

## IMPROVING THE CREATIVITY OF EARLY CHILDREN WITH THE METHOD OF UTILIZING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN PANDEMIC TIMES

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### ABSTRACT

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*The low creativity of early childhood during the pandemic is because in learning from home children are only given worksheets and piles of assignments from school. In addition, the lack of stimulation given to children about utilizing the environment as a source of learning, makes children's creativity less optimal. This study aims to increase the creativity of early childhood with the method of utilizing the natural environment during the pandemic. This research is a qualitative research using classroom action research. The research subjects were conducted at PAUD Nurul Ilmi Cibinong Gunungsindur-Bogor. With this research, it is able to increase the creativity of early childhood through the use of learning resources from nature such as soil, stones, leaves, twigs, wood, water, clay and so on which can be utilized as much as possible.*

### KEYWORDS

Natural Materials, Creativity, Early childhood



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## INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the world and Indonesia (Pakpahan & Fitriani, 2020), many aspects have an impact, especially in the world of education (Erni, Vebrianto, Miski, Mz, & Thahir, 2020). During this pandemic, children must study at home through online learning or distance learning (Ameli, Hasanah, Rahman, & Putra, 2020), in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Karo, 2020).

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Teaching and learning activities in educational institutions (Tasrim & Elihami, 2020), especially early childhood education institutions (PAUD) (Johni Dimiyati, 2013), also conduct online learning and distance learning (PJJ) with the aim of preventing early childhood from spreading the virus (Suhendro, 2020) and still receiving the right stimulus for aspects of their development, both physically and mentally spiritual (Suhendro, 2020).

Ward William, C. 2015. Creativity in Young Children. Journal of Creativity Behavior. The result of his research is that creativity is problem solving (Rahmzatullaili, Zubainur, & Munzir, 2017). Creativity is divergent thinking or the ability to think in generating new ideas that are more effective as a process of adaptation and flexibility thinking (Marliani, 2015).

Creativity can grow from within everyone if stimulated properly (Oktiani, 2017). Creativity is the ability to produce or create something new (Fakhriyani, 2016). According to Supriadi Creativity is a person's ability to give birth to something new, both in the form of ideas and real works that are relatively different from what exists. Furthermore, he added that creativity is a high-level thinking ability that has stages of development and the ability to explore the imagination of children.

There are four interrelated dimensions (4P) in creativity, namely person, press, process and product. These four dimensions are interrelated, namely a creative person who involves himself in the creative process, as well as with support and encouragement (press) from the environment, producing a creative product. Creativity is owned by each individual who is unique and different. Through the creative process, it will produce creative products.

According to Rachmawati and Kurniati, explaining that the strategy of developing creativity in children through activities to create products has an important position in various aspects of child development. Not only creativity is facilitated to develop well, but also other aspects of ability. Based on this, the following will be put forward some strategies for developing creativity in kindergarten children: a) Development of creativity through creating products (Hasta-Karya). b) Development of creativity through imagination. c) Development of creativity through exploration. d) Development of creativity through experiments. e) Development of creativity through projects. f) Development of creativity through music. g) Development of creativity through language.

From the description above, it can be concluded that creativity is the ability to create something new, either in the form of ideas or ideas that produce works. Every child is creative, it's just that every child has a different level of creativity, it's just a matter of how teachers and parents provide opportunities and freedom for children to develop their creativity.

The concept of learning by using the environment is a learning concept that identifies the environment as a source of learning. Utilizing the natural environment will stimulate the talents and potential of children. The natural environment is rich in developing children's potential because: a.) Nature is universal and does not run out. b) Nature is unpredictable c). Nature is abundant d) Nature is beautiful, nature is alive with sound .e) Nature created many places. e) Nature can heal and contain a wealth of nutritious food (Rahayu, Nugraheni, & Rahayu, 2016)

From the description above, it can be concluded that the natural environment is a source of learning for children where the natural environment not only affects the development of the child's body, but provides a real playing experience for children.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research method uses qualitative methods with the form of research used

classroom action research (CAR). By using the observation model. The stages of action research according to Kemmis and Taggart in Arikunto include: (a) planning, (b) action, (c) observation, (d) reflection. Then it continues with replanning, action, observation and reflection for the next cycle, and so on so as to form a spiral.

The research was conducted at PAUD Nurul Ilmi BSI, Cibinong Village, Gunungsindur District, Bogor through online learning or distance learning during the pandemic. With the research subject of early childhood students, this research will start from March-May 2021 in the second semester.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ability to explore can be seen when children use the natural environment as a learning resource to experiment with creating a work.

Example:

- a. Make a toy car from grapefruit peel and banana stem
- b. Make a swing on a tree from a strong rope
- c. Make a toy horse from banana fronds

If seen from the meetings that have been held, the activities of using natural materials make children. Roger in Munandar revealed that encouragement is the main motivation for creativity when individuals form new relationships with their environment in an effort to fully realize themselves. Encouragement is not only given from outside such as family and school, but children can encourage themselves to produce an idea or work. With interesting encouragement in each meeting, they will be motivated to be creative with various media such as natural materials and active participation in activities. In addition to the media, researchers encourage internally such as appreciating children's work and praising their achievements. Creativity can be enhanced by processes.

This process is obtained when children get interesting and creative activities. Like when children show their activities at every meeting, then enthusiastically express opinions and are active in discussions. According to Rachmawati and Kurniati, explaining that the strategy of developing creativity in children through activities to create products has an important position in various aspects of child development, such as: a) Development of creativity through product creation (Hasta- Karya). b) Development of creativity through imagination. c) Development of creativity through exploration. d) Development of creativity through experimentation. e) Development of creativity through projects. f) Development of creativity through music. g) Development of creativity through language.

In introducing the natural environment, early childhood needs to be taken out of the room (outdoor environment) where children can see firsthand what materials can be used by children to be creative and make something valuable. Recognition can be seen from something that is easy to see, such as soil, water, leaves, wood, twigs, flowers, seeds and so on.

This can provide action or stimulation by utilizing the natural environment as a source of learning as well as a source of children's creativity (Wahyuni, Asri, & Suniasih, 2014). We can introduce the source of the use of natural materials by utilizing leaves that can be used as collage material (Istiqomah, 2018), tracing, splashes so as to form a creation that looks good (Khuzaimah, 2020), for example the shape of a butterfly made from stacked leaf patches. Sources of utilization of wooden twigs that can be used to make pencil box creations or boxes that are useful for storing other objects, with the form of arranging pieces of wood / twigs so that they look unique.

From various natural sources it can be used for early childhood and does not require a lot of money, in the natural environment children can also recognize various types, shapes, colors and uses. The use of natural ingredients is also not harmful to early childhood.

Creative people or children are able to create products based on their own thoughts. Children are able to make products by utilizing the environment provided by researchers. Abdulssalam said that creative production is production that is new and incomparable, and is known for its ability to produce something new or create a new relationship with something already known. The products that the children produce are not only glued and cut, the children paint on the leaves and stamp the leaves. Interesting learning invites children to continue to be creative to produce imaginative products. Researchers provide action at each meeting by utilizing the natural environment as a learning resource. The researcher discussed the theme and continued by introducing the child to the objects around the environment that the researcher brought to be a source of learning. Then the researcher invites the children to make creations using the objects that the researchers have provided. When finished, the children were asked to tell their work in front of their friends. The objects around are very diverse and available in the neighborhood. The use of the natural environment is created freely in accordance with the creativity of the teacher, so that the learning delivered is interesting and stimulates children's curiosity. Researchers found strengths and weaknesses in the use of the natural environment in learning. The advantage is that it is easy to find in the neighborhood. The leaves, seeds, stones and twigs used by researchers come from the surrounding environment, so they do not require a lot of money. In addition, natural materials such as leaves and seeds have various and varied shapes and textures. Teachers can take advantage of the natural environment in accordance with learning activities. The disadvantage of using natural materials is that they are not durable in storage, such as the leaves collected by researchers quickly dry and shrivel so that they cannot be used. Teachers must be smart in processing natural media materials that quickly change both shape and color. Based on the description above, it can be said that the natural environment can increase children's creativity.

The creative use of natural materials for early childhood really needs to be introduced and needs to be practiced directly so that children are able and understand what can be used in the surrounding natural environment. Based on observations, it is shown that early childhood creativity in PAUD Nurul Ilmi BSI, Cibinong Gunungsindur Village, Bogor is still not optimally developed. This can be seen from the low creativity of children in the use and introduction of everything that exists in the natural environment

Researchers held reflection actions with online learning or distance learning 4 times. Researchers together with collaborators carry out activities in accordance with the plans that have been designed before implementing the activities. At the end of each meeting, researchers and collaborators hold reflections after each activity. This reflection is carried out with the aim of seeing the learning process and the impact that occurs on children. This is because children's creativity with the use of the natural environment has not reached the predetermined success criteria.

Children's creativity with the use of the natural environment seems to increase gradually from pre-cycle, cycle 1, then cycle 2.

The percentage obtained from cycle 1 was 40%, which experienced an increase in creativity compared to the pre-cycle. This is because action or stimulation has been given by utilizing the natural environment as a learning resource.

The percentage obtained in cycle 1 has not yet reached the target. Then after that it was continued with cycle 2, the average percentage increase in cycle 2 in each child

experienced a significant increase of 80%. It can be said that the indicators of children's creativity are in the stage of developing as expected. Based on these data, the researcher decided not to continue the action to the next cycle.

From the results of observations made in cycles 1 and 2, the activities of utilizing the natural environment as a learning resource went according to the previous plan.

From the results of cycle 1, it can be found when children are hesitant in expressing their opinions, but because researchers try to encourage children to express their opinions or ideas, it becomes more visible when children start to want to try to make the same work as exemplified.

Then in cycle 2 the researcher began to provide children's activities. By providing activities that can produce a product that is different from that exemplified by researchers by giving children the freedom to be creative according to their level of ability.

Broadly speaking, it can be said that children's creativity by utilizing the natural environment is increasing in each cycle, where in the second cycle the increase in children's creativity has developed as expected. And based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that creativity can be increased by utilizing the natural environment as a learning resource for early childhood.

The results of qualitative data analysis prove that the use of the natural environment can increase children's creativity, one of which can be seen from the child's personality, such as children who are enthusiastic to participate actively in learning activities. In each meeting, each child's confidence slowly begins to show, like when he tells his work well in front of his friends. Children also look active during learning activities, such as children's curiosity about objects in the natural environment that researchers bring, making children happy to ask questions and explore using the natural environment as a learning resource.

## CONCLUSION

Early childhood creativity can be increased by utilizing the natural environment where children can explore the natural environment, are able to have the will and drive to create works by utilizing the natural environment as a learning resource. The increase in children's creativity can be shown from the research and development process on the use of natural materials that are applied directly. Based on the results obtained before introducing and using natural materials, early childhood creativity has not yet developed its creativity. Then after doing classroom action research using natural materials that are around the child's environment, it shows an increase in children developing according to their expected level of creativity. Therefore, the use of the natural environment in learning can provide a significant increase in creativity for early childhood.

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