

Playdough Media to Increase Creativity in Early Childhood

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Abstract

21st-century skills, which are the main things that children must master, prioritize the 4C, namely creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, where the learning process will prioritize skills that adapt to the conditions of the time. Creativity in early childhood is also characterized by the ability to form imagination. To foster creativity, children need to play, one of which is playing playdough. This research aims to analyse playdough media to increase creativity in early childhood. The research method used is descriptive. Data was obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation sources from TK Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman. The collected data was analysed based on the Miles & Huberman model, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion. Based on research and interviews with heads, and teachers, it can be concluded that playdough can stimulate children's creativity because playdough is a safe medium, easy to find material, easy to shape, and children independent, and confident. Self-confidence, courage to express opinions, and high curiosity are characteristics of creative children.

Keywords: Playdough, Creativity, Early childhood

Introduction

Early childhood is a unique individual who is undergoing a process of rapid and fundamental development for later life (Wardhani, 2019). Early childhood is in the age range of 0-6 years (SISDIKNAS, 2003) and age 0-8 years according to NAECY. Early age is the golden age, as well as a very critical period in the stage of human development. (Miarti, 2019). The growth and development of children at an early age greatly determine the quality of health, intelligence, and emotional maturity of humans at the next stage, thus investing in early childhood development is a very important investment for quality human resources. (Rush and Shelden, 2011)

According to Suyanto, early childhood education aims to develop the child's full potential as a complete human being as a philosophy according to the nation (Morrison, 2012). According to Sujiono, early childhood education is strategic education in the formation of complete human beings who are intelligent, have moral character, are physically and mentally healthy, and must be given children's human rights. Six aspects of development must be developed in optimizing the potential of early childhood, namely the development of values. Religious and moral, physical motoric, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and artistic, develop optimally so that they can develop according to their age level. (Hidhayani, 2020). Children also have their own distinctive and unique characteristics that are not the same as adults and will develop into complete adult humans (Katoningsih, n.d) Early childhood is divided into 4 stages, namely infancy from birth to 12 months, childhood/toddler from age 1 to 3 years, preschool period from age 3 to 5 years, and elementary school period from age 6 to 8 years. (Fleer et al., 2019). At each stage, the age that children pass through will show their characteristics which are different from one stage to another. Therefore, the form of treatment given to early childhood must pay attention to the characteristics of each stage of development, especially in increasing their creativity. (Gauntlett, n.d.).

Creativity is the achievement of abilities in children, the stimulation that is expected from an early age leads to the condition in which children live in their time. The 21st-century skills which are the main things that children must master prioritize 4 concepts according to Pamungkas (2020) containing the 4Cs, namely creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration where the learning process will prioritize a skill that adapts to the conditions of the times. Creative Thinking Skills are the ability to create new ideas or thoughts that are different from those that already exist. Creativity is the ability to develop (create) new ideas and ways that are different from before. Creativity is the ability to develop (create) new ideas and ways that are different from before. Meanwhile, creativity is a person's ability to create new things, whether in the form of ideas or real works. Creativity or creativity can have a positive impact on all people and the community environment (Zubaidah, 2018). Creativity and innovation are often equated by most people. However, creativity and innovation are different. Innovativeness is manifested in innovation which is a new idea that is obtained through gradual development and is realized in an idea or work result. Creative thinking skills are innate from birth.

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However, this skill can also be trained by providing challenges in the form of problems that require finding new solutions, whether in the form of ideas or ideas or in the form of work results in solving the problem. (Han and Abdrahim, 2023)

Creativity will produce various innovations and new developments in life. This very important creative potential is possessed by every child, children have characteristics that experts often classify as characteristics of creative individuals, for example, great curiosity, like to ask questions, (Ardini and Lestarinigrum, 2018) High imagination, daring to face risk, enjoy new things, and so on. However, parents, teachers at school, and the environment are important factors that greatly influence the development of creativity. The word children are the most real emotional colouring. The early competencies produced by children will encourage their later creativity. Children are the purest objects for exploring their abilities through the creativity they create. Creativity is an activity and ability to create something or a new combination based on pre-existing elements to become something meaningful and useful. (Mappapoleonro, 2019). Creativity can be realized anywhere, anytime, and by anyone regardless of age or level of education. Keeping yourself busy doing creative things is very beneficial and gives you satisfaction. It cannot be denied that creativity can improve the quality of life. The creative ideas created can be useful for yourself and others, to form concepts that are similar to the real world. High creativity in children encourages children to learn and create more so that one day they can create new things beyond our expectations. (Mayar et al., n.d.) Initial observations at Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten, teachers still use children's activity sheet books, teacher-centered learning is often called a teacher center so that children always follow what the teacher says and orders. Children are expected to be more creative so that in the future they will not only be consumers but can give birth and create something meaningful and useful. They are also not limited by any frame. This means that they have freedom and flexibility in their activities. Creative children also tend to have fun in activities. Early childhood creativity is also characterized by the ability to form mental imagination, and concepts of various things that are not present in front of them, to foster creativity children need through play. (Rahmawati, et al., 2010)

Playing can also connect children with their imagination, environment, parent, family, and the world. It was also emphasized that playing activities can help children to increase creativity. Playing has a goal that is party inseparable from an activity, whereas the goal in a game activity is subject to the means to achieve it. (Gray, 2013). Play is also a learning medium and activity that facilitates growth and development for children. Through play, children recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Even when a child is sick, playing is still a fun activity. (Susanti and Trianingsih, 2017). In playing, children have the opportunity to express what they feel and think. By playing, children are practicing skills and children get satisfaction from playing, which means developing themselves. Children can develop improved reasoning and understand the existence of their environment, forming imagination, fantasy, and creativity, one of which is through playdough games. (Erbas et al., 2017).

Playdough is an educational game made from flour dough which can be easily made and can be colored according to the child's wishes. The flexibility value shows that playdough provides the widest possible opportunity to form the desired pattern according to the child's imagination because the nature of playdough is that it is very easy to shape anything. (Haryaningsih, 2011). According to Einon (2004:96), playdough is a suitable play material for children. The texture is very soft to knead but elastic enough to be shaped. This media is an option because it has advantages, namely children can try how to make their playdough, which is a new experience for children, children can add colour to the playdough as they like, forming playdough, and it doesn't require expensive costs, children can discover something new or make an update and get a new experience, namely making playdough (Taufan, 2017).

Playdough is very useful for training a child's creativity and imagination. Creative teachers can make their own at school and can invite their students to make the dough together because the process of making the dough can be an experience in itself for children. Teachers can introduce various concepts through playdough, including texture, colour, size, and symbol, and, can stimulate children's creativity to practice creating something. (Waldi, 2014) Based on research observations on the use of playdough media, at Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten to develop children's creativity, playdough media is expected to help teachers in teaching and learning activities and make children enthusiastic about participating in the teaching and learning process using playdough media as a means of creativity for early childhood. The aim to be achieved in this research is to analyze playdough media to increase the creativity of early childhood at Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman kindergarten.

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative research method is a method or method of research that emphasizes analysis or descriptiveness. In a qualitative research process, things from the subject's perspective are more emphasized and the theoretical basis is used by the researcher as a guide so that the research process is in according with the facts encountered in the field when conducting research. (Seiawan, 2018).

The subjects of the research were female students at the Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten for the 2023-2024 academic year. Group A students consisted of 19 students, consisting of 11 girls and 8 boys. Data collection methods in this research used direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Direct observation, namely the researcher was involved in learning activities at Aisyiyah 14 Kindergarten from the initial activities until the children returned home. Interviews are direct face-to-face and verbal contact with research data sources, namely school principals and teachers. Documentation, namely documents in the form of photos of activities and other supporting data. The data that has been collected is then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, displaying the data, and

drawing conclusions. (Huberman, 2014). The data validity test is carried out to find out the actual data. The data validity test in this research uses the source triangulation technique, namely comparing and checking the truth of the data or information obtained, namely by comparing one data with another source, such as comparing the result of observation with the result of interviews or documentation.

In this study, researchers compared the result of teacher interviews regarding playdough media to increase creativity in early childhood with the result of researchers' observations and also the result of interviews with students and documents of children's learning outcomes. The researcher also compared the results of the researcher's observations regarding teachers' skills in teaching through playdough media with the results of interviews with teachers and school principals, so that the actual data was obtained. The flow of research activities can be described as follows

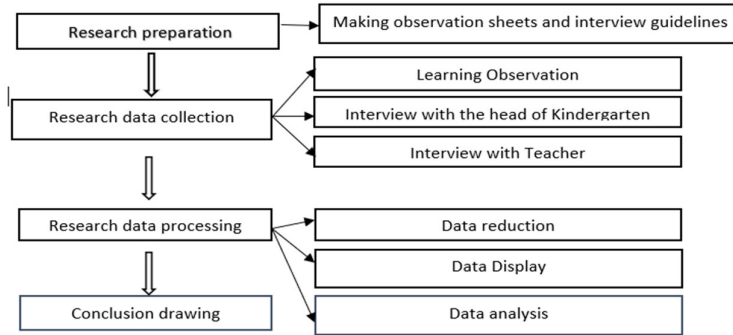


Figure 1. Flow of Research Activities

Result and Discussion

Result

Learning activities at Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten start from the opening activity, namely forming a circle in the schoolyard to carry out simple movements through singing, then entering the classroom by shaking hands with the class teacher, the children sit on the carpet in a circle. Based on observations, the learning activities carried out by the teacher in the introduction are to create a pleasant learning atmosphere by providing songs, and motivation so that children are enthusiastic and cheerful, followed by habits such as praying before studying, memorizing short letters, and hadith.

Based on observation, the teacher has implemented SOP for core learning activities as a basis for implementing learning, including informing about today's activities, discussing learning, providing trigger sentences so that children think about asking questions, and conveying the rules of the games. Apart from the SOP, the learning implementation guide used is the RPPH which the teacher prepares the day before the learning implementation. In the RPPH the teacher prepares the tools and material that will be used in the learning process. Before the main activity is played by the students, the teacher invites the children to tell a story and watch a learning video about playdough. In the learning process, activities are designed to be a form of play to make them more varied and interesting for children. The teacher opens the activity with appreciation, delivers material about playdough, accompanies, guides, and motivates children so that children are more optimal in increasing their creativity through play. Playdough is an educational game that is loved by children. When playing with playdough, children can practice creativity and children can make various shapes according to creations such as flowers, lollipops, caterpillars, and other shapes. The materials used are made from ingredients that are safe for children, a mixture of wheat flour, oil, and food colouring.

Playdough materials are sold in shops and supermarkets, but in this observation, the playdough is made by yourself because it is safer for children to use. Playdough is made together with students and teachers. Next, children can make creations using the playdough that has been provided and can be shaped according to a predetermined theme. The materials and tools used are as follows :



Figure 2. Playdough Materials



Figure 3. Children's Make Playdough

Table 1. How To Make and Play Playdough

How to Make Playdough	Steps for Playing Playdough
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare equipment and playdough ingredients 2. Put one spoonful of vegetable oil, one spoonful of salt, and one cup of water into the tray, stir well until everything is evenly mixed, then add 2 cups of wheat flour, stir again until the dough is smooth (not sticky to your hands), then the finished dough is separated into several parts. To be colored according to the child's taste. To use dye, just give it a drop and mix it, then knead the dough again until the colour is even. Once the playdough is ready, the children are ready to shape anything according to the given by the teacher 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children take enough playdough dough 2. Children shape playdough according to the desired shape 3. If children have difficulty making their playdough shapes, children can use playdough molds with various shapes to make it easier for children to be creative with playdough.



Figure 4. Children are Creative in Making Flower Shapes



Figure 5. Children Create According to Their Imagination/Ideas

During the learning process, the teacher carries out various activities such as helping children who have difficulty completing the task of doing their work, reprimanding children who disturb their friends, supervising students in the process of observing if there are children who lack concentration, the teacher reminds children to pay attention, the teacher responds to things that arise. Become questions for children, whether to pay questions related to the theme or outside the learning theme, helping children who still need guidance and direction because each child's development is different, and seeing children who can express their ideas and opinions through the work they create, documenting children's work for assessment. The teacher gives a warning when the activity time is almost up to prepare for cleaning up, and when the time for rest arrives the teacher asks the children to play outside the classroom, the teacher in this kindergarten is not still in the classroom but all the teachers come out of the classroom to control the play activities, after the children have finished playing outside then wash their hands, go back into the classroom to eat together followed by preparations for going home, the teacher monitors all the children when the children arrive, the children play until the children go home.

Playdough can be reused after the children have finished playing, put it in a plastic box and close it tightly. Or wrap it in plastic. Then put it in the refrigerator. The playdough can last up to a month. If the dough becomes sticky after storing it in the refrigerator, add a little flour and knead the dough again until it is smooth. If a child accidentally swallows playdough, it will certainly be safer and there is no need to worry because the ingredients contained in playdough are made by themselves, not from chemicals. Playdough is a game that can hone skills, apart from increasing creativity, it can also be used to recognize colours and shapes. Playdough is also an educational toy because it can encourage children's imagination.

From the result of an interview with the principal of Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten, at the beginning of each school year, the teacher and principal together prepare learning tools as a learning plan for the next school year. The teacher must be able and ready to design learning activities that can support the learning process, this design includes at least the following things; selecting and determining teaching materials, formulating objectives for presenting learning materials, choosing appropriate methods of presenting learning materials, and carrying out evaluation activities learning achievement.

From the results of interviews with the teacher, after the learning activities are completed, the teacher assesses the work done by the children. The assessment must be carried out naturally, namely when children play, create work, and so on (Mundia and Setiawan, 2020) In carrying out the teacher's assessment does not compare one child with another child, all children are recorded and their development is known, the teacher tries to record the development of all children so that children's strengths and weaknesses or learning difficulties can be identified. Based on interviews with teachers, playdough media can attract and increase the creativity of early childhood. They can be creative according to their imagination and become active and creative learners, not only following the teacher's order but acting based on their ideas, thus creating fun learning.

The result of conversation with students, when asked "Do you enjoy being able to make your playdough and play with playdough?" They answered, "I'm happy, teacher, some even said they want to make it themselves at home with Mom." Children tell stories about the work they have done with confidence.

Discussion

Early Childhood Education is a form of education that focuses on laying the foundation for physical, intelligence, social-emotional, language, and communication growth and development, by the uniqueness and stage of early childhood development. Preschool age is a period when children have not yet entered formal education. Therefore, early childhood is the right time to develop children's potential and intelligence. Directed development of children's potential in this age range will have an impact on their future lives. On the other hand, if parents cannot pay attention to the development of their child's potential in a correct and directed manner, it could have fatal consequences for the child's true potential (Redhana, 2019). Virzara Aurny states that parents who like to teach various things to their children tend to have fewer creative children, and what needs to be paid attention to is that sometimes parents try to be too involved in their child's creative process so that the child experiences delays in developing their creativity. (Munandar, 2016).

Early Childhood Creativity can be developed through the learning process and stimulation. Giving children opportunities to be active through playing, exploring, and experimenting by making toys, can bring out creativity in children. Children's creativity can develop well by giving children the freedom to express themselves and without coercion, the role of the teacher does not dominate in learning. (Priyanto, 2015). Creativity in children needs to be nurtured, developed, and improved in addition to developing intellectual intelligence through creativity, children can create something according to their talents or abilities. We also need to know that 2 main factors influence a child's development, namely hereditary and environmental factors. Hereditary factors are factors that are the basic foundation for the child in achieving his or her growth and development. These factors can be congenital, gender, race, or ethnicity. Meanwhile, environmental factors, both internal and external, in the form of the child's body and physical growth, are also the main factors influencing a child's growth, one of which is the child's health condition and the influence of growth hormones. (Fatma Hajar Lu'luah Azizah, n.d.). When children are in the school environment, they need help from teachers in the child's creative development process. According to Dere (2019), teachers must also encourage children to participate in creative games, must care about children's new products, and must respect them. Apart from that, children's creativity must be appreciated and children must be given trust. Apart from that, teachers must also be able to children's current

conditions in designing learning to be more effective, one of which is by inviting children to play. (Novitasari and Fauziddin, 2022).

Playing is a fun activity for children, playing not only fills time but also a basic need for children, such as food, care, and love. Experts agree that children must play to achieve optimal development without playing, children will have problems later in life. That's how important play is for children. According to Parten in Fadhillah (2017), playing is an activity as a means of socializing and can provide children with opportunities to explore, discover, express feelings, be creative, and learn in a fun way (Harahap, 2022). Play is an important element for children's physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, creative, and social development. Play can use play equipment or not. The most important thing is that children feel happy with the game they are playing, and don't care about the final results will get. However, for early childhood, the forms and tools of play must contain educational values to develop the child's potential. Play activities carried out by children, the teacher will get an idea of the child's development stage and abilities. By playing children can learn to explore, construct, and create. (Miranda, 2016).

Playing with playdough is very useful for training a child's creativity and imagination. Creative teachers can make their own at school and can invite their students to make the dough together because the process of making the dough can be an experience in itself for children. The teacher can introduce various concepts through playdough, including texture, colour, size, and symbols, and can stimulate children's creativity to practice creating something. In line with the above, Einon Dorothy stated several benefits if children play using playdough media, namely ;

1. Children easily play on their own and produce satisfactory results.
 2. Increase children's self-confidence.
 3. Playdough provides many ways for an activity
 4. Children can sit quietly and focus on using the playdough.
- Apart from that, this playdough media also has several benefits, including helping children :
- a. Strengthen the fingers, hands, and wrists.
 - b. Develop children's imagination.
 - c. Develop self-esteem, not right and wrong and children have the opportunity to gain mastery over their environment.
 - d. Release feelings of tension or anger
 - e. Playdough can be made into any shape.

Ki Hajar Dewantara in Slamet Suyanto stated that early childhood children learn best with "Indra" (Their senses). By touching, squeezing, hitting, or holding playdough, children will be able to make various shapes they often encounter, and they can even manipulate them into various shapes they want (Suyanto, 2008).

Based on research at Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten, playdough media is an effective learning medium that can be used to develop children's creativity. Apart from the material being easy to find and safe, the nature of play dough is that it is very easy to shape into anything. (Haryaningsih, 2011). According to Einon (2004: 96), playdough is a suitable play material for children. The texture is very soft to knead but elastic enough to be shaped. This media is an option because it has advantages, namely children can try how to make their own playdough, this is a new experience for children, children can add color to the playdough as they like, forming playdough and does not require expensive costs.

Conclusion

Based on the result of research through observations and interviews with the principal and teachers of Aisyiyah 14 Danukusuman Kindergarten, it can be concluded that playdough can stimulate the creativity of early childhood because playdough is a safe medium, easy to find ingredients, easy to shape, children can freely explore their word, children become more creative. Innovative children are more independent, self-confident, dare to express opinions, and are highly curious as characteristics of creative children.

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