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Enhancing Elementary School Students' Soft Skills Through the Parent Teaching Program: Leveraging Local Resources for Optimization

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Abstract

This study employed an explanatory sequential design to investigate the implementation of the parent teaching program and its impact at an elementary school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was conducted in two stages: distributing and analyzing questionnaires to 76 students in the first stage and interviewing teachers and parents in the second stage. Data analysis employed basic statistics for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis for qualitative aspects. The results indicate that the parent teaching program at this school commences with the program's planning stage, during which teachers directly involve parents in meetings. The program is implemented after final exams or a week before the school holidays. It has a positive impact on the development of students' soft skills. Following the program's implementation, students demonstrated increased teamwork, communication, and creativity activities. Additionally, the program boosted students' self-confidence and critical thinking skills, which could benefit them in the future. It can be concluded that this program represents an innovative approach to enhancing students' soft skills by making use of local resources.

Keywords: Elementary School; Local Resources; Parent teaching; Soft Skill

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INTRODUCTION

Learning fatigue can have negative impacts on students. Students experiencing learning fatigue in class can be influenced by various factors, including monotonous learning, lack of innovation in teaching, teachers who deliver one-way instructions, and other factors (Putri & Pranata, 2023). Therefore, innovation in teaching is needed to overcome student fatigue in class (Surapaneni, 2023). The quality of education must continually be improved by introducing innovations that can positively impact students (Bergmans et al., 2023).

Educational innovations must always be developed and enhanced (Al-Sous et al., 2023). Regularly improved learning innovations will lead to an improvement in the quality of education. The independent curriculum provides flexibility for educational units to develop curricula according to students' characteristics, learning styles, and school conditions. Thus, schools can innovate according to the needs and characteristics of their students. One of the innovations that can be introduced in the effort to innovate teaching is parent teaching (Sihombing et al., 2021).

Based on a survey conducted by Adam Kamil, which involved 1000 respondents through an online survey method, it was found that 99% of teachers agree that learning innovation is essential (Kamil, 2023). Based on these survey results, learning innovation is highly required in classrooms so that the teaching process continually incorporates new elements that can create new learning experiences for students (Putra & Afrilia, 2020).

Parent teaching is an innovation in learning implemented with the hope of creating varied learning experiences and providing new learning experiences for students, thereby stimulating students to discover new things (Pukowski, 2019). Parent teaching is a program that involves parents with specific professions to share their experiences and knowledge directly with students, with the hope of increasing students' knowledge and understanding and ultimately helping students improve their soft skills (Marx et al., 2015).

In this era of disruption, efforts to enhance students' soft skills must always be empowered (Schulz et al., 2023). The goal is for students to have high capabilities and competitiveness, with the hope that they can become valuable individuals for their religion, nation, and country. Enhancing soft skills can be addressed by utilizing local resources; one such resource in schools is the parents of students (Moradi & Arshadi, 2016). So far, students have only received knowledge from teachers, resulting in a one-sided understanding. With the parent teaching program, it is hoped that students can gain different understandings and learning experiences (Verma et al., 2023).

Soft skills are crucial abilities for everyone to possess (Muammar & Alhamad, 2023). Soft skills are intangible and cannot be directly measured or observed. They

typically include teamwork, collaboration, leadership, adaptability, self-development, communication, and others (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2023). The challenges of the 21st century require everyone to have soft skills, as these are useful in the workplace, family environment, and daily life (Toader et al., 2023).

Based on initial observations conducted at Yogyakarta Elementary School, boredom in learning is still a common issue encountered in every class, especially in higher grades. This boredom must be addressed and anticipated because it can lead to student disengagement, reduced critical thinking, passive classes, and, ultimately, lower student achievement (Dutta et al., 2023). This background led Yogyakarta Elementary School to create the parent teaching program.

Efforts to enhance students' soft skills are familiar in the field of education. Research conducted by Faizah et al. (2013) focused on developing problem-based learning tools to enhance students' soft skills. Faizah's research is related to this study as both investigate the enhancement of students' soft skills. However, Faizah's research focuses on developing learning tools, whereas this study focuses on implementing the parent teaching program. This study has a novelty aspect, which lies in the parent teaching program. According to Open Knowledge Maps, research on parent teaching is still rare, with previous studies focusing more on parenting efforts at home rather than involving parents in the school learning process.

This study aims to reveal efforts to enhance students' soft skills through the parent teaching program by utilizing available local resources. Limited resources do not automatically hinder the introduction of learning innovations; therefore, teachers must be able to present learning innovations to address problems in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, this study will delve deeply into the responses of students and parents regarding parent-teaching activities. Every program has its strengths and weaknesses, and this study identifies the factors that hinder and support the parent teaching program. This study will also explore in depth how the parent-teaching program is implemented and its implications for students, with the hope that this study can serve as a reference for other schools in introducing learning innovations through the parent-teaching program.

METHODS

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative and quantitative data management techniques, with a sensual exploratory research design to investigate the implementation of the parent teaching program and its impact on students. The qualitative approach was chosen to describe the parent teaching program's implementation and capture teachers' and parents' perceptions of the program. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach was selected to measure student satisfaction and understanding of the parent teaching program, thus assessing the program's effectiveness (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This research was

conducted at an elementary school in Yogyakarta that had already implemented the parent-teaching program. The study was conducted during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. Data were collected through interviews, observations, documentation, and questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with classroom teachers and parents of students using a structured interview guide and recorded using a mobile phone. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, choosing those most capable of answering the research questions. Observations were made to assess the implementation and student responses to the parent-teaching program, while questionnaires were used to quantify student satisfaction and understanding of the program.

The questionnaire was developed to measure student satisfaction and understanding of the Parent Teaching program. The development process involved identifying objectives, developing question items, consulting with experts, and conducting trials and revisions. The validity of the questionnaire was examined through content and construct validity, while its reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The questionnaire grid includes dimensions of student interest, understanding of the material, and improvement of soft skills.

In-depth interviews were conducted with two teachers and two parents to gather information on the program's planning process, implementation stages, efforts to improve students' soft skills, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Interview questions for teachers included the program planning process, implementation stages, efforts to enhance soft skills, program implications, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Meanwhile, interview questions for parents focused on their teaching experience, challenges faced, the program's impact on their children, and cooperation between the school and parents.

Observations were conducted to assess the program's implementation and student responses. Observation items included parental involvement, student interaction, the learning environment condition, and the improvement of students' soft skills. The aim of these observations was to provide deeper context to the data collected through questionnaires and interviews.

Table 1

Data Informants/Respondents

Informants/Respondents	Code	Total	Data Collection Tool
Teacher A	T1	1	Interview
Teacher B	T2	1	Interview
Student Parents	P	2	Interview
Students	S	76	Questionnaire

The qualitative data analysis technique used in this study employs thematic data analysis, which involves stages of data familiarization, data coding, theme determination, and data presentation. Thematic data analysis was chosen for its perceived tactical and accurate approach to managing and presenting data (Heriyanto, 2018). Meanwhile, the quantitative data analysis technique utilized Microsoft Excel with basic statistical tests to measure the implications of the parent teaching program in enhancing students' soft skills (Divisi et al., 2017). Data validity was ensured through triangulation, employing source triangulation and data triangulation in this research. Triangulation was used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the presented data. The questionnaire was calculated using the Ritcher scale calculation. Respondents were selected using a random sampling technique from a population of 308 with a margin of error of 10%; a sample of 76 students was obtained. Questionnaires were distributed to students to find out the implications and students' interest in participating in the parent teaching program, The questionnaire lattice is contained in the following table:

Table 2

Questionnaire Grid

Question	Score
Interest in parent teaching programs	1-5
Implementation processes	1-5
Taught materials	1-5
Relationship with parents	1-5

To explore more in-depth information, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents are needed so that the process of preparing and implementing the parent teaching program, the implications of the program, and the inhibiting and supporting factors of the parent teaching program can be revealed, the following interview grids were used in this study:

Table 3

Interview Grid

Question	Informants
The development process of parent-teaching programs	Teacher
Stages of parent teaching program implementation	Teacher and Parent
Efforts to improve students' soft skills in parent-teaching programs	Teacher and Parent
Implications of parent teaching programs	Teacher and Parent
Supporting factors and inhibiting factors in the implementation of parent teaching programs	Teacher and Parent

FINDING

The parent teaching program in elementary schools is an initiative that harnesses various valuable local resources, namely the practical skills and knowledge possessed by students' parents. This program is designed to enrich students' learning experiences by integrating practical knowledge and skills that are directly relevant to their daily lives. By involving parents from diverse professional backgrounds, the program provides students with opportunities to learn from experts in various fields, thereby expanding their insights and equipping them with useful, practical skills.

The parent teaching program not only enhances students' practical knowledge but also strengthens the relationship between schools and families. It creates a more dynamic and interactive learning environment where students can learn directly from their parents' real-life experiences. The implementation of this program begins with thorough planning, involving regular meetings between teachers and parents. Teachers play a role in identifying students' soft skill development needs and providing input on effective teaching methods.

1. The Design and Implementation of the Parent Teaching Program

Implementing a program certainly requires prior program planning. This is necessary so that the executed program can function effectively. In-depth interviews were conducted with class teachers and parents to understand how the parent teaching program is planned. The questions asked were: "How is the parent teaching program planned in this school?" and "Are you involved in the planning of this program?".

Teacher 1 (T1) responded: "I am involved in designing this program through team meetings with teachers and coordination with parents. We seek ways to align the content taught by parents with our curriculum and educational objectives". Teacher 2 (T2) responded: "I am involved in designing this program by providing input on students' needs in soft skill development. We hold teacher team meetings to create learning plans". One parent (P2) said: "I feel this program is well-designed. We were informed about the program's plans and objectives during school parent meetings".

The program is implemented at the end of each semester or, more precisely, after the final semester exams. Its aim is to fill vacant time with beneficial activities that enhance students' knowledge and soft skills before the semester break. Teacher 1 (T1) added: "The implementation stages begin with scheduling parent visits to the school. Subsequently, we provide guidelines to parents on how to deliver the material in an engaging manner that meets students' needs".

(A) (B)



Figure 1

Implementation of the Parent Teaching Program

Figure 1 illustrates the process of implementing the parent teaching program. In Figure (a), students are shown baking themed cakes as part of parent teaching activities, while Figure (b) depicts the group's assignment on regional cultures in Indonesia under the theme of introducing Indonesian cultures in parent teaching.

2. Students' Response to the Parent Teaching Program

The results of the student questionnaire indicate the students' responses to the parent-teaching program. The questionnaire consisted of questions for 76 randomly selected students. There were six questions with five answer options: SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree), and SA (Strongly Agree).

Table 4

Students' Interest in the Parent Teaching Program

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	%	Description
1	I am interested in the parent-teaching program			7	39	30	327	86	Strongly Agree
2	The process of material explanation by parents is easy to understand		3	5	31	37	330	87	Strongly Agree
3	I feel comfortable asking parents about the taught material		2	4	29	41	337	89	Strongly Agree
4	This program strengthens my relationship with my parents.		4	9	35	28	315	82	Strongly Agree

5	I feel more comfortable communicating with my parents after participating in this program.	3	6	36	31	323	85	Strongly Agree
6	My parents support and are involved in my educational development	2	3	13	32	26	305	80	Strongly Agree

The questionnaire was completed by students after they participated in several sessions of the parent-teaching program. Each student was given sufficient time to honestly fill out the questionnaire based on their experiences during the program. Data collection was anonymous to ensure that students felt comfortable and free to express their opinions. After data collection, analysis was conducted by tallying the number of responses for each answer category (SD, D, N, A, SA) and then calculating the percentage of responses for each statement. The results indicated that the majority of students responded positively to the parent teaching program, with many stating agreement or strong agreement with the statements provided.

The parent-teaching program has shown significant positive outcomes based on responses from 76 students. The survey revealed high levels of student engagement and satisfaction: 86% expressed strong interest in the program, demonstrating its appeal. Additionally, 87% found the material explained by parents easy to understand, indicating effective communication. A notable 89% felt comfortable asking questions about the material, highlighting a supportive learning environment. Moreover, 82% believed the program strengthened their relationship with parents, while 85% reported improved communication. These findings underscore the program's success in enhancing both academic understanding and familial bonds, facilitated by diverse teaching methods tailored to parents' professions. This approach enriches learning experiences and fosters a supportive educational environment, benefiting students' overall development and well-being.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

In a program implementation, there are supporting factors and inhibiting factors. This also applies to the parent teaching program, particularly as it is a newly implemented program. Interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to identify the supportive factors in this program and the potential obstacles during its implementation.

Table 5

Factors supporting and inhibiting the Parent Teaching Program

Respondents	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
T1	Collaboration among teachers, principals, and parents of students	Time constraints and communication barriers
T2	High parental support	Differences in teaching skills and schedules
P1	Full support from schools and teachers	Parental busyness
P2	Support from schools	Coordination of time between schools and parents

4. Impact of the Parent Teaching Program

Parent teaching has significantly impacted students, teachers, and parents. Survey results indicate that the program has cultivated students' soft skills. Out of 76 students surveyed, 20% felt that the program enhanced their collaboration, 30% believed it boosted creativity, and 50% reported improvement in communication. These findings were derived from a closed-ended survey that students answered after participating in several parent-teaching sessions.

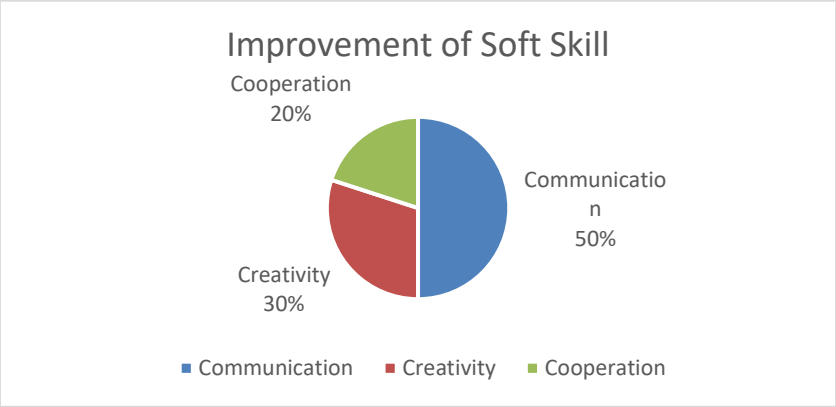


Figure 2

Students Soft Skills After Implementing Parent Teaching

The questionnaire used in this survey includes key indicators such as student interest, understanding of the material, and improvement of soft skills. Student interest in the Parent Teaching program reached 85%, indicating that students are very interested in and comfortable with this program. This indicator is important because interest and comfort can affect how effectively students can receive, process, and apply new information in their daily lives.

Observations during the implementation of the Parent Teaching program showed that parental involvement in teaching was very high, and teaching methods varied depending on the parents' professions and skills. For example, parents who are chefs taught cooking, involving students in practical and interactive activities, while parents who are doctors provided basic medical knowledge that enhanced students' health awareness. These observations support the survey and interview data, indicating that the variety of teaching methods helps increase student engagement and interest in learning.

Meanwhile, interviews with teachers and parents revealed that the program has positively impacted children's development and has made them more enthusiastic about learning.

Teacher T2 stated, "I observe increased self-confidence and critical thinking skills among students. Consequently, they are more prepared to face challenges in the future".

Parent P1 commented, "The impact has been very positive. We see children more enthusiastic about learning and talking about what they have learned at school".

DISCUSSION

1. The Design and Implementation of the Parent Teaching Program

Teacher involvement in developing and implementing parent teaching programs reaffirms the school's commitment to engage parents in children's education actively. Teacher meetings and coordination with parents create a forum for sharing perspectives and building mutual understanding. Providing guidance to parents on delivering engaging and relevant materials represents a proactive step in ensuring effective parent-child interactions.

Teacher meetings serve not only as a platform for program development but also as an opportunity for teachers to gain insights from parents regarding student needs and characteristics. This collaboration establishes the foundation for more personalized and tailored teaching strategies. Additionally, providing guidance to parents outlines a structured approach and shared responsibility in achieving educational goals. Involving parents in delivering materials offers opportunities for richer learning experiences (Padmadewi et al., 2018), thereby optimizing parents' role as significant educational partners.

Maintaining continuity in meetings and coordination between teachers and parents is crucial in developing parent-teaching programs. Consistency in fostering open dialogue builds a strong foundation for sustained collaboration (Trani et al., 2018). Guidance for parents should also be periodically updated to ensure relevance to educational developments and student needs. Moreover, regular evaluation of program implementation provides deeper insights into its effectiveness. Feedback

from teachers, parents, and students opens opportunities for program enhancements and adjustments. Evaluation may involve recording participation rates, analyzing student learning outcomes, and assessing the success of parental guidance implementation.

2. Students' Response to the Parent Teaching Program

The survey results reflect positive acceptance and enthusiasm towards this initiative. This aspect requires in-depth research to uncover specific factors driving student interest, which could open opportunities for the enhancement and expansion of this program.

High levels of interest can be attained through several key factors. Firstly, the program successfully creates learning experiences that are relevant to students' daily lives. In this regard, the material taught by parents directly relates to students' needs and interests, thereby strengthening a positive relationship with learning.

Secondly, the comfort students express highlights the positive atmosphere fostered by the program. This factor indicates that students feel secure and supported in a learning environment involving parents. Such comfort can significantly contribute to student motivation and engagement in the learning process (Che Ahmad et al., 2017; Rodriguez-Keyes et al., 2013).

Student interest serves not only as a measure of program success but also as an indicator of the effectiveness of the educational approach as a whole. When students are actively engaged and enthusiastic about learning, it creates a dynamic learning environment and promotes their comprehensive development (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). In this context, the parent teaching program provides direct benefits to students and shapes a positive learning culture within the school.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The collaboration among teachers, schools, and parents is identified as a key supportive factor in the success of parent-teaching programs. This collaboration creates an integrated educational environment where shared understanding and support can enhance program effectiveness. The active participation of teachers in providing input and guidance to parents demonstrates efforts to accommodate various student needs.

The importance of this collaboration is to establish a foundation for information and experience exchange (Parkhouse et al., 2023), ensuring that teaching strategies can be tailored to students' needs and developmental levels. Schools need to ensure mechanisms are in place to stimulate and maintain this collaboration, including training and regular discussion forums.

Differences in parents' teaching skills and their busy schedules are identified as inhibiting factors. Variations in parents' teaching abilities can create inequalities

in student learning experiences. Meanwhile, parents' busy schedules pose practical barriers to their optimal participation in the program.

A personalized and focused approach can be taken to address differences in teaching skills, such as providing specialized training or guidance sessions. Adopting more inclusive and parent-friendly teaching strategies can also help mitigate inequalities. Additionally, schools can seek flexible solutions to accommodate parents' schedules and time constraints, including remote participation options or the use of technology.

4. Impact of the Parent Teaching Program

The impact of parent teaching programs serves as a critical indicator for evaluating the success and overall effectiveness of the program. Emphasizing the improvement of soft skills, such as communication, cooperation, and creativity, strengthens the evidence that this program is oriented toward academic achievement and the holistic development of students.

The enhancement of students' self-confidence and critical thinking skills represents highly positive outcomes. Self-confidence is a key element in shaping resilient individuals prepared to face future challenges (Donnellan & Robins, 2010; Ercan, 2017; Walsh et al., 2020). Enhanced critical thinking skills, fostered through this program, form the foundation for sound decision-making and problem-solving abilities.

When discussing the impact of parent teaching programs, it is important to consider the underlying mechanisms driving these improvements. Firstly, parental involvement in the educational process creates a supportive environment. Students who perceive support and involvement from their parents are more likely to develop holistically.

Secondly, the emphasis on developing soft skills implies that the program not only imparts conceptual knowledge but also engages students in practical experiences that stimulate the development of social and emotional skills. Interactions with parents can play a significant role in shaping students' mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors (Osher, 2021).

However, it is important to note that these positive impacts may only sometimes be immediately or directly measurable. Some changes in behavior and skills may take time to manifest and develop. Therefore, long-term evaluation will provide a more comprehensive insight into how these impacts continue and alter the trajectory of students' development.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the Parent Teaching Program has been identified as a successful initiative in integrating the role of parents in the educational process. Strong collaboration, high student interest, and positive impacts on student development indicate that this program has the potential to serve as a model for a more holistic educational approach involving the wider community. By continually strengthening supportive factors and addressing barriers, the Parent Teaching Program can significantly contribute to the development of student's character and skills both in school and in their daily lives. Continuous evaluation and monitoring will be key to ensuring the sustainability and improvement of this program in the future. This research can have positive implications for the renewal of school programs by utilizing existing local resources to provide proper education for students to develop soft skills by utilizing existing potential. One limitation of this research is its small sample size, consisting of only two classroom teachers and two parents. Future research is recommended to conduct more in-depth exploration by involving a larger number of respondents. Additionally, since not all schools implement the Parent Teaching Program, this could be a recommendation for further research for those interested in implementing this program in other schools.

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