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Implementation Of Deep Learning To Support The Development Of Social-Emotional Abilities In Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Deep learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam) is now part of the basic framework of Indonesia's national curriculum, including early childhood education, yet its success depends on how the approach is implemented in educational institutions. This study aims to analyze the implementation of deep learning to support the development of social-emotional abilities of young children at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency. The study employed a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design. Data were collected through interviews with 2 principals, 6 teachers, and 8 parents, observation of 24 children, and documentation, and were analyzed using Edward III's four implementation variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The results show that both kindergartens implemented deep learning through group play, role play, sharing, turn-taking, storytelling, and simple conflict resolution, but with different patterns of support. TKQ Zahrotunnisa relied on more formal mechanisms, such as scheduled meetings, standard operating procedures, supervision, and written reflection, whereas TKQ Al-Haadii relied on direct coordination, daily oral communication, and the use of the surrounding environment. Observation records showed changes in seven social-emotional indicators, although some behaviors still required teacher guidance. The main obstacles were uneven teacher understanding, inconsistent parental involvement, and limited media and time, which were addressed through internal training, joint reflection, use of the environment, and stronger communication with parents. These findings indicate that deep learning can be supported through both formal and simpler institutional mechanisms as long as communication, teacher commitment, and collaboration with parents are established.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini/PAUD) is essentially oriented not only toward developing children's cognitive abilities but also toward providing holistic stimulation across the various aspects of development (Sujiono, 2016). One aspect that plays an important role is social-emotional ability, namely children's ability to recognize and manage emotions, build relationships with others, communicate, cooperate, show empathy, follow rules, and adapt to their social environment. This ability forms the basis for children's lives in the family, school, and community, and the preschool years are an important period for acquiring the social-emotional skills that underpin children's later social-emotional well-being (Aksoy & Gresham, 2024). Children who are able to recognize their feelings find it easier to manage their emotions, while the abilities to share, take turns, and resolve conflicts are skills that need to be built from an early age. Therefore, social-emotional abilities need to be developed through learning processes that suit the characteristics of young children.

The quality of learning plays an important role in providing experiences that support such social-emotional development. Learning that gives children opportunities to engage actively, interact, experience, try, and reflect on their experiences can create a more complete learning process. One approach relevant to these needs is deep learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam), which is now part of the basic framework of the national curriculum, including at the early childhood level (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025). However, the success of a learning approach is determined not only by a sound concept but also by how the concept is translated and implemented in practice (Fullan, 2015). Without effective communication, adequate resources, supportive implementer attitudes, and a clear institutional structure, deep learning risks being understood merely as a change in method rather than as a change in how children's learning experiences are viewed.

In this study, deep learning is not understood as learning that merely adds to the content load or level of difficulty, but as a way of designing and implementing learning experiences that suit children's characteristics through play, exploration, interaction, collaboration, habituation, communication, and simple reflection. The term deep approach to learning itself is rooted in the distinction between deep and surface processing of learning material proposed by Marton and

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Säljö (1976). This concept positions children as active subjects who experience an activity, understand the experience, connect it with everyday life, and derive meaning from the process. In early childhood education, deep learning is directed by three principles, namely mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025). Mindful learning gives children room to engage consciously in learning experiences, meaningful learning connects learning experiences with children's real lives, and joyful learning creates an atmosphere that is safe, enjoyable, interactive, and appropriate to children's developmental needs. These principles are closely related to social-emotional abilities. Through group play, children learn to communicate, cooperate, share, and take turns; through role play, children learn to understand the feelings and perspectives of others; and through experiences of dealing with conflict, children learn to recognize emotions, control their responses, and find ways to solve problems (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009).

To examine the implementation of this approach, this study uses Edward III's (1980) implementation theory as its analytical framework. Edward III (1980) proposes four variables that influence the success of implementation, namely communication, resources, dispositions, and bureaucratic structure, which are interrelated in determining whether a policy or program can be implemented in accordance with its objectives. This model is in line with Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), who also position resources, inter-organizational communication, the characteristics of implementing agencies, and the disposition of implementers as determinants of implementation performance. In the context of early childhood education units, communication is needed so that teachers understand the nature and objectives of deep learning; resources include adequate educators, facilities, media, time, information, and support; disposition relates to educators' attitudes, commitment, willingness, and consistency; while bureaucratic structure relates to the division of tasks, coordination, procedures, supervision, and evaluation systems.

Previous studies relevant to this research can be mapped into three groups. The first group examines play-based learning as a vehicle for developing young children's social-emotional abilities. Wirahandayani et al. (2023), through a systematic review of 15 articles, concluded that the role-play method affects the social-emotional development of preschool children, while San et al. (2021), using a pretest-posttest design with a control group, found that a play program had an impact on the social and emotional development of preschool children in Myanmar. The second group consists of studies on the implementation of education programs using Edward III's framework. Sururi et al. (2023), for example, found that the implementation of the Program

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Sekolah Penggerak (Driving School Program) in junior high schools had met the aspects of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure despite facing many obstacles in its first year, with resources, especially budget, remaining the aspect in need of improvement. The third group comprises the emerging studies of deep learning in early childhood education. Surianti et al. (2026) reported that learning based on real experiences and active participation encouraged cooperation, emotional regulation, empathy, and independence among children in one kindergarten class, while Sholihah and Rahmadani (2026) examined the application of the mindful, meaningful, and joyful principles in one faith-based kindergarten and found that a dense religious program and parents' demands for *calistung* (reading, writing, and arithmetic) skills were structural obstacles.

From this mapping, the studies of deep learning in early childhood education found in this review are generally studies of a single institution or a single class and focus on learning practices, whereas studies using Edward III's framework, such as Sururi et al. (2023), examine programs at the secondary school level. In the available literature, studies examining how implementation factors at the level of early childhood education units sustain deep learning practices while also tracing the development of children's social-emotional behavior remain limited. This need is relevant to the Taman Kanak-Kanak Al-Qur'an (TKQ, Qur'anic kindergarten), because educational units with the same distinctive character may have different institutional and resource patterns, so the implementation of the same approach may proceed differently across institutions.

Unlike the studies mapped above, this study seeks to fill this gap in three ways. First, it uses Edward III's four variables to examine the implementation of deep learning at the level of early childhood education units, rather than at the secondary school level as in the study by Sururi et al. (2023). Second, the analysis of implementation factors is linked directly to the development of seven observed social-emotional indicators, namely recognizing emotions, taking turns, sharing, cooperation, empathy, independence, and responsibility. Third, this study compares TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii in Karawang Regency as a multisite case study, so that the similarities and differences in implementation at the two institutions can be identified.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the implementation of deep learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam) to support the development of young children's social-emotional abilities at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency. More specifically, this study seeks to answer how deep learning is implemented through communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure; how this implementation supports the development of

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children's social-emotional abilities; what obstacles are encountered and what efforts are made to overcome them; and what the similarities and differences in implementation are between the two TKQs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach because it was directed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing deep learning to support the development of young children's social-emotional abilities at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the object of the study relates not only to learning outcomes or achievements but primarily to the processes, experiences, interactions, meanings, and natural conditions that occur during the implementation of learning.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The qualitative research process takes place in natural settings, uses data drawn from various forms of information, and positions the researcher as the main instrument in obtaining and interpreting data. This view is relevant to this study because the implementation of deep learning at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii needs to be understood based on the experiences and perspectives of principals, teachers, and parents, as well as children's behavior during the learning process.

Moleong (2017) explains that qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically in a natural context by utilizing various scientific methods. In this study, the phenomenon examined is how deep learning is implemented in the learning process of young children and how this process provides experiences that support the development of children's social-emotional abilities. Therefore, the study was not directed at measuring relationships between variables statistically, but at comprehensively understanding the implementation process occurring in the field.

Furthermore, Sugiyono (2019) explains that qualitative research is used to examine objects in their natural condition, with the researcher as the key instrument. Data are collected through triangulation techniques, data analysis is inductive, and research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. These characteristics fit this study because the

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implementation of deep learning is an educational phenomenon that takes place in real situations and involves interaction among principals, teachers, children, and parents.

This study used a case study design to gain an in-depth, comprehensive, and contextual understanding of the implementation of deep learning to support the development of young children's social-emotional abilities at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency. The choice of a case study was based on the characteristics of the research, which focuses on an educational phenomenon occurring in real conditions, namely how deep learning is planned, implemented, supported, evaluated, and developed in an early childhood education setting.

According to Yin (2018), a case study is a research method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. This view fits this study because the implementation of deep learning cannot be separated from the school context, teacher characteristics, child characteristics, principal support, parental involvement, resource availability, and the learning culture that has developed in each TKQ.

Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that a case study is a qualitative research approach used to explore a case or several cases in depth in real life. The case is bounded by time and particular activities, while the researcher collects detailed information using various data collection procedures. Based on this view, this study focuses on the implementation of deep learning as an educational case examined in depth through the experiences and practices of principals, teachers, and parents, as well as children's activities.

The choice of the case study method was also based on the research need to understand the implementation process, not merely to know the final outcome of applying deep learning. The researcher needed to obtain a picture of how the concepts of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning were translated by teachers into learning activities suited to the characteristics of young children. Therefore, the data examined included the implementation of play and exploration activities, teacher-child interaction, group activities, habituation, communication, and records of children's social-emotional development.

A qualitative approach was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing deep learning in the natural context of early childhood education. This study was designed as a multisite case study because it examines the same phenomenon in two educational units, namely TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency, while maintaining the characteristics and context of each institution. The use of two sites enabled the researcher to

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compare the similarities, differences, supporting factors, and obstacles in implementing deep learning at the two TKQs.

The research subjects consisted of 2 principals, 6 teachers, 8 parents, and 24 children who were the focus of observation, with the same distribution at both TKQs, as presented in Table 1. Informants were selected purposively (purposive sampling) based on the criteria of being directly involved in learning, being willing to provide information, and representing different classes or age groups. Principals and teachers were the main informants because they were directly involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. Parents were supporting informants selected based on the children who were the focus of observation and who had given consent, so that they could provide information about children's social-emotional development at home. Children who were the focus of observation were selected based on teacher recommendations and parental permission, covering a variety of social-emotional behaviors. Data from adult informants were complemented by child observations and school documentation.

Table 1. Distribution of Informants and Observed Children

Site	Principals	Teachers	Parents	Children as observation focus
TKQ Zahrotunnisa	1	3	4	12
TKQ Al-Haadii	1	3	4	12
Total	2	6	8	24

Before data collection, the researcher obtained research permits from the university and the principals of TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii. Parents or guardians gave written informed consent for observation and interviews, including consent for their children to be observed during learning activities. Children were given a simple explanation and could decline to participate. The names of informants and children were anonymized using codes. Interview codes begin with the letter W, followed by K (principal), G (teacher), or O (parent), and Z (TKQ Zahrotunnisa) or A (TKQ Al-Haadii), while the codes OBS-Z and OBS-A denote observation notes at each TKQ.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to observe learning activities, teacher-child interaction, play activities, exploration, group work, and children's social-emotional behavior. Interviews were conducted with principals,

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teachers, and parents to explore their understanding, experiences, obstacles, and efforts in implementing deep learning. Documentation was used to complement the research data in the form of children's developmental records and school activity documents. The development of children's social-emotional behavior was recorded by comparing observations at the beginning (weeks 1-2) and end (weeks 6-8) of the activities.

Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data were then categorized based on Edward III's (1980) four implementation variables, namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The categorization results for each TKQ were then compared to identify similarities and differences in implementation between the two sites. Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from principals, teachers, parents, and observations of children. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing data from observation, interviews, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of Deep Learning through Communication

Communication is the first variable in Edward III's (1980) implementation theory. Communication is an important prerequisite for a policy or approach to be translated by implementers into concrete action. In the implementation of deep learning, communication is understood not merely as the delivery of information from the principal to teachers, but as a process of building a shared understanding of the nature, objectives, and ways of applying deep learning.

Policy messages must be transmitted to the right personnel and conveyed clearly and consistently (Edward III, 1980). In the context of deep learning, educators' understanding of the concept depends heavily on the quality of communication within the school environment.

Field findings show that at both TKQs, communication took place through beginning-of-semester meetings, principal directives, teacher discussions, and WhatsApp groups. The difference was that communication at TKQ Zahrotunnisa was more scheduled, whereas at TKQ Al-Haadii it was more flexible and largely took place through daily conversations. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, the principal emphasized that deep learning does not mean adding difficult content, and this message changed the understanding of teachers who had initially assumed that

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deep learning was synonymous with many assignments. At TKQ Al-Haadii, teachers' understanding was instead formed after observing group activities and role play in practice. Communication with parents at TKQ Zahrotunnisa also took place through a home-school communication book (*buku penghubung*), as the following informants expressed.

> "We conveyed at the beginning-of-semester meeting that deep learning does not mean adding difficult content. What matters is that children experience, play, and understand their experiences." (WKZ-1)
>
> "At first I thought deep learning meant lots of assignments. After discussing it with the principal, I understood that children are invited to tell stories, work together, and reflect on simple experiences." (WGZ-2)
>
> "The teacher often sends short notes in the communication book about how my child was today. From that I know I have to continue the habits at home." (WOZ-3)
>
> "We did the socialization through teacher meetings and the WhatsApp group. Because we have few teachers, daily communication is mostly oral." (WKA-1)
>
> "I understood the concept after seeing the group activities and role play." (WGA-2)

This finding is in line with Jati et al. (2025), who, in a study using Edward III's framework, found that effective teacher-student communication and strong leadership supported student engagement in a school literacy program. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, communication in implementing deep learning was directed at aligning the understanding of principals and teachers regarding mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning. The quotations show that teachers' understanding of deep learning as a deeper learning experience, rather than the delivery of more difficult content, was formed through discussions with the principal at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and through observing practice at TKQ Al-Haadii. Communication also took place between teachers and children. Teachers gave children opportunities to express opinions, express feelings, tell stories, ask questions, and listen to their peers. These activities also served as a means of developing social-emotional abilities.

Communication with parents was also an important part. Through the communication book, parents at TKQ Zahrotunnisa understood their children's learning experiences at school, so that positive habits related to emotional management, independence, responsibility, and social interaction could be continued in the family environment. Thus, communication became the foundation for building a shared understanding of deep learning among principals, teachers, and parents.

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2. Implementation of Deep Learning through Resources

Resources are the second variable in Edward III's (1980) theory. Policy implementation cannot proceed effectively if implementers do not have adequate resources. In the TKQ context, resources include educator competence, information, time, learning media, facilities and infrastructure, the learning environment, and institutional support.

Field findings show differences in resources between the two TKQs. TKQ Zahrotunnisa had more varied media and better-organized classrooms, whereas TKQ Al-Haadii relied more on the surrounding environment and simple objects. Teachers used readily available materials, and parents also used situations at home as material for habituation. Both TKQs faced time constraints; at TKQ Zahrotunnisa, administrative demands even reduced children's reflection time.

> "We use blocks, cloth, storybooks, and safe used items. It doesn't have to be expensive; what matters is that children can try." (WGZ-1)
>
> "The problem is time. Sometimes the activity is already good, but because we have to catch up on administration, the time for children's reflection gets shorter." (WGZ-3)
>
> "Here we use the schoolyard and the surroundings a lot. Children are invited to observe plants and then talk about their feelings." (WGA-1)
>
> "We also use things at home, for example my child talks about toys that have to be shared with siblings." (WOA-2)

Resource limitations have also been found in other contexts. Untari et al. (2025) reported that the resource aspect, in the form of a shortage of teachers trained as facilitators and limited access to project materials, was the main obstacle to implementing the P5 program (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila, Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project) at SMA Negeri 9 Malang, even though its communication and bureaucratic structure functioned well. Teachers' quotations at both TKQs show that deep learning does not depend on expensive media (WGZ-1), because blocks, cloth, storybooks, used items, the schoolyard, and situations at home can be used as learning materials (WGA-1; WOA-2). Conversely, time constraints resulting from administrative demands reduced children's opportunities for reflection (WGZ-3).

In social-emotional development, these resources were used for role play, group games, sharing activities, collaborative activities, environmental exploration, and habituation of responsibility. The availability of teachers with understanding and competence was also an

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important factor. Teachers' quotations at both TKQs reveal efforts to design learning experiences that give children opportunities to be active, explore, try, communicate, and cooperate.

3. Implementation of Deep Learning through Disposition

Disposition is the attitude and commitment of implementers in carrying out a policy. In the implementation of deep learning, teachers' disposition is an important factor because changes in learning require educators' willingness to move away from learning patterns oriented toward content transfer.

Educator commitment is an important element in the implementation of deep learning. This commitment includes earnestness, willingness, consistency, responsibility, an orientation toward children's social-emotional development, alignment with child-centered learning, reflection, and a willingness to develop competence.

Field findings show that teachers at both TKQs were committed, responsive to children's emotions, and willing to try new activities. This responsiveness was evident when teachers handled children fighting over something by first asking about the children's feelings, and in teachers' efforts to accustom children to speaking up and apologizing consistently. Parents also felt the impact on their children's courage to express their feelings. The difference lay in the mode of reflection: TKQ Zahrotunnisa relied more on written reflection, whereas TKQ Al-Haadii relied more on oral reflection.

> "If children are fighting over something, I don't blame them right away. I first ask how they feel, then ask the child to listen to their friend." (WGZ-2)
>
> "I try to be consistent. Even when I'm tired, the children need to learn how to talk and say sorry." (WGA-3)
>
> "The teacher is willing to listen to the children. My child is now braver to say 'I'm sad' instead of crying right away." (WOZ-1)

This role of disposition is in line with Susanto et al. (2026), who found that disposition was the dominant variable in implementing a character habituation program in elementary schools, particularly through teachers' affective acceptance and consistent role modeling. Teachers' commitment in this study can be seen in their willingness to consistently apply mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning. This commitment was maintained even when teachers experienced fatigue, as expressed by WGA-3. Disposition was also evident in teachers' responsiveness. This attitude appeared when teachers asked about children's feelings before

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handling a dispute and were willing to listen to children, as parents also perceived (WGZ-2; WOZ-1).

When conflicts occurred between children, for example, teachers did not simply stop the conflict but helped children recognize their feelings, listen to the other party, understand the situation, and find an appropriate resolution. This process became a direct experience for children in developing social-emotional abilities. Thus, teachers' disposition became the link between the concept of deep learning and the real experiences of children.

4. Implementation of Deep Learning through Bureaucratic Structure

Bureaucratic structure is the fourth variable in Edward III's (1980) theory. Bureaucratic structure relates to how tasks, responsibilities, coordination, procedures, supervision, and evaluation are organized to support implementation.

Field findings show that TKQ Zahrotunnisa had learning SOPs (standard operating procedures), a supervision schedule, and a teacher reflection book, including weekly reflections to discuss teachers' obstacles. The division of tasks at this school involved class teachers preparing activities, the principal monitoring, and parents supporting habituation at home. Meanwhile, TKQ Al-Haadii had a simpler division of tasks, with supervision carried out periodically by the principal and coordination resting on direct communication between teachers and the principal.

> "There is a supervision schedule and weekly reflection. Teachers can share their problems, and then we look for solutions together." (WKZ-2)
>
> "The division of tasks is clear: class teachers prepare the activities, the principal monitors, and parents support the habits at home." (WGZ-1)
>
> "Our structure is simple. What matters is that communication between teachers and the principal works." (WKA-2)

Regarding structure, Susanto et al. (2026) also found that the principal's direct presence in supervision was a concrete form of support for program implementation, while Jati et al. (2025) noted that a rigid bureaucratic structure can hinder responsive decision-making. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, the division of roles was clearly formulated: class teachers prepared activities, the principal monitored, and parents supported habituation at home (WGZ-1). At TKQ Al-Haadii, the division of roles was simpler and rested on direct communication between teachers and the principal (WKA-2).

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The school structure also gave teachers room for reflection and improvement. Deep learning cannot be applied on the basis of a single activity but requires a continuous process. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, this room was provided through weekly reflections and the teacher reflection book, whereas at TKQ Al-Haadii reflection took place mostly orally. This finding indicates that bureaucratic structure in implementing deep learning is not merely administration but serves as a support system so that learning can proceed consistently.

5. Implementation of Deep Learning to Support the Development of Children's Social-Emotional Abilities

The implementation of deep learning was directed at learning experiences that can support children's social-emotional development. Learning through play, exploration, interaction, collaboration, habituation, communication, and real experiences gives children room to learn to manage themselves and build social relationships.

Field findings show that group play, role play, sharing tools, queuing, storytelling, and resolving simple conflicts were the main vehicles for social-emotional development at both TKQs. Observation records reveal gradual changes in children's behavior. Note OBS-Z-07 at TKQ Zahrotunnisa recorded that AZ (4;6) initially fought over blocks and cried when refused. The teacher guided AZ with a model sentence, "Try saying, I'm still using it, we'll take turns later." At the week 6 observation, AZ said, "I'm still using it, you can have it later," and waited for a turn for about two minutes. Note OBS-A-05 at TKQ Al-Haadii recorded that BR (5;1) was initially quiet during group activities. After several role-play activities, BR began offering crayons to peers and said, "This is for you." Similar changes were also observed by teachers and parents, as the following informants expressed.

"I see that the children are better able to wait their turn and share." (WGZ-2)

"At home, my child has started apologizing without being told after fighting over toys." (WOA-1)

Changes in the seven observed social-emotional indicators, from the beginning to the end of the observation period, are summarized in Table 2. Some changes still required guidance; for example, children were able to wait their turn but sometimes still needed reminders.

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Table 2. Records of Children's Social-Emotional Indicator Development at the Beginning and End of Observation

Indicator	Beginning (weeks 1-2)	End (weeks 6-8)	Source
Recognizing emotions	AZ cried without explaining	AZ said "I'm angry because it was taken from me"	OBS, teacher notes
Taking turns	Pushed peers	Waited 1-2 minutes, sometimes still reminded	OBS
Sharing	Refused to share	Offered tools after finishing	OBS, WO
Cooperation	Played alone	Joined a small group	OBS, WG
Empathy	Remained silent when a peer was sad	Patted the peer and called the teacher	OBS
Independence	Fully assisted	Tidied up tools with direction	OBS
Responsibility	Left tasks unfinished	Completed simple activities	OBS, DOC

Note: OBS = observation, WG = teacher interview, WO = parent interview, DOC = documentation.

On the indicator of recognizing emotions, AZ initially cried without explaining the cause, but by the end of the observation was able to say "I'm angry because it was taken from me" (OBS-Z-07; teacher notes). A parent at TKQ Zahrotunnisa also saw that their child was braver in expressing sadness instead of crying right away (WOZ-1). On the indicator of taking turns, children who had initially pushed their peers began to be able to wait for about one to two minutes, although they sometimes still needed reminders. On the indicator of sharing, children who had initially refused to share began offering tools to peers after finishing with them, as seen when BR offered crayons to a peer (OBS-A-05).

On the indicator of cooperation, children who had initially played alone, such as BR, who was initially quiet in group activities, began participating in small groups. On the indicator of empathy, children who had initially remained silent when a peer was sad began patting their peer and calling the teacher.

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On the indicator of independence, children who had initially been fully assisted began tidying up tools with the teacher's direction. On the indicator of responsibility, children who had initially left tasks unfinished began completing simple activities, and at home parents saw their children begin apologizing on their own after fighting over toys (WOA-1). The changes in all seven indicators were gradual and partly still dependent on teacher direction, so they are more accurately read as development supported by learning experiences rather than as independent achievements.

These changes are consistent with the systematic review by Jannah et al. (2026) of 42 studies in Indonesia, which showed a positive association between deep learning in early childhood education and children's self-regulation and social competence, and with Surianti et al. (2026), who found growth in children's cooperation, emotional regulation, empathy, and independence. This pattern is in line with the understanding of deep learning in this study, namely providing learning experiences that suit children's characteristics through play, exploration, interaction, collaboration, habituation, communication, and simple reflection.

6. Obstacles to Implementing Deep Learning

The implementation of deep learning in early childhood education may face various obstacles. Challenges that need attention include uneven teacher understanding, limited resources, changes in learning habits, and the need for institutional support.

Field findings confirm three main obstacles. First, teacher understanding was uneven because some teachers still viewed deep learning as a new method. Second, parental involvement was inconsistent, so habituation at home did not always continue. Third, limited media required teachers to be creative. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, the prominent obstacles were time taken up by administration and uneven teacher understanding, whereas at TKQ Al-Haadii the prominent obstacles were limited media and inconsistent parental involvement.

> "Some teachers still regard deep learning as a new method, not yet as a way of viewing children's learning experiences." (WKZ-1)
>
> "Parents are busy, so sometimes the habits at home don't continue." (WGA-2)
>
> "Media are limited, so we have to be creative." (WKA-1)

These obstacles are in line with Ramadhani et al. (2026), who found that early childhood teachers in Pontianak Tenggara District faced the greatest challenge in the mindful aspect, as well as obstacles related to the diversity of children's characteristics and limited facilities and infrastructure, and with Dwijantie (2025), who noted teacher readiness and limited infrastructure

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as the main challenges of deep learning in early childhood education. Inconsistent parental involvement was also found by Jati et al. (2025) in a school context. Limited teacher understanding can cause deep learning to be understood merely as a change in learning method rather than as a paradigm shift regarding children's learning experiences. Limited media and time can also affect teachers' ability to design diverse learning experiences. Another obstacle is parental involvement. Social-emotional development does not occur only at school, so continuity between habituation at school and at home is essential.

7. Efforts to Overcome Obstacles

Efforts to overcome obstacles at both TKQs included improving teacher competence, strengthening communication, optimizing resources, principal supervision, and strengthening collaboration with parents. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, teachers had the opportunity to attend internal training, share good practices, and conduct joint reflection. Commitment to developing one's own competence is one of the indicators of educator disposition in this study.

Field findings show that the two TKQs pursued different efforts according to their obstacles. TKQ Zahrotunnisa pursued internal training, supervision, joint reflection, and sharing of good practices among teachers, and gave teachers room to try new activities. TKQ Al-Haadii utilized the surrounding environment and strengthened communication with parents through the communication book and a parents' group.

"We hold good-practice sharing among teachers and joint reflection." (WKZ-2)

"The principal gives us room to try new activities." (WGZ-3)

"We activated the communication book and the parents' group." (WKA-2)

This strengthening of communication with parents is supported by the meta-analysis by Smith et al. (2020) of school-age children, which showed that family-school partnership interventions had a positive effect on children's social-behavioral competence, with school-to-home communication and two-way communication as contributing components. TKQ Al-Haadii utilized the surrounding environment as a learning resource to work around limited media. At TKQ Zahrotunnisa, the principal gave teachers room to try new activities (WGZ-3). Communication with parents was strengthened through the communication book and the parents' group so that the stimulation of social-emotional abilities could take place continuously. Thus, the implementation of deep learning became part of the child's educational ecosystem, not merely an activity taking place in the classroom.

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8. Comparison of Implementation at the Two TKQs

The comparison of the two sites shows that TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii both implemented deep learning through play activities and social interaction, but with different patterns of support, as summarized in Table 3. TKQ Zahrotunnisa tended to rely on more formal mechanisms, such as scheduled meetings, SOPs, routine supervision, and written reflection, with the main obstacles being time taken up by administration and uneven teacher understanding. TKQ Al-Haadii tended to rely on direct coordination, daily oral communication, and the use of the surrounding environment, with the main obstacles being limited media and inconsistent parental involvement. These differences were also reflected in the efforts pursued, namely internal training, supervision, and reflection at TKQ Zahrotunnisa, and use of the environment and stronger communication with parents at TKQ Al-Haadii.

Table 3. Comparison of Deep Learning Implementation at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii

Aspect	TKQ Zahrotunnisa	TKQ Al-Haadii
Communication	Scheduled meetings, weekly reflection, communication book	Meetings and WhatsApp, daily oral communication
Resources	More varied media, organized rooms	Greater use of the environment and simple objects
Disposition	Written reflection, routine supervision	Oral reflection, flexible
Structure	More formal SOPs and supervision schedule	Simple structure, direct coordination
Social-emotional practices	Group play, role play, small projects	Role play, schoolyard exploration, sharing tools
Obstacles	Administrative time, uneven teacher understanding	Limited media, inconsistent parental involvement
Efforts	Internal training, supervision, reflection	Use of the environment, communication with parents

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CONCLUSION

The implementation of deep learning (Pembelajaran Mendalam) at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and TKQ Al-Haadii, Karawang Regency, took place through all four of Edward III's implementation variables, with different patterns at the two institutions. Communication built a shared understanding that deep learning does not mean adding difficult content but creating mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning experiences; this communication was more scheduled at TKQ Zahrotunnisa and took place more through daily conversations at TKQ Al-Haadii. In terms of resources, TKQ Zahrotunnisa was supported by more varied media, whereas TKQ Al-Haadii relied more on the surrounding environment and simple objects, and both faced time constraints. Teachers' disposition was evident in their commitment and responsiveness to children's emotions, while the bureaucratic structure at TKQ Zahrotunnisa was more formal through SOPs and scheduled supervision, and at TKQ Al-Haadii rested on a simple division of tasks and direct coordination.

This implementation supported the development of children's social-emotional abilities through group play, role play, sharing tools, queuing, storytelling, and resolving simple conflicts. Observation notes and children's developmental records revealed changes in the seven observed indicators, namely recognizing emotions, taking turns, sharing, cooperation, empathy, independence, and responsibility, although some behaviors still required teacher guidance. The main obstacles encountered were uneven teacher understanding, inconsistent parental involvement, and limited media and time. The two TKQs pursued different efforts according to their obstacles, namely internal training, supervision, joint reflection, and sharing of good practices at TKQ Zahrotunnisa, and use of the surrounding environment and stronger communication with parents at TKQ Al-Haadii. These findings indicate that deep learning in early childhood education can be supported through both formal and simpler institutional mechanisms as long as communication, teacher commitment, and collaboration with parents are established.

This study is limited to two TKQs in Karawang Regency using a qualitative approach, and children's development was compared between the beginning and end of observation without a comparison group, so the findings are not intended to be generalized or read as a cause-and-effect relationship. Based on these findings, early childhood education units are advised to safeguard teachers' reflection time so that it is not displaced by administrative demands, to strengthen teachers' understanding through sharing good practices, and to maintain the continuity of habituation at home through the communication book or parents' groups. Future

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research could trace children's social-emotional development over a longer observation period or in more early childhood education units.

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