

Enhancing Imagination Through Finger Painting Activities in 5-6 Year Olds

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Abstract

The development of imagination in early childhood is crucial for supporting creativity and cognitive abilities. This study aims to enhance the imagination of children aged 5-6 years through the finger painting activities using Classroom Action Research (CAR) with two cycles, involving 15 children aged 4-6 years as subjects. Initial observations revealed that most children were in the "not yet developed" category. In Cycle I, free experimentation with finger painting improved their status to "starting to develop" and "developing as expected." In Cycle II, structured instructions and more varied colors resulted in most children reaching the "developing as expected" category. Finger painting proved effective in fostering imagination, creativity, and confidence in early childhood.

Keywords: Imagination, Finger Painting, Early Childhood

Abstrak

Perkembangan imajinasi pada anak usia dini penting untuk mendukung kreativitas dan kognitif. Penelitian ini bertujuan meningkatkan imajinasi anak usia 5-6 tahun melalui kegiatan finger painting menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan dua siklus pada 15 anak usia 4-6 tahun. Observasi awal menunjukkan mayoritas anak dalam kategori "belum berkembang." Pada Siklus I, eksperimen bebas finger painting meningkatkan kategori ke "mulai berkembang" dan "berkembang sesuai harapan." Siklus II dengan instruksi terstruktur dan variasi warna meningkatkan mayoritas anak ke kategori "berkembang sesuai harapan." Finger painting terbukti efektif mengembangkan imajinasi, kreativitas, dan kepercayaan diri anak usia dini.

Keywords: Imajinasi, Finger Painting, Anak Usia Dini

INTRODUCTION

The importance of imagination in early childhood cannot be ignored. Early childhood is a crucial age in the development of a child's brain (Aisy et al., 2024; Sit, 2023; Sitorus et al., 2024). Imagination helps them explore the world in a creative and flexible way (Ardhi & Warmansyah, 2023; Ratmiati et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2023). By imagining, children can expand their knowledge of the world around them, learn how to solve problems, and develop their minds as a whole (Winata, 2023). It also helps them face challenges in new and innovative ways. Playing, storytelling, and art activities help

children grow into creative individuals who are ready to face a difficult future (Priyanti & Warmansyah, 2021; Sandi & Setyorini, 2018; Susanti & Desyandri, 2022). So, supporting early childhood imagination is important to help them develop into better individuals.

According to Pratiwi & Widiyono (2023), imagination relies on experience, which develops gradually and uniquely in each child. Imagination allows us to envision the unseen or nonexistent, facilitating the expression of novel ideas and aiding in creative problem-solving (Faizin & Hartono, 2024; Winata, 2023). Through imagination, we can creatively articulate our thoughts and generate innovative ideas. It also helps us adapt to change by enabling us to envision various scenarios and make informed decisions. Imagination plays a crucial role in navigating complex situations with greater ease. As highlighted by (2024), imagination is an integral aspect of children's learning experiences. It not only fosters an enjoyable learning environment but also transforms imaginative play into opportunities for exploratory learning.

Human imagination can be divided into two types, reproductive imagination and creative imagination (Jumriatin & Anhusadar, 2022; McMurray, 2018; Warmansyah et al., 2024). Reproductive imagination occurs when a person reproduces an image that already exists in his mind, whether it is an image described by someone else or derived from personal experience, but may not be completely accurate (Rosdiana & Pratiwi, 2023). On the other hand, creative imagination involves the ability to generate new and original ideas. This kind of innovation results in great discoveries and achievements in fields such as science, art, literature, and technology. To assess human imagination, there are nine indicators used: transformation, crystallization, effectiveness, elaboration, exploration, intuition, novelty, productivity, and sensitivity (Lian et al., 2012). Ideally, early childhood education should provide space for children to express themselves and explore their potential through various creative activities.

Based on the observation results at Khairin Islamic School Kindergarten, finger painting exercises have a lot of potential to foster children's imagination. It was found that children in Kindergarten environments usually show difficulties in terms of creative expression and visual representation of their thoughts. One useful strategy to overcome this obstacle is to have children do finger painting activities, which are activities that allow them to express themselves freely with their fingertips. By involving children in finger painting, they have the opportunity to explore their own imagination and realize it in the form of creative images. Children can explore their already limited creativity and improve their motor skills by using warnings and textures silently. More importantly, finger painting helps children develop a sense of self-esteem in their ability to express themselves creatively and sensually. Thus, implementing finger painting activities at Khairin Islamic School Kindergarten can be a logical step to stimulate the imagination of early childhood and enrich their learning experience.

Numerous studies have explored the benefits of finger painting exercises in enhancing children's creativity and development (McMurray, 2018; Rosdiana & Pratiwi, 2023; Sandi & Setyorini, 2018; Susanti & Desyandri, 2022; Winata, 2023). Finger

painting has been shown to foster artistic skills, creativity, and imagination in children. Children demonstrate fantasy, sensitivity, and self-expression through their finger painting work, which are vital indicators of artistic growth (Susanti & Desyandri, 2022). Additionally, finger painting has therapeutic benefits, as it is utilized to support patients with mental disorders (Jumriatin & Anhusadar, 2022; Sandi & Setyorini, 2018). Gender differences have also been noted in children's creativity levels during finger painting activities, with studies indicating that girls tend to exhibit higher creativity than boys.

Research consistently highlights finger painting's positive impact on fine motor skill development in early childhood. For instance, Rosdiana & Pratiwi, (2023) found that finger painting significantly improves fine motor skills, which are essential for self-care and academic success. This finding is supported by Akhyun (2021) & Wasilah, (2022), who confirmed finger painting as an effective stimulus and tool for developing fine motor skills. Overall, the evidence underscores the multifaceted benefits of finger painting for children's creativity, artistic growth, and motor development.

Finger painting has an influence on children's creative development, based on previous research on the topic "Finger Painting in Early Childhood Development" which uses a quantitative data analysis approach. Classroom action research is the method used in this study. In another study, additional factors were mentioned in the research title "Developing Finger Painting Creativity to Encourage Early Childhood Cognitive, Affective, and Motor Skills," the results showed that children cognitively recognize basic colors and mix colors. There were 4 children who developed very well..(Nuzulia et al. 2021)

Earlier studies have primarily focused on finger painting as a method to enhance fine motor skills and creativity, confirming its value in early childhood education. However, they have yet to explore how finger painting directly supports the development of children's imagination. This study complements previous findings by observing imagination indicators through a systematic assessment approach. By comparing results across two action cycles, the research aims to provide a more detailed understanding of how finger painting contributes to imaginative growth in children. By employing an action research approach in an educational setting, this study identifies specific patterns in children's imagination development. The results are expected to offer deeper insights for educators and practitioners, emphasizing the importance of finger painting not only in fostering creativity and motor skills but also in stimulating children's imaginative potential.

This study aims to enhance the imagination of children aged 5-6 years by utilizing finger painting activities as a medium to stimulate creativity and foster imaginative development. The research focuses on observing imagination indicators and comparing outcomes across two action cycles to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of finger painting in supporting imaginative growth in early childhood.

METHODS

Researchers use an approach known as Classroom Action Research (CAR), which is usually conducted in a classroom or other educational setting. To improve learning outcomes and the educational process, this method uses cyclical steps: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

In this classroom action research, the researcher chose to adopt the Kemmis and McTaggart Model as the main conceptual basis. This paradigm provides a strong basis for assessing and improving the quality of learning through a reflective cycle with four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The first step in the planning stage is to identify learning problems or difficulties that require attention. Furthermore, the actions taken are carefully designed to address the problem. Observations are carried out systematically to monitor the implementation of actions and collect data related to their impact. The reflection stage is the core of this model, where teachers as researchers reflect on learning experiences, evaluate the effectiveness of actions, and formulate further improvements. By adopting the Kemmis and McTaggart Model, this study seeks to contribute a deeper understanding of how the application of the reflective cycle can optimize the learning process in educational environments.

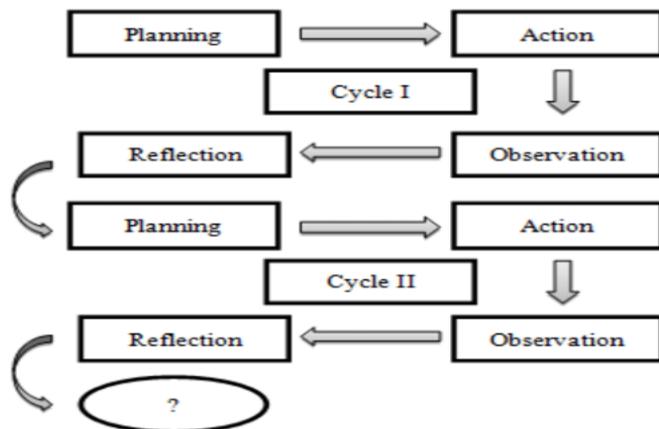


Fig 1. The Kemmis and McTaggart Model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pre-cycle learning process has been completed before Cycle I and Cycle II. The results of the pre-cycle analysis show that of the eleven children in group B, seven (63.64%) children are classified as Not Yet Developing (BB), three (27.27%) children are classified as Starting to Develop (MB), one (9.09%) child is classified as Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and none (0%) children are classified as Developing Very Well (BSB). These results are the initial reference in planning learning activities to improve child development.

Table 1. Pre-Cycle Results Table

Evaluation	Number of children	%
BB	7	63.64
MB	3	27.27
BSH	1	9.09
BSB	0	0

Children in group B continued to show low levels of development, as shown in the previous table. The results showed that no children (0%) were in the Very Well Developed (BBI) category, three children (27.27%) were in the Beginning to Develop (BBI) category, seven children (63.64%) were in the Not Yet Developed (BBI) category, and one child (9.09%) was in the Developing According to Expectations (BH) category. This was due to inadequate learning techniques, lack of resources for assistance, and lack of specific approaches to help children develop their abilities. In addition, lack of practice and involvement in appropriate activities were also major factors. The results of this Pre-Cycle indicate the need for more effective interventions to encourage children's development through planned learning activities.

Cycle I:

In Cycle I, the researcher conducted one meeting focusing on finger painting activities to encourage children's creativity. Children were given an example of a chicken picture as a trigger, but were not given direct instructions on how to make it. The purpose of this method is to give children the freedom to explore with color and texture using their fingers, so that they can develop creativity and imagination independently

During the activity, some children seemed enthusiastic about touching and mixing paint with their hands, while others seemed hesitant and less confident in experimenting. Children who were used to art activities tended to be more daring in trying various color combinations and techniques, while children who were doing finger painting for the first time tended to be confused and needed more guidance.

Three (27.27%) of the eleven children are still in the Not Yet Developing (BB) category, six (54.55%) are in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, and two (18.18%) have entered the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) group, based on observation data. However, no children are classified as Developing Very Well (BSB).

Table 2. Cycle 1 Results Table

Evaluation	Number of children	%
BB	3	27.27
MB	6	54.55
BSH	2	18.18
BSB	0	0

From the results, it can be seen that finger painting can be an interesting activity to start the process of developing children's creativity, although some children still need time to adapt. This observation indicates the need for further assistance at the next meeting to increase self-confidence and encourage more creative exploration from each child.

Cycle II:

In Cycle II, the researcher conducted a second meeting by providing clearer directions to the children on how to make finger painting. In addition, the children were introduced to various different paint colors to increase variation and creativity in their work. In this meeting, the children were taught the steps in making a picture of a chicken using their fingers and were given the freedom to explore with more diverse colors and techniques.

During the activity, children appeared more confident in using their hands to create images, and they were more enthusiastic in mixing colors and experimenting with textures. The use of different colors provided more interesting visual stimulation for children, encouraging them to be more free in expressing themselves. The provision of more structured examples in this meeting made it easier for most children to follow and try the various movements and techniques taught.

Based on the observation data in Table 2, there were no children in Cycle II who were included in the Not Yet Developing (BB) and Starting to Develop (MB) categories. A total of 7 children (63.64%) were included in the Developing According to Expectations (BKH) category, while 4 children (36.36%) were included in the Very Well Developing (BKB) category.

Table 3. Cycle 1 Results Table

Evaluation	Number of children	%
BB	0	0
MB	0	0
BSH	7	63.64
BSB	4	36.36

The findings show that when children were shown examples of how to make finger paint using different colors, their creativity increased significantly. Children showed better development, especially in terms of self-confidence and the ability to express their ideas through art. This table indicates that a more focused approach in Cycle II succeeded in improving the quality of finger painting activities and encouraging children to develop more optimally.

Comparison of Cycle I & Cycle II:

In Cycle I, although the finger painting activity attracted the children's attention, most of them still showed limitations in developing their creativity. Of the 11 children who participated, 54.55% were able to advance to the Starting to Develop (MB)

category, while only 18.18% were able to advance to the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category. Some children seemed hesitant and had difficulty exploring colors and textures using their hands. This illustrates why children who are not yet accustomed to art-related activities need more time and support to feel comfortable and confident in expressing themselves. Although they are interested, most children still need guidance so they can explore more freely.

In Cycle II, significant changes were seen after the children were given clearer guidance and introduced to a wider variety of colors. The survey results showed that 63.64% of children were in the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category, while 36.36% of children were in the Developing Very Well (BSB) group. When given more structured instructions and given the freedom to experiment with different colors and methods, the children became more confident and enthusiastic about completing their tasks. They not only dared to mix colors, but also began to explore various ways to express their ideas through art. The variety of materials and techniques provided gave them space to create more freely, which encouraged the development of their creativity to the fullest.

Overall, the comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II was indicated to provide clearer direction and opportunities for experimentation that are very important in supporting children's creativity. In Cycle I, although the finger painting activity had attracted attention, children still needed more support to overcome their doubts. However, after being given a more focused explanation and freedom to explore in Cycle II, children were able to show very positive developments in terms of their confidence and ability to create. This study underlines the importance of proper guidance and space for children to freely express themselves in supporting the growth and development of their creativity.

According to research showing how art-related activities can foster children's creativity, finger painting has proven to be a very successful strategy for enhancing children's imagination. The study revealed that through this activity, children not only hone their fine motor skills but are also trained to think more freely and expressively. By giving children the freedom to express their ideas and feelings using their fingers and hands, finger painting encourages them to be more explorative in creating works of art that reflect their imagination and creativity. This is also supported by the fact that this process helps children develop an understanding of color, shape, and texture directly, which further enriches their artistic abilities (Fitriani et al., 2019; Maghfuroh & Chayaning Putri, 2018; Ramdini & Mayar, 2019; Sukarini, 2020).

In research on the topic, finger painting has been shown to be a very effective hobby for developing the imagination of young children. One method that helps children express themselves freely and develop their creativity is finger painting (Aisy et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2022; Ulfadhlilah, 2021). This activity not only hones their talents but also trains creative thinking skills that include fluency, originality, and flexibility in creating artwork. In addition, finger painting is an interesting and fun activity that increases children's enthusiasm and involvement. Through this activity,

children produce unique, beautiful, and meaningful art products, which depict their self-expression in a very varied way. Therefore, finger painting has been shown to be a very effective way to develop children's creative abilities as a whole and enhance and stimulate their imagination (Insani et al., 2024; Widianti & Narotama, 2024).

The findings and discussion of this study underscore the importance of providing more targeted guidance and opportunities for experimentation in supporting children's creativity development. In Cycle I, although finger painting attracted children's attention, most of them still showed limitations in expressing ideas and exploring colors and textures. However, because they had access to more detailed instructions and opportunities to try new things, children were able to show significant improvements in their creativity and confidence in Cycle II.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, five to six-year-old Khairin Islamic School PAUD students benefited from the use of finger painting methods as part of the learning cycle in terms of their creativity and imagination. The majority of young individuals were in the Not Developing (BB) and Starting to Develop (MB) categories during the pre-cycle period, with only a small portion moving up to the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) group. This means that further care is needed to encourage children's creativity. In Cycle I, although there was improvement, many children still felt hesitant and lacked confidence in expressing themselves through finger painting. However, in Cycle II, with the provision of more structured examples and the introduction of color variations, children showed significant development. The majority of adolescents were classified as Developing Very Well (BSB) or Developing as Expected. The finger painting method has been proven to increase children's creativity, self-confidence, and fine motor skills through a more concentrated approach and unlimited expression. As a result, this method can be further improved during the PAUD learning process, with adjustments made based on the child's needs and development.

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