

Research Article

Creating an Environment that Influences Children's Learning and Character Qualities

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ORCIDImanuel Hitipeuw: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9939-6310>**Abstract.**

This study aimed to describe the environment created by parents for their children and its effects on academic performance and character qualities. Utilizing a survey methodology, data were collected through direct and indirect observations and analyzed qualitatively. The research subjects comprised two children from the same family. The findings revealed that the parents created an environment to engage the children in arts and physical exercise. They provided various tools such as musical instruments, laptops, smartphones, bikes, paper and coloring pencils, building blocks, toys, puzzles, and books to facilitate activities like singing, playing, reading, typing, writing, and creating. Although the language setting of these tools was in English, parents communicated with the children in Indonesian. The effects of this environment were evident in the children's development of characteristics such as resilience, creativity, responsibility, and self-regulated learning. These traits, fostered by the environment, subsequently contributed to the children's enjoyment and success in academic, social, language, and artistic performances.

Keywords: creating environment, children learning, character qualities

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1. Introduction

Creating an environment for influencing students to behave appropriately is important and working. Many theorists, researchers and practices ([1], [2]) support for making environment that triggers correct responses from individuals interacting with it, and even helping in building personality of the person [3], [4]. Those in architecture discipline create environments and strategies to stimulate people to behave and mobile appropriately, and they call it as universal design [5], [6]. In the classroom, we learn about how to design an instruction to accommodate all students regardless of they have disabilities or not in order to help them successfully in social and academic performance [7], [8]. In a nutshell, the environment can influence individuals to learn and behave appropriately.

Knowing the effects of the environment upon the development of children is a must if we want them to grow healthy and intelligent that leads to wellbeing. Children need help from the environment to develop their potential. According to Vygotsky, children need



scaffolding in order to help them master the task [9], [10] [11], [12]. They also need to be given an environment that support them to be competent, related, and have autonomy, and even need to be accepted socially [13], [14].

The first environment is home, and the parent's role is important to build relationships and give home environment that help children grow healthy [2], [15]. How parents think and interact with their children are crucial moments. Parents might be helpful for children or vice versa. In this digital era, many parents allow their children to use smartphones. This technology can be used to help the children learn or make them addicted to the entertainments offered by the device. In this case, parents need to learn the effect of the digital devices [16], [17] before letting them to play with the digital devices connected with internet. This means that parents, caregiver, or teachers in schools have to put a lot of effort into designing the environment that can influence student learning and behavior that we need to see in their life [13].

Each child has the potential to learn or to grow from all the interaction with the world. Even among children suspected have developmental problems or disabilities, they still have a hope to reach their goals without many delay if they are supported since the beginning of their life, such an Rtl (Response to Intervention), an early childhood intervention developed in US where parents and experts helping children to reach their developmental milestones [18], [19], [20], so they are ready when time comes for them to begin their education. And even after this period, children who are at risk [21], [22] in school because of lack of academic skills and repeating the same grade are still have a hope to be excellent and competitive in global level as the Papua students showed [23], [24]. This program showed that social and instructional support are matter in helping all children.

The notions that all children can learn are important. In earlier stages of the development, the dendrites of children neurons are so flourish [25] and research on brain related to education come to the public in 1990 when medias publicized those research [26]. This idea and research related to neurons drive experts in psychology and education to elaborate their knowledge and practices with the brain. Neurons of early childhood children have more possibilities to accept the chemical information (neurotransmitter) release from other neuron axons. In terms of learning, this means that at earlier stages, children are ready to learn many things such as languages naturally. We can find children mastering languages more than one language, and in my experiences living in Indonesia, we can find easily children can master at least two or three languages (English, tribal and national languages) before they entered schools.

Based on the ideas above, through this paper, I would like to report one case of one family with two children that creates a home environment that affects their children's development. The environment created by the parents can be traced based on the ecological systems of Bronfenbrenner or constructivism by Piaget and Vygotsky [27], [28]. Reporting this case is important when dealing with gen Z where their lives are influenced by the digital devices connected to the internet that drive them to the bigger social environment. To navigate digital information in order to help them learn and growth are crucial. Because certain parents have to compete with the outside influence that bombarded their children if they want to keep their young ones going astray from the proper development. The lesson learned is important to be reported for encouraging others to support the children's development. So, in this seminar, I would like to expose some of the important milestones the children showed. The purposes of this paper are (1) to describe the environment parents created for their children; and (2) the effect the environment has on the academic performance and character qualities of the children.

2. Method

A research survey was used in this study. Data was collected by using observations (direct and indirect). Data collected, besides direct observation, were also based on tangible data including pictures, video, paper, and recording. Data were collected periodically for certain events related to academic and related activities. And the collected data were analyzed by using qualitative description. Subjects of this research were two children, a girl, and boy from one family. Both children have been observing since they were born until now when they are enrolling at state universities in Indonesia. The family was selected because of their effort to create a positive home environment to influence their children at home. They are scholars; and the wife was working as a manager in a private multinational company in Jakarta until her daughter graduated from elementary school, and then the family moved to another city in East Java where her husband is faculty member in one state university until now.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Subjects' Description: Hedi and Ebe

Hedi, the girl, was born in November 2002 as the first child. And the youngest, a boy, Ebe was born in January 2004; fourteen months after Hedi. They both went to the same

kindergarten until senior high school. At college, they go to different state universities because they have different interests to pursue their degree. Physically, they have a high posture and good physical endurance. They can ride bicycles and swim since they were young. Hedi even can drive her father's car by herself since she was a fifth grader. Academically, both mastered their 3Rs before going to elementary school, even Hedi already mastered it before attending kindergarten. Their academic activities, mostly done by themselves, and parents just support what they needs related to their school.

They love to play with their peers. They also love swimming, biking, drawing, writing, coloring, singing, and playing instruments. And sometimes they lead others for singing together. Hedi is more creative in music. She composed jingles, songs for herself and her groups or others. She was also selected to joint Kemendikbud BBM Program related to music (Belajar Bersama Maestro) under Musician Maestro Purwacaraka. Her compositions can be found in YouTube and Spotify. But both always hide their identity in you-tube, and their parents sometimes were surprised to find them in YouTube.

In Social event, both during their years in school, they got along with their classmates and neighbors peers. When Hedi finish elementary school, her family move to another city and start to go to public schools, previously they attended private schools. When moved, the boy did not yet graduate from elementary school, and continued his 6th grade in the new public school. Both showed the ability to adapt to the new environment.

In moral development, Hedi and Ebe love reading books related to the inventors, biographies and illustrated bible. They also love to talk with adults, even enjoy when given quizzes by adults. They are able to control their own behavior in many occasions when given the correct model. Now, Hedi is in the medical profession program, and Ebe is in 6th semester in Aviation Engineering.

(1) Description of the environment parents created for their Children

During their early years of development, when Hedi and Ebe were sleeping, parents played classic or hymn music from CDs. Later, after two years of age, they learned how to play the CDs by themselves. Hedi got a keyboard from parents in her second birthday. They grow to love music. From listening to music— to play instruments and singing the songs they have learned.

Parents created the environment through providing tools that will trigger activities related to arts, 3Rs (reading, writing and math), and playing. Through arts such as music, coloring, drawing, dancing and play with playdough and blocks — children learn to sing, read, write, calculate, and build something they like.

3Rs: Parents provided laptop for the children. And laptop expose the children with the alphabets, words and sound, lyrics, writing, singing, or watching CDs. Their teachers gave positive comment such as “Hedi already mastered 3Rs in her first day in kindergarten”. They did their school task and assignments independently. They finish elementary school and Junior High School in top ranks. At senior high school, they went to a well-known publicschool because of the achievement of their students. From high school, Hedi went to medical school because her passion is to help others, and graduated in 7 semesters, and now enroll in medical profession program at the same university. Ebe is a student at aviation engineering program as his passions toward airplane since he was so young. They are now living in different cities in pursuing their degrees.

About arts: parents provided toys and equipment that triggers enjoy full learning. Puzzles, used papers, gadgets, musical instruments, children’s books, songs with lyrics, and building blocks are available for children to engage and involve in all activities related to these toys and equipment’s.

Language setting: Parents set up all the equipment including songs, books, gadgets and laptop are in English mode. But parents in communicating with children mostly use standard Bahasa Indonesia.

Other supports from parents are for Hedi and Ebe activities outside the classrooms. Children are active in social media, but mostly as observers and hide their identities. They also actively involved in school choirs for competition and school music and dance performances. They enjoy their school and friends. Hedi mostly work in music creative. While Ebe is actively involve in writing on websites.

(2) the effect the environment on the academic performance and character qualities of the children

Through many tools, children can choose what they will do independently or in group. Having a choice give the children control and power over their activities and build their interests. When children can choose what they love to do, then they will focus and enjoy doing the activity. And in such condition, when it is a learning activity, the children will engage intensely and love to repeat the activities. Music for instance, children love to do it. When they practice singing or play instruments, they tend to repeat many times and try many ways until they master it. Through these activities, actually children build characteristics such as resilience, creativity, and self- regulation. The tools and the activities, also, influence children in developing their motor coordination, paying attention, and social competences when working in groups. In turn, these characteristics will affect the future learning. These characteristics show especially, when they created

their own music with limited tools but by maximizing their digital skills they can produce digital music. Also these characteristics reveal also through their ability to regulate their learning independently and keep working to achieve their educational goals even though the majors they choose right now are not easy for some others, but they keep improving and enjoying their study.

Learning: Beside attending regular schools, they also attended after school programs for studying certain subject courses to learn more deeply about the major subject courses. Parents never received complaint from schools. Ebe and Hedi even maximize their after- school programs for improving their knowledge and skills. After school programs sometimes ended at night. Their father brought them food for their dinner if they need it. Every day, in the morning, their father dropped them at school, and later pick them up from schools or after school programs. From all these activities, Hedi and Ebe learn how to handle their own school activities with high responsibility.

Language: Children show ability to communicate in fluent Bahasa and English since they were young. Adult figure, such as teachers, praised their language abilities both in Bahasa Indonesia and English. One colleague of the parents from abroad gave positive comment about the ability of the children in communicating in English, as if their parents communicate in English at home.

What we need to see in a civilized community is the generation that can take responsibility for their own potential and use it for the best they can be. Both children showed the characteristics that are needed for survival and for future development [29]. Having the characteristics are important for students in learning, and these will give more control and power over the activities [13], [28] that lead to enjoyable learning that characterizes through the engagement of the individual [30].

Arts help the children in learning [25]. For example, by listening to the song and trying to imitate the song, the children learned and trained to expand the range of their attention. At the same time their emotions are involved with the activity. They also learn how to pronounce the words correctly and can activate both rational and emotional minds [31], [32]. Attention range is important to focus on task [11]. The involvement of emotion is a key for enjoying the task and keeps the individual to stay focus and to trigger flow occur during activities. All these capabilities are the essence if we want children learn and achieve the educational goals.

In the next stage, their ability for reading and writing and the qualities of resilience and creativity help these children in schools. Even these qualities make them successful in helping their classmates in other events such as music and arts performances. So, the qualities are not just for academic matters but also for other social and entertainment

aspects that are needed for interacting with all environments. This also showed that they developed well social ability [33]. They also showed the ability to regulate their own learning. Means their metacognition is on fire when they are given the activities that designed carefully for them since their earlier stages.

4. Conclusion

The environment created is to engage the children with arts and physical exercise. All these are for facilitating the children to sing, play, read, type, write or create something, and even to speak foreign language. The effect of the environment influences the children's characteristics such as resilience, creativity, responsibility, and self-regulated learning; and these characters subsequently help them enjoy and succeed in academic, social, language, and art performances.

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