

## **Effectiveness of the Naturalistic and Spiritual Program on Social Skills in 4-5 Year Olds at TK Kartika XV-6 (Qualitative Research)**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the environmental introduction program for Group A children (ages 4-5) at TK Kartika XV-6. The research is conducted at TK Kartika XV-6. Based on previous research on naturalistic and spiritual environmental introductions, the program helps children recognize various components of their natural surroundings, such as flora and fauna, as well as spiritual environments through visits to places of worship. This program also aims to foster a sense of love and care for the environment. Observations made by the researcher indicate that the environmental introduction program is highly effective in developing children's social skills, enabling them to learn about biodiversity, language skills, communication, and personal responsibility. The results of this study show that the program is very effective based on observations and assessments conducted by the researcher. The research method used is qualitative. According to the results of the Taxonomy Analysis, the implementation of naturalistic and spiritual environmental introductions through activities such as visiting natural environments and places of worship has proven effective for children in understanding and preserving their surrounding environment.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Naturalistic and Spiritual Environment, Social Skills.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is fundamentally aimed at facilitating the holistic growth and development of children, emphasizing the development of their personality traits (Utami, Widiatna, Ayuningrum, et al., 2021). A learning program can determine whether the stimulation provided by teachers can be considered a measure of success in achieving established goals (Setyowati & Setiyatna, 2023). Generally, effectiveness is measured by how well the outcomes meet the planned objectives. In education, many aspects of effectiveness exist, from learning methods and teaching strategies to student outcomes. Academic performance varies widely.

First, efficiency helps improve the quality of education. An effective curriculum can produce students who are knowledgeable, emotionally intelligent, and socially adept. Second, efficiency in education refers to the optimal use of resources, including available time, staff training, and facilities to achieve desired results. Effective early childhood education is a crucial goal (Anis, Usman, & Arfah, 2021).

Cognitive and social development theories support the importance of ECE program effectiveness. According to Jean Piaget, children learn by actively interacting with their environment (Handika et al., 2022; Vioreza, 2014; Hadiny et.al., 2023; Ernawati et.al., 2023; Mansoer & Susilah, 2023). Therefore, preschool curricula must effectively provide a stimulating environment that encourages cognitive development. Albert Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes the importance of role models for children (Firmansyah

& Akbar, 2023). A holistic introduction to the environment for children aged 4-5 not only aids in their current social skill development but also lays a strong foundation for the future. Children with a deep understanding of nature and spiritual values will grow into caring, responsible individuals capable of interacting well in society.

According to the Child Development Achievement Standards, social skills are measured based on several indicators. Key points usually assessed include communication skills, the ability to express ideas and feelings clearly, listening and understanding others, demonstrating empathy, showing concern for others' feelings, appreciating different perspectives, cooperating in group activities, sharing and taking turns with peers, resolving conflicts positively, negotiating and finding solutions together, emotional control, and appropriate reactions in social situations (Annisa et al., 2023; Vioreza, et.al., 2023; adar, W., & Pujianti, Y., 2024; Syaikhu, er.al., 2022; Silaen et,al., 2022).

The aim of this research is to examine the implementation of the environmental introduction program at TK Kartika XV-6 regarding children's social skills and to identify supporting and inhibiting factors, as well as parental responses to the naturalistic and spiritual environmental introduction program through direct activities in natural and spiritual settings.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

Sugiyono defines research methods as systematic scientific approaches used to gather data for specific purposes and applications.(Utami, Widiatna, Herlyna, et al., 2021; Utami & Vioreza, 2020) These methods are designed to ensure that the data collected is reliable and valid, enabling researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed decisions based on their findings (Nurachadijat & Selvia 2023).The research method used is qualitative, analyzing the program through learning taxonomy. This method is employed to assess the effectiveness of the program through several stages of learning activities, including planning, implementation, and evaluation, using instruments such as interviews, documentation, and daily notes. Instruments are aligned with theories related to the effectiveness of environmental introduction programs and social skills in children. The assessment results for the children serve as benchmarks for the program's effectiveness.

The author participated in program activities and observed the children's responses and interactions with their environment, as well as their interactions with those around them. The hands-on approach provided valuable insights into how young children engage with both natural and spiritual aspects of their surroundings. These observations allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how environmental awareness is cultivated in early childhood and how children's social and cognitive skills develop through these interactions. By participating in these activities, the author was able to witness firsthand the impact of such programs on the children's learning processes.

This research was conducted with 4-5-year-old children at TK Kartika XV, which involved visits to natural environments such as parks and gardens, as well as places of worship. These visits provided the children with opportunities to directly engage with nature and experience the spiritual elements of their local environment. The inclusion of diverse environments, such as nature and spiritual sites, enriched the children's learning experiences and allowed them to explore various aspects of their surroundings. Such visits were essential in broadening their perspectives and reinforcing the educational goals of the program, promoting environmental awareness and respect for different cultural and spiritual traditions.

Throughout the study, the children's responses to the visits and activities were carefully observed. The interactions observed reflected the children's curiosity, imagination, and growing understanding of the world around them. By observing how the children responded to both the natural world and spiritual sites, the researcher could

assess how the program contributed to their development in areas such as environmental awareness, social interaction, and language skills. These observations were critical in evaluating the effectiveness of the environmental introduction program and its role in fostering a sense of care and responsibility toward the environment.

Some learning methods employed include direct visits to the environment and singing with available media in the locations the children visit. According to Benjamin Bloom and his well-known taxonomy of educational objectives, effective learning should encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains to fully engage learners (Kasanah & Pratama, 2024). Effective learning must provide stimuli that address multiple developmental aspects, allowing teachers to impart comprehensive knowledge to children through media they encounter in natural and spiritual settings. These aspects will positively impact children's social skills, as active interaction enables them to optimize their social skills both individually and in groups.

### **3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research results consist of an analysis carried out by the author through data collection in the field, which included interviews with school officials, parents, and students, along with the use of assessment instruments and field notes (Utami, Widiatna, Ayuningrum, et al., 2021). This comprehensive approach allowed for a detailed understanding of the subject matter, integrating various perspectives from key stakeholders. By combining qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, the research was able to offer a nuanced view of the topic, ensuring that the findings were grounded in real-world experiences and supported by empirical evidence.

#### **3.1 Research Result**

After the researcher describes data related to the school background, they begin to describe data related to the Evaluation of the Naturalistic and Spiritual Environmental Introduction Program at TK Kartika XV-6, which is as follows:

##### **3.1.1. Curriculum of TK Kartika XV-6**

TK Kartika XV-6 follows the Merdeka Curriculum, which is structured to provide a comprehensive and flexible educational experience for young children. The institution's profile includes key components such as the brief history of the Early Childhood Education unit, the organizational structure, the address and location map of the unit, as well as the status of the institution. This foundational information helps provide clarity about the ECE unit's purpose, its vision for child development, and its place within the broader educational landscape. It sets a clear framework for understanding the institution's role in fostering early childhood growth and learning.

Document I of the curriculum includes a detailed introduction to the institution's vision, mission, and educational objectives, which align with the overarching goals of the Merdeka Curriculum. It also outlines the structure and content of the learning program, ensuring that children's education is both holistic and developmentally appropriate. The annual program is designed to offer a well-rounded curriculum that integrates various aspects of learning, allowing children to engage with diverse subjects in a meaningful way. These foundational elements are essential in providing a clear direction for both educators and learners throughout the academic year.

Document II, on the other hand, provides a more detailed look at the specific plans for teaching and learning throughout the semester. It includes the Semester Program, Weekly Lesson Plans, Daily Implementation Plans, and assessment strategies. These documents ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively and allows for ongoing evaluation of each child's progress. The detailed planning and structured approach ensure that the learning environment at TK Kartika XV-6 is both dynamic and responsive to the

developmental needs of each child. This approach supports a tailored educational experience that promotes growth in all areas of child development.

### **3.1.2. Process of Naturalistic and Spiritual Environmental Introduction Activities**

Teachers and children toured the area to observe and learn about the places of worship around Kopassus. The children first traveled by car to a Mosque (Islamic place of worship), the second visit was to two churches: a Protestant Church and a Catholic Church, which are places of worship for Christians. The third visit was to a Hindu temple, where they were warmly welcomed by the temple's caretakers, and the children were amazed by the unique design of the temple.

In addition to learning about places of worship, the children were also introduced to the natural environment, such as vegetable and fruit gardens owned by the Kopassus unit near the school. The children saw various types of vegetables and fruits in the garden and were taught how to care for God's creations to prevent the plants from wilting or dying. Additionally, there were also livestock such as rabbits, chickens, and fish. The Kopassus unit utilizes the available land for gardening and livestock activities, allowing the schoolchildren to learn directly about flora and fauna in close proximity. This activity is usually carried out while engaging in light exercise, such as walking.

Learning Media, The learning media used include places of worship, vegetable or fruit plants, and animals. Learning Methods to Stimulate Children's Knowledge of Naturalistic and Spiritual Environments. Learning methods for stimulating children's knowledge of naturalistic and spiritual environments often involve integrating nature-based experiences and providing children with opportunities to interact with their surroundings. For instance, outdoor activities such as observing animals, tending to plants, or visiting places of worship help develop an understanding of the natural world and spiritual connections to it. By engaging children in hands-on activities like gardening or caring for animals, they begin to recognize the importance of environmental stewardship (Aussie Childcare Network, 2023; Natural Start, 2019). Through these methods, children not only develop knowledge about sustainability but also learn about their roles as caretakers of both the environment and their spiritual well-being. Engaging with nature and practicing environmental responsibility becomes part of the children's daily routines, supporting their overall development in terms of both environmental awareness and character building.

The methods used in the activities for introducing naturalistic and spiritual environments are as follows: 1). Introducing Method; Observations indicate that the introducing method was employed during activities to familiarize children with the naturalistic and spiritual environments by showing them various aspects of their surroundings directly. This method was used while exploring the environment, with the teacher leading the activity and the children observing and learning. The observations reveal that the introduction occurs in a specific situation where the teacher presents places of worship, plants, and livestock in front of the children. The children engage in direct introductions alongside the teacher; 2). Singing Method, During these activities, it was observed that the teacher invited the children to sing songs about animals and plants. The children appeared more enthusiastic and joyful while exploring the environment. Based on the observations, interviews, and documentation reviewed, it was found that the singing method serves as motivation for the children, keeping them engaged and energetic; 3). Direct Practice Method The practice method involved directly visiting places of worship and gardens with the children.

Effectiveness of Environmental Introduction Learning: 1). Direct Practice; The observations indicate that the method used by the teacher is the performance method. This method is employed to obtain assessments that require students to perform tasks in observable ways, such as watering plants, applying fertilizer, and feeding livestock, as demonstrated by the teacher; 2). Observation. The observations show that the method used is observation, where the teacher monitors the children to gather information or assessments regarding their development or any issues that may arise; 3). Anecdotal

Records, The observations also reveal that the method employed is anecdotal records. The teacher uses this method while observing various events involving the children and records them after the events occur during the observation. The results show that the direct practice method is used by children during the activities, such as gymnastics. Direct practice allows for the assessment of children's gross motor development.

### **3.2. Discussion**

Based on the results of the Taxonomy Analysis, the implementation of the naturalistic and spiritual environmental introduction program is designed to stimulate awareness and promote the sustainability of the environment and nature in the surrounding areas. This program encourages children to recognize the importance of preserving the natural world, which is essential for ensuring a healthy and sustainable environment. By engaging young learners with nature and spiritual elements, the program instills values of environmental stewardship from an early age.

A pressing need for environmental care, especially in the context of early childhood education. Educating children about the environment at a young age allows them to develop an appreciation for nature and an understanding of their role in protecting it. Importance of environmental awareness in shaping future generations that are conscious of their environmental responsibilities.

The integration of both naturalistic and spiritual elements in the curriculum is vital in nurturing a holistic approach to environmental education. By combining practical knowledge of nature with spiritual values, the program fosters a deeper connection between children and their surroundings. This approach not only supports cognitive and social development but also encourages moral and ethical responsibility towards nature, ensuring that children grow up with the understanding that they are active participants in maintaining the balance of the environment.

The condition of the Earth, which is growing older, and the increasing human dependence on nature make environmental issues an important matter that requires serious attention. Meanwhile, Philip Shabechoff reminds us that our planet is unique, and its size feels increasingly smaller over time. Therefore, protecting and nurturing the Earth with love and care is an essential step for the sustainability of life. area as follows: 1) Effectiveness of the Naturalistic and Spiritual Environmental Introduction Program. After conducting observations and interviews regarding character education strategies focused on environmental care for early childhood at TK Kartika XV-6, the researcher obtained and presented the following findings: a) The teacher introduces the importance of caring for the environment; b) The teacher encourages children to practice environmental care habits daily; c) The teacher engages children in experiments and activities related to environmental care; d) The teacher supervises and explains the benefits gained from establishing these habits and participating in environmental care activities. Therefore, we must also always maintain the cleanliness of the school environment because it has many benefits for our daily lives. 2) Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Naturalistic and Spiritual Environmental Introduction Program. a. Supporting Factors: a) The school provides children with PJD buses, allowing them to explore environments outside the school; b) The idea of visits as a program offers a unique and engaging learning experience for children; c) Outing class activities help alleviate children's boredom Suardipa, I. P., & Primayana, K. H. (2023). b. Inhibiting Factors: Incomplete facilities at places of worship limit the learning experiences available to children; Funding is needed to hire PJD buses; Longer learning times are required; c. Parental Response to the Naturalistic and Spiritual Environmental Introduction Program. Parents are very enthusiastic in supporting the naturalistic and spiritual environmental introduction activities at TK Kartika XV-6. They appreciate that their children get to explore and learn about spiritual environments, understand God's creations, benefit from the garden's produce, and learn about various religions and places of worship while riding the PJD bus.

Through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening project, students are encouraged to develop a higher awareness of the importance of preserving the environment as part of the entrepreneurial character they are fostering Kurniawan & Wijarnako (2023).



Figure 1. Children boarding the PJD bus to explore the area and learn about places of worship.



Figure 2. Children visiting the temple near the Cijantung complex.



Figure 3. Children visiting the Kopassus garden.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted on the introduction of naturalistic and spiritual environments for children ages 4-5 at TK Kartika XV-6 Kopassus, it was found that the environmental introduction program plays a crucial role in helping children recognize and understand various components of their surroundings. These components include flora, fauna, and inanimate objects such as places of worship, providing a holistic approach to the children's learning experience. This program is designed not only to educate children about the environment but also to foster a deep sense of love, care, and responsibility toward it.

The children in group A at TK Kartika XV-6 have shown significant potential for developing important social skills through the program. These skills enable them to engage in learning about biodiversity, which is essential for developing an awareness of the world around them. Additionally, the program helps enhance language skills and communication, as children learn to express their observations and thoughts about their environment. Personal responsibility is another key aspect of the program, encouraging

Children to take ownership of their actions and their role in caring for the environment. Evaluations conducted at TK Kartika XV-6 reveal the effectiveness of the environmental introduction program. These evaluations include a combination of performance assessments, observations, and anecdotal records, which provide a comprehensive view of each child's progress and development. These methods allow teachers to track improvements in the children's social skills, language development, and environmental awareness over time, ensuring that the program meets its educational goals.

Overall, the research highlights the value of integrating naturalistic and spiritual environment education into early childhood programs. By introducing children to the diverse aspects of their surroundings, TK Kartika XV-6 not only contributes to their cognitive and social development but also instills in them a lifelong sense of responsibility toward the environment and the world around them. The findings suggest that such programs are crucial in shaping well-rounded, socially responsible, and environmentally conscious individuals from an early age.

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