STANDARDIZATION OF THE NEW STUDENT ADMISSION PROCESS AT AL-AZHAR 29 BSB ISLAMIC KINDERGARTEN AND PRESCHOOL IN SEMARANG

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of school activity programs in the process of placing new students at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang. School readiness assessments are used as the main basis for class grouping and learning strategy planning throughout the school year. This study was conducted because there is still a gap in research on how the concept of school readiness is consistently applied in institutions with dense and development-oriented learning programs. The research used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and assessment document reviews, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model through a process of reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that school readiness assessments play an important role in forming a balanced class composition, supporting differentiated learning strategies, and creating a more stable and inclusive classroom dynamic. The information obtained from mapping children's readiness helps teachers design early interventions and learning routines that are tailored to the developmental needs of each student. In addition, readiness assessments strengthen communication between schools and parents and increase family involvement in the educational process. Overall, the school readiness assessment process not only serves as an administrative procedure but also provides a foundation for more responsive and sustainable learning planning and evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is education before entering primary school. This education is a developmental effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age, carried out through the provision of stimulation (Saputra n.d.). Early childhood education plays a strategic role in establishing the foundation for a child's spiritual, social, and

emotional development. During this period, moral values need to be consistently instilled because children are in the imitation phase, where they imitate the behavior they see in their surroundings, especially their teachers. Developing morals from an early age is crucial so that children have a strong moral foundation before entering the next level of education. Therefore, teachers have a significant responsibility in creating a learning environment that supports the development of daily moral habits. (Jurnal et al. 2023).

However, the main challenge facing early childhood education institutions today is the busy learning schedule. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum and school programs often include a variety of complex daily activities, encompassing academics, motor skills, arts, and even religious activities. This situation requires teachers to integrate moral education into every learning activity so that these values become part of children's daily routines rather than merely supplementary activities. In this context, teachers' ability to maintain consistency is crucial for the success of moral education (Khazam and Munir 2023).

As an Islamic educational institution, KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang has a special focus on cultivating morals through structured learning activities. However, the school's busy program sometimes poses a challenge in ensuring that each activity incorporates elements of moral development. Teachers are required to have effective, creative, and adaptive strategies for integrating moral values into various planned activities. Research on teacher strategies is important because it can provide a concrete picture of moral development practices in Islamic schools.

Various previous studies have shown that the success of moral education in early childhood education (PAUD) is greatly influenced by teacher consistency and collaboration within the school environment. However, there has been little research specifically examining teacher strategies for maintaining consistent moral instillation amidst a busy learning schedule, particularly at the Islamic institution Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang, which has a fairly intensive program. This creates a new research space to explore how teachers implement these strategies, the obstacles they face, and how solutions are implemented in real-life situations (Zulfiana 2025).

Although various previous studies have examined the importance of moral development in early childhood, most studies have focused on methods for instilling moral values, such as habituation, role modeling, and positive reinforcement. These studies have not yet explored in depth how teachers can maintain consistency in learning environments with numerous activities and demands. Consequently, there is a gap in understanding the practical strategies teachers use to ensure moral values are integrated into all aspects of daily activities (Tauhid et al. 2023).

Furthermore, most previous research has focused solely on the implementation of moral development in general, without considering the context of institutions with busy schedules, such as KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang, which is renowned for its intensive academic, Islamic, and self-development programs. This situation creates a research gap regarding how institutions with busy schedules can maintain the effectiveness of sustainable moral development. Therefore, more specific research is needed on techniques for integrating moral values in busy learning environments (Istriyani and Satyarini 2021).

Another gap lies in the lack of research that addresses teachers' strategies in a planned and systematic manner, not just their behavior or habits in teaching morals. Few studies describe how teachers plan, implement, evaluate, and adapt moral-instilling strategies to suit classroom dynamics. This highlights the need for research that can describe teacher strategies more operationally so they can serve as guidelines for other educational institutions. (Susilawati 2024).

Furthermore, previous research rarely addresses the factors supporting and inhibiting the consistency of moral instillation in school settings with their fast-paced activities. This gap is crucial to address, as the primary challenge in moral development lies not only in designing activities, but also in maintaining these values despite teachers' demanding tasks and time constraints. Given these gaps, this study aims to contribute by exploring in-depth teacher strategies for maintaining consistent moral instillation amidst the busy learning schedule at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, implementation processes, obstacles, and supporting factors that influence the success of moral instillation in the context of integrated Islamic education (Rosmiati 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze teacher strategies in maintaining consistent moral development at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang. This study focuses on the strategies implemented, their effectiveness, and the supporting and inhibiting factors in the practice of moral development. The results are expected to contribute to the development of character education theory for early childhood and serve as a reference for schools in designing more effective and sustainable moral development programs.

METHOD

This research was conducted at the Al Azhar 29 BSB Islamic Kindergarten, Semarang, located on Jl. RM. Hadisoebeno Sosrowardoyo, Kedungpane Village, Mijen District, Semarang City. This location was chosen based on the consideration that the Al Azhar 29 BSB Islamic Kindergarten is one of the integrated Islamic educational institutions that consistently implements a school readiness program in the New Student Placement Process. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design because the focus of the research aims to explore in depth how the school readiness program is implemented in the new student placement process at the Al-Azhar 29 BSB Islamic Kindergarten. This approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of assessment practices, decision-making, and the dynamics of teachers and parents in the student placement process based on school readiness. The research subjects consisted of the principal, class teachers, or special assistant educators involved, and parents of new students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select informants who were considered capable of providing the most relevant information regarding readiness assessment practices and the class placement process.

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To maintain data validity, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information from teachers, principals, and parents, as well as comparing interview results with observations and assessment documents. Validity was strengthened through member checking by reconfirming findings with informants to ensure the researcher's interpretations were consistent with field conditions. Furthermore, the researcher conducted prolonged engagement during several school visits to ensure the data obtained were more accurate and contextual. Overall, this research methodology was designed to ensure that the analysis of the student admission program at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang was conducted in-depth, systematic, and scientifically accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the school readiness program in the student placement process at Al-Azhar Islamic Kindergarten shows that the assessment process in the new school year has a significant impact on how the school manages classroom dynamics, individual children's needs, and learning strategies throughout the year. The assessment process conducted by the school not only assesses basic cognitive aspects such as the ability to recognize letters, numbers, or patterns, but also encompasses developmental aspects that are far more fundamental to a child's success in adapting to the learning environment. Teachers conduct in-depth observations of emotional regulation skills, independence, ability to follow instructions, social readiness, communication skills, and motor skills that support daily classroom activities (Tjajul 2024). The comprehensive picture obtained from this assessment serves as a basis for

schools to create more balanced class compositions that support each child's potential. Field findings clearly demonstrate that children with higher readiness tend to adapt quickly to school routines, while those with lower school readiness require additional support to adjust in the early weeks.

Placing students based on readiness has a direct impact on how teachers manage their classrooms. Teachers report that when students' readiness profiles are known early on, the learning process is more efficient because teaching strategies can be tailored to the class composition. Classes composed of children with relatively good self-regulation skills tend to exhibit a more organized flow of activities, greater focus, and fewer behavioral disruptions. Meanwhile, for classes with a significant number of children with moderate to low readiness, teachers can implement a more structural approach, such as using more predictable routines, breaking instruction into smaller chunks, and providing additional emotional support (Melina 2010). The effect is seen in the improved quality of children's learning experiences, as they are placed in an environment that is developmentally appropriate to their readiness. This reinforces previous theories that emphasize that differences in readiness can influence how students respond to learning activities, and that early mapping can facilitate teachers in developing differentiated learning.

In addition to improving classroom management effectiveness, the readiness-based placement process at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang also impacts the school's relationship with parents. Parents' understanding of the importance of school readiness is fostered through transparent and informative communication from the school. When the school explained that assessments are not intended to label students as smart or less smart, but rather to understand their children's needs, most parents responded positively to the process. (Fatimah and Kusumawati 2025). They felt that their children were being personally cared for and that their developmental needs were a primary consideration. Some parents even stated that the assessment results gave them new insights into their children's condition, particularly regarding independence or social-emotional skills they had not previously realized. Parents' trust in the school increased as they saw continuity between the assessment process, class placement, and the teaching strategies implemented by teachers. This demonstrates that school readiness is not just a technical issue but also part of the collaboration between families and schools in building an ideal learning environment.

The implementation of the school readiness program also resulted in the development of a more targeted and targeted early intervention program. After the mapping was conducted, the school developed various support programs for children who needed additional assistance, including language stimulation activities, motor skills training, social skills training sessions, and fostering independence skills such as packing bags, putting on shoes, and following simple instructions. This program was not only provided at the beginning of the year but was also implemented periodically to ensure consistent child development. Teachers were able to monitor each child's progress over time, comparing the results of the initial assessment with progress made throughout the learning process. This demonstrated that readiness is a crucial foundation for schools to build a sustainable child development system, not simply a basis for class grouping.

In terms of classroom dynamics, this implementation has been shown to create a more stable, harmonious learning environment that is aligned with children's developmental needs. Teachers report that classes designed around developmental readiness tend to have more positive student interactions (Lestari and Sylvia 2023). Highly prepared children often model behavior for their peers, while teachers can pay more attention to low-readiness children without feeling overwhelmed by the large differences in the classroom. This dynamic facilitates the creation of a more supportive and inclusive learning culture. Children who were initially shy gradually gain confidence in interacting, while children who previously demonstrated difficulty regulating their emotions begin to transition smoothly through activities. This demonstrates that school readiness programs have a long-term impact on the quality of children's social interactions and character development.

The implementation of the school readiness program at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang is also in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes personalized learning and student profile mapping as the starting point of the educational process. School readiness is positioned as a crucial factor because it helps schools ensure that the learning process is not uniform but responds to individual student differences. Teachers are given the space to adjust the rhythm, material, and teaching approach according to the child's developmental

readiness level. This approach not only increases learning effectiveness but also strengthens children's rights to receive an education appropriate to their developmental stage. This demonstrates that the school readiness assessment process should not be considered merely an administrative procedure, but an integral part of a learning system that is humanistic and responsive to children's varying abilities.

Overall, the research results indicate that the school readiness program in the student placement process at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang is very significant in improving the quality of educational services, creating more balanced classes, strengthening communication with parents, and supporting the implementation of more effective early intervention programs. The implementation of the school readiness program provides a solid foundation for teachers in creating more structured, adaptive, and developmentally-centered learning. These findings indicate that the school readiness assessment process plays a crucial role not only at the beginning of the school year, but throughout the educational process, as it serves as the main map that guides teachers in understanding, assisting, and developing the potential of each child in a sustainable manner.

The implementation of the school readiness program at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang has also proven to be a crucial tool in ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students. Through a structured assessment process, the school can identify children who may not have had prior preschool experience or who come from families with different developmental settings. This identification is crucial because it provides the school with the opportunity to provide additional support early on, so that children who arrive with lower levels of readiness do not immediately fall behind their peers. This reinforces the finding that school readiness programs can significantly reduce developmental gaps when used as a basis for learning planning (Cevin Sanderzon Makapedua 2021). In this way, schools can ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to develop optimally without experiencing significant obstacles during the transition to a formal learning environment.

Furthermore, data can provide valuable longitudinal insights for teachers in monitoring student development throughout the year. Teachers use assessment results not only as a starting point but also as a benchmark for evaluating student progress over time. When teachers observe significant improvements in independence, emotional regulation, or language skills, they can adjust their teaching approach to be more challenging and enriching. Conversely, when a child's development appears to be stagnant, teachers can change strategies or collaborate with parents to find the best solution. This continuous use of data demonstrates that the approach does not stop at the placement stage but rather becomes an ongoing cycle of analysis and intervention. This pattern reflects reflective and evidence-based educational practices, aligned with the principles of authentic assessment-based education.

Di sisi lain, implementasi program kesiapan sekolah juga memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan Teacher professional competence. An in-depth assessment process requires teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of early childhood development, the ability to conduct authentic observations, and the ability to interpret developmental data into pedagogical decisions. Research findings indicate that teachers at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang are increasingly skilled in using assessment instruments, recording developmental progress, and implementing differentiated learning based on student readiness profiles. These skills not only improve the quality of teaching but also strengthen the role of teachers as observers of development and primary facilitators in children's learning processes. This implementation thus serves as a means of improving pedagogical quality through systematic and consistent assessment practices (Nisa 2021).

In the context of school management, school readiness also helps schools design more accurate academic policies and annual programs. Mapping student readiness profiles annually allows schools to predict human resource needs, determine teacher distribution, manage class sizes, and ensure balanced teacher-student ratios. Furthermore, school readiness program data helps schools identify teacher training needs. For example, if many children present with social-emotional challenges, schools can strengthen teacher training in behavior management and emotion-based interventions. Implementing school readiness serves as a strategic planning tool that strengthens the school's overall education system and ensures the continuity of quality education services from year to year.

Another important aspect of this discussion is how the school readiness assessment process fosters a more inclusive school culture. When schools understand that each child comes from a different developmental background,

the focus is no longer solely on academic achievement. School readiness programs encourage teachers and schools to prioritize often-overlooked developmental aspects, such as the ability to work together, understand emotions, follow routines, and build self-confidence. This approach allows children with special needs or unique developmental profiles to feel accepted as part of the classroom community. The concept of inclusion is no longer just a slogan, but is practiced in placement, instruction, and daily interventions. Thus, readiness provides the foundation for a warmer, more child-friendly, and more responsive learning environment to accommodate diversity.

Furthermore, the implementation of a school readiness program at Al-Azhar 29 Islamic Kindergarten, BSB Semarang, demonstrated that the developmental assessment process conducted at the beginning of the year can predict the quality of a child's transition to the next level of learning. Teachers found that children with high readiness at the beginning of the year tended to demonstrate good learning independence, the ability to complete tasks, and stable learning motivation throughout the school year. Meanwhile, children with low readiness who received early intervention were shown to be able to catch up significantly by the end of the first semester. These findings provide empirical evidence that a school readiness program can serve as an important indicator for designing transition programs, not only for the current year but also for ongoing planning for the next level. This confirms that school readiness is not just initial knowledge, but also a predictor of a child's long-term learning success.

Figure.1.1 Documentation of Observation Implementation

The implementation of the school readiness program at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang also demonstrates how the developmental assessment process can bridge the gap between the home and school worlds. When assessment results are shared with parents, they not only receive information about their child's condition but also gain a clear picture of what skills need to be strengthened at home. Teachers explained that family involvement increased after the assessment, especially among parents who previously lacked a clear understanding of how to support their child's independence and social skills. This change in family involvement patterns impacted the consistency of children's habits, such as following routines, managing emotions, and completing simple tasks. This more concrete collaboration reduced the gap between school expectations and home habits, resulting in a smoother transition for children to the school environment. These findings demonstrate that the school readiness assessment process not only functions internally but also has an ecological impact that extends beyond the family.

More deeply, the implementation demonstrates how the school readiness assessment process can create a more humane transition for new students. For some children, the classroom environment may feel unfamiliar and overstimulating, which can be overwhelming. Through mapping, teachers can understand children's sensitivity to change, their level of confidence in interactions, and their ability to adapt to the broader social environment. Teachers then design gentler transition strategies, such as allowing for gradual adjustment periods, providing quiet areas for children who are easily overstimulated, or assigning small tasks that allow children to feel successful in the early days. Transitions designed around readiness have been shown to reduce initial anxiety, decrease the number of tantrums in the first week of school, and accelerate the establishment of stable daily routines. This demonstrates that readiness is not simply a grouping tool but an integral part of the process of humanizing early childhood education.

From a pedagogical perspective, the school readiness assessment process changes the way teachers view classroom learning. Teachers no longer rely on a single approach for all children, but instead implement truly data-

driven differentiation practices. Learning approaches also become more flexible, both in terms of material presentation, activity duration, and how children demonstrate understanding. Children with high school readiness can be given additional challenges such as problem-solving activities or independent exploration, while children with low school readiness receive more intensive support in more concrete and structured activities (Sridadi 2023). This flexibility creates a learning space that better respects children's natural developmental rhythms while ensuring that each child remains optimally engaged in the learning process. These findings confirm that the school readiness assessment process can encourage teachers to move beyond uniform learning patterns and toward a more personalized and adaptive approach.

The implementation of school readiness programs also has a significant impact on shaping the social and emotional climate in the classroom. When teachers understand children's social-emotional profiles from the outset, they can design more empathetic interaction strategies, adjust their communication styles, and provide more appropriate emotional support. Children who tend to withdraw, for example, are given gradual opportunities to interact through pair activities before moving on to group work. Conversely, highly active and impulsive children are directed toward activities that require gradual self-regulation. This approach creates a more stable classroom atmosphere and helps children build confidence in interactions. This strong social-emotional classroom dynamic provides an important foundation for children's academic and character development, aligning with the view that school readiness encompasses social skills, self-regulation, and emotional harmony.

In the long term, the school readiness assessment process also serves as a developmental documentation tool that can be archived for cross-year analysis. When schools record school readiness data year after year, they can see patterns in student development, trends in areas most in need of intervention, and the effectiveness of existing programs. This data helps schools refine their internal curricula, strengthen transition programs, and develop foundational skills strengthening activities that better meet the needs of their student population. This longitudinal mapping empowers schools to make evidence-based decisions, not assumptions. Thus, school readiness is not just about placing children in the right position, but rather about establishing a systemic foundation for improving the overall quality of education.

The entire process of implementing the school readiness program at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang ultimately demonstrated that a systematic and continuous development assessment process can provide clear direction for all components of education, from teachers, parents, to school policies. This approach proves that the quality of early childhood education is not only determined by the teaching materials or facilities available, but also by the school's ability to correctly read children's developmental needs from day one. The school readiness assessment process provides an accurate initial map so that every intervention, teaching, and policy can be formulated with a solid foundation and relevant to the real conditions of students. These findings reinforce the understanding that school readiness is a key element that can improve the quality of learning, smooth the transition process, strengthen family-school relationships, and build a more positive school experience for each child.

Figure.1.2 Interview Implementation Documentation

Standarisasi penerimaan calon siswa dipandang penting oleh guru karena berfungsi sebagai mekanisme Quality assurance at the early stages of the educational process. With clear standards, schools can ensure that class composition is balanced and conducive to learning. Teachers gain an objective reference for assessing children's initial

readiness across various developmental aspects, from communication and social interaction skills to motor skills and independence. The clarity of these standards helps schools maintain the quality of educational services and ensure that each child is placed in a learning environment appropriate to their developmental stage.

In addition to serving as a selection tool, admission standards also play a strategic role in early-year learning planning. The results of assessments and mapping of child readiness provide a comprehensive picture of students' initial conditions, enabling teachers to set realistic and measurable learning objectives. This information enables the development of learning activities that are neither too difficult nor too easy, while also supporting the implementation of learning differentiation. Teachers can identify children who need additional support and adjust teaching methods and strategies to be more effective for their class groups. Thus, admission standards contribute to the development of adaptation programs, daily routines, and optimal classroom management from day one.

Furthermore, admission standards facilitate teachers' ability to identify individual children's needs. Through initial assessments, teachers can identify each student's unique strengths and challenges. This mapping helps teachers design more targeted interventions, whether in the form of additional stimulation, activity modifications, or individual mentoring. This needs-based approach increases each child's opportunity to develop optimally according to their capacity and developmental pace.

From a teacher's perspective, implementing admission standards has been shown to positively impact children's development after they enter school. An accurate initial understanding of a child's condition enables teachers to offer learning experiences aligned with their developmental stages. Children become better prepared to face the demands of learning, adapt more easily to new environments, and demonstrate increased confidence in participating in classroom activities. Preventive and targeted interventions from the outset help minimize learning barriers and support holistic development, including cognitive, language, social-emotional, and independence. Therefore, admission standards serve not only to regulate the administrative process of student admission but also serve as a crucial foundation for creating quality learning experiences for children.

Interview results indicate that the initial observation program for new student admissions (PPDB) at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang is an important step in assessing children's readiness before entering the formal school environment. Observations are conducted as a form of selection due to the high interest of prospective students who register each year. The school has standards that prospective new students must meet, so each child is required to take a developmental test, which covers the ability to distinguish colors, arrange objects, auditory and visual observation, and several other developmental aspects such as language, motor skills, and basic skills. The teacher explained that the observation results are an early indicator to see whether the child is ready to follow the rhythm of learning at school..

In some cases, observations indicate signs of developmental delays or specific challenges, such as a child's inability to distinguish colors, difficulty concentrating, high dependence on parents, or constant crying when left alone. If these conditions are found, teachers will conduct follow-up interviews with parents to gather information about the child's developmental history. Admission decisions are then made based on compliance with school readiness standards. Children who do not meet these standards may not be accepted, but schools will still provide solutions or recommendations appropriate to the child's condition, such as therapy, additional stimulation, or delayed school entry.

Once a child is accepted as a student, the school does not place all high-ability children in one class. Instead, placement is done heterogeneously, combining children with well-developed abilities with those who still show some weaknesses. Teachers explain that this is done to create a more balanced class dynamic. Early childhood learns through interaction, so diversity in the classroom can facilitate the process of mutual imitation and foster empathy. Classes that are too homogeneous, for example, only containing children who have not yet fully developed, have the potential to create a less conducive classroom. Conversely, if only children with highly independent abilities are included, opportunities for social learning become less balanced.

During the observation process, schools face several obstacles. One of the main challenges is observing children who are completely new to the school or who have never attended school before. Children arriving at school for the first time often feel unfamiliar, afraid of meeting new people, reluctant to leave their parents, or even cry during

the observation. This situation makes it difficult for teachers to objectively assess the child's abilities. In situations like this, schools schedule repeat observations on another day in the hope that the child will exhibit more natural behavior. Follow-up observations are an alternative measure to provide schools with a more accurate picture of development.

The results of the study indicate that initial observation is a crucial element in the selection and placement process for new students at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang. This observation not only serves as a form of assessment but also as a mechanism to ensure that children entering the school have adequate developmental readiness. This finding aligns with early childhood education literature, which states that school readiness is a fundamental factor for a child's success in formal education. This readiness encompasses physical-motor, social-emotional, cognitive, language, and adaptive skills. Therefore, initial assessment is a critical step in mapping a child's initial condition and tailoring an appropriate learning program.

Temuan penelitian juga menegaskan bahwa keputusan sekolah dalam menerima atau menolak calon peserta The selection process for students is based on professional considerations. When a child exhibits developmental delays, the school does not make an immediate decision but instead conducts follow-up interviews with parents to obtain more comprehensive information. This approach reflects the principle of family engagement in Early Childhood Education (PAUD), which involves working collaboratively with families to understand the child's developmental history. Furthermore, providing recommendations or solutions for children who do not yet meet standards demonstrates that the school remains committed to the child's development, not just the administrative aspects of PPDB (Enrollment Admissions).

The selection process conducted by KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang demonstrates a professional approach to holistically assessing child development. Color discrimination tests, object arrangement tests, and auditory and visual observation are all part of the developmental assessment process relevant to early childhood development indicators. This activity aligns with the principles of the Early Childhood Education Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of diagnostic assessments to identify a child's initial abilities and learning needs. The school does not use an academic assessment process for selection, but instead focuses on basic developmental skills. This demonstrates the school's understanding of the characteristics of early childhood learners who are not yet ready to be burdened with academic demands but require support in more fundamental aspects of development.

The subsequent discussion regarding child placement in classes demonstrates the school's understanding of the importance of social dynamics in early childhood learning. Heterogeneous classes containing a mix of children with diverse abilities have been shown to be beneficial for social-emotional development. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which states that children learn best through interactions with peers of higher abilities. Therefore, placing children based on diverse abilities can be an effective strategy for fostering collaboration, positive imitation, and social adaptation.

The challenges schools face, particularly when observing children who have never attended school, are a common challenge in the child assessment process. Children who are still highly dependent on their parents tend to exhibit unstable behavior when in a new environment, making assessments less valid. The school's action of scheduling re-observations is a responsive assessment strategy tailored to the child's needs. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that initial observations serve not only as an administrative selection process for PPDB (School Enrollment) but also as a crucial part of the process of mapping children's learning needs. Observations help teachers identify initial conditions, strengths, and areas requiring further support. This allows for more targeted learning design, and optimal placement of children in classes to create a conducive learning environment. These results demonstrate that KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang has implemented the principles of development-based early childhood education and respect for individual differences.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the school readiness program implemented in the placement process for new students at KB-TK Islam Al-Azhar 29 BSB Semarang plays a highly strategic role in improving the quality of early

childhood education services. Early readiness assessments have been shown to provide a comprehensive picture of a child's developmental status, encompassing cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor, and independence aspects. This information serves as a crucial basis for schools in determining balanced class placements, designing differentiated learning strategies, and developing early intervention programs tailored to each child's needs.

The school readiness-based placement process has been shown to create classroom dynamics that are more conducive, inclusive, and adaptive to individual differences. Teachers can manage learning activities more effectively because they have a prior understanding of students' developmental profiles. Furthermore, collaboration between teachers and parents is strengthened through transparent communication of assessment results. Parents gain a new understanding of their child's developmental status and can provide more appropriate stimulation support at home.

The implementation of readiness assessments also serves as a means to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students. Children who demonstrate low readiness receive early support and intervention, enabling them to catch up during the learning process. This program also serves as an important indicator for schools in designing academic policies, classroom management, and developing teacher professional competencies. Thus, school readiness is not merely an administrative procedure in the PPDB (Admissions Enrollment) process, but a fundamental foundation for building a humanistic, responsive, and sustainable learning experience for all students.

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