

# THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S READING MOTIVATION IN INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

Many researchers have presented about the need of parental involvement in children's learning which is positively related to achievement. The more parents involvement in children's learning especially in reading, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. Also, Programs which involve parents in reading with their children, supporting their work on homework assignments, or tutoring them using materials and instructions provided by teachers, show particularly impressive results. Although, there are some obstacles faced by parents in getting involved in their children's reading activity, they will be able to solve by applying some ideas which are suggested. The research also show that the earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects will be. Early childhood education programs with strong parent involvement components have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach.

**Keyword:** *Parental Involvement, Reading, and Motivation*

## ABSTRAK

Banyak peneliti telah menyajikan tentang perlunya keterlibatan orangtua dalam pembelajaran yang membawa pengaruh secara signifikan terhadap prestasi belajar. Intensitas keterlibatan orang tua dalam pembelajaran seperti membimbing membaca berpengaruh secara positif terhadap prestasi belajar. Demikian halnya dengan keterlibatan orang tua dalam kegiatan ekstra kurikuler menunjukkan hasil yang signifikan. Meskipun demikian, ada beberapa kendala yang dihadapi oleh orang tua untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan membaca anak-anak mereka, akan tetapi mereka akan mampu memecahkan masalah tersebut dengan menerapkan beberapa ide yang disarankan. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa sebelumnya dalam pendidikan keterlibatan orangtua dalam membimbing anak mempunyai efek yang kuat terhadap prestasi belajar. Program pendidikan anak usia dini dengan melibatkan peran orang tua menunjukkan adanya pengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan hasil belajar.

**Kata Kunci:** *Keterlibatan orangtua, Reading, dan Motivasi*

## INTRODUCTION

It has been commonly known that children's reading motivation has a big influence in their academic achievement. When children have high motivation, they will be able to get better grades in their schools. This idea is supported by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) who said that children who have higher reading motivations will obtain high achievement than those who do not. However, children's reading motivation in some developing countries is still low. This case also happens in my country, Indonesia. This situation becomes worse when children do not get any adequate support from their parents.

No one denies that parental involvement will be able to enhance their children's' reading motivation.

In Indonesia, every September is celebrated as "Reading Month." Hopefully, the celebration can improve people's reading motivation, especially children so that they will get success in their schools. Since 1995, media has always provided information to support children's reading achievement. The information in the median is also aimed at addressing the concern about Indonesian children's reading motivation which is still low.

In addition, our government always reminds parents to give supports to children

reading motivation; however, the complaint on this case still occurs. It seems that it is difficult to find an effective way to involve parents in increasing their child's reading motivation. This research will be very significant to develop an effective intervention in order to improve parents' involvement in supporting children's reading motivation in every family.

Based on the above discussion, this paper will present information about children's reading motivation, some obstacles for improving parental involvement, and some approaches and recommendation to solve problems.

### **Children's Reading Motivation**

In discussing reading motivation, it is to understand the definition of reading and motivation. Firstly, I would like to start with the definition of reading. According to Simpson (2004), reading is a process of gaining life skill which is needed by human to perform their daily activities.

In addition to the reading definition, Juel (1988) says that reading is a process to acquire a word and combine the meaning of the word into a sentence and reading pattern. The eventual purpose of reading is someone will be able to read and to get the point of a text. Juel also adds that there are two components which are important to remember in reading ability. The two components in reading ability are : decoding and comprehension. Decoding is the process that leads children to word recognition. This process is often referred to as phonemic awareness. Comprehension is the process by which the meanings of words are integrated into sentences and text structures. From this explanation, it can be concluded that reading is a process to gain an understanding from various words and letters that may go gradually or quickly.

Then, I continue with motivation. Geen (1995) says that motivation is something that refers to the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of human behavior. So, it is clear

that motivation is very important to do an activity. In general, motivation can be defined as a tendency that makes someone to try activities in certain ways. Motivation also means positive child behavior toward environmental aspects. Moreover, there is also an opinion that motivation is a constant tendency to focus on and enjoy a happy activity.

Based on the above opinions, we can conclude that children's reading motivation is something which is strong that can push children to look at, pay attention to, and feel attracted to reading so that they want to read something based on their own desire. In addition, Sinambela (1993), defines children's reading motivation as the existence of positive and interested feeling within children toward the book that they are reading. Sinambela adds that reading motivation aspect includes feeling comfortable to read, reading frequency, and the awareness of the benefit of reading.

### **How To Teach Children Become Good Readers**

According to Neuman (2005), there are five simple ways that parents can do to teach their children become readers. The five ways are :

#### *Simply talk- a lot*

Talking with children is very important in language development. The reason is that children will learn words and build vocabulary by listening and engaging with us in their daily activities. The more words we use to speak with them, the more words that they will know. For example, when they are upset, we can use different ways to describe their feelings.

#### *Play encourages Narrative*

It is widely accepted that playing will be very helpful for engaging children in reading. By playing, children will be able to enhance and refine their capacity to use symbols and construct imaginary words that will be beneficial for having their sense of narrative. When we play a narrative scenario, we can

extend vocabulary through description or add a wrinkle to the story that may encourage problem solving.

### *Sharing stories is key*

Story will be important to teach our children become readers. This is because children use story to impose a structure on experience. A child who becomes connected to stories develops good habits for listening that improve their appetite for reading. Take an example, we can ask them what will happen if the shoe actually fits the wicked sister in Cinderella.

### *The song language connection*

When we sing the ABC song or play a game with word repetition, we are trying to strengthen our children's ability to hear and to pay attention to the sounds and rhythms of speech. When children engage in verbal play, it supports the concept of words and tunes their ears to differences and similarities in how words sound. So, we are supposed to sing as many as we can and not to worry about our voice because most children like their parents' voice.

### *How writing develops reading*

Research shows that reading and writing develop alongside one and another and cannot be separated from each other. Writing is important in the early years because it helps children connect what they hear in words with the symbols that they represent in print. We can improve our children's reading through writing by letting them to enjoy the act of writing, such as giving them a crayon or marker to draw whatever they want.

## **The Age For Establishing Children's Reading Motivation**

There is a common question regarding when the appropriate time to establish children's reading motivation is. According to Ward (2005), children have gotten some basic reading ability when they are three years old, then they will be able to construct some simple sentences in the age of five. On the other hand,

Hoffman (2006) says that it will be a great thing if we could teach our children in earlier age.

Based on the above explanation, we can indicate that parents can establish their children's reading motivation from their earlier age such as when they are 3 years old. Since this reading motivation can not be formed automatically, it is important that parents really pay attention on the progress of their children's reading ability. In addition, children's reading motivation is also influenced by stimulation gotten from the environment. In this case, a family will be the primary place to push and build child's reading motivation. Parents are supposed to understand the importance of their role in enhancing child's reading motivation, and then followed by teachers, children's classmates and societies.

In addition to children's reading activity, they usually will use the book to get some knowledge before they learn reading. They will understand how parents start reading a something. For example, parents will start from the up-down, read every lines from the left side to the right (Pepak, 2007)

## **The Benefits of Parental Involvement in Children's Reading Motivation**

It is widely accepted that parents should be involved in their children's reading activity. The evidence has proved about the benefits of parents being involved in their education generally and in their reading activity particular. Parental involvement in reading activity will lead children to get higher academic achievement, greater cognitive competence and have few problems in their school activity. This idea is supported by Johnson (2007) who said that parents play an important role in increasing their children's reading ability. When parents get involved in their children reading activity, it will enable their children to get a better education, behavior and higher school achievement. If children do not have this basic requirement to gain

other knowledge, they will have challenges in establishing their identity so that they will not miss any opportunity in their lives. So, parents will be able to prevent their children from facing this challenge by getting involved actively in their children's reading activity.

### **Obstacles in Making Parents Get Involved in Their Children's Reading Activity**

In developing countries, children's reading motivation is still low although reading is one of the factors that can not be separated from education in whatever level children are. Parental involvement in education especially in reading activity is very important; however, we still face some obstacles in making their involvement run well. Below are obstacles in making parents get involved in their children's education (Africa News, 2007):

- Parents who never bother to visit the school to see the teachers of their children eye-ball to eye-ball.
- Parents who drink heavily and indulge in continuous fighting watched by helpless children.
- Parents who have no time for their children because of being too busy making money, even to the extent that they cannot help their children with their schoolwork.
- Parents who never check whether their children attend school daily, and are shocked the day the teacher tells them that their children never attended school for the whole term.
- Parents who do not really see the value of education.
- In rural areas there are parents who strongly believe that their children fail in school because of witch-craft.

### **Some Solutions and Recommendation to Improve Parental Involvement in Their Children's Reading Activity**

It is widely believed that every activities done face some obstacles. This case also

occurs in making parents get involved in children's education, especially in improving their children's reading motivation. However, by understanding some recommended ways, those obstacles can be eliminated so that parental involvement in education especially in reading activities can be improved gradually. According Redding (1991) there are several ways to enhance parental involvement:

- Parents must be seen not as external parties to be involved through the good graces of the school but as full partner in the school community
- Parents involvement begins with parents most likely to respond and proceed in wider circles of involvement as the task of reaching other parents is assumed by the parent organization and the unit circle of parents.
- It must focus on the central aims of the school; when parents are asked to be involved, it should be a reason that they really counts.
- Parents involvement must be measured by quantitative criteria, not head count
- Priorities of parent involvement in order to encourage the involvement of parents with their ways that matter to the child's learning: to involve parents with one another and with one another children in ways that matter to their children's learning; and to encourage involvement of parent with the activities of the school.

### **The Importance of Understanding Parental Involvement in Reading For Future Carrier**

I think all of us agree that parental involvement will commonly refer to the establishment of "warm and close" relationships with children, which can be accomplished with relatively little time investment. The key ingredient appears to be positive emotion and attention toward children. I think there are three components of parental involvement considered to be crucial such as interaction,



the availability of time for children, and taking responsibility for children. Also, we believe that all children have the potential to learn, to get high expectation which is essential for personal development and optimal learning and to get a better life for their future. Therefore, I suggest that parents should be consistently involved in their children's education especially in reading activities.

We read on the newspaper that in the US and Europe countries that parental involvement have increased so that it does contribute to their children's intellectual, social, and emotional development. In addition to this, there are some research indicate that children who have adequate attachment from their parents will able to get a better academic achievement and to interact more socially with their environment.

Moreover, according to Oleck (2007) the future of our children's will depend on the skills that they have. By having adequate skills, they will be ready to face the challenge and to compete with one another. Therefore, I believe that parental involvement will be very useful for making our children well-prepared for challenges in their future lives.

On the other hand, parental involvement in their reading activities in some developing countries such as Indonesia is still low. Their low economy status and their educational background are some reasons for these problems. However, by understanding the importance of parental involvement in their children education and some solutions to solve obstacles, I do believe that they can improve their involvement again. To me, this study is very useful for my career goal because it has broadened my knowledge of how to get involved in our children's education effectively. Since I am also a father, I am sure that when I go back to my country, I will be able to apply this approach and give my full attention on my children's education especially in his reading skills. In addition to this, I am also planning to conduct some discussion such as training or

workshop to share the importance of parental involvement in children's education, especially in children's reading motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Many researches have presented information to us about parental involvement in children's learning which is positively related to achievement. Further, researches tell us that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning especially in reading, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. These researches do work for all types of parent involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of students.

In addition, it is important for us to know that there are strong indications that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home. Programs which involve parents in reading with their children, supporting their work on homework assignments, or tutoring them using materials and instructions provided by teachers, show particularly impressive results. Although, there are some obstacles faced by parents in getting involved in their children's reading activity, they will be able to solve by applying some ideas which are suggested.

Finally, researches also showed that the earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects will be. Early childhood education programs with strong parent involvement components have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach.

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