

Utilization Of Loose Parts Media In Developing Early Childhood Creativity

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to determine the effectiveness of learning using *loose parts* media to stimulate the creativity of early childhood students in BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2, Sukoharjo District, Sukoharjo Regency.

Methodology: The research uses a qualitative approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Results: The findings reveal that after implementing *loose parts* media in learning, children became more creative, showed courage in creating works, and developed greater independence. Additionally, the children appeared happy and engaged, as the activities allowed them to play while learning.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study highlights the importance of using varied and stimulating media—such as *loose parts*—in early childhood education to promote creativity, independence, and enjoyment in learning. It demonstrates how creative materials can effectively support holistic development when integrated into teaching strategies.

Introduction Section

Throughout human life, early age is a very important period. The early age phase is a period in which individual potential develops rapidly as a gift from the creator (Suryana: 2021). Early Childhood Education is a form of education that emphasizes physical development (fine and gross motor coordination), emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence), intelligence (thinking power, creativity, language, communication, social emotional (attitude, behavior, religion), and art according to the developmental stage of early childhood. Early childhood has its own specialties and uniqueness. They show distinctive characteristics. Early childhood is an age where a person has their own specialties and uniqueness where children are seen to have distinctive characteristics. (Efiawati: 2021). Early childhood is the first period in a person's life where they have the opportunity to receive stimulation through learning. Lack of stimulation can affect a child's development, triggering obstacles in the next stage after early childhood. (Rahayu, Hafidah, Dewi: 2024).

Children aged 0 to 6 years have a period where they really need various stimulations to help develop their various abilities (Fajrin, Junanto & Kurniasari: 2020). Every child born into this world has potential. Early age is the initial phase of life that has the potential to receive stimulation through the learning process. Creativity is an important element for children and adults in the 21st century. This ability is considered important in various countries. (Andriyani & Rakimahwati: 2020). According to (Nur'aeni & Westisi: 2020) Children are the next generation of the nation. Therefore, they need to get proper education because education is very important for their development. The main purpose of continuing higher education is to provide character education to children. Therefore, proper education is needed so that children can grow and develop properly because the child's further development is greatly influenced by the stimulus received at an early age. The first basic education received by a child is in early childhood education. Every child is born with creativity and loves to explore, but the level of creativity varies depending on the stimulation received in the early stages of their development. A child is influenced by the environment around him, and vice versa, the environment is also influenced by the child. Changes in individuals and the environment can affect the creative process.

Creativity means strength and quality to be able to express themselves with the abilities that children have, they always make changes that are made at all times in every activity that children do. This happens because creativity is hampered by a lack of previous knowledge and depends on a person's intellectual abilities. Therefore, it is important to encourage and develop learning creativity in children. Emphasized by the opinion of Debeturu & Wijayaningsih (2019) If children's creativity develops well, it will have a positive impact on children. Conversely, if children's creativity is absent, the growth of the child's personality will be disrupted. Creativity is one of the important potentials that must be improved from an early age. Supriadi explained that creativity is a person's ability to create new things, be it ideas or works that are different from those that already exist (Novi Mulyani: 2019). Children need help from others around them in order to grow

creatively. Children's creativity needs to be developed, if the actions or stimuli given by the teacher are not diverse and varied, then creativity will not arise. (Destria Andriyani: 2023). Children's creative potential basically requires activities that require activity, activities that generate creative ideas. In this case, children need guidance and encouragement from those closest to them in order to create an environment that supports the development of children's creativity (Novi Mulyani: 2019). In developing children's creativity, media and strategies are needed that can stimulate various aspects of children's development, such as loose parts materials.

Loose Parts are materials that can be moved, combined, and redesigned in various ways. Can be broken down and recombined. Loose Parts provide unlimited opportunities for creativity in the learning process and stimulate children's imagination. Loose parts are learning materials that can be used continuously in children's learning. In addition, loose parts can also be used to explore various aspects. The purpose of learning using Loose Parts teaching materials is to increase children's creativity through the principle of using Loose Parts, They are free to express themselves and recreate by assembling teaching materials according to their imagination. (Fajri Dwiayama & Satma Awaliana: 2021) Loose Parts are not used just like that, teacher assistance and certain policies are needed so that loose parts can be used as a learning medium to develop various aspects of early childhood development. According to Sally Haughey in Maria Melita Rahardjo (2019), loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, and re-engineered in unlimited ways. Loose parts are objects that are easily found in the environment, such as used cardboard, plastic bottles, used plastic packaging, cloth, stones, metals, shells, and natural materials and others. Kiewra and Velack in (Gull, Carla: 2019) emphasize the concept that natural objects can be anything. Some natural objects may indicate something specific, however, children are encouraged to be innovative and use them in unique ways, according to their personal needs and interests. All of these materials can be accessed by teachers and parents anywhere at no cost. Loose parts are materials that are easy to combine, redesign, carry, move, separate, and put together in various ways. Loose parts will also create new, limitless creative possibilities in learning and make children creative (Siti Maryam Hadiyanti: 2021).

Loose parts must be supported through appropriate place management, from play-set placement to teaching. Educators need to provide guidance so that children can turn their imaginations into works. The role of teachers includes encouraging students to make creative products, giving awards for their creativity, and documenting children's work. (Azizah, et al., 2020). The results of research conducted by (Mardi-yah and Hambali, 2022) in implementing loose parts media, the stages carried out by children include imagining, experimenting, exploring, and creating works. The role of the teacher is to convey game strategies, cleaning strategies, strategies for storing loose parts media, and conveying strategies for making creative works. This learning process provides children with meaningful play experiences, allowing them to interpret the world around them through play activities. However, there are still some schools that have not been able to direct the use of loose parts as a good learning medium. (Azky Farida: 2020) There are still many schools that only use LKA Media in learning, so that many problems with learning difficulties are found in children.

In the implementation of Children's Worksheets (LKA), several problems were found in children such as learning difficulties, decreased interest in learning, and fatigue in children. This can also cause boredom in children which will later affect the continuation of their education. Boredom while studying can cause someone to become easily angry, hurt, and frustrated. (Tara, Debra & Melita, Maria: 2022). To increase creativity, different media and strategies are needed besides just using children's worksheets (LKA). Because there are still many materials that can stimulate various aspects of development, such as loose parts.

Loose parts media are used to find solutions in problem solving, creativity, concentration, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, science, language development (literacy), art, logical thinking, mathematics, technology (engineering), and technology (technical) (Yulianti Fransiska & Roza Yenita: 2021). Gilman from McGill University describes Loose Parts as a mindset that emphasizes a process approach, where when children play, they can spontaneously have conversations that give meaning to learning (Yuliati Siantajani: 2020). According to Sally Haughey in (Yuliati Siantajani: 2020) Loose parts are defined as open and reassembled materials, which can be used individually or combined with other materials. Loose parts generally consist of natural and artificial objects.

In the results of the interview with the Head of BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo before implementing learning using loose parts media, the institution still uses LKA which causes children to feel bored, unfocused and eliminates children's creativity to be able to imagine and explore in learning, so that teachers must be able to find ideas or ways to make children enthusiastic again in learning and participating in activities, and explore children's creative ideas to develop children's abilities to think creatively. Currently, the BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo Institution has implemented learning using loose part media, based on the results of observations on its implementation, children seem to focus on their respective activities and are able to produce unique and interesting works. Field conditions, theoretical explanations and research studies encourage researchers to dig deeper into the effectiveness of loose parts media in learning. So the author took the title "Utilization of Loose Parts Media in Developing Early Childhood Creativity at BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo".

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach. In this study, based on the formulation of the problem raised by the researcher, namely regarding loose parts media learning to stimulate early childhood creativity. Qualitative research is research that

provides an overview of a phenomenon or condition that occurs. The phenomenon in qualitative research is holistic or comprehensive so that the data found cannot be separated. (IMade Laut Mertha Jaya: 2020).

Research using qualitative methods at BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo, researchers can obtain data both directly, namely through observation, through documentation and through interviews with research subjects. The research subjects who are the main sources who can provide the data information needed to reveal the problems in the author's research include 14 participants consisting of 1 principal, 1 class teacher and 12 group B students of BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo (children aged 5-6 years).

The object of this research focuses on matters related to the use of loosepart media to increase the creativity of early childhood. The objects of this research include: Children's activities when playing looseparts and data related to the results of observations of children when playing using looseparts media including children's work that is directly documented as informants and then described based on children's stories. To obtain valid and accurate information data, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with informants related to the learning process, especially in the implementation of learning with looseparts media. Informants appointed to provide information include: Class teachers and Principals.

Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and document studies. According to Nasution: 1998 in (Sugiyono, 2022) states that observation is the basis of all science. Observation is a research method that is carried out systematically through observation, including activities using all senses to focus attention on an existing object or phenomenon. The researcher conducted observations at BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2, Sukoharjo District, Sukoharjo Regency regarding the application of loose parts media learning to stimulate the creativity of early childhood. The researcher conducted observations such as the process of implementing learning using loose parts media, evaluation after learning and then observing how children develop after carrying out learning using loose parts media.

Interviews are a method of assessing or collecting data by examining information directly from research subjects (sources). This method has certain advantages over other techniques, including information obtained based on actual events, without any false assumptions. (Mohammad Ali A., Ishomudin, et al: 2020) (Sugiyono: 2020) Interviews conducted by researchers are included in structured interviews in which researchers prepare question points that will be used as interview material or questions and answers with sources (teachers) to obtain data or an overview of the implementation of independent learning using loose parts media at the institution.

The researcher conducted the first interview with Mrs. Rumi Satarwi, S.Pd.I as the principal of BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo to obtain data and information regarding learning using loose parts media, why apply loose parts media for learning, then whether learning using loose parts media has an effect on children's creativity, and asked about the curriculum used in the institution, then the second interview was conducted with Mrs. Siti Rahayu, S.Pd.I. as the class teacher of group B because she understands more about children's development in the classroom, so the researcher interviewed her regarding the process of learning activities using loose parts media, what preparations were made before learning began, then how the children's development was after completing learning using loose parts media.

Documents are records of past events that can be in the form of writing, pictures, or monumental works from someone. (Sugiyono: 2020) Documentation is carried out to complete the data obtained through observation and interviews. The data that is to be obtained to support the completeness of this research include the profile data of the BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo School, the institution's curriculum, the daily learning implementation plan (RPPH), then the data of group B students.

After collecting the data, the next thing that researchers need to do is analyze the data. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing, compiling them into patterns, choosing what is important and what will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easy to understand by oneself and others. The data model in this study follows the concept given by Miles and Huberman, which states that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue continuously at each stage of the research until it is complete. (Sugiyono: 2022) Data analysis techniques in this study are: 1). Data Collection. In qualitative research, data collection through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation is also about what is heard, seen, and thought in order to collect reflective data on data in qualitative research. Usually notes are made in the form of keywords, short, main points, then completed and refined when the researcher has returned to his residence. 2). Data Reduction. Data reduction means summarizing, choosing the main points, focusing on the important things. Data reduction aims to provide a clearer picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data. 3). Data Presentation. Data presentation can be done by selecting data through data reduction and then presenting it in the form of verbal writing systematically so that it can be concluded. 4). Drawing Conclusions. Conclusions in qualitative research are new findings that have never existed before. Findings can be in the form of a description or picture of an object that was previously unclear so that after being examined it becomes clear.

To ensure the validity of the data, the author conducted interviews with teachers, observations of children, and made detailed notes in the field. Interviews were conducted with teachers in a structured manner by asking their opinions on the use of loosepart media, increasing children's creativity after using looseparts media in learning, challenges when implementing looseparts media and children's responses to learning using looseparts media. Recording detailed

observations of children was the next effort made by the researcher. The aspects observed were the learning process with looseparts media and before using looseparts media.

Results And Discussion

Learning that inspires learning motivation and stimulates children's creativity is learning that is designed by teachers with innovation and uses appropriate learning resources. Utilizing the surrounding environment as a learning resource by inviting students to observe the environment can improve balance in the learning process. Learning does not only take place in the classroom, but also outside the classroom. In this context, the environment plays an important role as a source of learning that influences physical, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual development (Nining Suratiningsih: 2021). The learning style of early childhood is by playing while learning. Playing has an important role in developing creativity, self-development, imagination, self-confidence, as well as children's emotional, physical, social, and cognitive strengths and skills to optimize their potential (Yasinta Maria Fono & Efrida Ita: 2021). Freedom to learn through play is a fundamental need for early childhood, because all aspects of their development are stimulated through play. When children are active, they do it according to their wishes without any pressure or coercion (Marlina, Qalbi, Putera: 2020). Through play, they will be able to explore using materials and tools as a medium for playing. Playing provides an opportunity for children to express their creative impulses as an opportunity to feel objects and challenges to find something in new ways, to find a different use of something, and to find something new (Yusnita, Novi: 2023). Children's creativity will emerge if children have high motivation, curiosity and imagination.

There are various ways to increase children's creativity, one of which is through the use of loose parts media in learning activities. This method involves playing with various materials and giving children the freedom to explore, which is provided by the facilitator (Damayanti, Rachmatunnisa, Rahmawati: 2020) The use of loose parts helps the development of children's abilities through exploratory play activities (Srinahyanti: 2022). Creativity is not an addition, but is a major part of the play environment directly and potentially. To increase children's creativity, it is necessary to carry out activities that are relevant to the use of meaningful educational play materials and tools. By playing loose parts, students will be more familiar with the environment and objects around them. They will know that these objects can be used and reused (Farikhah, Mar'atin, Afifah: 2022).

Efforts made by BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 teachers, Sukoharjo District, Sukoharjo Regency in increasing creativity and creating a new learning atmosphere in the classroom for students are by implementing learning using loose parts media. Initially, the institution still used the usual learning model without utilizing loose parts media. With a new atmosphere in the classroom and a learning method that gives children the freedom to explore according to their imagination, it can help teachers recognize the talents and interests of students. In the concept of early childhood learning, the meaning of learning in PAUD is re-emphasized. How nice it would be if this plan could be realized again, because the real world for children is a place where they can play without having to constantly work on questions. Therefore, if creativity is increased, children's potential will increase. However, currently parents and schools only focus on improving academic achievement and ignore the development of creativity.

From the results of interviews conducted by researchers with BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo teachers, there was a significant increase in children. The use of loose part media in this learning helps children to think more creatively in creating a work. In addition, this media helps attract children's attention and makes them more active in learning. As stated by (Yasinta Maria Fono and Efrida Ita: 2021) that the use of loose parts in BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo learning can create a different learning atmosphere because children can create without limits freely. The use of loose part learning media in BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo has a positive impact on children's learning. Children are very excited and enthusiastic when using loose part media in their activities. Children can be more free to create because of the variety of loose part materials that are easy to find, one of which is natural materials that are around (Safitri & Lestarinigrum: 2021)

In addition, from the observation results, it can be seen that children are very careful in arranging loose-part materials into a work. The teacher then goes around and asks the children about the process of the idea they will create, invites children to talk about the ideas they have, asks children about what they will create, which is essentially spontaneous questions from the teacher that can encourage children to provide creative answers without any direction or obligation. At that time, the teacher is ready to respond to questions and give children the opportunity to think before asking or answering questions. This is important to do and understand because not all children can immediately answer quickly because each child has a different stage of thinking speed. The teacher provides stimulation in various ways so that children can grow with confidence and create a comfortable atmosphere without tension during the activity.

When the author observed the learning process using loose parts media, it was found that children showed imagination in using loose parts to form numbers and write their own names. They were able to utilize the materials provided by the teacher and follow a different learning design than usual, which was not limited to books. Children were invited to learn and play with used goods around them. The children were very enthusiastic about participating in learning activities at that time. They started by arranging their names from the stones that had been collected and counting the number. Making free

creations from natural materials that had been collected with existing materials prepared by the teacher (such as cardboard, stones, pieces of wood, and used HVS paper).

During learning using loose parts media, children show creativity in the learning process. Children's creativity emerges when trying to apply their ideas with the loose parts materials they choose. Then, children show activeness in learning. The activeness of students is driven by curiosity to try various types of loose parts in their work. Furthermore, children are seen to be independent in doing their assignments, because the teacher gives children the freedom to be creative according to their wishes, so indirectly they can do their own assignments according to the ideas they have. In addition, children also show a willingness to work together with their friends, because when using loose parts they will certainly give each other ideas, tell stories, help each other and share. In doing activities, students have shown their self-confidence when playing loose parts. Because there is nothing wrong and right, the most important thing is that children want to do learning activities until they are finished, whatever is produced will be appreciated as a work of students.

This shows that when children are given the freedom to explore in playing using only the available tools and materials, their work can exceed the targets set by the teacher. Children's story materials are used as descriptions of the work without the teacher having to re-compose it. The teacher only writes an analysis of the child's developmental achievements in narrative form from the material told by the child. The teacher explains the child's abilities related to the original products produced by the child from a new imagination process that combines information from previous experiences. The results of the child's work in playing are then arranged into works as part of the potential for creativity that begins to form in the child. In addition, the teacher sees how much the child has the courage to take risks in his work, which may be different from his friends. The teacher's analysis shows that the level of development of children's creativity is getting higher.

The results of the presentation described above confirm that loose parts play activities are an effective solution in increasing children's creativity. Through exploration and experimentation, children can interact indirectly with themselves according to their wishes and also interact with the surrounding environment to find self-satisfaction, as stated by Montolalu in (Yasinta Maria Fono and Efrida Ita: 2021) Creativity is played by giving children the opportunity to express themselves freely, find alternative solutions to their own problems, and feel satisfaction and openness while playing. According to Munandar (Fatmawijayati., 2018) children's creativity involves utilizing materials around them to combine their knowledge and ideas as a form of unique experience. According to Siantajani, in (Prameswari, T." W & Lestarinigrum: 2020) it will greatly help the achievement when children play, through loose materials children can convey their own ideas, that is the real loose parts media. By using Loose Parts for early childhood, children's abilities will increase and they will feel more comfortable when playing with their imagination. Loose Parts do not limit right and wrong, and can be rearranged according to the child's needs.

The development of creativity through playing loose parts is also carried out by (Zakiyatul Imamah Muqowim: 2020) who emphasized that children's creativity can be stimulated well through the role of teachers as facilitators in encouraging the development of children's creativity. Will create new processes, ideas, and products that can be changed through the use of flexible imagination. Playing provides freedom, flexibility, and new experiences. This is creative entertainment where children can learn from various problems through playing with various media and without guidance from teachers. Teachers invite children to explore their previous experiences.

Research conducted by (Siskawati: 2021) shows that the use of loose parts media during Learning From Home (BDR) can optimally improve children's creativity, socialization, cooperative attitudes, and communication skills. In addition, loose parts media is quite effective in helping teachers provide materials to children and can make it easier for parents to accompany their children during the Learning From Home (BDR) period. Loose parts media helps improve student learning outcomes and is easy to find at no additional cost around the children's homes. Research conducted by (Muliati Sula: 2021) states that children who play with loose parts have higher levels of creativity and imagination than those who play with modern games. They also develop more skills and competencies. Maybe we will think that we will be more bothered to clean up because most of the materials end up in places we don't expect, but when children go through the play materials in the area in a creative way, it is our responsibility to support and encourage children's work and ideas. The results of research conducted by Muliati show that the use of loose parts media with experimental methods can improve children's science skills. Some indicators of science ability that have increased include children's ability to explore, solve simple problems, be responsible in completing tasks, and be more creative in trying and discovering things.

In addition, the opinion of (Dewi Sawitri & Anik Lestaningrum: 2023) The use of Loose Parts media has been proven to increase students' curiosity and enthusiasm. Students show positive changes and responses during learning, such as showing enthusiasm, being less bored, happier, more active, having a high curiosity, being more creative, and daring to communicate their thoughts. Of course this can increase children's creativity, because with their enthusiasm and curiosity, they are able to ask questions so that teachers can provide playful footholds so that children can think more creatively in creating a work.

In addition, the opinion of (Fauziah: 2018) which emphasizes that designing learning activities using natural material-based media will increase interest and make children's learning activities more varied. This will increase children's creativity, because they will explore more various play tools from the surrounding environment that are based on nature.

Children will stimulate their creativity and use imagination and fantasy, which will be recorded in children's memories because they are done through voluntary and fun play.

Documentation of children's work playing loose parts is expected to provide benefits for children's development in the future. This is in line with the opinion of Ahmad Susanto in (Yasinta Maria Fono and Efrida Ita: 2021) where the benefits of achieving creativity in children can improve their quality of life. The development of knowledge and technology requires creative, innovative ideas, and discoveries that are beneficial to society. It is important to stimulate this interest from an early age so that individuals can learn to create something without depending on the work of others. In addition, playing with loose parts helps children get used to being creative. Utilizing easily available, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly materials to support children's learning.

Research shows that playing with loose parts is effective in children's cognitive development in problem solving. Children use their thinking process and creativity while playing, combining their ideas with objects around them without any specific instructions. When friends play, children will also become excellent observers. They may find other ideas after seeing their friends' work, because children's thinking processes have their own uniqueness. There needs to be motivation first from their peers, as well as parents or teachers around them.

From the results of the researcher's observations, it was found that children's creativity emerged when they were learning and playing using loose parts media, because students were free to choose play activities and create their work without being required to follow activities that were fixed in the children's worksheets (LKA), while learning using worksheet media, students were not free to explore and create according to their interests because they tended to be more passive when carrying out core activities.

Based on several in-depth interviews and observations and documentation found by researchers, the analysis shows that learning by implementing independent learning using loose parts media at BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo shows that the development and increase in children's creativity is getting higher, this can be seen from the way children express their opinions or ideas, their courage to ask questions, their activeness in class, being able to create works and explore well during the implementation of learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions in this study regarding the application of learning using loose parts media to stimulate the creativity of early childhood in BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo, that loose parts media has proven effective in increasing creativity in children in group B BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo. This is proven by the fact that they have been able to show their creativity in the learning process, namely children can create works according to their imagination without the help of teachers, are not easily bored during learning, children prefer to experiment, and can solve a problem faced, with this media also giving children the freedom to explore according to their imagination, can help teachers in recognizing the talents and interests of students

The implications obtained from the use of Loose Parts media to develop early childhood creativity at BA Aisyiyah Kriwen 2 Sukoharjo are to make students have high creativity, both in creating works of art and in solving problems.

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