



Improving Fine Motor Skills through Finger Painting Activities in Early Childhood at Kindergarten

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Abstrak:

Pendidikan anak usia dini merupakan masa emas yang menjadi landasan bagi perkembangan anak secara holistik khususnya aspek perkembangan motorik halus yang dapat membantu anak dalam melakukan aktivitas dasar seperti menggenggam, menekan, mengontrol gerakan jari, serta melatih koordinasi mata dan tangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas aktivitas finger paint dalam meningkatkan kemampuan motorik halus anak usia dini di TK ABA Al-Fitrah, Kecamatan Karang Intan, Kabupaten Banjar, Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa pre-test dan post-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan motorik halus anak, terbukti dari ketuntasan yang naik dari 38% pada pra-tindakan menjadi 62% pada Siklus I, dan mencapai 85% pada Siklus II. Temuan ini membuktikan bahwa kegiatan finger painting mampu melatih otot tangan dan jari, meningkatkan pengendalian gerakan, serta memperkuat koordinasi mata dan tangan melalui aktivitas yang kreatif, eksploratif, dan menyenangkan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru perlu secara konsisten menghadirkan aktivitas pembelajaran yang kreatif dan interaktif untuk mendukung perkembangan anak usia dini. Orang tua diharapkan dapat mendampingi anak di rumah agar stimulasi motorik halus tetap berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan strategi pembelajaran berbasis bermain dalam mengoptimalkan perkembangan motorik halus pada anak usia dini.

Kata kunci: Motorik Halus, Anak Usia Dini, Taman Kanak-Kanak, Finger Painting

Abstract:

Early childhood education is a golden period that serves as a foundation for holistic child development, particularly in the aspect of fine motor skills, which can assist children in performing basic activities such as controlling finger movements and training hand-eye coordination. This research aims to determine the effectiveness of finger painting activities in improving the fine motor skills of preschool children at TK ABA Al-Fitrah, Karang Intan Subdistrict, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province. The study employs a descriptive quantitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of pre-tests and post-tests. ensure safe and engaging facilities to optimally support the development of fine motor skills. The research results indicate an improvement in children's fine motor skills, evidenced by an increase in mastery from 38% in the pre-action phase to 62% in Cycle I and reaching 85% in Cycle II. These findings demonstrate that finger painting activities can train hand and finger



muscles, enhance movement control, and strengthen hand-eye coordination through creative, exploratory, and enjoyable activities. The implications of this research suggest that teachers need to consistently present creative and interactive learning activities to support the development of young children. Parents are expected to accompany their children at home to ensure that fine motor stimulation continues. This research contributes to the development of play-based learning strategies in optimizing fine motor development in early childhood.

Keywords: Fine Motor, Early Childhood, Kindergarten, Finger Painting

Introduction

Early childhood children are in a crucial early developmental phase for their future, with several characteristics that distinguish them from individuals at other age stages (Suyadi & Ulfa, 2017). They are pure individuals who hold great potential that needs to be maximally guided. Although children's developmental patterns are generally similar, their developmental rhythm varies because each child has individual traits. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the initial stage of learning that plays a very important role in the child's developmental process. ECE serves as a foundation for further levels of education and is also part of the implementation of the lifelong education concept. Without proper supervision, negative impacts on child development can persist for a long time. Therefore, ECE managers should not ignore the role of the environment as a learning tool. The environment has a significant influence on the development of young children, as it fosters feelings, comfort, and opportunities for children to interact, which can support the learning process (H. A. Putri & Hibana, 2024).

Early childhood is known as the golden age period, which is when children's development occurs very rapidly. During this stage, children experience a unique phase because they have their own world that is different from that of adults. This difference is not only seen in physical size and ways of thinking but also in their responses to their surroundings. The learning environment plays an important role in supporting children's growth and development. The quality of the environment, whether good or bad, also affects children's success. Therefore, teachers in schools are required to be creative in designing a supportive learning environment, even if they are not experts in environmental design. At the very least, teachers need to understand how to create a comfortable atmosphere for teaching and learning activities (Rizqina, 2019). In addition, early childhood education basically also includes efforts and actions taken by adults, such as educators and parents, in caring for, nurturing, and educating children by creating impressions and environments where children can explore and experience, thus providing them with the opportunity to know and understand learning experiences from the environment through observation, imitation, and repeated attempts that involve all the potential and intelligence that the child possesses (Billah, 2023).

In the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning national standards for early childhood education, Article 10 (3) Physical-motor skills as referred to in paragraph (1) includes (a) gross motor skills, which encompass the ability to perform coordinated, flexible, balanced, agile body movements, locomotor, and non-locomotor, and to follow rules. (b) fine motor skills, which include the ability and dexterity to use fingers and tools to explore and express oneself in various forms (S. Putri, 2022). One significant aspect that develops during this time is physical and motor skills.



Motor skills are abilities that develop along with maturity in controlling body movements, where the brain acts as the control center. These movements are divided into two types, gross motor skills involving large muscles, and fine motor skills involving small muscles as well as hand-eye coordination. The surrounding environment, including home and school, has a significant influence in supporting the development of children's motor skills (E. Astuti, 2020; Fatmawati, 2020).

As children grow older, they begin to master more complex and coordinated motor skills, moving from simple movements to directed movements that support daily activities (Hayati, 2019). Motor skills are all the movements that the body is capable of performing in response to a stimulus. Therefore, every movement made by a child, regardless of how simple it is, results from the interaction of various systems controlled by the brain, as the brain functions as a neural structure that regulates and controls all physical and mental activities of an individual. The development of a child's motor skills is divided into two parts: gross motor skills and fine motor skills (S. Putri, 2022). Fine motor skills are very important as they relate to skills such as writing, drawing, cutting, pasting, and other cognitive activities. Early childhood typically learn motor skills through play activities, which also serve as a means of exploring their creativity and imagination (Amudariya, 2023; Sari et al., 2020). The motor development of early childhood generally follows a relatively similar pattern, which is through sequential stages that can indicate whether it is progressing normally or experiencing delays. However, each child has different levels of development from one another. No child is exactly the same, either in terms of physical growth or motor development. These differences do not mean that one child is smarter than another, but rather that motor skills can essentially be learned and trained to develop (Roostin, 2020).

Various previous studies have shown that play-based methods using concrete media can enhance children's fine motor skills. Finger painting, for example, is a painting technique using fingers that is effective in developing fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and children's dexterity (Siregar & Ismet, 2021; Winata et al., 2023). In addition, this activity provides sensory stimulation that is beneficial for the development of children's tactile senses, while also fostering creativity and imagination (Lestari et al., 2024). Based on the observations in group A of TK ABA Al-Fitrah in Karang Intan Subdistrict, it was found that out of thirteen children, seven were categorized as not yet developing, and six children were beginning to develop their fine motor skills. Many children still require assistance from teachers for cutting, gluing, or imitating shapes, and they experience difficulties in hand-eye coordination. In addition, the learning atmosphere tends to be less engaging, causing children to quickly become bored and lose focus during activities. This condition indicates the need for the implementation of methods or activities that are more enjoyable, interesting, and effective in enhancing children's fine motor skills.

Previous research has developed various media and methods, such as loose parts (Andriyani & Indhra, 2022), montage (Taznidaturrohman et al., 2020; Yulianto & Awalia, 2017), ronce shapes and colors (Haryanti, 2022), or recycled materials (Niqo & Wahyudi, 2024; Setyowati, 2021). Although effective, some of these methods are still limited in providing direct sensory stimulation and optimal creative exploration experiences. Finger painting activities offer advantages because they combine fine motor learning, sensory experiences, and creativity directly, making it more enjoyable for children (Sari et al., 2020; Winata et al., 2023). Based on the description, this study aims to analyze how finger



paint activities can enhance the fine motor skills of early childhood children at TK ABA Al-Fitrah in Karang Intan Subdistrict. Finger paint activities are expected to become an effective solution to optimize fine motor development while also fostering creativity and imagination in children. This study aims to improve children's fine motor skills through finger paint activities by implementing enjoyable, interactive, and directed learning methods.

Method

This research uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) with a qualitative-quantitative approach, aimed at improving children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities at TK ABA Al-Fitrah in Karang Intan Subdistrict, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province. CAR was chosen because it allows teachers as researchers to identify real problems in the classroom and apply solutions directly through a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection according to Kurt Lewin's model. Data collection techniques include direct observation of children's behavior and participation during the learning process, fine motor skill tests before and after intervention, as well as documentation in the form of photos, notes, and children's work. The instruments used include a list of indicators for fine motor skills such as drawing, imitating patterns, cutting, gluing, beading, folding, buttoning, tying shoelaces, and expressing oneself through art. Each aspect is assessed on a scale of Not Developed, Beginning to Develop, Developing as Expected, and Developing Very Well.

The research location is at TK ABA Al-Fitrah, Karang Intan Subdistrict, group A, with thirteen children as subjects. The implementation procedure of the research consists of two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR). Each cycle starts with lesson planning, followed by actions in the form of finger painting activities and observations of the children's learning processes and outcomes, as well as reflections to evaluate success and formulate improvements for the next cycle. The application of this method allows the researcher to directly monitor the children's fine motor skills development, assess the effectiveness of the finger painting activity, and make continuous improvements. Data analysis is conducted quantitatively by calculating the percentage of fine motor skills achievement, thus determining the level of learning success for children both individually and in groups.

Result and Discussion

This research aims to improve the fine motor skills of early childhood children through finger paint activities at the ABA Al-Fitrah Kindergarten. Based on initial observations in the field, the fine motor skills of the children are still low. Out of a total of thirteen early childhood children, the majority are categorized as Not Developing (ND) or Beginning to Develop (BD), as evidenced by their difficulties in drawing simple shapes, pasting, cutting, and threading. The children often require assistance from the teacher, lack focus, and quickly become bored during activities, indicating the need for more engaging and enjoyable interventions. The recap from post-cycle II is as follows:



Table 1. Recapitulation after Cycle II

Development Category	Cycle I	Cycle II	Change
Not Yet Developed (NYD)	0 Children (0%)	0 Children (0%)	No Change
Beginning to Develop (BD)	10 Children (76,92%)	0 Children (0%)	-10 Children
Developing as Expected (DE)	3 Children (23,08%)	10 Children (76,92%)	+7 Children
Developing Very Well (DVW)	0 Children (0%)	3 Children (23,08%)	+3 Children

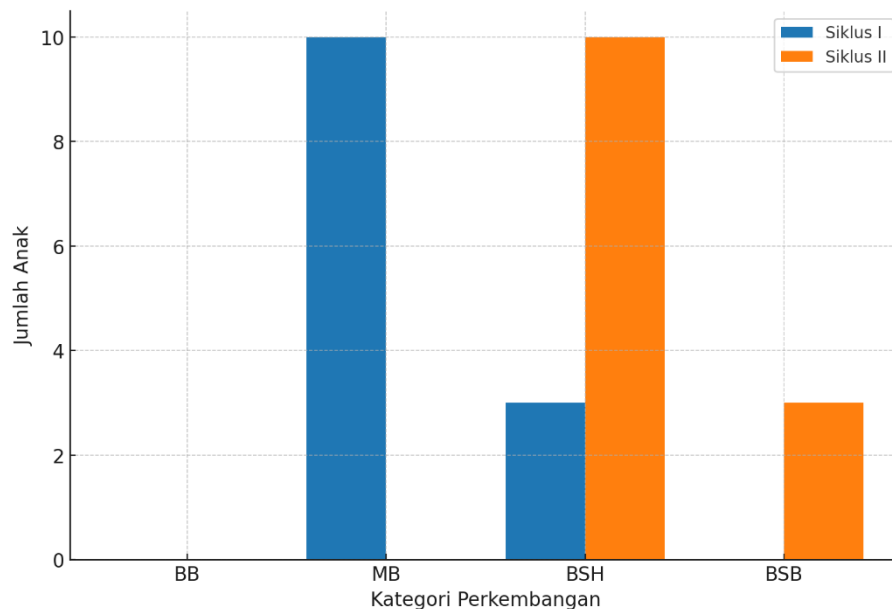


Figure 1. Graph of Fine Motor Development in Early Childhood

After the implementation of the finger paint activity in Cycle I, there was an increase in fine motor skills, where 3 children (23.08%) reached the Developing as Expected (DE) category, although most children were still in the Beginning to Develop (BD) category. The finger paint activity in the field appeared to attract the children's interest; they began to be more enthusiastic about using their fingers to explore paint, draw shapes, and stick according to patterns. The teacher provided individual assistance to ensure the optimal stimulation of hand-eye coordination and fine motor control for the children.

In Cycle II, all children showed significant progress. A total of 10 children (76.92%) reached Developing as Expected (DE) and 3 children (23.08%) reached Developing Very Well (DVW), with no children still at Beginning to Develop (BD) or Not Yet Developed (NYD). Activities in the field showed that children were more confident, creative, and able to express themselves through art. The children appeared more focused and enjoyed the



learning process, reflecting the effectiveness of finger painting as a method for fine motor skill learning. The results of this study align with the motor development theory according to Hurlock, which emphasizes the importance of direct practice and muscle-nerve-brain coordination in the development of fine motor skills (Aulina, 2017).

Supporting factors for the success of research include children's readiness, the role of teachers, availability of media, learning environment, and parental support. The readiness of enthusiastic children facilitates motor stimulation, the teacher's role in individual guidance accelerates progress, attractive finger paint media increases interest, and a conducive learning environment helps children stay more focused. Parental involvement also strengthens the child's learning experience at home. These supporting factors are in line with the child development ecological theory put forward by Bronfenbrenner, which emphasizes that a child's development is influenced by various interacting environmental systems. Ecological theory is Bronfenbrenner's perspective that states that development is influenced by five environmental systems, ranging from five contexts regarding direct interactions with people to broader cultural contexts. The five systems in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory are (1) microsystem, the environment where the individual lives; (2) mesosystem, which includes the relationships between microsystems; (3) exosystem, which involves experiences in other social environments, where the individual does not have an active role but influences what the individual experiences in direct contexts; (4) macrosystem, which includes the culture where a person lives; and (5) chronosystem, which encompasses the pattern of environmental events and transitions throughout life (E. Y. Astuti, 2023). In the context of finger painting activities, the child's readiness, the teacher's role, learning media, the learning environment, and parental support are part of the interconnected systems that contribute to the achievement of the child's fine motor skills.

In finger painting activities, children are given the opportunity to freely express the imagination they want to realize. This activity is essentially simple, not complicated, and does not have strict rules in its implementation. The role of the teacher is to provide motivation and build the child's courage to try without the fear of getting dirty from paint or colored paste. Finger painting plays a role in developing children's expression through painting media with hand movements, fostering fantasy, imagination, and creativity, training the strength of hand and finger muscles, enhancing coordination between eyes and hands, training color blending skills, and fostering appreciation for hand movements (Mayar et al., 2022). The research results of Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) show that children are very enthusiastic about participating in this activity and enjoy it. These results also indicate that finger painting activities can help improve children's eye-hand coordination and make them more skilled in performing daily activities. Thanks to the good development of children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities, they can also perform other tasks well, such as putting on shoes, unbuttoning shirts, peeling peanuts, holding a fork correctly, and more.

Through finger painting games in learning activities, children can be trained to develop their fine motor skills, particularly in their hands and fingers. This has been proven in various previous studies and is supported by relevant theories. Furthermore, this game is in line with the essence of children learning through play and aligns with the Standards for Child Development Achievement (STPPA) outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 of 2014 (Evivani & Oktaria, 2020). Thus, finger painting activities have proven to be a fun, effective method that stimulates hand-eye coordination,



fine motor control, and children's creativity and can be sustainably implemented in kindergartens to support the fine motor development of early childhood.

Conclusion

The research results show that finger painting activities are very effective in improving the fine motor skills of early childhood children at TK ABA Al-Fitrah. This is evidenced by the increase in the percentage of children's mastery from 38% in the pre-action phase, to 62% in Cycle I, and reaching 85% in Cycle II. This activity successfully stimulates fine motor skills such as grasping, pressing, controlling finger movements, sticking, threading, and folding paper. In addition, finger painting supports the development of hand-eye coordination, creativity, imagination, and self-expression in children, making learning more enjoyable and interactive. The research findings indicate that finger painting activities are highly effective in enhancing fine motor skills among early childhood students at TK ABA Al-Fitrah. This is evidenced by the increase in the percentage of children's achievement, from 38% in the pre-action stage to 62% in Cycle I and reaching 85% in Cycle II. The activity successfully stimulated fine motor skills such as grasping, pressing, controlling finger movements, pasting, stringing beads, and paper folding. Moreover, finger painting supported the development of hand-eye coordination, creativity, imagination, and self-expression, thereby making the learning process more enjoyable and interactive.

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