

## The digital module encourages expression to develop the social competence of early childhood education teachers

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### Abstract

This study aims to develop a digital module that encourages expression and analyses the improvement of the social competence skills of early childhood teachers after using digital modules. The research and development methods and experimental methods were used. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire, pre-test-post-test and documentation. Data were analysed descriptively, qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative analysis was carried out through data reduction and curative analysis through inferential statistics with *t*-test. The results showed that the digital module had been developed through expert validity tests, limited trials and extensive tests. The digital module that has been developed is able to improve the social competence of early childhood education programme teachers. This is indicated by the transformation of teachers in cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects in dealing with children, and teachers begin to get used to using encouraging expressions.

Keywords: Digital module, encouraging expressions, social competence.

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## 1. Introduction

Every word or expression coming out from someone's mouth has an effect on the people in their surroundings; it can be both positive and negative effects. Sometimes people do not realise that they have released a bad, negative and rough expression, the expression which is able to make another one feel sad, moody, pain and have no motivation (discouraging expressions), for instance, 'you are fool', 'you are bad boy', 'you are disobey', 'you've never learnt', 'you're stupid boy/girl' or 'you're useless'. When children are reminded continuously of negative expressions, it will make the children feel depressed and lack confident. Children will also tend to feel worthless, pessimistic and unwilling to doing something which is positive. This is very important because children will learn from their environment, including all the words they hear (Cheung et al., 2021). In addition, it will be a reference in the child's memory (Monaghan et al., 2017; Smith & Yu, 2008; Yu & Ballard, 2007; Yu & Smith, 2007). This should be a serious concern.

During the children's growth and development period, their brain's nerves are still in the process of connection. When parents and teachers snap at children, by scolding them or being condescending by rough expressions, as well as various other bad attitudes, it will cause the children's soul to feel depressed. The result of their depression causes damage to the process connection of their brain nerve cells. If the brain is damaged, then improvement will not be reversed perfectly since the scar is not gone. Therefore, what needs to be considered is not only what is conveyed, but it is also necessary to pay attention to how to convey it properly (Grinstein & Kronrod, 2016). In addition, children who often portray negative behaviour will also shape their mindset negatively, which is not optimal. The information received by children will not arrive at the brain centre, but only in the brain stem, and therefore it becomes difficult for them to thinking logically.

Accordingly, parenting which can make children happy and confident without making them spoiled and dependent is required, for instance, by talking carefully in front of them, speaking in mild intonations and becoming the parents that is flexible in all situations. All of these will help the children have a positive experience which will shape the process of their growth, both cognitively and mentally. However, one of the most influential factors in children's behaviour is the example they see in adults (Brennan et al., 2015; Campos et al., 2018; Purwati & Japar, 2017). Therefore, the involvement of parents in the development of their children is also a factor that needs to be considered.

Children often make their parents feel angry or annoyed by having a bad attitude. But it does not mean that the parents should be angry with their children and say rough words of prohibition and snap. It is crucial to remember that when we disallow or speak to the children, it will affect their behaviour in the future (Alatupa et al., 2011). If the children are given a good or bad predicate, it will become their identity in the future. By that predicate, people will tend to look at the whole character and not their attitude one by one. Dorothy Law Nolte, an expert in parenting, states that if the children live by a mockery, they learn to be shy; meanwhile, if they live with the spirit, they learn to be confident. This suggestion proves that the expression or words said by the parents to their children determine the characteristic and future of their children (Hartono, 2012).

From the citation above, it is clear that the way in which we disallow the children can affect their attitude in the future. So, we need to have the right way to disallow them. This is very necessary because ideally educational practice should develop positive values and attitudes. Disallowing children is an art of making them not feel that they are banned. Early childhood development is a golden age. Early childhood education and preschool activities help them to develop their social behaviour through

behavioural interactions (Karmila & Muhtarom, 2022). This reinforcement of social behaviour is a valuable provision for the next phase of development.

Social skills are very important for children because they help form behaviour, actions and attitudes of children (Pianta et al., 2008). The early childhood education programme is one of the forms of educational management which emphasise on the base laying, leading to the growth and development of five levels, such as moral and religion; physical (coordination of fine and rough motoric); cognitive/intelligence (power of thought and creation); social and emotional (attitude and emotion); and language and communication, which are appropriate for the unique growth stages of early age children.

Early age is the right period to put the basic growth of physical ability, language, social/emotional, self-concept, art and moral and religious values in children. The implementation of learning activity in early childhood education programmes, i.e., learning approach and the way in which the teacher teaches, has a crucial role in the effort of delivering the teaching material to the protégé. School is the second home, which is of full attention, where the children feel safe and are concerned by the teacher and school mate. School is a garden for the children. Their classes are not held in a traditional classroom but in a garden.

The findings in the field indicate expressions of despair that still occur in early childhood programmes, such as teachers calling out bad calls to their students when they cannot answer a question and when they find it difficult to understand what the teacher is saying. From these problems, it is necessary to provide an expression of encouragement module for training. This module is packaged in the digital form. It is important to support the integration of technology which is very beneficial in achieving the objectives of learning activities (Herwin et al., 2022; Sartono et al., 2022).

The pushing expression module is a book in digital format, written with the aim of helping teachers learn independently, motivating teachers to keep trying to get used to using push expressions and making teachers aware of the importance of using push expressions. Therefore, this study aims to develop a digital module that encourages expression and analyses the improvement of the social competence skills of early childhood teachers after using digital modules.

## **2. Methods**

The research method used is research and development, as well as the experimental method. The subjects of this study were early childhood education teachers who were randomly selected. The analytical technique used is quantitative in the form of expert assessment and effectiveness testing through *t*-test. Then, this research was carried out by the development based on the stages below. Qualitative analysis was carried out through data reduction and curative analysis through inferential statistics with *t*-test.

### *2.1. Background study*

To know whether the teacher of early childhood education programmes has used encouraging expressions or not yet, the researcher conducted a background study by asking 38 teachers of early childhood education programmes to fill the questionnaire sheet consisting of 10 questions. This was carried out randomly to avoid conflicts of interest.

### *2.2. Planning*

In the planning stage, the researcher made the prototype or product design. In the context of module development of encouraging expressions, the conceptual framework of encouraging expressions

module was developed. Before being validated by the expert of prototype, it was tested in the early childhood education programme. The test involved 3 teachers and 30 parents from the early childhood education programme.

### *2.3. Product validity by the expert*

The things validated included the module of encouraging expressions and the research instrument. The expert team involved in the process of validity consisted of the educational experts and designer experts. These examiners will give the assessment towards the module of encouraging expressions. The assessment used the instrument validity sheet, which was prepared by the researcher. Based on the assessment and the experts' suggestion, the product is revised or perfected before the limited testing.

### *2.4. Limited testing*

Appropriated with the real situation faced, this testing involves six teachers from the early childhood education programme. This testing aims to know whether the module of encouraging expressions has a weakness before testing on real respondents. Based on the limited testing result, the revision of the module was done and ready to be tested extensively. It was labelled the first revised product to proceed to further testing.

### *2.5. Extensive testing*

This testing was conducted on a bigger group. Just like the previous stage, this activity still considers random selection to avoid conflicts of interest, which was implemented in this training for all the teacher of early childhood education programme. In this research, the pre-test of the ability of encouraging expressions was given before the subjects underwent training of the encouraging expressions module. At the end of training, the post-test of encouraging expressions was implemented.

This study was carried out to note the effect of the module of encouraging expressions towards the teacher's social competency skill. Extensive testing was carried out to a) measure the teacher response towards the product developed as on the limited testing and b) the effectivity testing by giving the pre-test and post-test to the training participants. The suggestion on this testing is expanded and made into the reference in arranging the final product.

## **3. Findings and discussion**

### *3.1. Results of the initial product development*

In the context of development of the module of encourage expression, by preparing the conceptual framework of the module of encourage expression which will be developed. Before it is validated by the expert of initial product has been tested in the early childhood education program. This testing involves three of teachers and thirty parents from early childhood education program. The initial draft of the module was developed under the title Words Change Life.

The components of the module consist of the toddler age is a golden age, there a connection of the brain cells of children which is about 80 percent in toddler age, the words have the authority, the words examples which change life, and the way to familiarize oneself use the words which change life. The product design has been revised based on the suggestion from the teachers of early childhood education program and evaluation on the accompaniment time. The result of the initial draft revision of the

product design, which is then become the initial product in this research. The following is an example of the appearance of the developed module.



Figure 1. Example of the encourage expression module page

Figure 1 shows an example of a module product page that has been developed. The module is one of the learning media that is still widely used in learning activities to date (Calamlam, 2021; Feekery et al., 2021; Khotimah et al., 2021; Logan et al., 2021; Santoso et al., 2021). Along with the development of technology, the current trend of learning modules has turned into digital-based modules (Everaert & Safari, 2021; Setiyani et al., 2020; Yustitia & Kusmaharti, 2022). This is very relevant to the current conditions where the impact of the pandemic has made learning activities more by being carried out online. The ideal learning is learning that achieves its goals optimally. Therefore, the module developed is expected to be able to assist teachers in learning and improving their social competence.

### 3.2. The product validity

The test on the initial product of the module of encouraging expressions which was developed was carried out in three stages: experts' validity, limited testing and extensive testing. The result of the experts' validity of the module on encouraging expressions was carried out by two experts. The results of the test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The result of expert's validity

Expert 1		Expert 2	
Aspect	The experts' suggestion	Aspect	The experts' suggestions
Material	It is good and not asked for revision	Material	Have been ready to be used for the research by the sentence revision on
Structure	Adding the introduction and the		

	table of material simulation	the instrument of social competency on the aspect of communication
Picture	Made clearer	

Limited testing was conducted by six teachers of the early childhood education programme, with the programme which has been implemented is the conference for teacher in applying the encouraging expressions in learning and the accompaniment of teacher in applying the encouraging expressions in the process of learning.

Through training and mentoring, each teacher is asked to pay close attention to every word he/she says every day in the learning process. Learning is carried out with the main support of digital modules. The next finding was that when they forgot to use the expression of encouragement, they would record and count their mistakes. This case has been going on for a month. When they first started practicing pushing expressions through the help of a digital module, they all laughed because they forgot to use pushing expressions and they admitted that it was not easy to get used to using pushing expressions. The researcher also followed up by observing and recording every word spoken by the teacher.

Field findings indicate a change in attitude in the trial participants after getting used to using this encouraging expressions digital module. This is evidenced by findings that show changes in the participants themselves, for example, they used to use the phrase 'take a broom' which then changed to 'please help me take a broom'. Another change is, when they get help, they usually do not say anything, but after taking advantage of the modules that have been developed, they have gotten used to saying, 'thank you for helping me', and another changed expression is 'darling, please get along and play together', while trying to let the children fight as well as saying more thanks.

When a child does something, even the smallest thing, and if it is appreciated, the child tends to do it again. For example, a child is the object of research because his mother always thanks him when he helps her. This results in the boy never refusing what his teacher asks him to do. When the teacher forgets to say, 'thank you', the child waits to receive the word 'thank you' and tries to remind the teacher that he or she has helped them. So, the teacher says, 'I am very sorry, I forgot to say thank you'.

Words/expressions encourage practice not only with students, but also with other teachers and students' parents. The relationship between teacher and teacher and teacher and student becomes closer and more comfortable because expressions are very influential in creating situations. The teacher's impression after practicing the expression of encouragement in the teaching and learning processes is very varied. When dealing with children with positive phrases or words makes it easy for children to obey. With the right expression, it saves a lot of energy because the teacher would not shout. In addition, children feel more valued, so they feel closer to the teacher and the learning situation in the classroom becomes more conducive and children seem more enthusiastic.

### 3.3. Extensive testing

This testing is towards the module of encouraging expressions which has been revised based on the suggestion from the respondents of limited testing. At the beginning the researcher asks only 15 teachers in this extensive testing, but because many of them felt enthusiastic to join the training, the researcher allowed all of them to join the training. Extensive testing aims to know the way to develop the module of encourage expression, the training module of encouraging expressions, which is about improving the social competency of teacher or not and the way to make teacher familiar with using the encouraging expression; therefore, the encouraging expressions become a lifestyle for the teacher and

they use it in learning, with the hope to make it supportive in the learning and teaching processes and to improve the educational quality. These factors support and obstruct the teachers in making them familiar with encouraging expressions. The test results show that teachers are willing to get used to using encouraging expressions after using digital modules. This directly has a positive impact on the social competence of teachers.

Social competence is a competency that must be possessed by teachers. This is very important because teachers play a role in social transformation in educational activities (Okeke & Mtyuda, 2017; Sumaryanta et al., 2018). In addition, social competence is part of a teacher's professionalism (Parnawi & Taridi, 2018). The findings of this study have proven that the digital module developed has been shown to have a positive effect on the social competence of teachers. However, this module is still new to them, so challenges and habituation factors are still obstacles. However, this factor is only a minor obstacle.

### 3.4. Effectivity testing

After the module development phase is completed, the next step is to see the effectiveness of the module. The data that will be developed in this study is the value of the teacher's social competence before participating in the training (pre-test) and after participating in the training (post-test) to test whether the encouraging expressions module influences increasing teacher competence since the module has never been used before. If there are differences in the achievement of competence before and after training (at pre-test and post-test) in using the expression of encouragement, then this module is said to be effective. Tests were carried out by paired sample *t*-test. Table 2 presents the test results.

Table 2. The result of paired sample *t*-test

Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	95% Confidence interval of the difference		<i>t</i>	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
55.620	8.842	.995	53.640	57.601	55.909	78	.000

Table 2 shows the results of the paired sample *t*-test. This was carried out to prove the effectiveness of the digital modules that have been developed. Based on the test results obtained, the coefficient sig. (two-tailed) is smaller than 0.05. This coefficient indicates that the digital module has a significant influence on the social competence of teachers. In addition, because the effect is positive, it can also be concluded that the use of this digital module can improve the social competence of teachers as an independent variable. Therefore, in general, this module has proven its effectiveness empirically.

### 3.5. Final product

Product revisions were developed based on suggestions from the results of extensive testing about the module material and content. One suggestion is that examples of how to solve problems using encouraging expressions that the researchers convey in the training are written in digital training modules with the reason that using digital technology can be more easily accessed at any time, while with only the conventional printed modules, it is more difficult to implement. Therefore, the use of digital technology is considered very important to make it easier to understand and apply the expression of encouragement. The encouraging expressions module in this study has been revised with suggestions for limited testing and the readers' suggestion is to add examples of encouraging expressions. Also,

adding instructions will make it easier for users. In addition, this study also adds several quotes in the module so that readers can easily understand the encouraging phrases.

This research has resulted in a module encouraging expression. Through this product, teachers have good social competence in carrying out their profession. The expression of encouragement is very beneficial for educating children. This is very good for child development (Martín-Loeches et al., 2009). Encouragement is one of the most common methods by which a person expresses support for his or her social environment (Beets et al., 2010; Hwang et al., 2011; Jose & Bellamy, 2012; Wong, 2015).

#### 4. Conclusion

This research produces a digital module of driving expressions that has been developed through expert validity testing, limited trials and extensive testing. The encouragement of the digital expression module can improve the social competence of teachers. This is indicated by an increase in social competence which is about 56% (good increase). In addition, the paired sample *t*-test showed a significant difference. This shows that the digital expression module has a significant effect on increasing teacher social competence. The findings of this study indicate that the developed digital module product has a positive impact on the social competence of early childhood education teachers. Therefore, this product is recommended to be applied further to teachers in the hope that the social competence of teachers in the future will be better. Because this product has been tested to be effective, it is recommended to use it continuously.

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