

## Implementation of Loosepart Media in Developing Children's Creativity

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative-based research focuses on the narrative and linguistic representation of specific situations or phenomena in a natural context, using a variety of data-gathering techniques that do not alter the research environment. A qualitative descriptive method was applied to describe the use of loose media in sharpening early childhood creativity at Islamic School Al Azhar 12 Cikarang by collecting information through narration. In the study on the application of loose parts to stimulate creativity in children at an early age, conducted at Islamic School Al Azhar 12, information was obtained through the involvement of 24 individuals, consisting of a class teacher and 23 students from Class A Shafa, in the institution. The use of media loose Part in Islamic school Al Azhar 12 Cikarang proved to be effective in stimulating the development of creativity in early children through a structured series of activities. This includes the steps taken by children as well as the approach adopted by educators. Exploration activities involving a variety of elements in the learning environment attracted great interest from children.

**Keywords:** Learning Media, Loose Parts, Childrens's Creativity

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### INTRODUCTION

The primary role of creative growth in children is to advance their intellectual capacity to uncover and create innovative ideas. Through the proper development of their abilities, children will have the opportunity to realize and express themselves as authentic individuals. As an illustration, when a child succeeds in making a doll out of stone, this paves the way for them to innovate in creating other objects according to their desires (Sari, 2012).

The learning process aims to facilitate individuals access to knowledge. The intrinsic relationship between learning and the learning process forms an inseparable entity, as expressed by Aswatan and Gede (2016). A simple definition of learning is an attempt to influence the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual sides of a person so that he is motivated to learn on his own initiative, a concept introduced by Nata Abuddin (2009).

Furthermore, learning is designed by teachers as a process to enrich morals, improve intelligence, and help students develop various skills. These include, but are not limited to, improved critical thinking, creative innovation, knowledge construction, problem solving, and effective mastery of teaching materials. These skills are crucial to master in the context of the 21st century.

The digital transformation has redefined the way individuals interact globally, entering a phase often referred to as the digital industrial revolution. The presence of the digital era has significantly affected the dynamics of daily life, marking a fundamental change in the way humans communicate and interact. Education in this era is required to prepare Indonesian generations to face the ever-changing waves of information and communication technology innovation. Digital era education is a response to continuous social evolution, where society has developed from primitive to agrarian, then to industrial, and is now transitioning to an information-based society. This information age is marked by increasing digitization, with the widespread adoption of computers, the internet, and mobile phones since the 1960s to the present, changing the way of life from offline to online. The increase in the number of internet users in Indonesia, which grew from 88.1 million in 2015 to 132.5 million, underscores this shift. As such, education in Indonesia must adapt to this rapid digital development.

One of the most important things to hone in this century is to continue to hone creativity in students. Developing and stimulating creativity in every aspect of learning implemented in early childhood education is crucial to the successful growth and evolution of children in the early stages of life. In Indonesia, parents' main preference in the education system is centered on improving students' academic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. Often, a feeling of pride and success arises among parents and educators when their students can read and calculate with ease, causing the moral and emotional aspects to be given less attention. The main reason driving this expectation is the requirement for entry into higher levels of education, such as primary school, which demands reading and numeracy skills. As a result, the teaching methods chosen by teachers tend to focus only on developing left-brain intelligence, namely literacy and numeracy skills. This monotonous teaching approach often leads to boredom among students, with a negative impact on the right brain, which is responsible for the development of creativity. This means that students' creative potential is not maximized, which in turn can hinder their creative growth.

Lack of variety and appeal in learning media results in limited creativity in young children. Their specific characteristics and needs are not met by the conventional educational media still widely used in many educational institutions, including books, posters or illustrations, and flashcards, which are less effective in stimulating their imagination and expression. Some inhibiting factors affect students' creativity, such as prohibiting and threatening, limiting curiosity, giving excessive praise, giving inappropriate punishment, and a lack of variety in learning activities. These can make young children risk-averse, less expressive or passive, dependent on others, and easily bored. The definition of creativity can be defined as the capacity to create new ideas that are unique, have value, and can be adapted to the situation. As a vital component of children's evolution in early

life, creativity supports them in expressing themselves, overcoming challenges, thinking analytically, and innovating. Various elements, such as surrounding conditions, stimuli, encouragement, interests, skills, and character, influence creativity in children in their early developmental phase.

In general, in the kindergarten environment, children's creative thinking skills are minimal. This is manifested in works that tend to be uniform and do not stand out. Typically, art activities that encourage creative thinking are limited to the use of tools such as colored pencils, crayons, and paints, and these activities often only take place within the classroom. Furthermore, children's creativity is often limited by environmental conditions. Children are constantly having their needs met without being given the opportunity to express their ideas or thoughts freely. Sometimes, they are also directed too much to follow or imitate rather than given the freedom to develop and apply their own ideas.

A similar phenomenon occurred with 4-5-year-old Al Azhar Islamic Kindergarten students, the subjects of this study. Students who receive excellent care at home, where they are assisted in all activities such as procurement of daily necessities, transportation of bags, feeding, and clothing, and are only allowed to play in indoor areas equipped with air conditioning and avoid playing outside in the heat, tend to show a lack of creativity and have a tendency to give up quickly when faced with new tasks that they have never tried before. These children are always modeled, guided, and supervised super tightly. It is their environment that makes children less creative because they are not given the trust and space to explore on their own, making them less initiative and less creative, and they must be really supported in trying new things.

To nurture creativity in children at an early age, the Loose Parts method is one effective strategy. This method relies on the use of everyday materials that are not fixed in nature, such as plastic, metal, wood, and fabric, all of which are easily found in the surrounding environment. The advantage of using loose parts as an educational tool lies not only in the availability and accessibility of these materials but also in their ability to minimize expenses. Through Loose Parts, children are given ample space to develop their imagination, enhance their creativity, and explore aesthetic values. It is hoped that with this initiative, children will be encouraged to produce works that not only serve as a means of playing and exploring imagination but also as a driver for the development of their creative abilities.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a type of Research and Development (RnD). The educational research and development model adopted the 4-D (Four-D) development model. The Four-D model can generally be viewed as a model for instructional development. According to Triyanto, the Four-D development model can be adapted into 4D, namely Define, Design, Develop, and Dissemination. (Triyanto, 2007).

In this research, the approach taken is to use qualitative descriptive methods. This qualitative-based research focuses on describing, in the form of narrative and language, specific situations or phenomena in a natural context, using a variety of data collection

techniques that do not change the research environment. The qualitative descriptive approach aims to collect information that will be used to test theories or answer questions about current conditions, including the characteristics and frequency of the research object as described by Lexy J. Moleong in his book "Qualitative Research Methodology: Revised Edition," published by Remaja Rosdakarya in 2017, 36th edition, page 6-47.

The main objective of descriptive research is to paint a systematic and accurate picture of the phenomena and properties of the object or subject being analyzed. This is done through qualitative methods, which allow the collection of descriptive data consisting of speech or writing from individuals as well as observed actions. The information collected is in the form of text, visuals, and actions, as opposed to quantitative data that is usually represented in numbers or statistics. This qualitative data contains more meaning than just numbers or frequencies. It is essential that the researcher define the purpose of the study explicitly and specifically, plan the strategy of approach carefully, and consider all possibilities. From the prepared plan, data can be acquired and compiled into a report presented as a narrative. In this context, the descriptive-qualitative method was applied to describe the use of loose media in honing early childhood creativity at Al Azhar 12 Cikarang Islamic Kindergarten by collecting information through narratives. This research involved direct observation of learning activities in the classroom, which was then reinforced by interviews with the class teacher.

In the research on the application of loose parts to stimulate creativity in children at an early age conducted at Al Azhar 12 Islamic Kindergarten, information was obtained through the involvement of 24 individuals consisting of a class teacher and 23 students from Class A Shafa at the institution. Class A Shafa was chosen as the research subject because they met the criteria considered essential by the researcher to carry out the application of loose-part media to increase creativity in early childhood. The data collection process took place through interviews, observations, and periodic recording, relying on information from two types of sources, namely primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those who directly provide data to researchers, while secondary sources provide information indirectly to researchers. Primary data is often collected through observation and interview processes. On the other hand, secondary information is obtained from documentation, including photographs of learning activities and relevant written documents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The use of loose-part media at Al Azhar 12 Cikarang Islamic Kindergarten has proven effective in stimulating the development of early childhood creativity through a series of structured activities. This includes the steps taken by the children as well as the approach applied by the educators. Exploration activities that involve various elements in the learning environment attract great interest from children. Loose Part Media, which is a facility at Tk Islam Al Azhar 12 Cikarang, consists of objects that are easy to find, such as gallon caps, bottle caps, used yarn containers, pine cones, used egg containers, gypsum, natural stones, used bottles, used boxes, VCDs, and sterofoam. The school facilitates Loose Part objects in one corner of the school environment that can be used as a Loose Part bank

for students who want to play. A loose-part corner is also set up in each classroom to stimulate children's creativity.

Loose Parts offers a number of benefits in its application, which include: (1) functional diversity in the use of various activities; (2) repeated durability without being depleted; (3) flexibility in transformation into various forms and instruments; (4) stimulation of children's multifaceted development; (5) trigger children's creativity in optimizing objects in the environment; (6) encouragement of children's ability to solve routine problems; (7) activation of children's potential, interests, and talents; (8) cost efficiency and ease of acquisition; and (9) inspiration of new insights and experiences for children. However, Loose Parts also has disadvantages in addition to its various advantages, namely: (1) strategy mistakes can lead to boredom of learning in children; and (2) failure in the application of invitations and challenges can hinder aspects of children's development.

Creativity development in early childhood can be enhanced by utilizing Loose Part as a tool, which involves various learning methods such as product creation, imagination, exploration, experimentation, project, musicality, and linguistics. Through the application of loose parts as a learning material, children are inspired to produce various creations based on their learning process. The effectiveness of this method is proven by the loose part and the open approach of educators, which provide space for children to experiment and produce work according to their own aspirations and capabilities. This finding was reinforced through insights gained from an interview with Mrs. Pinka, an educator in Shafa's class A, who emphasized the importance of giving children space to explore and create based on their individual initiatives and desires. Generating innovation can mean designing something completely original or altering a previously known item or product.

The opportunity to explore, examine, and understand the various elements that are widely available is given to children. Observation activities allow them to more easily recognize the surrounding environment through the exploration process, as found by the researcher. Yeni Rachmawati and Euis Kurniati, in their work, also emphasize that through exploration, children are given the opportunity to observe, process, feel, and ultimately create something of interest to them. The children were enthusiastic about testing various elements in their environment, especially when using loose-part media, which opened up a variety of experimental possibilities. With guidance and challenges provided by the teacher through invitations and provocations, children's experiments become more focused and productive. An interview conducted with Mrs. Pinka, a teacher in Shafa's class A, revealed that the learning process involves the use of experimental strategies. This strategy is activated by stimulating students' interest through various prompts and challenges specifically designed to orient students' experiments in a particular direction, define the steps that need to be followed, and clarify the purpose of the experiment. This process ensures a focused experiment. Furthermore, observations made by the researcher showed the children's understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in their play environment, as well as the selection and purpose of certain components in their activities. Similarly, the researcher emphasized the importance of experimentation in helping children understand the processes and reasons for phenomena, as well as developing their ability to identify and

solve problems, which in turn enables them to create something useful from their explorations.

The students showed great enthusiasm to carry out the various game agendas they had designed, determined to take turns participating in all the activities prepared by the teacher. In the weekly activity scheme, the teacher arranged between 6 and 8 games, providing ample opportunities for students to complete the entire week's agenda, and each game contained a variety of potentials that could encourage students to embark on big projects. This conclusion was drawn based on an interview with Ms. Pinka, Shafa's class A teacher, who stated that in the project approach, 6–8 games are usually prepared per week. Over a seven-day period, children are given ample opportunity to complete a series of games, opening up a wide range of potential activities. If there are any reservations or dissatisfaction with the outcome of the project, there is an opportunity for the child to make improvements or continue at a later date. Further observations revealed an increase in children's enthusiasm for creating works using the elements presented, mainly because educators provided activities that stimulated the expression of their thinking, skills, and capacities.

Based on the research findings obtained through interviews, it was revealed that a child's surroundings are rich in elements that can emit unique tones and sounds. When these elements are combined, they create an even wider variety of sounds. Teachers utilize this phenomenon to apply a musical approach to the learning process by utilizing loose-part media. Observations made by researchers also showed children's ability to produce a variety of sounds and tones from various elements in their environment. Yeni Rachmawati and Euis Kurniati have also explored that the abundance of natural nuances and melodies is a characteristic of the earth. We, as humans, cannot escape the diverse sounds that fill every moment with different types, intensities, lengths, speeds, and rhythmic patterns. From nature, we learn about harmony, equality, symmetry, order, and the value of cohesion and integration through the sounds and rhythms of nature.

Communication opportunities for children in their social interactions, including with peers and educators, include the ability to receive and express information verbally. In this context, interviews revealed that the application of communicative strategies starts from the beginning to the end of the play session, including dialog about children's progress in completing certain tasks. In addition, at the end of the session, children are given space to discuss the activities that have been carried out and the knowledge gained. Research observations showed that children spontaneously conveyed their ideas and feelings to peers and teachers. The study highlighted how children often used conversation as a way to express their thoughts. This behavior facilitates the development of language skills and dialogic interaction with others, with the expression of emotions being one of the children's main methods of using language.

This learning process took place at Al Azhar 12 Cikarang Islamic Kindergarten. The focus of the study was on group A Shafa students, whose ages ranged from 4 to 5 years old, with a total of 23 children. The study took place from January 16 to 30, 2024, covering the stages of planning, observation, execution, and review. Sessions were held for 80 minutes

per session. The instrument developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study was an observation scale that assessed indicators of children's creativity progress. For practical activities using Loose Part media, the researcher provided various materials such as twigs, pinecones, seashells, stones, leaves, flowers, and various other natural elements.

Creating a conducive, comfortable, and stimulating environment for children is the main goal. Before starting the study, the researcher conducted a preliminary review to understand the conditions and context at Al Azhar 12 Islamic Kindergarten, including the number of classrooms, total students, number of educators, daily educational routines, and facilities and equipment available at this institution. This study was initiated to advance the evolution of children's creativity by applying loose-part media as an intervention method. In the first observation, there were several aspects that needed improvement to be applied in the second observation, including: there were some children who showed a lack of concentration and motivation during the explorative activities; there was a reluctance in some children to try again at making the work when experiencing obstacles, such as difficulty coming up with ideas or overcoming problems using equipment such as scissors and adhesives; and there were still children who had not mastered the ability to tidy up equipment and materials after use.

Following these activities, remedial measures to address the constraints identified in the initial observations will be implemented in subsequent observations in order to increase the effectiveness of the expected achievements. Some of the improvement strategies include: Updating learning resources by teachers and researchers, either through literature or demonstrative videos, on creative techniques to transform everyday objects into more interesting toys. This is expected to increase children's excitement and satisfaction in producing diverse creations, provide encouragement and inspiration from teachers to children to encourage them to apply their ideas independently, offer support if they encounter obstacles in using the creation equipment, and prioritize responsibility by children in managing and maintaining the equipment that has been used with guidance and direction from the teacher.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Research carried out at TK Islam Al Azhar 12 Cikarang regarding the utilization of Loose Part media to stimulate children's creativity shows that Loose Part media is integrated in the learning process at TK Islam Al Azhar 12 Cikarang through the application of the complete stages of interacting with Loose Part. This includes strategies for playing, cleaning, and storing equipment that children use every day. The learning process incorporates seven key strategies to advance preschoolers' creativity, which include product creation, use of imagination, exploration and experimentation activities, project development, and the application of music and language.

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