

Exploring the Implementation of the Montessori Practical Life Area at Home and School for Children Aged 3–4 Years

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Abstract

Montessori Practical Life activities play an important role in promoting young children's independence, responsibility, and everyday life skills through meaningful real-life experiences. This study aimed to explore the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities at school, their continuation at home, and the continuity of these practices between the two learning environments for children aged 3–4 years at KB Anggrek, Aluh-Aluh Kecil Muara Village, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and consisted of one principal, three classroom teachers, and six parents. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that Montessori Practical Life activities have been consistently integrated into daily routines at school and reinforced through similar activities at home. Teachers implemented the activities by preparing learning environments, demonstrating tasks, and encouraging children to perform them independently, while parents extended these experiences through daily household routines. Effective communication between teachers and parents supported the continuity of implementation across both settings. Although challenges such as limited learning materials, time constraints, and differences in children's developmental readiness were identified, participants adapted available resources and maintained consistent practice. The study concludes that the continuity of Montessori Practical Life activities between school and home reflects a collaborative partnership between teachers and parents in supporting children's independence, responsibility, confidence, and everyday life skills.

Keywords

Early Childhood Education; Home School Collaboration; Montessori Method; Practical Life



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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a fundamental role in fostering children's holistic development during the golden age, a critical period characterized by rapid cognitive, physical,

social-emotional, and language development. During this stage, children learn most effectively through direct experiences, exploration, and interaction with their surrounding environment (Nofianti, 2021). According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged 2–7 years are in the preoperational stage, where learning occurs primarily through concrete experiences and symbolic thinking rather than abstract reasoning. Therefore, educational approaches that provide meaningful hands-on activities are essential to support children's developmental needs (Baiti, 2020).

One of the educational approaches widely recognized for promoting children's independence and holistic development is the Montessori method. Developed by Maria Montessori, this child-centered approach emphasizes self-directed learning, prepared environments, and meaningful activities that enable children to develop independence through real-life experiences (Nasution, 2017). Rather than relying on teacher-centered instruction, the Montessori method encourages children to explore learning materials independently while teachers act as facilitators who observe, guide, and support children's learning processes. Recent studies have demonstrated that Montessori education contributes positively to children's cognitive development, executive functioning, social competence, self-regulation, and independence (Zulkarnaen, 2025).

Within the Montessori curriculum, the Practical Life area serves as the foundation for children's learning experiences. Practical Life activities consist of everyday tasks such as pouring water, transferring objects, buttoning clothes, cleaning tables, sweeping floors, watering plants, washing hands, and organizing learning materials (Susetya & Zulkarnaen, 2022). These activities are carefully designed to develop children's concentration, coordination, order, independence, responsibility, and life skills through repeated practice in meaningful contexts. Although these activities also support fine motor development, their broader purpose is to prepare children to become independent individuals capable of managing everyday responsibilities confidently (Aulina, 2021).

The successful implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities requires consistency between children's learning environments, particularly at school and at home. According to Montessori philosophy, children's development is optimized when educational experiences provided by teachers are reinforced through similar routines and opportunities for independent practice within the family environment. Parents therefore play a significant role in extending children's learning experiences beyond the classroom by encouraging participation in daily household activities appropriate to their developmental stage (Zulkarnaen & Baiti, 2025).

Previous studies have primarily investigated the effectiveness of Montessori education in improving specific developmental domains, such as fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, academic readiness, creativity, and independence within school settings. However, limited research has explored how Montessori Practical Life activities are implemented simultaneously in both school and home environments and how consistency between these two settings supports children's daily learning experiences (Sanenek et al., 2023). Moreover, studies examining collaboration between teachers and parents in implementing Practical Life activities

among children aged 3–4 years remain relatively scarce, particularly in rural early childhood education settings in Indonesia (Sulyandari A, 2021).

This research addresses that gap by exploring the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities in both school and home settings at KB Anggrek, Aluh-Aluh Kecil Muara Village, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan. Specifically, this study investigates how Practical Life activities are implemented by teachers in the classroom, how parents continue similar activities at home, and how consistency between school and family environments is established through communication and collaborative practices. Understanding these implementation processes is expected to provide a comprehensive description of Montessori Practical Life practices in early childhood education and contribute to strengthening partnerships between schools and families in supporting children's independence and life skills.

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature on Montessori education, particularly regarding the implementation of Practical Life activities across multiple learning environments. Furthermore, the study provides practical implications for early childhood educators, school administrators, and parents in developing collaborative strategies that promote children's independence, responsibility, self-confidence, and everyday life skills through consistent Montessori-based practices.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the implementation of the Montessori Practical Life approach in both school and home environments for children aged 3–4 years. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to the implementation of Practical Life activities in natural settings (Chatra et al., 2023). The research was conducted at KB Anggrek, an early childhood education center located in Aluh-Aluh Kecil Muara Village, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted to identify the implementation of Practical Life activities and the interactions between teachers and children during learning activities. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents were carried out to obtain detailed information regarding the implementation of Practical Life activities, the roles of teachers and parents, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the continuity of these activities between school and home. Documentation, including lesson plans, photographs of learning activities, school records, and supporting documents, was also examined to strengthen the research findings (Susanto et al., 2023).

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting,

simplifying, and organizing relevant information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The organized data were then presented systematically to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure consistency between the findings and the collected data (Meleong, 2021).

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, data credibility was established through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the school principal, teachers, and parents. Method triangulation involved comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with several participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives (Susanto et al., 2023).

The study adhered to ethical research principles. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their personal information. To protect participants' privacy, all personal identities were anonymized in the reporting of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study explored the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities in school and home environments for children aged 3–4 years at KB Anggrek, Aluh-Aluh Kecil Muara Village. The findings were organized into three themes based on the research objectives: (1) the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities at school, (2) the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities at home, and (3) the continuity of Montessori Practical Life practices between school and home.

Implementation of Montessori Practical Life Activities at School

The findings indicated that Montessori Practical Life activities have been integrated into the daily learning routine at KB Anggrek. Interviews with the principal and classroom teachers revealed that these activities are conducted every school day as part of children's habitual learning experiences. Teachers reported that Practical Life activities include pouring water, transferring objects using spoons or tweezers, opening and closing bottles, buttoning clothes, washing hands, organizing toys, wiping tables, sweeping floors, watering plants, cleaning the playground, threading beads, and storing learning materials after use.

Teachers explained that each activity begins with preparing the learning materials and environment, followed by a demonstration of the task. Children are then encouraged to perform the activity independently, while teachers observe, provide motivation, and offer assistance only when necessary. This learning process encourages children to participate actively and practice everyday skills through direct experience.

The participants also reported that children responded enthusiastically to these activities because they involved real objects and familiar daily routines. However, differences in children's levels of independence were observed. Children who frequently practiced similar activities at home were generally more confident and required less assistance than children who had fewer opportunities for independent practice.

Several challenges were identified during implementation, including limited Montessori learning materials, variations in children's developmental readiness, and limited instructional time. Teachers addressed these challenges by adapting locally available materials and providing individualized guidance according to each child's needs.

Implementation of Montessori Practical Life Activities at Home

Interviews with six parents revealed that Practical Life activities were also practiced in the home environment. Parents reported that they became familiar with these activities through communication with teachers, classroom WhatsApp groups, and conversations with their children.

The home activities included eating independently, dressing without assistance, washing hands, arranging toys, storing personal belongings, wiping tables, watering plants, sweeping floors, disposing of garbage, and helping with simple household chores. Parents generally introduced these activities by demonstrating the task before encouraging children to perform it independently.

Parents reported that children gradually became more willing to complete everyday tasks independently after regularly participating in Practical Life activities. They observed improvements in children's responsibility, confidence, discipline, and willingness to help with household routines. Nevertheless, parents also experienced several challenges, including limited time to accompany children, children's occasional boredom, and children's tendency to request adult assistance when facing unfamiliar tasks.

Continuity of Montessori Practical Life Activities Between School and Home

The findings demonstrated continuity between the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities at school and at home. Similar activities were practiced in both settings, including washing hands, organizing personal belongings, pouring water, cleaning tables, watering plants, and participating in simple daily responsibilities.

Teachers reported maintaining regular communication with parents regarding children's learning progress and recommending activities that could be continued at home. Parents confirmed that they attempted to reinforce similar routines in daily family life, allowing children to repeatedly practice the same skills in different environments.

The participants identified several factors that supported successful implementation, including effective communication between teachers and parents, consistent daily routines, school support, and parental involvement. At the same time, several barriers remained, such as limited learning materials, differences in children's developmental abilities, and time constraints experienced by both teachers and parents.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Montessori Practical Life activities have been consistently implemented in both school and home environments for children aged 3–4 years at KB Anggrek. The implementation reflects the fundamental principles of Montessori education, particularly child-centered learning, learning through direct experience, and the development of independence through meaningful everyday activities. Rather than positioning teachers as the primary source of knowledge, the learning process allows children to explore, practice, and gradually master daily life skills independently while teachers serve as facilitators who prepare the learning environment and provide guidance when necessary.

The implementation of Practical Life activities observed in this study aligns with Montessori's philosophy that meaningful learning begins with activities closely connected to children's everyday lives. Activities such as pouring water, buttoning clothes, washing hands, cleaning tables, sweeping floors, watering plants, and organizing learning materials provide authentic opportunities for children to develop coordination, concentration, order, and responsibility through repeated practice. Similarly, Lillard emphasized that authentic, hands-on experiences promote children's executive functioning, self-regulation, and independent learning.

The findings also highlight the important role of teachers in facilitating Montessori learning. Teachers in this study consistently prepared learning materials, demonstrated activities, observed children's performance, and provided assistance only when needed. This instructional pattern reflects the Montessori concept of the teacher as a guide rather than a director of learning. By minimizing direct intervention, teachers created opportunities for children to solve problems independently, make decisions, and learn through trial and repetition.

Another significant finding is the continuity of Practical Life implementation between school and home. Parents reported extending similar activities into children's daily routines, including dressing independently, organizing personal belongings, helping with household chores, and maintaining personal hygiene. This continuity demonstrates that learning is not limited to formal educational settings but is reinforced through daily family experiences. Montessori emphasized that children benefit from consistent opportunities to practice life skills across different environments, allowing them to internalize routines and gradually develop independence as part of their everyday behavior.

Effective communication between teachers and parents emerged as an important supporting factor in maintaining continuity between school and home. Teachers regularly informed parents about classroom activities and children's learning progress, while parents attempted to reinforce similar experiences at home. This collaborative relationship reflects the broader concept of family–school partnerships in early childhood education, where consistent educational experiences across settings contribute to children's overall development.

The study also identified several challenges in implementing Montessori Practical Life activities. Teachers reported limited availability of standard Montessori materials, differences in children's developmental readiness, and limited instructional time. Parents similarly

experienced challenges related to work responsibilities, limited time for supervision, and children's occasional reluctance to perform tasks independently. These findings suggest that successful Montessori implementation depends not only on specialized learning materials but also on adults' commitment to providing meaningful opportunities for children to participate actively in everyday activities.

The findings contribute to the existing literature by extending the understanding of Montessori Practical Life beyond classroom implementation. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the effectiveness of Montessori education in improving children's cognitive development, academic readiness, fine motor skills, or independence within school settings. In contrast, this study provides qualitative evidence that the continuity of Practical Life activities across school and home environments is an important aspect of Montessori practice. By exploring the perspectives of both teachers and parents, this study highlights the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and families in creating consistent learning experiences for young children.

Overall, this study suggests that Montessori Practical Life activities can be effectively integrated into children's daily experiences both at school and at home through collaborative efforts between teachers and parents. The consistency of these experiences enables children to repeatedly engage in meaningful activities that support the development of independence, responsibility, self-confidence, discipline, coordination, and everyday life skills.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of Montessori Practical Life activities in both school and home environments for children aged 3–4 years at KB Anggrek, Aluh-Aluh Kecil Muara Village, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The findings indicate that Practical Life activities have been consistently integrated into daily routines at school and reinforced through similar practices at home. Teachers implemented these activities by preparing learning environments, demonstrating tasks, and encouraging children to perform them independently, while parents extended these learning experiences through everyday household activities appropriate to children's developmental levels.

The study also found a strong continuity between school and home implementation, supported by regular communication and collaboration between teachers and parents. This continuity enabled children to repeatedly engage in meaningful real-life activities across different learning environments. Although several challenges were identified, including limited learning materials, differences in children's developmental readiness, and time constraints experienced by teachers and parents, participants addressed these challenges by adapting available resources and maintaining consistent daily practice.

The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on Montessori education by demonstrating that the successful implementation of Practical Life activities extends beyond the classroom and depends on collaboration between schools and families. The study highlights the importance of providing children with consistent opportunities to practice

everyday life skills in authentic contexts to support their independence, responsibility, confidence, and overall development.

This study was conducted in a single early childhood education center using a qualitative approach; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all educational settings. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of schools, diverse cultural contexts, and mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to further examine how continuity between school and home influences children's developmental outcomes over time.

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