



The Role of Teachers in Improving Fine Motor Skills of Early Childhood through Finger Painting Activities

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Abstract

This study explores teachers' professional role in improving children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities at RA Islam Irmassss. A descriptive qualitative approach was used to deeply understand this phenomenon. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation of teachers and children involved in finger painting activities. The results showed that teachers have an important role in developing children's fine motor skills through finger painting, acting as facilitators, models, and mentors. Children show active participation and positive response to this activity. Teachers use a variety of creative teaching strategies to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for children. The implications of this study for educational practice include the improvement of teachers' teaching strategies in finger painting activities and their relevance to the early childhood education curriculum. The results of this study highlight the important role of teachers in supporting children's fine motor development and contribute to the development of more effective educational practices in early childhood education settings.

Keywords: Fine Motor, Finger Painting, Early Childhood

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a very potential age to train and develop children's various potentials, talents and intelligence. Early childhood is an important period in child development. In this phase it is also referred to as the golden age period of children in early life, namely at the age of 0-5 years (Ramli, 2022). Early age is a very good period where children will easily accept, follow, see and hear everything that is modeled and recorded in their memory (Ferdian Utama, 2017).

Sujiono stated that early childhood is an individual who is undergoing a rapid and fundamental developmental process for later life (Sujiono, 2009). One very important aspect in early childhood education is fine motor development (Dea, Urrofah, & Utama, 2023). Fine motor is the child's ability to control small movements of the muscles of his body, such as those needed in writing, drawing, and other activities (Ilham Kamaruddin, Achmad Abdul Azis, Mohammad Syahrul Assabana, Arif ismunandar, & Duwi Meilina, 2022). Finger painting is one of the creative activities that can help in the development of children's fine motor skills (Ferdian Utama, 2022). Through finger painting activities, children are invited to express freely by using their fingers to draw and create, which in turn helps in the

development of hand and eye coordination, as well as fine motor control (Handayani, Hidayati, & Khotimah, 2023).

Fine motor development is related to the development of the ability to use the fingers to perform various activities (Jumiyati, Priyantoro & Hasanah, 2023). For example, the ability to move objects from the hand, scribble, arrange blocks, cut, write and so on. Motor skills are one of the most important factors in individual development that affects further development (Virawanti & Sugiarto, 2022). The problem that occurs if the child's fine motor skills are not trained enough is feared that the child will be less able to function the small muscles in moving the fingers and both hands, will be less able to coordinate hand speed (Riyadi et al., 2023). Seeing the negative impact of the lack of fine motor stimulus, it is important to improve children's fine motor skills early on.

In the context of education for early childhood, the role of teachers in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) or Kindergarten (TK) is very important (Utama & Tanfidiyah, 2019). Teachers in the Irmasss Sukoharjo Islamic RA environment have a very significant role in shaping the mindset, behavior, and skills of early childhood. However, not many studies have specifically investigated the professional role of teachers in improving children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities in the Islamic RA environment. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by identifying and analyzing the role of teachers more deeply in helping children develop fine motor skills through finger painting activities at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo. Based on observations of children aged 4-5 years at RA Islam IRMASSSS Sukoharjo on the learning outcomes of students on fine motor skills in Finger Painting activities, a problem was found. Some children feel less mastered in developing fine motor skills as evidenced by the results of observations made by researchers. Children need interesting and fun learning activities, not monotonous learning that makes children get bored faster. Children's fine motor skills at RA Islam Irmassss Sukoharjo are considered adequate, because researchers observe that the learning that is often given to children is drawing activities, coloring, doing children's worksheets, and so on.

With a better understanding of the role of teachers in developing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities, it is expected to make a significant contribution in improving the quality of early childhood education, especially in the environment of RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo, as well as providing valuable insights for educational practitioners and researchers in the field of education for early childhood.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the role of teachers in enhancing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities at RA (Raudhatul Athfal) Irmasss Sukoharjo Islamic Kindergarten. The qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to provide in-depth understanding of the observed phenomena, while the descriptive approach is used to describe the phenomena in detail (Arias, Arias, & Rodríguez-Medina, 2021). The research site is RA Irmasss Sukoharjo Islamic Kindergarten, where the research subjects include teachers involved in finger painting activities and the children participating in these activities. Data collection is conducted through several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are carried out directly during finger painting activities guided by teachers and children's participation. Interviews will be conducted with teachers to understand the strategies and approaches they use to develop children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities. Additionally, documentation will be carried out on teaching materials, activity planning, and children's artwork in finger painting activities. The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively by summarizing findings from observations, interviews, and documents. Data will be organized, categorized, and analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and relationships concerning the role of teachers in enhancing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities.

Data validity will be ensured through data triangulation, where data from various sources such as observations, interviews, and documents will be compared and verified. Data reliability will be ensured by maintaining consistency in data collection and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 2014). It is hoped that the results of this research will provide a deep understanding of the role of teachers in enhancing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities in the environment of RA Irmasss Sukoharjo Islamic Kindergarten. The research findings are also expected to contribute to the development of early childhood education, especially in Islamic education settings, and provide guidance for educational practitioners to improve the quality of learning in similar environments.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teacher's Role in Finger Painting Activities

From the research results, it was found that teachers at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo have a very important role in developing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities. They not only act as facilitators, but also as models and guides for children in expressing creatively through finger painting (Maftutah, Jannah, & Utama, 2021). Teachers demonstrate the ability to create a supportive environment and motivate children to actively participate in these activities (Rochanah, 2021). The results of research on the role of teachers in finger painting activities at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo are very relevant to various theories of developmental psychology and education. In this context, several theories can be used to analyze the role of teachers in developing children's fine motor skills through finger painting activities. Albert Bandura's theory of Social Learning highlights the importance of the role of models in children's learning. Teachers who model finger painting activities set a positive example for children, helping them develop interest and confidence in creative expression. By demonstrating skills and positive attitudes towards art, teachers help shape children's perceptions of the activity (Lesilolo, 2019). Furthermore, Jean Piaget's theory of constructivism emphasizes direct experience as the key to children's learning. Through teacher-guided finger painting activities, children have the opportunity to explore and create using their own fingers. The teacher acts as a facilitator who helps children build their understanding of color, texture and shape through direct experience.

Lev Vygotsky highlighted the role of the zone of proximal development in children's learning. Teachers at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo help children achieve their potential by providing appropriate guidance and support in finger painting activities. They provide challenges that are appropriate to children's ability levels and provide support when needed, thus helping them develop optimally (Azarine & Hendriani, 2023). Then Jerome Bruner's Meaningful Learning theory emphasizes meaningful learning through experiences relevant to everyday life. Through finger painting activities, teachers create meaningful learning situations for children where they can express freely and create unique works of art. This helps to increase children's intrinsic motivation towards art learning.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory highlights the importance of the physical and social environment in children's development. Teachers at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo create an environment that supports and motivates children to participate in finger painting activities. They ensure that children feel safe and comfortable in their creative expression, which in turn helps facilitate fine motor development and creativity development. Overall, the results show that the role of the teacher in finger painting activities is not only as an instructor, but also as a facilitator, model and guide who assists children in the development of fine motor skills, creativity and interest in art. By integrating these theories, we can better understand how teachers can play an important role in developing children's potential through art activities such as finger painting.

Children's Participation and Response

Children at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo show a high level of participation in finger painting activities. They enjoy the process of exploration and creative expression through the medium of finger painting. The children's response to this activity was very positive, and they showed improvement in their fine motor skills over time. The children's participation and response in finger painting activities at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo provides a positive picture of the positive influence of creative activities on children's development. Children at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo showed high participation in finger painting activities. This reflects their interest and enthusiasm for art activities involving finger painting media. High participation can provide significant benefits to children's development, as they are actively and deeply involved in creative experiences.

Children enjoy the process of exploration through finger painting. This activity gives them the opportunity to explore colors, textures and shapes freely. Through finger painting, children can express their creativity in a natural and fun way. It provides a rich sensory experience and enriches their understanding of art. The children's response to the finger painting activity was very positive. This reflects their satisfaction and excitement throughout the process. Positive experiences like this can increase children's motivation and interest in art, and provide positive support to their emotional and social development. Through finger painting, children develop their fine motor skills. Using fingers to control paint and create patterns can help improve hand-eye coordination and fine motor control. Improvement in fine motor skills is an important development in the early stages of a child's life, and art activities such as finger painting can be an effective means to an end. Overall, the children at RA Islam Irmass Sukoharjo's positive participation and response to finger painting activities created a learning environment that stimulated creativity and fine motor skill development. Initiatives like this can be a positive model for children's education elsewhere.

Children's Fine Motor Development Through Finger Painting Activities

Based on observations made at RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo, it is known that before implementing this finger painting activity the teacher has prepared the program in the educational design. Teachers realize that finger painting needs to be done to improve fine motor skills and foster the interest of students so that learning objectives can be achieved. Finger painting is also used as a means given to eliminate boredom in children.

As for the process of applying finger painting, the teacher makes an Activity Plan with a customized theme, such as the theme of animals. The first step is the selection of animals according to the pictures that will be made in finger painting. The materials and tools used in this activity are the second step in finger painting activities, the teacher provides and determines the materials and tools to be used in the activity process, of course the most basic thing to consider in providing materials and tools is the safety and comfort of materials and tools that will be used by students, especially early childhood. The teacher then demonstrates how to make finger painting dough. Step by step and children pay attention to how the dough is made. In this finger painting activity, the teacher provides motivation to children so that children can do it more skillfully and can imagine according to their creativity.

There are several obstacles that exist when the finger painting process is applied such as dirty clothes, water colors falling on the floor and the resulting colors cannot be the same (the results of the work are different). However, these obstacles can be resolved properly. That is by providing adequate facilities, responsibility and good communication between parents by providing information if this finger painting activity uses dyes that can be removed with soap.

In the application of finger painting, the percentage of success in improving fine motor skills in early childhood RA Islam Irmasss Sukoharjo looks less than 50% because

indeed the improvement of fine motor skills is not only finger painting, but there are other activities such as writing, tearing, cutting, playing plasticine, sewing or others. So according to researchers, finger painting is only one way to improve fine motor skills and not the main one in improving fine motor skills. Rather a form of effort to avoid boredom in students. With this, RA Islam Irmassss Sukoharjo makes finger painting as a weekly activity in order to improve the fine motor skills of students more optimally.

The relevance of the results of this study to the education curriculum, especially in the context of early childhood education curriculum development, is very important (Sarinastitin, 2019). The education curriculum should be designed in such a way that it provides space and opportunities for children to engage in creative activities such as finger painting. Activities such as finger painting help in the development of children's fine motor skills, creating a strong foundation for their future motor abilities. In addition, through finger painting, children can express themselves and develop their creativity thoroughly, helping them explore the world in different ways. Art activities such as finger painting also provide rich sensory experiences, enriching children's understanding of colors, textures and shapes. Thus, an educational curriculum that includes creative activities such as finger painting helps in providing a holistic learning approach, which involves not only the cognitive, but also the physical, emotional and social aspects of children (Burhanuddin et al., 2021). Therefore, including creative activities such as finger painting in the early childhood education curriculum is an important step to support children's holistic development and facilitate fun and meaningful learning experiences.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that after finger painting activities, the fine motor skills of children aged 5-6 years at RA Islam Irmassss Sukoharjo have not developed optimally as expected. Because in improving fine motor skills not only with finger painting activities. There are still many other options in improving fine motor skills. if we continue to force one activity that continues it must arise a sense of boredom in learning. Actually, there are many other levels and each child's character is different so there needs to be a variety in learning methods to improve fine motor skills.

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