



Research Article

Improving Creativity Through Playdough Games for Children

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Abstract

This study is based on the fact that the creativity of children in group A at Mawar Merah Kindergarten, Sidobogem Village, Sugio, Lamongan, is still underdeveloped. Observations show that during skill-building activities, children tend to be less careful and less persistent in their work, resulting in less neat and less optimal results. One of the causes is the teaching approach applied by teachers, which focuses more on creativity materials with a low level of difficulty. As a result, children are less accustomed to facing new challenges. In addition, teachers also rarely apply creativity learning through games, which have the potential to enhance children's development. Based on these phenomena, the research question in this study is: "How can we improve the creativity of children in group A at Mawar Merah Kindergarten through playdough games?" The purpose of this study is to improve children's creativity in the classroom by using playdough games in the 2024/2025 academic year. This study involved nine children from group A of Mawar Merah Kindergarten. The data collection methods used included observation and documentation. The results of the analysis showed that there was an effect on increasing creativity through playdough games in group A children at Mawar Merah Kindergarten, Sidobogem Village, Sugio District, Lamongan Regency, in the 2024/2025 academic year..

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood refers to children aged 0-6 years, also known as the golden age, which is a critical period for children. If their growth and development needs are not properly met during this period, it will greatly affect their growth and development in later stages. During this period, especially between the ages of 4 and 6, children experience a sensitive period in which they are receptive to various stimuli. This is the most appropriate time to lay the foundation for developing moral abilities and religious, socio-emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical motor skills. Education is conscious guidance or leadership by educators, resulting in physical and spiritual development that shapes the child's personality. (Djali, 2015). As stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 Chapter 1, Article 1, Point 14 states that "Early Childhood Education is a guidance effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age, carried out through the provision of stimuli to assist physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are prepared to enter further education (Bustomi, M.Y. 2012). Simply put, the concept of PAUD is an educational concept that aims to offer the community the importance of education on the characteristics of early childhood behavior

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(Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, 2012). In PAUD learning, play is the main concept that is emphasized (Yuliana, 2011).

Early childhood education is a form of education that focuses on laying the foundations for physical growth and development (fine and gross motor coordination), intelligence (thinking skills, creativity, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence), socio-emotional (attitudes and behavior as well as religion), language and communication, in accordance with the uniqueness and stages of development experienced by early childhood. This can be achieved through play. Playing is doing activities or things that are fun (using certain tools or just physical activities) (Wandi & Mayar, 2019). For kids, playing is a really fun activity that makes them happy and lets them express what they're feeling. (Setiawan, 2023). Children can develop self-esteem through play, because by playing, children acquire the ability to control their bodies, objects, and social skills as well as creativity (Sari, E.K. 2019). Vygotsky argues that through play, children have the opportunity to investigate in depth and pay close attention to things that interest them. (Vygotsky, L.S. 1997)

One game that can stimulate creativity in early childhood is playdough, which can improve creative thinking skills and train originality in creating works. Playing with plasticine effectively stimulates children's imagination and diversity of work (Awaliyah et. al, 2021). Creative can be interpreted as being active, diligent in making efforts, diligent in learning to find new discoveries that are beneficial to others, society, the nation, and the country. Creativity is an action, idea, or product that replaces the old with something new (Yulinda, 2018). Creativity can be defined as working hard, diligently striving, diligently learning to find new discoveries that are beneficial to others, society, the nation, and the state (Iqbal, 2022). We can see creativity in the world of education, for example, in scientific writing competitions, where the findings become scientific role models (Rachmawati, 2010). Playdough is an educational toy that is inexpensive and flexible in designing patterns according to children's plans, imagination, and creativity. (Eko Setiawan, Labib Sajawandi, 2022). With a creative nature, children will always want to discover new things and can benefit society with their findings. Increased creativity in children is marked by the ability to produce more varied ideas and works. (Rizky et. al, 2023).

Developing children's creativity through playdough has an important role in motor development because in this activity, each child will use their imagination to create different shapes according to their imagination. In making playdough, they use various colors and shapes according to their imagination. Basically, the results of children's work made through the activity of making and arranging playdough will provide opportunities for children to create their own objects. Theoretically, playdough is considered an alternative for developing children's creativity.

METHOD

This research is action research focused on classroom situations, commonly referred to as Classroom Action Research (PTK), which is "a type of action research conducted by teachers to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. PTK is carried out to improve and/or refine learning practices that should be implemented by teachers. (Arikunto, 2019). The implementation of classroom action research requires teachers to be agents of change who must always make changes and improve their professionalism. To that end, research efforts are carried out to find answers to the problems faced by teachers in their daily tasks in the classroom. This research uses classroom action research because it employs a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing teachers to immediately see the results of their changes and make improvements in the next cycle. This is suitable for kindergarten learning, which requires rapid evaluation. In general, the research steps consist of four stages, namely: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. From this cycle, it is hoped that data can be collected as answers to the research questions. (Setyosari, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations, it is known that children at Mawar Merah Kindergarten need to develop their creativity to create an active learning atmosphere, meaning that they are still unable to learn independently without further guidance from teachers. The students show that they are still not confident and free in

playing and learning. Therefore, the researcher sought to enhance the creativity of children in group A at Mawar Merah Kindergarten, Sidobogem Village, Sugio, Lamongan, through playdough games.

The researcher attempted to find a solution through Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve learning. The research was conducted on children aged 4–5 years, namely in group A of Mawar Merah Kindergarten, Sidobogem Village, Sugio, Lamongan. The research was conducted in stages through two cycles, with each cycle carried out in two meetings.

1. Cycle One

First Meeting

The first cycle stage was held on Tuesday, July 2, 2024. This meeting used playdough to form stars. The second meeting of cycle stage I (July 4, 2024) used playdough to form rainbows.

a. Planning

Researchers prepare by compiling the following necessary items:

Table 1: Planning for the first meeting in Cycle One

No	Planning
1	Prepare a daily activity plan to be used
2	Preparing learning media according to the needs of the RKH
3	Creating observation instruments to measure improvements in children's fine motor skills

b. Implementation

At this stage of implementation, researchers delivered lessons with the theme of “Nature” under the sub-theme of “Celestial Objects/Stars.” Details of the implementation can be seen in the following table:

Tabel 2: Pelaksanaan Pertemuan 1 Siklus I

Time	Activities
07.30 – 08.00	Opening Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greetings and prayer• Singing• Singing the national anthem Indonesia Raya• Reciting Pancasila and its symbols• Attendance
08.00 – 09.00	Core Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher explains creative learning using playdough with star-shaped molds.• Before starting the collage, the teacher explains the shape to be made, namely a star, what it is called, and where it is located.• The teacher explains how to shape a star using playdough.• The children begin working on their tasks until they are finished.
09.00 – 09.15	Break (children play and eat snacks)
09.15 – 09.30	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher gives messages about the lesson• The teacher explains about the next lesson• Wheels and greetings

c. Observation

Researchers conducted observations concurrently with the implementation of learning by filling out a prepared instrument, namely an observation sheet compiled in accordance with the assessment indicators. The development of creativity can be seen from the children's work. After observing 9 students for creativity improvement, it was found that 1 child developed very well (BSB), 1 child developed as expected (BSH), 2

children were still developing (MB), and 5 other children had not yet developed (BB). The results of children's creativity with playdough in meeting 1 of cycle I can be described as follows:

Table 3: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement in Meeting 1 of Cycle I

No	Nama Siswa	Item									Keterangan			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Maiza Syakila NS	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-
2	Muh Abdul	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-
3	Prandika AD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-
4	Dylan JA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-
5	Nur Siti A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	17	-	-
6	Mikaila Adeeva	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	17	-	-
7	Geysha Gafira	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	-	-	-	30
8	Khusnul K	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-
9	Zahira Tsana H	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-
Jumlah Anak											5	2	1	1

d. Reflection

The results of the reflection on meeting 1 of cycle I can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The children still do not fully understand how to do their task, which is to make stars using play dough. This is because the teacher has not managed the class well during classroom learning.
- 2) Time efficiency is still lacking, resulting in the children's work not being optimal because there are still many steps that have not been carried out.
- 3) The children's interest has not increased, as can be seen from the fact that they still often play alone with their friends.
- 4) The children are not yet able to shape the playdough well.

Based on the results of the observation table above, it can be seen that some children are starting to show good progress, but there are still obstacles. Therefore, further improvements are needed in meeting 2 of cycle I.

Second Meeting

a. Planning

Table 4: Meeting Plan for Cycle I, Session 2

No	Planning
1	Prepare a Daily Activity Plan (RKH) to be used.
2	Prepare learning media according to the needs in the RKH.
3	Prepare evaluation tools.

b. Implementation

At this stage of implementation, researchers delivered lessons with the theme of "Nature" under the sub-theme of "Celestial Objects/rainbow." Details of the implementation can be seen in the following table:

Table 5: Implementation of Meeting 2, Cycle I

Time	Activities
07.30 – 08.00	Opening Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings and prayer • Singing • Singing the national anthem Indonesia Raya • Reciting Pancasila and its symbols • Attendance
08.00 – 09.00	Core Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher explains creative learning using playdough by forming a rainbow. • Before starting, the teacher explains the shape to be made, namely a rainbow, what it is called, and where it is located. • The teacher explains how to make a rainbow shape using playdough. • The children begin working on the task until it is completed.
09.00 – 09.15	Break (children play and eat snacks)
09.15 – 09.30	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher gives messages about the lesson • The teacher explains about the next lesson • Wheels and greetings

c. Observation

Researchers conducted observations concurrently with the implementation of learning by filling out a prepared instrument, namely an observation sheet compiled in accordance with the assessment indicators. The development of creativity can be seen from the children's work. After observing 9 students to assess their creativity development, it was found that 2 children developed very well (BSB), 1 child developed as expected (BSH), 2 children were still developing (MB), and 4 other children had not yet developed (BB).

The results of children's creativity development with playdough games in the second meeting of cycle I can be described as follows:

Table 6: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement in Meeting 2 of Cycle I

No	Nama Siswa	Item										Keterangan			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	
1	Maiza Syakila NS	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	30	
2	Muh Abdul Kalim	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
3	Prandika AD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
4	Dylan JA	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	1	-	17	-	-	
5	Nur Siti A	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-	
6	Mikaila Adeeva	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	17	-	-	
7	Geysha Gafira NR	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	-	-	-	30	
8	Khusnul Kholifah	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
9	Zahira Tsana H	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
Jumlah Anak												4	2	1	2

Table 7: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement in Cycle I (Meetings 1 and 2)

No.	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	5	2	1	1

2	4	2	1	2
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d. Reflection

The results of the reflection on the second meeting of Cycle I can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Teachers can manage the class better than before, armed with the lessons learned from the first meeting.
- 2) Children have begun to be able to form rainbows well, although not yet neatly, because the teacher provided explanations and examples that were easy to understand.
- 3) Some children have been able to complete their tasks faster than others, and their interest has begun to show.
- 4) Children can work on tasks independently, although they still often play by themselves.

Based on the reflections in Cycle I in meetings 1 and 2, several issues can be concluded that can be used as material for improvement in Cycle II. The plan for improvement in Cycle II is as follows:

- 1) Provide more varied learning methods so that children feel more enthusiastic.
- 2) Use more interesting media so that children's interest increases and they become more enthusiastic in the learning process.

2. Cycle two

The first session of Cycle II was held on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, with the children making caterpillars out of play dough. The second session of Cycle II was held on Thursday, July 11, 2024, with the children making turtles out of play dough.

a. Meeting One (Cycle two)

1) Planning

Table 8: Planning for Meeting 1, Cycle II

No	Planning
1	Prepare a Daily Activity Plan for use
2	Preparing learning media according to the needs of the RKH
3	Creating observation instruments to measure improvements in children's fine motor skills

2) Implementation

At this stage, two meetings were held, and the theme chosen by the researchers was "animals" with the sub-theme being land animals (caterpillars).

Table 9: Implementation of Meeting 1 Cycle II

Time	Activities
07.30 – 08.00	Opening Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings and prayer • Singing • Singing the national anthem Indonesia Raya • Reciting Pancasila and its symbols • Attendance
08.00 – 09.00	Core Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher explains creative learning by making caterpillar shapes using play dough. • Before starting, the teacher explains the shape to be made, namely a caterpillar, what it is called, and where it lives. • The teacher explains how to shape a caterpillar using play dough. • The children begin working on their tasks until they are finished.

09.00 – 09.15	Break (children play and eat snacks)
09.15 – 09.30	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher gives messages about the lesson • The teacher explains about the next lesson • Wheels and greetings

3) Observation

Researchers conducted observations concurrently with the implementation of learning by filling out a prepared instrument, namely an observation sheet compiled in accordance with the assessment indicators. Children's creativity development can be seen from their work. After observing 9 students for creativity improvement, it was found that 3 children developed very well (BSB), 2 children developed as expected (BSH), 2 children were still developing (MB), and 2 other children had not yet developed (BB). The results of children's creativity development with playdough in meeting 1 of cycle II can be described as follows:

Table 10: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement Meeting 1 Cycle II

No	Nama Siswa	Item										Keterangan			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	
1	Maiza Syakila NS	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	30	
2	Muh Abdul Kalim	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
3	Prandika AD	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	-	17	-	-	
4	Dylan JA	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	-	-	21	-	
5	Nur Siti A	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	30	
6	Mikaila Adeeva	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-	
7	Geysha Gafira NR	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	-	-	-	30	
8	Khusnul Kholifah	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	-	17	-	-	
9	Zahira Tsana H	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	-	-	-	
Jumlah Anak												2	2	2	3

4) Refleksi

The results of the reflection on the observations of meeting 1 of cycle II can be described as follows:

- a) Learning has begun to be conducive, as indicated by the students starting to focus on learning and paying attention to the teacher.
- b) Time efficiency has been optimized.
- c) The children's work has begun to look neat because the media used is slightly easier but still interesting due to the different colors.
- d) The children are accustomed to and independent in completing their assignments.

Based on the observations in the reflection results, further improvements are needed in the second meeting by evaluating the shortcomings in the first meeting.

b. Meeting Two (Cycle 2)

1) Planning

Table 11: Planning for Meeting 2 of Cycle II

No	Perencanaan
1	Menyusun Rencana Kegiatan Harian (RKH) yang akan digunakan
2	Menyiapkan media pembelajaran sesuai dengan kebutuhan di RKH

3 Menyusun instrumen untuk evaluasi

2) Implementation

During this implementation stage, the researcher conducted the activity on Friday, July 11, 2024. The theme used by the researcher was “animals” with the sub-theme “land animals/turtles.”

Table 12: Implementation of the Second Meeting of Cycle II

Time	Activities
07.30 – 08.00	Opening Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings and prayer • Singing • Singing the national anthem Indonesia Raya • Reciting Pancasila and its symbols • Attendance
08.00 – 09.00	Core Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher explains creative learning by making turtle shapes using playdough. • Before starting, the teacher explains the shape to be made, namely a turtle, what it is called, and where it lives. • The teacher explains how to shape a turtle using playdough. • The children begin working on their tasks until they are finished.
09.00 – 09.15	Break (children play and eat snacks)
09.15 – 09.30	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher gives messages about the lesson • The teacher explains about the next lesson • Wheels and greetings

3) Observation

Researchers conducted observations concurrently with the implementation of learning by filling out a prepared instrument, namely an observation sheet compiled in accordance with the assessment indicators. Children's creativity development can be seen from their work results. After observing 9 students for creativity improvement, it was found that 4 children developed very well (BSB), 3 children developed as expected (BSH), 2 children were still developing (MB), and 0 other children had not yet developed (BB). The results of children's creativity development with playdough games in the second meeting of cycle II can be described as follows:

Table 13: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement Meeting 2 Cycle II

No	Nama Siswa	Item										Keterangan			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	
1	Maiza Syakila NS	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	30	
2	Muh Abdul Kalim	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	17	-	-	
3	Prandika AD	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-	
4	Dylan JA	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	-	-	-	30	
5	Nur Siti A	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	30	
6	Mikaila Adeeva	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-	
7	Geysha Gafira NR	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	-	-	-	30	
8	Khusnul Kholifah	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	21	-	
9	Zahira Tsana H	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	-	17	-	-	

Jumlah Anak	0	2	3	4
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The results of the increase in children's creativity in cycle II in meetings 1 and 2 can be described in the table below:

Table 14: Results of Children's Creativity Improvement in Cycle II (Meetings 1 and 2)

No.	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	2	2	2	3
2	0	2	3	4

4) Reflection

The results of the reflection on the second meeting of cycle II can be summarized as follows:

- In this cycle, learning was quite good, as indicated by the large number of students who developed in accordance with the assessment indicators.
- Students were able to complete assignments independently and the results were quite neat.
- Time efficiency was quite optimal.

Based on the results of the reflection on the second meeting of cycle II, it can be concluded that the learning pattern has been able to run as expected, so the observation ended at the second meeting of cycle II.

The development of learning media for children can begin by implementing light daily activities that children can do, such as cutting, pasting, and coloring. By combining these activities, an attractive learning model for children will be created, making learning fun. One such activity is collage, which involves cutting, pasting, and coloring. Through this, children will also learn various aspects such as recognizing colors, identifying geometric shapes, and developing their attention to detail. Such new experiences then stimulate children's curiosity, encouraging them to continue exploring in their learning. Data on children's creativity development is presented in the following table:

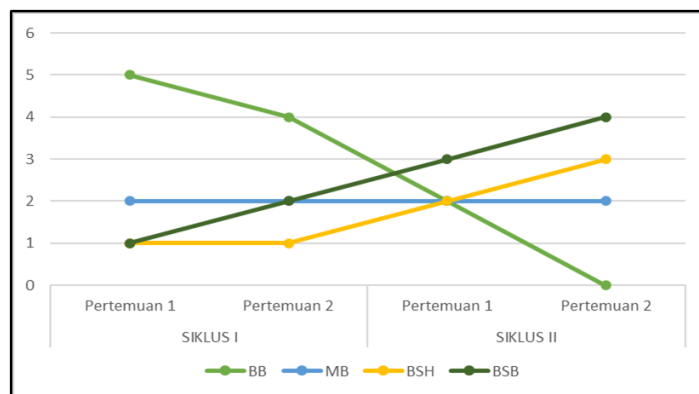


Figure 2. Graph showing the development of creativity in children in Cycle I and Cycle II of the student group.

Based on the graph above, it can be seen that there is a continuous improvement in each meeting. In cycle I, in meeting 1, out of 9 students, there was 1 child who developed very well (BSB), 1 child who developed as expected (BSH), 2 children who were still developing (MB), and 5 other children who had not yet developed (BB). In the second meeting, there were 2 children who developed very well (BSB), 1 child who developed as expected (BSH), 2 children who were still developing (MB), and 4 other children who had not yet developed (BB). Similarly, cycle II showed improvement in each meeting. In the first meeting of the 9 students, there were 3 children who were Developing Very Well (BSB), 2 children Developing as Expected (BSH), 2 children Still Developing (MB), and 2 other children who were Not Yet Developing (BB).

At meeting 2, there were 4 children who developed very well (BSB), 3 children who developed as expected (BSH), 2 children who were still developing (MB), and 0 other children who had not yet developed (BB). Based on the results of observations in cycle I and cycle II, it can be concluded that using playdough games with children in group A at Budi Luhur Kedungpengaron Kindergarten, Modo, Lamongan, resulted in a significant improvement in the children's creativity.

The results of this study are in line with previous research by Ayu Maisarah in the Journal of Education Research, which states that the application of the clay play method can improve children's creativity (Maisarah et al., 2020). It is also in line with research conducted by Mirna Sari in the Scientific Journal of Early Childhood Education, which states that children's creativity can be enhanced through playing with plasticine at the Lamlheu Elementary School Kindergarten in Aceh Besar Regency (Sari et al., 2016). Furthermore, research conducted by Mila Agriana in the Journal of Community Service also states that playdough games are effective in enhancing children's creativity. Students get the sensation of playing while learning, which has a very good effect, namely increasing students' enthusiasm for learning while playing more enjoyably, and not boringly (Agriana & Hujjatusnaini, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Playdough games have been proven to increase children's creativity based on observations and evaluations at the end of each learning session, which was conducted four days in cycle I and cycle II, showing significant improvement. The results of the study show continuous improvement in each meeting in cycle I and cycle II among students in group A at Mawar Merah Kindergarten, Sidobogem Village, Sugio, Lamongan. As a recommendation based on both field findings and theory, schools should provide learning facilities that meet the relevant needs, and teachers are also expected to develop their competencies and broaden their knowledge. With sufficient experience and practice, teachers will likely have a better grasp of the learning process, enabling them to achieve the set objectives.

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