

Improvement Efforts Creativity through Activity *Sand Painting* for Children Aged 5 – 6 Years

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ABSTRACT

This classroom action research (CAR) aims to improve children's creativity through sand painting activities. The background of this study is the low level of creativity observed among children in group B3 at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, Palembang. Many children still face difficulties in developing ideas, imagination, and creativity. They tend to imitate given examples, showing limited flexibility, originality, and innovation, and often appear hesitant to try new approaches. Furthermore, some children lack interest in coloring activities. Based on pre-cycle observations, out of 15 children, 13 (87%) were categorized as "Starting to Develop" (MB), while only 2 children (13%) reached the "Developing as Expected" (BSH) category. The research was conducted over two cycles, with each cycle consisting of six meetings. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on group B3 students. Data were collected through observations, checklists, and field notes. The results of the study show that in Cycle I, 11 children (73%) achieved the BSH category. In Cycle II, the number increased to 12 children (80%) in the BSH category, and 4 children (20%) reached the "Very Well Developed" (BSB) category. These findings indicate that sand painting activities are effective in enhancing children's creativity. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers incorporate sand painting into their learning activities to foster creativity among young learners.

Keywords: *Creativity, Sand Painting, Early Childhood.*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Nurjana (2023), education has now entered the 21st century, bringing with it new challenges and demands, particularly in the context of early childhood education. Children must be equipped with a variety of skills that align with the needs of the times in order to become individuals capable of competing globally. One of the essential skills that must be developed in early childhood is creativity. Creative children are better at solving problems, experiencing personal fulfillment, and improving their overall quality of life. A child with strong creative abilities will continuously seek new solutions and approaches to challenges. In the era of information, developing intellectual and creative skills is vital for enhancing the quality of human resources. Therefore, creativity should be nurtured through active learning practices across all subjects and levels of education.

Lestandy et al. (2024) emphasize that early childhood is the most crucial period for learning, as children at this age are highly motivated and absorb knowledge from a variety of activities. Teachers must be creative in designing learning experiences because young children learn more effectively through interaction with objects and people rather than abstract symbols. Creativity is essential for young learners as it equips them to become visionary individuals who can solve problems from multiple perspectives. Indriyani, Suryadi, and Puspasari (2024) argue that creativity is not an innate, unchanging gift but a skill that can be trained and developed. However, not everyone knows how to effectively stimulate creativity in children.

Creativity is the ability to generate new ideas, solutions, and unique concepts through diverse ways of thinking and imagining. Its importance lies in its role in fostering innovation, solving problems, and expressing oneself. In a constantly evolving world, creativity enables individuals and organizations to adapt, create relevant products or services, and enhance their competitiveness. Furthermore, creativity enriches life experiences, improves collaborative relationships, and encourages personal growth. By cultivating creativity, we can respond to challenges more effectively and inspiringly.

Sumarli (2022) notes that the aim of developing creativity in children is to help them better understand and interpret concepts during learning, build confidence in expressing opinions, and become more decisive and wiser in drawing conclusions. It also equips them to face everyday challenges with greater resilience. However, as highlighted by Rohman, Utami, and Indiaty (2021), a study by Jellen and Urban revealed that among eight countries surveyed, Indonesian children ranked lowest in creativity. This low level is attributed to environmental factors, particularly parenting and educational patterns that do not sufficiently support children's creative expression.

Widia and Handayani (2022) explain that children's creativity can be stimulated effectively through well-designed learning activities, one of which is sand painting. Sand painting involves the art of coloring using colored sand, which serves as an alternative learning medium that enhances children's cognitive development. This activity allows children to explore, experiment, and express themselves freely, thereby fostering creativity.

Sabilla (2022) also emphasizes that ideal learning conditions involve giving children challenges that stimulate their desire to explore and create. Cultivating creativity from an early age is crucial, as it significantly impacts all aspects of child development.

The reality observed by researchers during a three-day observation (September 2–4, 2024) in Group B3 (ages 5–6 years) at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, Palembang, involving 15 children, reveals several issues. Out of the 15 children participating in coloring activities, 7 still struggled to develop their ideas and imagination. These children tended to replicate the examples provided, without attempting to create new or unique designs. They faced difficulties demonstrating flexibility and originality. Moreover, 6 children showed low enthusiasm and engagement during coloring activities, appearing to complete the tasks solely due to external demands rather than intrinsic motivation or enjoyment.

Only 8 children were able to combine colors effectively, using a range of colors such as red, green, yellow, blue, and orange. However, 4 children's coloring results appeared monotonous, with minimal color variation, often mimicking the choices of their peers. Additionally, 4 children remained confused when selecting colors, indicating a lack of guidance and motivation from teachers, which ultimately limited the effectiveness of the activity in stimulating their imagination. This lack of support led to decreased enthusiasm and delays in completing the coloring tasks.

In response to these challenges, the researcher sees the need to redesign learning activities related to color exploration in order to enhance children's creativity. Therefore, this study was conducted under the title: "Efforts to Improve Creativity through Sand Painting Activities for Children Aged 5–6 Years at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, Palembang."

METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which is a form of research conducted by teachers within the classroom setting. The primary aim is to improve learning methods and practices through concrete and systematic actions. The research was carried out in three stages: the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. Cycle I and Cycle II were each conducted over six meetings. The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, utilizing checklist sheets and field notes to document the children's creative development. The subjects of this research were children aged 5–6 years in Group B3 at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, Palembang, totaling 16 children. The object of the research was the implementation of sand painting activities aimed at enhancing children's creativity.

The study was conducted at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, located on Jalan Bukit Sejahtera, Polygon Housing Complex, Ilir Barat I District, Palembang City, South Sumatra Province. This location was chosen due to its supportive environment for the implementation of the study. The research process began with a pre-cycle stage to identify existing problems and the developmental needs of the children. This was followed by Cycle I, which focused on introducing sand painting as a creative activity. Cycle II was designed to improve the techniques and variations used in the sand painting activities to further stimulate creativity.

Evaluation was carried out at the end of each cycle to assess the development of the children's creativity and to determine the necessary improvements for the subsequent cycle. Overall, this research aimed to develop and enhance children's creativity through the use of sand painting as a learning medium.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observation Results on Children's Creativity in Class B3 (Pre-Cycle)

Based on observations conducted by the researcher from September 2 to September 4, 2024, it was found that the creativity abilities of children in Class B3 still required significant improvement. Many children experienced difficulty in developing their ideas and imagination. They tended to follow the examples provided without attempting new or different designs, indicating limited flexibility and originality in their creative expression. Moreover, several children appeared hesitant to explore different color combinations or innovative approaches, suggesting a lack of confidence in expressing their creativity.

The observations also revealed that some children did not display enthusiasm or intrinsic motivation during coloring activities. Their engagement seemed to stem more from fulfilling the task rather than genuine interest or enjoyment. A number of children colored outside the given lines, indicating either a lack of interest or low motivation to actively participate in the creative process. In addition, the coloring outcomes of some children appeared monotonous, with minimal color variation, often replicating the choices made by their peers.

The total number of children in Class B3 was 15. During the pre-cycle stage, the data showed that 13 children required improvement in their creativity skills. Specifically, 4 children were categorized as ND (Not Developing), 9 children were in the SD (Starting to develop) category, and only 2 children had reached the DAE (Developing according to Expectations) category. These findings indicate the need for targeted interventions to foster creativity through more engaging and innovative activities, such as sand painting, to encourage exploration, self-expression, and creative confidence among the children. The following is a pie chart of the pre-cycle data results:



Figure 1. Pre-Cycle Pie Chart

Cycle II Research Results

Action observation was conducted during sand painting activities to improve children's creativity. Researchers observed and recorded the developments experienced by the children, then documented them as evaluation materials. In cycle I, observations were conducted from the first meeting to the sixth meeting. Observations conducted obtained results that children experienced increased creativity abilities. In the pre-cycle stage above, only 2 children (13%) received the BSH category (good, very good). While in cycle I, the number of children who received the BSH category increased to 11 children (73%). The following is a pie chart depicting the results of cycle I data:

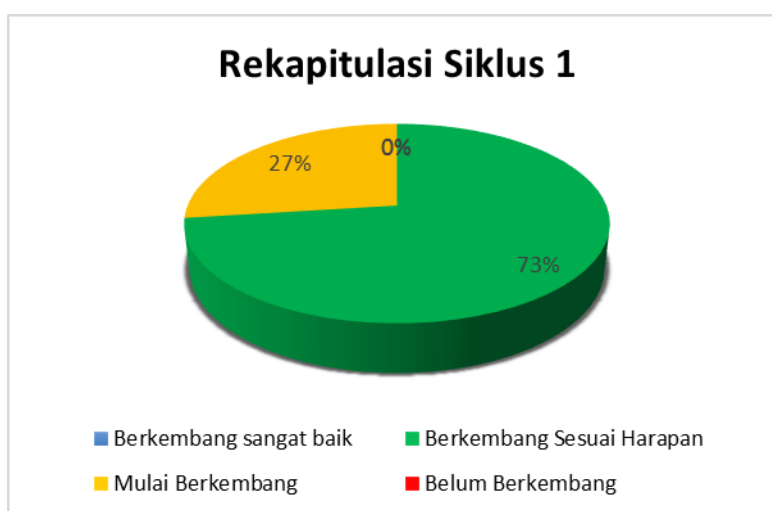


Table 2. Pie Chart of Cycle I Data Results

Observations for Cycle II were carried out across six meetings. The results demonstrated a continued and significant improvement in children's creativity. Compared to the pre-cycle and Cycle I, the data from Cycle II showed noticeable progress. In the pre-cycle stage, only 2 children (13%) were categorized as BSH (Developing as Expected), while 4 children (27%) were still in the BB (Not Yet Developing) category. During Cycle I, a marked improvement was observed, with 11 children (73%) reaching the BSH level, and no children remaining in the BB category.

In Cycle II, the number of children in the BSH category increased by 7%, bringing the total to 12 children (80%). Additionally, further progress was observed as 3 children (20%) advanced to the BSB (Very Well Developed) category. Notably, by the end of Cycle II, there were no children left in the BB or MB categories, indicating that all children had reached either the expected or very well-developed level of creativity. These findings reflect a significant enhancement in the creativity skills of the children from the pre-cycle stage through to Cycle II. This positive trend supports the effectiveness of sand painting activities in fostering creativity in early childhood education. A pie chart illustrating the data from Cycle II is provided below.



Figure 3. Pie Chart of Cycle II Data Results

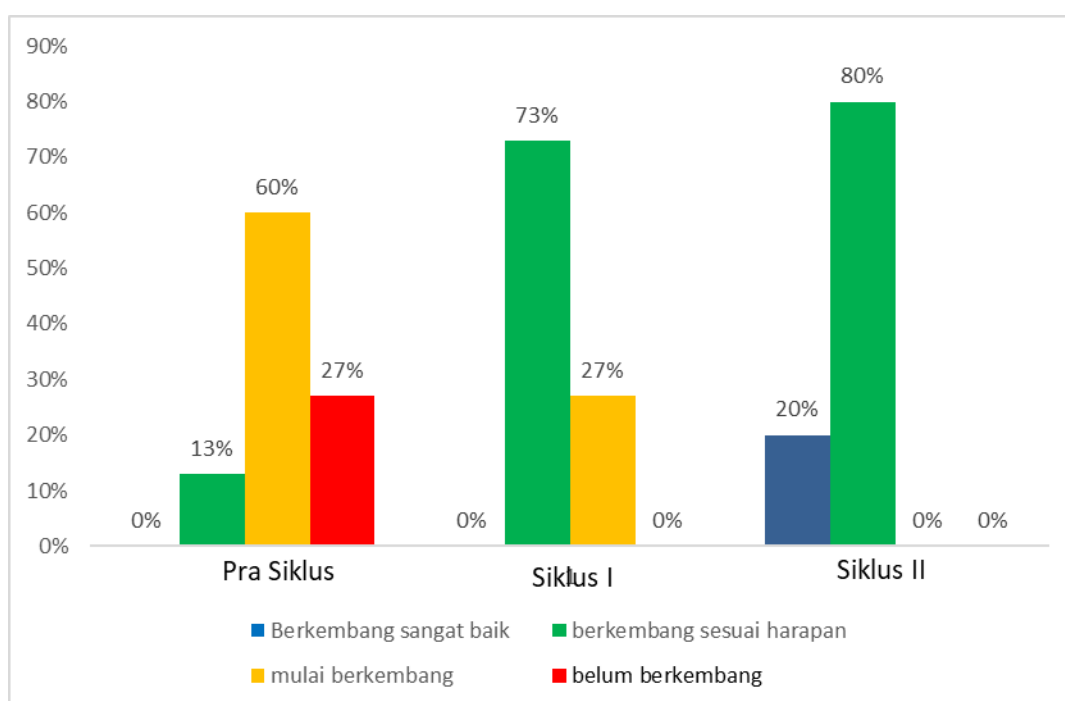


Figure 4. Bar graph of the summary of pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2 data results.

This study is different from previous studies because none have implemented sand painting activities that can increase creativity in early childhood, usually children color using crayons.

Discussion

The research conducted was a classroom action research with the aim of improving the quality of learning in the classroom, in collaboration with the class teacher. This study used the Kemmis McTaggart model, which consists of two cycles. Each cycle consists of the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages, with each cycle involving six meetings.

The activity implemented to improve creativity skills is sand painting, which is a coloring activity using colored sand according to children's creativity. Indriyani, M., Suryadi, D., & Puspasari, E. (2024). Application of Finger Painting to Improve Creativity in Early Childhood Group B6 of Pertiwi 1 Kindergarten, Bengkulu City.

Triadik, 23(1), 113–122.k. Sand painting activities aim to improve children's creativity through four main indicators. The first indicator, fluency, is seen when children can use various different colors and color quickly without confusion. Flexibility is reflected when children are able to change colors easily and use colored sand consistently throughout the picture. The third indicator, elaboration, is seen when children fill the entire picture with even and attractive coloring, and try new color combinations according to their imagination. Finally, originality is reflected when children can produce different works from their friends and create something new even though the objects given are the same. These four indicators support each other in assessing and improving children's creativity through sand painting activities.

Basically, children in group B3 aged 5-6 years old according to Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, which states that the level of development achievement of children aged 5-6 years is closely related to creativity. Creativity is one of the important aspects of development that needs to be developed in children aged 5-6 years. At this stage, children are expected to be able to generate new ideas, experiment with various materials and techniques, and show rich imagination in various activities. Children are also expected to be able to solve simple problems creatively and express themselves through art, such as drawing, singing, dancing, or making crafts. A supportive learning environment and directed play activities are very important to help children develop creativity optimally. Creativity that is developed early on not only supports children's current development, but also becomes an important skill for their future.

Before taking action, the researcher conducted initial observations of the creativity abilities of children aged 5-6 years. The results of the observations showed that children's creativity was not optimal. Of the 15 children observed, 4 children (27%) were in the category of not yet developing, 9 children (60%) were in the category of starting to develop, 2 children (13%) were in the category of developing according to expectations, and no children were in the category of developing very well. Some children still have difficulty using different colors, coloring quickly without confusion, changing colors easily, and using colored sand consistently. Children are also not yet able to fill pictures with even and attractive coloring, try new colors according to their imagination, or create different works even though they use the same object.

To overcome this problem, researchers took action by using sand painting activities to improve the creativity of children aged 5-6 years at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten Palembang. Learning for early childhood should involve fun activities. Therefore, sand painting activities provide opportunities for children to experiment and express themselves freely, which can help improve children's creativity.

After implementing sand painting activities in cycle I, there was an increase in children's creativity compared to before. Of the 15 children, 4 children (27%) were in the Starting to Develop category, 11 children (73%) were in the Developing According to Expectations category, and no children were in the Not Yet Developing category. Although there was an increase, the results in cycle I did not fully meet the desired target. Therefore, the researcher decided to continue to cycle II so that children's creativity could improve even better.

In cycle II, the data showed a significant increase in children's creativity. This increase was due to improvements in the deficiencies in cycle I. The improvements resulted in an increase in learning completeness with 80% of children entering the

category of developing according to expectations, an increase of 7% from cycle I which was only 73%, and 4 children (20%) entering the category of developing very well. Success in cycle II was seen in the children's ability to now use various colors quickly, change colors easily, and be consistent in using colored sand. Children can also fill in pictures with even coloring, try new color combinations according to their imagination, and create unique works.

From the results of the research that have been explained, it can be concluded that sand painting activities are effective in increasing children's creativity because this activity is fun. As stated by Harahap et al. (2023), sand painting is a new activity that is different from ordinary coloring activities, such as using crayons. By using colored sand, children are more interested and can be more free to create. This activity helps children to be more focused, dare to try new things, and solve problems when making pictures. In addition, this activity provides inspiration and enthusiasm for learning. This is also supported by Purwanto et al. (2023), who said that sand painting gives children the freedom to imagine and be creative.

The advantage of the research that has been conducted lies in the innovation in utilizing sand painting activities as a means to increase children's creativity. This study shows that sand media, which was previously often used only to develop children's fine motor skills, can now be maximized to support aspects of creativity. Through sand painting activities, children not only develop fine motor skills, such as adjusting the thickness of the sand, choosing colors, and controlling hand movements with precision, but also involve the creative thinking process. Children are invited to imagine, create interesting color combinations, and produce unique works of art. Thus, sand painting activities not only function as physical exercise, but also include dimensions of artistic expression, imagination, and problem-solving, all of which are integral parts of developing children's creativity. This approach provides a new contribution to the world of PAUD research, because it successfully integrates fine motor components into the creative process as a whole.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that sand painting activities can increase the creativity of children aged 5-6 years at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten, Palembang in the 2024/2025 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of sand painting learning at Az-Zahrah Islamic Kindergarten Palembang has proven to be effective in enhancing the creativity of Group B3 children. Creativity was assessed through four key indicators: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality. The study results show a significant improvement from the pre-cycle stage to Cycles I and II. In Cycle I, 11 children (73%) reached the Berproses Sesuai Harapan (BSH) category, and this number increased to 12 children (80%) in Cycle II. Notably, 3 children (20%) even achieved the Berkembang Sangat Baik (BSB) category. No children fell into the Belum Berkembang (BB) or Mulai Berkembang (MB) categories. Cycle II demonstrated notable improvements in children's skills, including better color selection, faster coloring, and the ability to produce unique and creative works. These outcomes confirm that sand painting activities effectively support the development of children's creativity by encouraging original expression, optimal color use, and individualized artistic outcomes. In conclusion, sand painting learning activities can significantly foster and enhance creativity in early childhood when implemented effectively.

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