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Teacher Motivational Scaffolding Strategies in Stimulating Early Childhood Multiliteracy

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe teacher motivational scaffolding strategies in stimulating early childhood multiliteracy at RA Al Ikhlas, Takalar Regency. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with research subjects comprising the school principal, class B teachers, and students. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that teachers have implemented motivational scaffolding strategies in daily learning activities, although these have not been formally documented in school policies. These strategies are manifested through the provision of prompting questions, positive reinforcement, gradual assistance, emotional support, and exploratory support. The implementation of motivational scaffolding strategies occurs during the opening, core, and closing phases of learning, integrating various aspects of multiliteracy, namely literacy, numeracy, science, digital, financial, and cultural and civic literacy. Interview and observation results indicate that these strategies effectively enhance children's engagement, self-confidence, and motivation in participating in learning activities. Children appeared more active in asking questions, expressing opinions, recognizing symbols, counting, exploring the environment, using simple digital media, understanding the concept of saving, and demonstrating cooperative attitudes and appreciation for local culture. Thus, motivational scaffolding strategies represent a learning approach that can meaningfully support early childhood multiliteracy stimulation.

1. Introduction

Early childhood education constitutes a crucial foundation in supporting children's optimal growth and development. During this phase, children require appropriate stimulation to develop various developmental aspects, including language skills, social-emotional abilities, cognitive capacities, and other fundamental competencies. Early childhood education serves as a fundamental foundation for shaping cognitive abilities, social skills, and overall personality development in children (Insani et al., 2025). In alignment with this, early childhood education plays a vital role in facilitating the growth and developmental processes according to children's developmental stages, thereby necessitating that the educational process be tailored to children's holistic needs and characteristics (Ilyas et al., 2025).

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Early childhood education represents an effective phase for providing stimulation across all aspects of child development. Within the learning context, teachers play a crucial role in providing support to ensure children are actively engaged in play activities as a medium for learning and acquiring new experiences. Research by Kale et al. (2022) emphasizes that parental and teacher motivation are pivotal in determining the quality of early childhood educational experiences. Furthermore, the success of learning is significantly influenced by teacher competence in facilitating optimal child development, both in cognitive aspects, social skills, and other fundamental abilities (Erika et al., 2024). The relationship between teachers and children, characterized by emotional support and responsiveness, has been identified as a significant predictor of early academic motivation in kindergarten settings (Lu et al., 2022).

One ability that is important to develop from an early age is multiliteracy competence. Multiliteracy is not merely defined as reading and writing proficiency, but also encompasses the ability to understand and utilize various forms of symbols, media, and communication in daily life. According to Yakubu & Obafemi (2023), multiliteracy relates to children's language and cognitive development as it involves the use of various forms of multimodal communication that help children comprehend meaning and support thinking skills in the learning process. Technological and informational developments have caused the concept of literacy to evolve into multiliteracy, encompassing the ability to understand texts, images, symbols, audio, video, and digital media. Cope & Kalantzis (2020) explain that multiliteracy constitutes the ability to understand and generate meaning through various communication modes influenced by social and cultural contexts. Within the context of early childhood education, multiliteracy encompasses literacy, numeracy, science, digital, financial, and cultural and civic literacy (Selayani & Bayu, 2023). Kumpulainen & Sefton-Green (2020) further assert that innovations in multiliteracies are essential for early years education to adapt to contemporary communicative landscapes.

Multiliteracy abilities in early childhood require stimulation through learning activities. One strategy that teachers can employ is motivational scaffolding. Motivational scaffolding represents a form of support provided by teachers to enhance children's learning motivation through prompting questions, positive reinforcement, gradual assistance, emotional support, and exploratory support. According to Ollonen & Kangas (2025), motivational scaffolding plays a significant role in creating enjoyable learning experiences and supporting children's engagement in learning activities. Young children require emotional and motivational support to actively participate in the learning process.

The concept of scaffolding is rooted in Vygotsky's social constructivism theory through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept. Vygotsky explains that children's cognitive development occurs through social interaction, wherein children can achieve higher levels of ability when receiving assistance from more competent individuals (Kurniati, 2025). Contemporary discourse on this theory, as synthesized by Veraksa & Samuelsson (2023), highlights the enduring relevance of both Piaget and Vygotsky in understanding early childhood education dynamics. Breive (2021) demonstrated how the student-teacher dialectic actively co-creates the ZPD, particularly in kindergarten mathematics, emphasizing the negotiated nature of scaffolding. Furthermore, an ecological approach to Vygotskian theory has been applied effectively in early childhood social studies, illustrating that instructional scaffolding must account for the broader classroom environment. Therefore, scaffolding becomes a pedagogical strategy that enables teachers to provide directed and gradual support according to children's needs.

Previous research has demonstrated that scaffolding can support the development of early childhood learning abilities. Suprihatin and Rosita's research showed that scaffolding techniques can enhance learning independence in children aged 5–6 years through the

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provision of gradual support. Farantika et al. (2024) also found that approaches based on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) are effective in enhancing creative thinking and establishing a multiliteracy-based learning environment for preschoolers through prompting questions and verbal guidance. Nair et al. (2024) specifically highlighted the efficacy of scaffolding strategies in enhancing pre-numeracy skills among preschool children, noting that structured support significantly improves foundational mathematical understanding.

Specifically addressing the sub-domains of multiliteracy, prior research has provided foundational insights. In financial literacy, studies by Anggraeni (2022) and Litamahuputty (2022) underscore the urgency of introducing basic financial concepts from an early age through contextual learning, while Sari et al. (2022) have developed augmented reality storybooks to enhance financial literacy in early childhood. In digital literacy, Behnamnia et al. (2020) identified the effective components of digital game-based learning in fostering creativity among young children, and Masoumi et al. (2024) mapped children's actions during scaffolding processes using interactive whiteboards, providing empirical evidence on how digital tools can mediate learning. Andiema (2024) further reviewed the integration of technology in play-based learning contexts. Regarding science and STEAM, Twiningsih & Elisanti (2021) demonstrated that STEAM-based media development effectively improves critical thinking skills and science literacy. In the realm of cultural and civic literacy, Azizah & Zubaedah (2024) investigated cultural literacy cultivation through the ATIK learning model, while Khairil et al. (2020) explored children's literacy culture through folklore. Collaborative efforts, such as the COMPARE Project (2023) at the University of Luxembourg, have also highlighted the importance of parent collaboration in fostering multiliteracy practices in early childhood settings.

However, despite these existing contributions, research specifically dedicated to teacher motivational scaffolding strategies in stimulating a comprehensive, integrated multiliteracy curriculum for early childhood remains limited, particularly within the context of Islamic-based early childhood education institutions in Indonesia. Based on preliminary observations at RA Al Ikhlas, Takalar Regency, the researcher found that teachers have implemented various forms of guidance and support for children during the learning process. Teachers provide direction, motivation, prompting questions, and emotional support, indicating the existence of motivational scaffolding practices in daily learning. Based on the foregoing explanation, this study aims to describe teacher motivational scaffolding strategies in stimulating early childhood multiliteracy at RA Al Ikhlas, Takalar Regency.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach was selected because the research aims to describe in depth teacher motivational scaffolding strategies in stimulating early childhood multiliteracy within natural field settings. The research was conducted at RA Al Ikhlas, located at Jalan Fitrah No. 05, Pattallassang District, Takalar Regency. Research subjects comprised the school principal, class B teachers, and students. Subject selection was conducted using purposive sampling techniques, considering parties who understand the learning process and the implementation of motivational scaffolding at the school.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out during the learning process to observe teacher-child interactions in multiliteracy activities. Structured interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers to obtain information regarding motivational scaffolding strategies implemented in learning. Documentation served as supporting data, including activity photographs, daily lesson plans (RPPH), and school archives. Data analysis utilized

the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through technique triangulation and source triangulation.

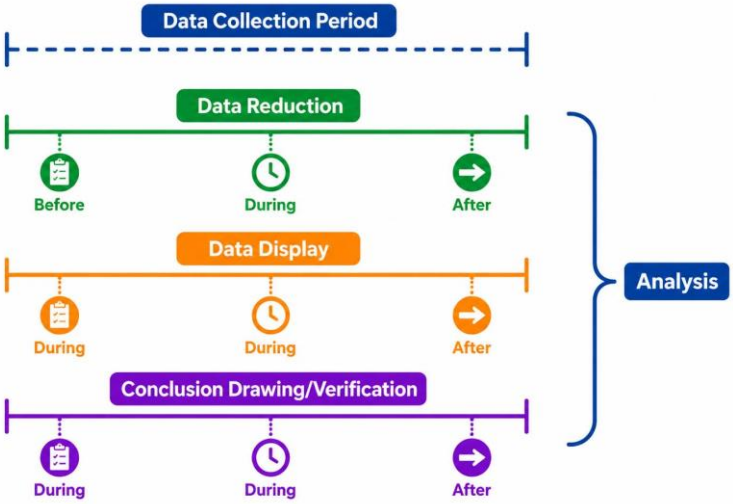

Figure 1. Research Design Diagram

3. Result and Discussion

Based on interview results with the school principal on April 7, 2026, it was revealed that RA Al Ikhlas does not yet possess specific written policies regarding multiliteracy learning. Nevertheless, multiliteracy elements have been implemented in daily learning activities through various activities encompassing literacy, numeracy, science, digital, financial, and cultural and civic literacy.

The principal explained that teachers have implemented forms of motivational scaffolding in learning, although they have not formally used this terminology. Teachers provide prompting questions, positive reinforcement, gradual assistance, emotional support, and exploratory support to ensure children are more active and motivated in learning.

This was corroborated by interview results with the class teacher, who stated that before entering the core learning activities, the teacher first builds children's interest through conversation, simple questions, and providing examples. The teacher also adjusts assistance according to each child's abilities.

> "*I usually engage the children in conversation first so that they become interested and active. I don't directly assign tasks, but rather provide examples and accompany them throughout the activities.*"

Observation results indicate that motivational scaffolding strategies are implemented during the opening, core, and closing phases of learning. Teachers provide support gradually, enabling children to actively participate in various multiliteracy activities.

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Figure 2. Multiliteracy learning activities at RA Al Ikhlas

3.1 Literacy

Literacy stimulation was conducted through activities such as reading picture storybooks, listening to stories, recognizing letters, and speaking in front of peers. During the opening phase, the teacher displayed picture storybooks and posed prompting questions such as "what picture do you see?" and "what letter do you recognize?"

Observation results showed that children appeared enthusiastic in responding to the teacher's questions and attempted to mention letters and objects depicted in the images. The teacher provided positive reinforcement through praise such as "great" and "clever" when children were able to answer questions.

Furthermore, the teacher provided gradual assistance to children who still experienced difficulty recognizing letters by pointing to images and pronouncing letter sounds slowly. Emotional support was also provided through patient and responsive attitudes, enabling children to feel confident in attempting.

These findings align with the perspective of Ollonen & Kangas (2025), who state that motivational scaffolding can enhance children's engagement and self-confidence in learning through emotional support and positive reinforcement. The results also corroborate the work of Farantika et al. (2024), who found that multiliteracy-based learning environments significantly enhance creative thinking, and Papadopoulos (2024), who demonstrated the effectiveness of multiliteracy-oriented programs (such as CLIL) in fostering language and critical skills in very young learners. The observed teacher-child interactions mirror the effective practices outlined by Papadopoulos & Bisiri (2020), where intercultural tales are used to foster critical thinking through scaffolding.

Figure 3. Children's literacy activities

3.2 Numeracy Literacy

Numeracy literacy was stimulated through activities involving counting concrete objects, recognizing patterns, and comparing quantities of objects. The teacher utilized media familiar to children's daily lives, such as blocks, buttons, and objects within the classroom. During the activities, the teacher posed prompting questions such as "how many blocks are there?" and "which one is more?" Children appeared actively counting objects while being guided by the teacher.

The teacher provided gradual assistance to children who were not yet able to count independently by counting together while pointing to objects one by one. Positive reinforcement was given when children successfully completed counting activities.

Research findings indicate that motivational scaffolding strategies assist children in becoming more confident in recognizing number concepts and simple numeracy. These findings are strongly supported by Nair et al. (2024), who explicitly validated the use of scaffolding strategies to enhance pre-numeracy skills. Furthermore, Alvarez-Vargas et al. (2023) provided evidence that physically active and playful math learning designs, underpinned by scaffolding, significantly boost early mathematical cognition. The concrete, play-based approach observed aligns with the socio-cultural principles discussed by Breive (2021), where the dialectic exchange between teacher and student co-creates a mathematical ZPD.

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Figure 4. Early Childhood Numeracy Activities

3.3 Science Literacy

Science literacy stimulation was conducted through activities such as observing the environment, simple experiments, and discussions about natural phenomena. The teacher provided opportunities for children to explore the school environment, including plants and surrounding objects.

During these activities, the teacher posed questions such as "why do plants need watering?" and "what happens if water is not given?" These questions encouraged children's curiosity and helped them develop critical thinking skills. The teacher also provided exploratory support by allowing children to directly engage in simple activities such as watering plants and observing the changes that occurred.

These findings demonstrate that motivational scaffolding can create meaningful and enjoyable science learning experiences for early childhood. This is empirically supported by Twiningsih & Elisanti (2021), who found that STEAM-based media development effectively improves both critical thinking and science literacy in early education. The exploratory nature of the teacher's support also reflects the principles of playful learning identified by Ollonen & Kangas (2025), wherein exploratory triggers motivate children to engage with scientific phenomena.

Figure 5. Children's Science Exploration Activities

3.4 Digital Literacy

Digital literacy was implemented through the use of audiovisual media and simple educational videos. The teacher utilized laptops and educational videos appropriate to the learning theme. Before watching the video, the teacher posed prompting questions to focus children's attention on the material presented. After the video concluded, the teacher invited children to discuss its content. Children appeared enthusiastic in attending to the digital media and were able to answer simple questions regarding the content viewed. The teacher provided positive reinforcement and emotional support throughout the activities.

The guided use of digital media helped children understand visual and audio information in a more engaging manner. These observations are corroborated by Behnamnia et al. (2020), who identified that effective components of digital game-based learning significantly boost creativity and engagement in young children. Masoumi et al. (2024) specifically mapped how children respond to scaffolding during the use of interactive whiteboards, confirming that structured digital mediation enhances cognitive outcomes. Andiema (2024) further advocates for the seamless integration of technology in play-based learning, while Zainiyah (2023) showed that digital literacy modules effectively improve health and nutritional knowledge, proving the efficacy of digital scaffolding. Research on peer scaffolding during iPad use in preschools (2022) also supports the notion that multimodal digital tools foster collaborative learning.

Figure 6. Use of Digital Media in Learning

3.5 Financial Literacy

Financial literacy was implemented through saving and charitable giving activities conducted regularly at school. These activities helped children understand the function of money and build simple habits in managing money. The teacher provided simple explanations regarding the importance of saving and sharing with others. Children appeared enthusiastic in depositing money into the provided savings containers. During this activity, the teacher provided emotional support and positive reinforcement to make children feel proud of their sharing and saving behaviors.

Research findings indicate that simple daily habit-building activities can serve as a means of stimulating early childhood financial literacy. This aligns with Anggraeni (2022), who identified that financial literacy learning in early childhood is crucial for building foundational economic understanding, and Litamahuputty (2022), who theoretically established the urgency of financial literacy from a young age. Furthermore, Sari et al. (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of contextual storybooks in teaching financial literacy, while Gerasimova et al. (2022) highlighted the strong correlation between financial literacy in preschool children and their parents' financial behaviors, underscoring the importance of school-based reinforcement.

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Figure 7. Children's Financial Literacy Activities

3.6 Cultural and Civic Literacy

Cultural and civic literacy was developed through the habituation of cooperative attitudes, religious activities, and introduction to local culture. Children were accustomed to participating in congregational Duha prayers, praying, and collaborating in group activities. The teacher modeled attitudes of mutual respect and helping friends throughout the learning activities. The emotional support provided by the teacher made children feel comfortable interacting with peers. Observation results indicate that children began to understand simple social rules such as queuing, sharing, and respecting friends' opinions.

These findings demonstrate that motivational scaffolding strategies not only support academic abilities but also contribute to children's social development and character formation. This is supported by Azizah & Zubaedah (2024), who investigated the cultivation of cultural literacy through structured learning models, and Khairil et al. (2020), who explored the role of folklore in building children's cultural literacy. Moreover, the collaborative and cooperative aspects observed reflect the findings of the COMPARE Project (2023), which emphasized that collaboration with parents and community enhances multiliteracy practices in early childhood settings. Ethridge et al. (2024) also noted that fostering play and social skills requires strategic pedagogical adjustments, aligning with the teacher's observed approach to civic habituation.

Figure 8. Children's Cultural and Civic Activities

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4. Conclusion

Early childhood education constitutes a crucial foundation in supporting children's optimal growth and development. During this phase, children require appropriate stimulation to develop various developmental aspects, including language skills, social-emotional abilities, cognitive capacities, and other fundamental competencies. Early

childhood education serves as a fundamental foundation for shaping cognitive abilities, social skills, and overall personality development in children. In alignment with this, early childhood education plays a vital role in facilitating the growth and developmental processes according to children's developmental stages, thereby necessitating that the educational process be tailored to children's holistic needs and characteristics.

Early childhood education represents an effective phase for providing stimulation across all aspects of child development. Within the learning context, teachers play a crucial role in providing support to ensure children are actively engaged in play activities as a medium for learning and acquiring new experiences. The parental and teacher motivation are pivotal in determining the quality of early childhood educational experiences. Furthermore, the success of learning is significantly influenced by teacher competence in facilitating optimal child development, both in cognitive aspects, social skills, and other fundamental abilities. The relationship between teachers and children, characterized by emotional support and responsiveness, has been identified as a significant predictor of early academic motivation in kindergarten settings.

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