manipulate the environment, one of which is developing learning programs that encourage children to be more active. Effective learning must provide opportunities for children to actively participate, explore, express opinions, and interact in real-life activities. Child-centered learning requires appropriate interaction and communication with adults. Manipulating a varied learning environment in direct learning provides opportunities for children to explore. Varied, enjoyable, and enjoyable learning needs to be designed using various media, models, strategies, methods, and approaches. The focus of this research is the application of the High Scope model to enjoyable learning.

The High Scope education program is a learning model that refers to Piaget's theory. This approach emphasizes identifying a child's condition based on their developmental level by testing their strengths. The High Scope project views differences in abilities and behavioral disabilities in children within their age group as developmental delays, not deviations. This approach emphasizes that children develop through certain stages. In its initial development, High Scope was used as the name of a curriculum developed for children aged three to four years. In subsequent developments, the name High Scope was used as an approach used in early childhood education programs.

Masliyana, Nur Kholik Afandi. (2023) High Scope is a learning strategy for children to interact actively by providing experiences to build knowledge.

Rahayu, N. et al (2022) the High Scope model gives freedom to children that schools not only produce children who are academically successful, but also have the skills to train independence and foster children's self-confidence. Sianipar, A. (2023) the High Scope model can increase community participation, cooperation with parents, which includes environmental, social aspects to help children create a safe, fun and clean school environment to support the overall development of children. The use of the High Scope curriculum develops intervention programs for children aged 3-4 years to prepare preschoolers for success in school. Piaget emphasized that children can learn well when children are active and seek solutions independently. Piaget disagrees with teaching methods that treat children as passive recipients. The educational implications of Piaget's view of all learning activities children will learn well through experimental activities and discussions rather than just imitating teachers or doing something by rote (Santrock, 2017). In order to realize the goal, the High Scope model pays attention to the following principles: 1) based on Piaget's constructive theory; 2) emphasizing active learning, emphasizing objects that can be manipulated; 3) the role of adults in focusing children's attention and language use in learning; 4) emphasizing choices and activities within the center; 5) emphasizing observation and assessment; 6) encouraging children to learn through direct, experiential activities, whether through active involvement with adults, materials, events, or ideas (Haenillah, 2015). The long-term goals of the High Scope project are as follows: Sharpening children's abilities using a variety of prepared and manipulated activities appropriate to the learning environment; Sharpening children's knowledge of objects based on educational concepts; communication skills, dramatization, and graphic skills represented through experience and communicating their experiences to peers or adults around the child; The ability to collaborate with others, make decisions about what to do and how to do something, and plan the use of time; The ability of children to apply the acquisition of new thinking skills in a wide and natural range based on situations using a variety of materials.

Early childhood is an individual undergoing a very rapid growth and development process, even described as a developmental leap (Purnama et al., 2021). Early childhood has a very valuable age range compared to later ages because their intellectual development is extraordinary. This age is a unique phase of life, and is in a period of change in the form of growth, development, maturation, and refinement, both in physical and spiritual aspects, which lasts a lifetime, is gradual, and is continuous (Mulyasa, 2012). Rohmah, N., Fahridatun, U., & Nisak, H. (2019) communication skills are important for success in life in a rapidly changing society. The curriculum supports children's initiatives by providing equipment and time to continue the activities the child chooses. Aspects of the High Scope Model that need to be considered are:

a. Active Learning

Children are directly involved in learning, experiencing direct contact with peers, teachers, objects, ideas, and events. These active learning experiences help children construct their own knowledge, such as learning concepts, forming ideas, creating symbols, and abstracting. As facilitators, they will observe children's participation in activities. Teachers will be guided by several key experiences that all children need to have as part of their motor, physical, social, and emotional development. There are 10 key categories, including: creative representation, language and literacy, social relations and initiative, movement, music, classification,

harmony, number, space, and time. These key experiences will play a significant role in children's acquisition of social and academic skills needed for success in school.

b. Child-Adult Interactions

Adults observe and interact with children at various levels to discover how each child thinks and reason. Adults allow children to take control of their individual learning. Children naturally develop communication and thinking skills, and require support and motivation from both within and outside the child. Learning is facilitated by organizing schedules and environments, observing a conducive social climate, supporting constructive conflict resolution, interpreting children's actions within their experiences, and planning for in-depth, active learning based on children's interests and abilities.

c. Learning Environment

The classroom is structured into five or more child-centered interest areas. These areas are clearly labeled with simple names to convey meaning, such as "book area," "home area," and "home area." A variety of materials is provided to help children find their way, use, and return what they have completed. This requires the role and responsibility of teachers in organizing the classroom. The knowledge and role of teachers require responsibility and competence for the children's future (Heidi Harju-Luukkainen & Jonna Kangas; 2021).

Teachers in High Scope classes record children's behavior, experiences, and interests. Teachers use these records to assess progress and plan future activities to support children's growth and development. This process requires group planning, daily observation notes, and a collection of semester-long recordings. These records are also used as information for parents to help them better understand their children's development.

The stages in implementing the High Scope learning model are as follows: 1) Determining the learning theme; 2) Determining the topic or focus of the theme for implementing the learning model; 3) Preparing a story or scenario for implementing the learning model; 4) Explaining to children how to implement the routine; 5) The teacher explains the various activities that will be carried out during the learning activity; 6) The teacher gives children the opportunity to tour the activity centers and see what activities will be carried out; 7) The teacher gives children the opportunity to plan their activities; 8) The children begin their activities according to their plans; 9) Upon completion, children clean up the equipment they have used and take a break. and 10) After the break, the child reviews all the activities they have completed (Morrison, 2012).

Communication skills are fundamental for all humans in conveying information, whether messages, ideas, or concepts, from one party to another. Communication is considered effective when the communicator has succeeded in making the recipient understand the message, feel happy, and overcome problems, thus maintaining a good relationship with the recipient (Rima Ivana, 2023). Effective communication requires that the information from the communicator is understandable to the recipient. The communicator must ensure that the information conveyed is clear so that it is received by the recipient. If the communicator's message is clear and precise, effective communication will emerge. Therefore, communication skills must be cultivated from an early age. The family, especially parents, can communicate directly with children, as they play a crucial role in their development.

The role of parents is crucial because without communication within the family, it will be difficult for young children to interact with those around them. Early communication is the right step in developing good language skills in children. This is because children at an early age are very sensitive to receiving stimulation in the physical motor, intellectual-social, emotional, and language aspects. Early communication skills will not develop on their own; they need stimulation from the environment, including the family, and a learning process from both parents and educational staff. By supporting an environment that can encourage a child to speak in good and pleasant language, children can be motivated to convey information well without feeling embarrassed in expressing their feelings. Guidance from parents is very important in developing a child's potential to communicate with parents, family, and peers. Parents are responsible for raising, protecting, nurturing, caring for, and educating children from the womb to adulthood, and even until the children marry (Bili, D. L., Harel Maga, Haingu., and Natalia Krisanta, 2025). However, parents rarely observe their children's development during the golden years, as each parent has different perspectives and perceptions about early childhood education, which impacts their development. Children may experience issues such as being quiet, unwilling to join peers, unwilling to speak, not daring to express opinions, ideas, and concepts, and being less active in communicating with friends and teachers. To address these issues, parents and teachers need to devise solutions or approaches to actively engage children in every activity to stimulate their development.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the process of implementing the High Scope model and its improvement in early childhood communication skills. The subjects of this study were 14 children aged 5-6 years. This study used purposive sampling (sample selection) with the consideration of the researcher being directly involved in the learning process and parties who are knowledgeable about the problem and willing to provide accurate information. The data analysis technique was the Miles and Huberman data analysis technique, meaning that the author must conduct data analysis throughout the study. The data collection was guided by observation, interviews, documentation, and field notes. The location of this study was Santo Dominikus Weepangali Kindergarten, Wee Pangali Village, Loura District, Southwest Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The time of this study was September 2024. Data were analyzed through data correction, and taking the main and important data, then presenting the data in narrative form for easy understanding, data reduction, and the final step was drawing conclusions and verification. This study aims to obtain an overview and in-depth understanding of the learning context through the application of the High Scope model in Early Childhood Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research was conducted at Santo Dominikus Weepangali Kindergarten (TK), Weepangali Village, Laura District, Southwest Sumba Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The research involved a variety of processes to obtain results that would impact children and society at large. Producing sound research requires effort, struggle, and initial field exploration to identify issues encountered by educators and students (children). Data obtained through observations by researchers involved planning,

implementing, and evaluating learning to improve it and meet community expectations, requiring a thorough, step-by-step process.

The planning stage required the preparation of various components related to learning tools (teaching modules), media, tools, materials, assessment rubrics, observation sheets, and learning models for use during the learning process. In the implementation stage, researchers implemented the planned activities using components contained in the teaching modules, such as learning objectives, learning steps, and learning assessments. Activities will run smoothly if researchers determine and master the theme, media, classes, and learning models used in teaching. The evaluation stage is a reflective activity carried out by educators and students after the learning activity has taken place. Educators need to reflect on whether the learning has gone as expected, whether the media used is appropriate to the theme and characteristics of the children, and whether the learning model used is in accordance with the principles and steps. This is important for educators to consider to optimize the planned learning and achieve the desired objectives. This research was implemented through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the learning process, so that the desired results can be achieved.

The results of this study demonstrate improvements in communication, cognitive, social-emotional, physical-motor, and artistic skills in early childhood through the implementation of the High Scope model. These results were obtained through lesson planning using the High Scope model to assess early childhood communication skills, based on the Merdeka curriculum document, including semester programs, elements, learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP), learning objective paths (ATP), and teaching modules according to themes agreed upon by teachers and researchers.

The implementation of the High Scope model was carried out during the learning process. The High Scope model consists of five centers: a preparation center, a role-play center, a design center, an art center, and a science/natural materials center. In this study, the researchers only examined the role-play center, the science/natural materials center, and the art center because they are related to communication skills in early childhood. The implementation of the High Scope model in learning begins with introductory activities, core activities, break activities, and closing activities. These activities were well-designed and scripted to ensure their implementation proceeded according to the prepared steps. The High Scope learning model allows teachers to assess early childhood communication skills through hands-on practice.

Preliminary activities are activities often carried out by teachers to familiarize children, outlined in standard operating procedures (SOPs). These include greeting children, greeting and returning greetings, removing shoes, storing bags, lining up in the yard, performing exercises or body movements, checking nails, ears, and teeth, singing, and praying before entering the classroom. Preliminary activities for role-playing centers, science/natural materials centers, and arts centers generally provide similar pre-classroom familiarization, and there is an opening greeting upon entering.

The core activity in the role-playing center in learning early childhood communication skills is to identify types of fruit plants, playing the role of a fruit seller and a fruit buyer. This activity has an impact and helps early childhood children to improve their communication skills, self-confidence, hone their thinking patterns, and be creative in exploring their ideas through role-playing activities. In the science/natural materials center, children can learn about fruit plants in the surrounding environment and conduct simple experiments in planting fruit plant seeds. This activity really helps

children to express their opinions, ideas, and thoughts through communication both with teachers and with their peers.

After completing the core activities, the children are invited to rest. Then, they are invited to wash their hands to eat together with their friends. In the closing activity, the teacher evaluates or reviews the day's activities by asking the children what they learned that day. The children answer and briefly review the activities they completed. The success or failure of each activity is determined by the evaluation. Teachers' assessments in learning centers involve directly observing whether the children are following and completing the assignments effectively. This information is then input into the assessment module used by the teacher during the lesson. The types of assessments used by teachers to children are anecdotal assessments, performance assessments, work, work results, and photo series. Anecdotal assessments are assessments carried out on a specific incident experienced by the child, performance assessments are assessments that the teacher directly observes when the child is doing an activity, assessments of children's work results are assessments of work that the child has done and photo series assessments are assessments carried out by the teacher from providing materials, working, and producing a work that is always photographed by the teacher and described.

In the closing activity, the teacher and children can reinforce what they have accomplished in the core activities. The goal is to ask about their feelings during the learning activities based on role-playing, science/natural materials, and art. This activity is intended to motivate children to carry out activities that will be carried out in the next meeting and demonstrate the results of their work. This activity will be provided as well as to familiarize them with the homecoming routine: packing their bags, lining up, praying, and greeting them home (SOP).

Discussion

The results of the study above indicate that the communication skills of early childhood in the application of the High Scope model are in the category of very good development (BSB) and developing according to expectations (BSH). This study has implications for improving the communication skills of early childhood, it is important for teachers to develop this High Scope model in the development of every aspect of early childhood. This means that language is a system of symbols that are organized to transfer that meaning. Language is a modification of communication that includes a special symbol system that is understood and used by a group of individuals to communicate various ideas and information. For example, Indonesian uses 26 letters (a-z) to write many words. Communication is very important to train children's courage, mentality, independence, and confidence to convey messages and accept the roles of others. Communication is the transfer of meaning through sounds, signs, body language, and symbols (Dhinie, 2008: 1.15). Communication, as the main foundation, continuously plays an important role in forming healthy relationships (Ai Siska Silvia and Dela Zahara, 2024). The symbol system in language includes: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Mulyana (2005) divides several factors that influence communication, namely physical (weather, temperature, air, and wall color), psychological (attitudes, tendencies, and prejudices), social (group norms and social values) and the time when communication is carried out (Iriantara, 2014: p. 5). Therefore, to develop communication in early childhood, the above matters must be considered, including the methods used to develop communication in early childhood learning.

Communication allows children to convey ideas or thoughts to others, or simply to talk to those around them, which can be difficult and intimidating. Creating a comfortable, safe, and enjoyable learning environment helps develop communication in early childhood. One method is to act out characters or objects around the child with the aim of developing imagination and appreciation for the material being taught (Dhinie, 2008: p. 7.32).

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The results of this study provide a general overview of the implementation of the High Scope model, which has an impact on the development of early childhood communication skills, which are in the Very Well Developed (BSB) category. This is evident during the implementation of learning at St. Dominikus Weepengali Kindergarten, where the teacher's learning is child-centered to stimulate each child's development. This learning focuses on children's communication skills in each activity designed by the teacher. These skills will continue to develop if early childhood children frequently communicate and interact with others, Hermoyo (2014) noted. The development of early childhood communication skills is greatly influenced by a learning environment that provides opportunities for children to express ideas freely and in a directed manner. Ayuningrum et al. (2023) found that effective communication is essential for children's growth and development. Good communication can shape a child's personality. Effective communication can strengthen close relationships between children and parents, children and educators, and create feelings of happiness and self-worth through emotional support (Fajar, 2023).

According to Rahayu et al. (2023), children's communication development is inseparable from adult encouragement to plan activities to stimulate their receptive and expressive language skills. Improving children's communication skills isn't limited to the High Scope model; role-playing can also be done. Inten (2017) found that role-playing can foster children's courage to express their ideas, thoughts, and experiences, and to

communicate various experiences to others, without the child feeling afraid or worried about mispronouncing their words to parents, teachers, or other adults.

The High Scope model is an effective approach to improving communication development in early childhood. This is evident during learning and is observed by observers (kindergarten teachers) using observation guidelines. Observers record the child's assessment results using a score or scale. The scales are: Not Yet Developing (BB), Beginning to Develop (MB), Developing as Expected (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB). Every child naturally differs in how they perform tasks, so teachers need to score children according to their ability level. The results of implementing the High Scope model in early childhood communication skills learning can be seen in teacher/observer assessments through observations, child performance, and work results.

The application of the High Scope model in early childhood communication skills has been shown to improve. This learning not only demonstrates communication skills but also other aspects such as cognitive, social-emotional, and fine motor skills. High Scope learning supports cognitive development and can demonstrate independence, curiosity, cooperation, perseverance, creativity, and problem-solving (Kelemen; 2017).

The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively to determine the development of children's communication skills through the implementation of the High Scope model in early childhood. Learning is child-centered, so teachers only facilitate children in pre-prepared activities within active learning. According to Morrison, the High Scope model is a child-centered learning approach that prioritizes active child involvement, from planning to the learning process. Learning activities are designed according to children's interests, ensuring that learning activities are carried out by teachers and children in an appropriate and balanced manner (Morrison, 2012).

Field data on early childhood communication skills learning using the High Scope model utilizes the independent curriculum. Implementing the independent curriculum requires teachers to prepare teaching modules designed through elements, learning outcomes, learning objectives, learning flow, and achievement indicators, as well as learning objectives. Teaching modules are designed to contain at least three components: learning objectives, learning steps, and learning assessments. Teaching modules may include other components to complement the learning modules. Furthermore, teachers need to carefully prepare the tools and media used by the children, ensuring they are appropriate to the theme. BSKAP 2024 recommends a minimum of three components in a teaching module: learning objectives, learning steps, and learning assessments.

Similar to Trianto, learning management includes at least four components: time, learning activity stages, learning methods, and learning media tools (Trianto, 2011). Learning planning is designed to encompass all aspects of child development, including morals and religious values, social-emotional skills, language (children's communication skills), cognitive skills, physical motor skills, and art, all integrated into a fun learning activity (Mursid, 2015). Implementation of the High Scope model in early childhood communication learning begins with initial activities, core activities, break activities, and closing activities, in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning National PAUD Standards in Chapter V, Article 15 (2), which states that the implementation of PAUD learning includes a. initial activities, b. core activities, and c. closing activities (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning National PAUD Standards, 2014).

The implementation of early childhood learning activities consists of preliminary, core, break and closing activities, description of activities: a. Initial activities are generally

depicted as greeting activities between teachers and children, asking for news, taking attendance, giving provocative questions, conveying themes, and conveying learning objectives. b. Core activities generally provide an overview of the activities carried out by children. In the core activities, the teacher invites children to observe videos, pictures, direct media used in learning; the teacher provides explanations related to the activities carried out by children that have been prepared by the teacher based on role-playing centers, science/natural materials, and art in the High Scope model; children can carry out activities in each center according to the teacher's explanation; communicate what is not yet clear; explain the results of work according to the center, and assess the results because children are according to their abilities. d. Closing is the last sequence in learning activities. This activity is carried out by concluding learning, feedback and follow-up (Trianto, 2013). Early childhood can be taught simple communication concepts, for example conveying messages through objects, the media used because early childhood cannot be required to think logically, so the learning process is carried out by playing using props or objects around them (Maulidya Ulfah, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Early communication is the right first step in developing children's language skills. Children are provided with appropriate stimulation by their environment, as this is a sensitive or golden age. This period significantly influences the quality of a child's subsequent development. Children need to be understood and accepted by every parent, teacher, and community member involved in the education process. As adults involved in a child's education, it is important to pay attention to the child's needs, such as active learning, interaction with adults, and attention to the child's learning environment, as these are the hallmarks of the High Scope model. Implementing the High Scope model can improve children's communication skills, but cognitive, social-emotional, and fine motor skills are also evident.

Researchers recommend that educators and parents pay close attention to all aspects of early childhood development, especially communication skills. Parents, as the primary educators in the family, need to equip their children well to produce outstanding children in the future. Educators and parents build strong partnerships to engage with and contribute to their children's development. For researchers and practitioners, the results of this study can be a reference and guideline in observing child development and can be a reference for future researchers to take more samples to obtain accurate results from this study.

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