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Implementation of Transformative Learning Model through Parents for Early Childhood Parenting in Java Family

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Abstract

Early childhood parenting in a family is a process fraught with problems and transformative states. One of the cases is 'anak karbitan' (adultish child) as a result of parents' ambition which is prevalent in urban areas, while in rural areas many parents do a variety of mistakes in parenting. It is caused by a lack of parental understanding on the parenting ideal knowledge. This study aims at finding the transformative learning process that occurs in the early childhood parenting in a family environment. The researcher employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. The informants of this study were parents who had children aged 0-6 years. The processes of data collection involved in-depth interviews, group discussions, participatory observation, and documentation. The researcher used the interactive analysis models to analyze the data. The results showed that parents did not realize that the learning experience they had, give transformative impact on their parenting style their children in their family environments. The problems faced by the parents in early childhood parenting were those dealing with: (1) with the unique character of the child, (2) the habituation of a child, (3) training the children's independence, discipline, and responsibilities, (4). The child's social interaction, (5) training their children's confidence, (6) sex education of early childhood. The actions that the parents did to solve their problem were giving rewards, advice, warnings, and punishment, and neglecting their children. Transformative impacts that occurred on the parents were internal and external impacts.

Keywords: transformative learning, early childhood, parenting, parents

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1. Introduction

Education is designed to develop individuals' potential from their early age to prepare their future. The family is the principal and the first fundamental informal education institution. Family has a big impact on development of the individual. Basically, schools function as supports for family education. Informal education activities can be carried out by the family and the environment as self-directed learning activities. It is stated in the explanation of the National Education System Regulations year 2003 that informal education can be implemented in the family due to the learning process that happened automatically in family situation [4].

The most prominent agents for children are parents, teachers and peers, as children will know something good and bad from them [6]. Education in family will impact on the personal and social aspects of children mental development. The interaction happened through parenting will give children the opportunity to show that they are part of the community around him or her. However, in reality the implementation of family education in Java, especially in parenting, receives less attention so far. Parents tend to be satisfied if their children have already sent to school. However, all the educational needs of children cannot be served through formal education. Hence, family environments as part of informal education are able to address the problems and challenges happened.

The statement that most parents reap what they have sown seems not to be a pseudo expression. If the parents do not teach good behavior to their children, they will not show good attitude as expected by the parents. Role model from the parents in early childhood will be fundamental education to form children personality in terms of religiousness, attitudes, manners, aesthetics, affection, security, obedience to regulations, and good habits. In addition, the role of family is to teach values and behavior as taught in school.

Rohner in [9] stated that childhood experiences influenced the development of their characters. The study, using the theory of PAR (Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory) showed that parenting of the parents, both acceptance or rejection, influenced the development of emotional, behavioral, social-cognitive, and psychological health that function in adulthood. The parents' mistake in parenting will impact in failure of the child's personality.

Parents who fail to fulfil a need of security and put too much pressure on their children will not make their children feel close to them and use their parents as role models. Children will have more confidence to 'peer group'. So, that is why, sometimes, they are easily influenced by negative association, for example, toddlers have a habit of smoking, cursing, and drinking alcohol which are deviant behavior fro children. This phenomenon proves 'death' role of the family in educating their children's moral. Children who received an inappropriate education system, will have their creativity score decline as much as 90% between the ages of 5 and 7 years. If the education system does not support the growth of creativity, then this decline will continue to the age of 40 where only 2% of their creativity left [5].

Today, many cases of *'anak karbitan'* (deviant adultish child) show that they are the victims of parental ambitions. Many parents are misguided by the notion of early childhood education. Education is misinterpreted as the need to learn reading, writing, and calculating. Consequently, many children have to undergo a learning process that does not comply with the stages of their development. The parents will be excessively proud on their children when they stand out academically in their early age. On the

contrary, when the child, like 'seed', if they have good starts from the beginning, they will likely grow up perfectly in the next stages.

This research hopefully elaborate problems faced by parents in educating children during their early childhood and see the actions that parents took to break the stagnation in transformative learning. Mezirow in ([11]: 82) explained that transformative learning as a process of change that impact the terms of reference. Throughout life, people will continue to develop a series of concepts, values, feelings, responses, and associations that make up the experience of his life. Transformative learning also offers instructional practices that are based on empirical research and is supported by the theoretical assumptions ([12]: 13). The transformative learning offers alternative conceptions. This alternative perspective offers fresh insights and provides a big boost in research of transformative learning. Transformative learning requires certain fundamental changes to the parents themselves. That learning occurs is related to certain psychological aspects that are necessary to change the mindset of parents themselves. These changes are related to the existence of a block (confusion) which is based on the cognitive and emotional dimensions. Hopefully the parents who are experiencing difficulties in training their children, able to help themselves to further develop their children's potential.

To achieve the objective, it is necessary to conduct a research that investigates the learning process of transformation that aims to solve the difficulties experienced by parents. One of the basic problems lies on the dimension of parents' change in learning process. Aspects of change can be seen from the cognitive (point of view/presupposition), mindset, perspective assumptions, attitudes, beliefs or emotions in parents' involvement. Therefore, with this transformative, parents can help themselves, when they encounter a problem, especially in early childhood parenting, quickly and appropriately in any circumstances.

2. Method

This study explores the transformative learning experiences of parents during early childhood care, which covers the problems experienced, the carried-out actions, as well as the impact. This study uses a qualitative approach with case study design. The reason of the use of qualitative approach with case study design are as follows: (1) the use of a qualitative approach is very appropriate in this research as the research questions on transformative learning that describes the parents' caring of young children, (2) a qualitative approach is highly relevant to the depths of meaning, views, and values that were stretched in time and space which are dynamic and complex [1]. The problems to be solved through the design of this case study is to identify the problems faced by parents in parenting, continued on overcoming parents actions in the problem, then look at the impacts from such actions.

A parent is used as key respondents in this study because their role is directly related to the implementation of transformative learning in early childhood care in family environment of Java. Although people in the research sites are still attached with a big family (extended family), but still, they accommodate a core family (core family), as well as other family types that have more interactions with early childhood. Preliminary studies were conducted to collect data relating to transformative learning in early childhood parenting.

Data were analyzed using analysis interactive models ([10]: 12). Data analysis technique is done through several steps. The first is data collection. The data collection was conducted by note-taking and recording data. The data collected consisted of documents (population statistics, maps of the area, data of early childhood), observation data (research site, family data to be observed), and interviewing with informants (parents, community leaders, educators from structural village). The second is reduction activity (data reduction) which was done by classifying data based on groups (tables, narratives, images). Data which were not important would not be included in the summary. The data included in the reduction phase were: data from interview that explain parenting in Java community, containing records of traditional ceremonies before and after child birth that was done by parents, and myths related to parenting that are often believed by parents. Data reduction would simplify sum up the problems and conduct subsequent data collection. The next is the presentation of data (data display) – the researchers experienced problems in finding patterns and answers in line with expectations. It happened because the data that had been summarized and presented are still incomplete. Researchers often repeated the previous steps. The benefits obtained in these activities were that the researchers understand the transformative learning process experienced by parents better. The last one is drawing conclusion. During the process of drawing conclusion, the results of field data were not often in accordance with the conclusions. To solve these problems, the researcher consulted to the experts. Finally, the successful conclusion arranged in the form of easily understandable results that referred to the research objectives.

To obtain valid findings, the researcher extended the time of the study because the data collected in the field were still incomplete. The researcher was trying to act carefully and thoroughly on matters relating to the research focus. In describing the data, the researcher sometimes find overlap data from the research questions and what were found in the observation. Triangulation technique is done by cross-checking the data to the same informants (parents) through interviews, documentary studies, and observations. The result of this triangulation was done when the researcher found inconsistent answer. Focus Group Discussion was conducted to have accurate answer from parents. Triangulation is the use of more than one method or more than one projects to assess a problem faced. The purpose of triangulation is to check the correctness of data between a source with other sources ([2]: 494). Researcher also reviewed

records of interviews, observation, and documentation to several key informants to obtain their agreement.

3. Findings and Discussion

A good family education is education that can provide a powerful impetus to their children. The impulse has a positive influence on the child and the family environment. The role of parents can be implemented by encouraging all of the family members to respect each other, in order to enhance mutual relationship and able to develop talents of each family members. If the parents care for their young children properly and in accordance with the development of age, then they can avoid mistakes that parents make.

Unfortunately, not all parents were able to carry out its role as expected. Many obstacles in the field were faced by parents in caring children. Such constraints occur when parents were lack of knowledge in parenting. This was evidenced by a situation that was experienced by the parents who gave less affection to their children. It is possibly caused by the life experiences of parents in their childhood, e.g. harsh treatment, physical punishment and verbal abuse from his parents. The experience gained in their childhood was then applied to their children.

Parents led transformative learning experience in caring for children. Generally, parents did not realize that their learning experiences bring a transformative impact on the parenting in a family environment. Transformative situation experienced by parents usually occurred incidentally (incidental learning) or accidentally (unintentional learning).

Parents' experience in the transformative process of learning did not occur in a short time. Transformative process for parents were going through several stages, which are sensing the problems (feeling), then with the problems they experienced, thinking about the problems that they encountered, then determining the position, as a trouble maker or as a problem solver. From the process of thinking, then they built strong awareness and now ready to take action which ends up with transformative learning.

Our research findings showed that parents were already implementing transformative learning in the time they have to do early age child care, either inadvertently commits acts of transformative or even parents have experienced transformative learning because of ignorance. Some parents were not using transformative learning strategy in solving issues related to early childhood care. The indications of parents who have done transformative were known from their critical reflection on the assumptions they have. Furthermore, parents opened and received the results of their lesson learned in the belief that the action taken was correct. In addition, parents always made improvements and strove consistently to all the actions he had done. In the end, parents brought a fundamental change in them.

There were two classifications of actions that the parents did in caring their children, i.e. positive action and negative action. Positive action was done by giving the award even if the child did something which was not correct in the parents' point of view. Negative actions were giving punishment and the omission to children. Negative actions had the following characteristics: (1) the problem solving that has been done was still limited to the surface level, (2) a lot of curative problem solving performed by parents, (3) the form of problem solving as shock therapy to children was done temporarily, (4) parents did not understand and care to the problems faced.

The impacts to parents who experienced the transformative learning process was divided into two, internal and external impacts. Internal impact was the effect of changes in the parents that come within themselves based on their experience, while the external impact was further impacts that arouse between parents and children. Internal exposures experienced by parents after the resolution of problems are: (1) stress when the child began to decline, (2) more patients (not emotional) in the face of their child's behavior, (3) more confident because of having a solution to the problem, (4) an increase in the experience of parents facing parenting issues. External impacts experienced by parents after the resolution of problems includes: (1) increasing relationship of positive communication between parents and children, (2) more steady and optimistic feeling in educating children, (3) close relationship between parents and children.

Transformative learning has become a theory and reference for various groups of researchers. This theory is predicted to be used in more future research as development is very significant. The core point on transformative learning is a fundamental change. If the transformative is a process of learning, it takes deliberate action to change learners' viewpoints. Transformative learning is a change process. This learning requires a deliberate action, a willingness to take personal risks, a genuine concern to bring about change to the students, and the means to utilize a variety of methods and techniques that help to create a supporting environment to the development of each individual [12].

The existence of transformative learning offers fresh insights and provides a big boost in the area of philosophy of education research. It happened, because the transformative events are often experienced by everyone in their surrounding neighborhood. Transformative learning can also measure the impact of learning outcomes (by using grades and test scores).

Transformative learning is a major theory in teaching a philosophy of education. Implementing transformative learning is not easy for parents, because a fundamental change is not an easy task without considerable personal reflection. Therefore, to obtain expected results, a lot of work, skill, and courage are required ([12]: 92).

To obtain serious changes in parenting for early age, the parents should be very patient, loving and understanding the psychological condition of the child. To be able

to change the mindset of parents, then the parents should be willing to change their own thinking, values, and beliefs.

Parents' decision to take transformation in caring for their children would affect their children's psychological condition. The impacts for the children if their parents are not taking the transformation are: parents have less close relationship to their children, the children are closer to others, and the role of parents is replaced. The composition of an ideal role in early childhood education for family is 60%; the role of schools is 20%; then, the role of the environment is 20% ([3]: 11). If the role of the family is less than that, then the role will be taken over by the surrounding environment and not taken over by the school, because the portion of children learning in early childhood institutions tend to be fixed (fixed). The impact for children if their parents applied wrong caring is that they will have personality problems or low emotional intelligence such as (1) indifferent, do not need anyone else, and cannot accept friendship because since their childhood, they have anger, distrust and other negative emotional disorders, (2) emotionally unresponsive, when children are denied, they will not be able to give love to others, (3) aggressive manner (always want to hurt others verbally or physically), (4) become self-inferior, have feeling of worthless and useless, (5) having negative view on the surrounding environment, such as insecurity, worry, insecure, suspicious of others, and feeling others were criticizing him, (6) emotional instability – intolerant or resistant to stress, irritable, angry, and properties that cannot be predicted by others, and (7) imbalance between emotional and intellectual development. Other negative impacts can be either strike to learn, and can even lead to juvenile delinquency and brawl.

According to [8] there are some crucial parenting behavior that can negatively influence the children development of emotional intelligence and character building, namely: (1) less verbal and physical affection, (2) less spending time to children, (3) being verbally abusive, for example: quips, discouraging children, and saying harsh words, (4) being physically violent, for example: hitting, pinching, and giving corporal punishment, (5) forcing children to mastering early cognitive ability, and (6) not instilling good character to children.

Parents' transformative process might occur internally intentionally or unintentionally, by helping others, being pushed by an internal stimulus and the environment, or others. It could also cause by the efforts of the parents themselves in a learning activity that is deliberately done independently. Transformative learning can be a learning process. The learning process itself can occur either intentionally or unintentionally ([7]: 108). Transformative learning means working to change perceptions, opinions, assumptions, interests, attitudes, mindset, or belief in order to develop own potential to solve existing life problems.

4. Conclusions and Sugestions

Parents are often unaware that their actions in parenting could bring transformative impact on the children. Parents' experience in parenting proved to be transformative learning that occurred intentionally and accidentally. In early childhood parenting, parents might perform positive and negative actions. Positive actions were done by giving reward. Negative actions were carried out by giving punishment, scolding, and abandoning the children. Transformative impact in parenting might occur internally and externally. Internal impact was affected the parents themselves, while external impact affected the relationship between the parents and their children. The impact on the parents triggered them to do reflection to find solutions for the difficulties experienced in caring for their children, while transformative impact on the children might change the children's behavior. However, there are also parents who did not experience a transformative learning. It happened because they were still confused and pessimistic about the problem.

Parents who often experience parenting problems need to reflect on themselves critically and explore their experiences of living through transformative learning. This way has actually been able to help parents solving their problems without spending their energy and money. Here are the suggestions based on the study: (1) the future researcher needs to elaborate the phenomenon of transformative learning from different point of views to obtain results in wider scope, (2) parents need good synergy to teach values to their children, and the parents should be a good example for their children.

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