



Improving Fine Motor Development Through Paper Clay Media in Early Childhood

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Abstrak

This study is motivated by the results of observations at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency District, related to the development of fine motor skills of children who are still not optimally developed. This can be seen from the less than optimal ability of children to move their fingers, eye and hand coordination. The problem in this study is how to improve fine motor skills through playing with paper clay in early childhood at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency District. This study aimed to determine the development of fine motor skills through paper clay activities, also called pulp paper, at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Krejengan District, Probolinggo Regency. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with the subject of 10 children, descriptive qualitative research with observation, interview, and documentation assessment techniques. Data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing are the analysis techniques used. The results of this study indicate that paper clay activities can help children in improving children's fine motor skills, imagination, and creativity.

Keywords: *Fine Motoric, Paper Clay, Early Childhood*



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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is one of the important and fundamental elements that serve as the main framework for processing and is the basic framework for developing children's skills, behavior, and knowledge (Riyadi et al., 2023). Many aspects of child development are closely related to early childhood. In short, early childhood development is significant for stimulating children, including their motor development (Apriliani, Sholihah, Aisyah, Khasanah, & Amelia, 2023). Every child has the right to receive educational services from an early age. Education can be provided

through formal, non-formal, and informal channels (Fitria Husnul Huda, Leli Fertilianita Dea, 2023). Early childhood education is one form of educational service. Education can take place through formal, non-formal, and informal channels. Early childhood education is an educational service aimed at preschool children aged 0-6 years, known as the golden age, because children develop very well physically and mentally at this age (Depdiknas, 2007).

Education is a learning process aimed at increasing knowledge and skills applied through guidance and teaching processes both externally and internally in schools so that learners can play their roles as best as possible. Education must also align with its goal of making learners always pious, faithful, healthy, morally good, creative, and responsible so that they become outstanding nation successors. If children are well-educated, given good examples, and accustomed to living with good values and characters, they tend to become good people with golden hearts, positive thinking, and noble manners (Toyyibatut Thowilah, 2021).

This approach encompasses all forms of child stimulation and organizations involved in developing and supporting early childhood education institutions will be integrated into a comprehensive administrative system (Travelancya & Asfahani, 2022). The age of 3-6 years is a sensitive period, namely a sensitive period in the development of a child's logical thinking perspective, which is a period where stimulation of certain activities is needed to assist in the child's development. According to Mansur (2005: 88), early childhood is a group of children who are in a unique process of growth and development. They have specific growth and development patterns according to their growth and development level. This is done by providing educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to further education. Children who receive good and full stimulation not only develop one development stage, but various stages of development (Marmi and Kuku, R., 2012). The six aspects of development that need to be developed for early childhood are cognitive, language, physical-motor, socio-emotional, moral, religious, and artistic. The aspect needed for holistic individual growth is physical development in terms of motor skills (Engelbertus Seran & Euis Kurniati, 2019). According to Hurlock, motor development is defined as the development of the maturity of body movement control and the brain as the center of movement. This movement is clearly distinguished into gross and fine movements.

From these opinions, it can be concluded that motor development is the change of motor skills from birth involving various aspects of behavior and motor skills (Rani Zulfia Khasanah, Leli Fertilianita Dea, 2021). This motor development aspect can be divided into two, namely, fine motor development and gross motor development (Meriyati et al., 2020). However, fundamentally, every child can perform basic movements since birth. This is divided into two parts: fine and gross motor skills. Gross motor skills form skills with muscles such as running and jumping. While fine motor skills are the increasing coordination of body movements involving much smaller or detailed muscles and nerves (Febrianti & Zahro, 2023).

Fine motor skills play a very important role in artistic development (Ilham Kamaruddin, Achmad Abdul Azis, Mohammad Syahrul Assabana, Arif Ismunandar, & Duwi Meilina, 2022). Fine motor skills are movements that only affect certain parts of the body and are performed by small muscles; therefore, physical motor movements should not require too much force but require very precise coordination and must be very careful. Motor skills must begin to develop when performing very simple

activities such as walking, holding and moving a pen, spoon, or fork (Kiromi, et al., 2022). The Quran provides a description of fine motor development from birth to death in a natural cycle. This is stated in Surah Ar-Rum verse 54 as follows:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ

"Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent." (Ar-Rum:54).

Education on fine motor skills enables children to skillfully and accurately use their fingers in daily life, such as gripping, inserting objects into holes, flipping pages or sheets of books, drawing, folding, cutting, pasting, assembling, and arranging (constructive play). The development of fine motor skills in early childhood supports children in performing daily activities. Not only does it develop children's fine motor skills, but play also indirectly influences the success of children in learning and achieving success. This is in line with the play theory proposed by James Sully, stating that playing is closely related to enjoyment during activities (Mayke S. Tedja Saputra, 2001). Play can be interpreted as an activity done for fun, regardless of the end result, and done voluntarily, without coercion or pressure from any party. Other opinions state that play is a very important activity for child development. Play should be initiated by the child and decided by the child itself. Play is done with joy, so all enjoyable play activities lead to children's learning. Plato, Aristotle, and Froebel view play as a practical activity. This means that play is used as a way to improve certain skills and abilities of children (Budi, 2015).

Some activities that can develop children's fine motor skills include shaping, which can be done using various media such as clay, plasticine, and paper pulp, also known as Paper clay. Paper clay is a easily moldable material made from recycled paper such as newspapers, cardboard, and other types of paper. Paper clay is a substance that resembles wax, soft, easily moldable, can harden on its own, and is non-toxic. Its use is safe for anyone, including children. Clay has a very malleable structure, making it very easy to shape into anything. Simply by drying it, the molded clay will harden. This activity is very popular among children and shaping is also categorized as a creativity development activity that requires imagination (Susilaningsih, 2015).

Clay is often referred to as clay because of its soft and easily moldable nature, but clay also has many varieties made from various mixtures, thus becoming clay. Stephani (2010: 86) states that clay can be called art because it can create various shapes through dough, which is essentially like flour. The materials for making clay can also be easily and safely obtained, so clay can be used and made by anyone. Shaping activities can train the physical skills of early childhood, including fine motor coordination of eye-hand with the provision of media as a supporter in the learning process. Learning media in kindergarten should be developed independently, using waste materials to create game media in order to visualize certain characters to students. Learning using media, in this case, media from leftover materials from unused items that can be recycled.

Using waste materials and natural materials can be used as playing media to optimize the environment while also adding playing equipment and to children, thus becoming inexpensive, easy, and available playing media (Nur Hafizah, 2018). The

reason for this study choosing to utilize office paper to create playing media is because paper is easily destroyed after being soaked. Paper can be used as a learning medium by making paper clay toys, also known as paper pulp. According to (Riza Tsalatsatul Mufida and Maria Oktaviani Abu, 2018), through playing with paper clay, children's productivity can be influenced. Children can create various shapes according to their wishes, form what is already there according to their preferences. Paper clay teaches children how to tear, soak paper pulp in water, clench, press, squeeze, flatten, and shape. Since children enjoy playing with water, making paper clay will allow them to play and learn simultaneously. Besides making children happy, they will also produce creative artworks.

Based on observations, on January 8, 2024, the development of children's fine motor skills has not been optimally progressing. In performing activities related to fine motor skills, at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency, it is shown that fine motor development has not been optimal due to small muscles such as fingers appearing stiff. Therefore, based on the description discussed above, the researcher is driven to conduct this study entitled: "Improving Fine Motor Development Through Paper Clay Media in Early Childhood at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency." Therefore, the researcher chooses paper clay activities as one of the fine motor development activities. Because in paper clay, children can express their imagination directly and also train hand movements to appear forming with step-by-step paper clay activities, children are given the freedom to choose any shape through the provided media.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Krejengan District, Probolinggo Regency, with a total of 10 students and 3 educators. The implementation date was January 8, 2024. This study employed qualitative research, as the focus was on in-depth descriptive data rather than numerical data. This is because subjective methodologies, such as research systems, yield different information about the individuals and behaviors observed or verbalized. Qualitative research has clear organization, such as word arrangement or descriptions of individuals that can be followed (Tohirin, 2012). This research used descriptive field research. The researcher directly visited the location to provide input and information about what was happening in the field. In this study, the researcher was able to ascertain the fine motor development of children during paper clay activities at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency. The subjects of this study were the school principal and educators, and the objects of this study were the students. The researcher studied the fine motor development of children in paper clay playing activities. The materials used were: paper, water, coloring, and containers. Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and interviews, while the research tools were the researcher himself, observation guides, and facilitators in direct interview meetings. These assets enabled the analyst to receive answers that provided ample opportunities to obtain more detailed information. The observation technique was employed during learning sessions, where children's activities were monitored in maintenance exercises, where waste materials or leftovers were used to develop students' fine motor coordination skills. Documentation strategy was applied by examining documents such as student progress reports. This procedure was used for close observation, aiming to seek and study information by observing the subjects and

objects being studied directly (Hardani, 2021). Data Analysis Techniques followed the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1992: 20), namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Data validity was verified by testing its accuracy to obtain precise and accurate information to assist the research results. In this review, data validity triangulation was conducted, especially source triangulation, which was done when comparing information obtained from several sources, and special triangulation, especially when information obtained was verified. through observation (observations), meetings/interviews, and documentation. The researcher used strategies to ensure the accuracy of data triangulation by using data sources and triangulation techniques. There were two triangulation procedures using tiered strategies to ensure the reliability of research findings from different sources. of information with the same technology (MoleongLexyJ, 2014). In the source triangulation method, investigators can consider the results of meetings or interrogations of witnesses obtained from various sources as correlations, verifying the truth of the information obtained. To test the accuracy of information, analysts directed interviews to seek information from the school principal and (educators) to obtain information about the fine motor development of early childhood during paper clay activities at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the results of research conducted on 10 children and 3 teachers at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency, it was found that the activities or observations during the implementation of paper clay media learning. By using paper clay, besides utilizing existing materials around, the materials are easily obtained so that they can be used to explore shapes according to children's imagination. Children gain direct experience and can help improve fine motor skills during paper clay play. The data obtained from interviews with teachers at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency, showed that the learning activities were carried out according to the implemented Weekly Learning Plan (RPPM), which includes learning stages such as initial activities, core activities, breaks, and final activities. Here are the stages in the paper clay activity:

Stages in Paper Clay Activity:

Before conducting paper clay activities, teachers first prepare what is needed and must be prepared in paper clay activities for children at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency.

1. Teachers prepare materials to be used in paper clay activities such as paper, water, containers.
2. The provided paper is torn into small pieces, soaked in water, and then crushed.
3. Then the teacher provides explanations and examples of how to shape paper clay.
4. The teacher or parent accompanies and guides the children in carrying out the paper clay activities.

Forming Activities Using Paper Clay Media:

Fine motor coordination skills in young children most commonly practiced using paper clay are a series of activities to achieve ideal results in developing fine motor coordination skills in young children at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village,

Probolinggo Regency. Based on the interaction results by the researcher to improve fine motor skills in children through shaping using paper clay activity steps. Teachers accompany children to prepare materials, and the teacher prepares everything that will be used, including tools and materials, explains what shapes the children will make, and explains how to work to perform the paper clay technique, providing paper clay games to children so that they understand during the play process.

During the first step of the opening activity, the teacher greets and asks the children about their day while singing, and then proceeds to the core learning where the activity of shaping using paper clay is carried out. Initially, the children were not very interested in the paper clay activity because they were still confused about it and unfamiliar because the teacher had not explained and demonstrated the procedure for playing paper clay. According to the interview results with one teacher, paper clay games have never been used in the learning process or during playtime in the classroom but instead, ready-made materials such as plasticine are used. After knowing this, the researcher tried to use easily obtainable materials and the teacher allowed the paper clay play activity.



Figure 1. Paper Clay Activity

In the image above, during the paper clay process, the children engage in activities outside the classroom, playing in groups. Then the teacher distributes paper to the children to make paper clay, which begins by tearing the paper into small pieces, soaking it in water, and then crushing the paper into pulp with their fingers. While crushing the paper, the children seemed reluctant. The teacher slowly helped if the child could do it and squeezed until there was no water left, so the activity could be completed. After forming it, the children are asked to take cardboard as a base for shaping the paper clay play, and the children now shape freely on the cardboard by pressing until the shape on the cardboard is formed, even though the shape still looks imperfect.



Figure 2. Paper Clay Activity on January 15, 2024

On February 15, 2024, after the teacher explained and demonstrated the existing pictures, the children were asked to follow the steps given by the teacher, and the teacher guided each child individually during the play process, using their fingers. In this second meeting, the activity involved coloring, shaping on paper/sticking crushed paper, and giving colors according to the picture. The teacher asked the children if their picture is okay, "Now, children, we are going to color the picture on this paper that I'm holding. Before that, I'm going to ask what is this picture...? What color is usually this picture...? And so on. The theme of the activity is Plants. The results of the second meeting show that the children are enthusiastic about it, and their fine motor skills have developed using their fingers, and the finger muscle movements are active in drawing using the paper clay technique. Some children can already do it by themselves without their parents' help, although some children still cannot and still go outside the lines, and they seem to prefer it if there are pictures.



Figure 3. Paper Clay Activity on January 23, 2024

After the teacher explained and demonstrated the activity in the above image, the children were asked to follow the steps given by the teacher, and the teacher guided each child individually during the play process, using their fingers. The process of crushing, tearing, paper and shaping according to the child's desire, research conducted by the researcher to find out how the fine motor skills development through paper clay activities for children at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency. A study conducted by the researcher to find out how the fine motor skills development of children during paper clay activities at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency. In the learning activities using paper clay activities with materials provided, children are very enthusiastic about the paper clay activity, as seen from the expressions of children who are happy to do the activity. The materials used in the paper clay activity are using leftover materials or recycled materials from unused items that can be easily obtained around. During shaping, children are given the freedom to choose shapes such as circles, triangles, squares, and others, but in shaping activities, many children use circular shapes because circles are very easy to shape. The paper clay activity is only given during the learning process, but there is no specific time for that activity.



Figure 4. Perfect Shaping



Figure 5. Less Perfect Shaping

The solid and ball-shaped pulp results have no water content in them because of the strength of the child pressing with their fingers. The strength in squeezing is the coordination of fine motor nerve in the palm of the hand, fingers, and hand strength, resulting in stimulation of fine motor aspects optimally achieved by children to prepare for further developmental stages. The strength in squeezing is the coordination of fine motor nerve in the palm of the hand, fingers, and hand strength, resulting in stimulation of fine motor aspects. The results of the children's work after playing paper clay, the teacher asked the children to raise their hands and asked them one by one what shape they made, such as :

What shape is this...?

What shape does it resemble...? Some children's works are still imperfect in shape.

Before addressing the title of improving fine motor development, the first research by (Sasha Oktaviani, et al. 2021) on her journal about the Use of Media in Developing Fine Motor Skills at KB Nurul Arif, in this research, the development of children's fine motor skills is done using plasticine media. The second research by (Dewi Fitri & Rosita Tanjung. 2022) on the journal about Efforts to Improve Fine Motor Skills through Clay Media. The results of both studies show that the development of their fine motor skills improved well through different media, the first researcher used plasticine media, and the second researcher used clay media. After seeing the research above, the researcher tried using paper clay games to improve the fine motor development of TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency.

Young children need development stimulation, such as fine motor skills. Children whose fine motor skills have not yet developed need sufficient stimulation so they do not have difficulty flexibly controlling hand and finger movements. Providing education on fine motor skills so that they can be skillful and precise in using their fingers in daily life will help children have a further foundation for daily tasks at home such as teaching children how to cut vegetables, write, use scissors, etc. Not only do activities at school need to be done, but parents also need to help stimulate their children's motor development by providing daily activity exercises. Fine motor development can be trained through various media, such as paper clay media, in line with Mayesky's statement in Maulida & Setyowati's journal (2015: 19) that the use of paper clay or paper pulp media can be a relatively good exercise for the small muscles of the fingers and hands.

Making a porridge dough when crushing paper, according to (Sartika, 2013), explains that the process of kneading involves the process of uniting and activating mental strength, thus forming something rotating, crushing, compacting/unifying, and also connecting mental neuron networks, finger movements will become important because it will become a manifestation and express the learning process towards understanding its meaning and learning. Skills are obtained from the child's

ability to manipulate, which is done repeatedly so that over time, the child can control and direct. Forming dough or paper porridge where the paper is put into water during the activity is a series of sequential activity actions, so the fingers will continue to move quickly, stimulating the fine motor development of children.

Supporting Factors in Paper Clay Activities to Develop Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood

Supporting factors in improving children's fine motor skills in paper clay activities are the materials needed in the activity are already available in advance, with the presence of residual materials such as paper, children are very enthusiastic about playing with paper clay. This is because the combination of paper and water can make children interested in exploring and discovering their knowledge according to their cognitive structure. Furthermore, in carrying out paper clay activities, the teacher provides examples or instructions on how to make paper clay games so that children are not confused in doing the activity. With teacher guidance, children will see and imitate the examples provided by the teacher, making it easier for children to shape the paper clay activity.

Hindering Factors in Paper Clay Activities to Develop Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood

The hindering factor in improving children's fine motor skills in paper clay activities is that some children are afraid when playing activities of crushing paper, children feel disgusted when trying new activities of paper put into water made into pulp. Some children still need teaching and guidance from the teacher, some children still cannot follow the teacher's instructions, and some children independently follow the teacher's instructions until they reach indicators in developing fine motor skills less optimally. The hindering factor is that parents do not give freedom to play with water or dirty materials at home; children need to be accompanied or supervised daily because children need someone to give motivation in developing their fine motor skills. If children are given the opportunity, their interest will develop more participating directly in paper clay activities is a simple game that can be done at home with parents and also has great benefits, a very great stimulation for their fine motor skills, especially regarding children's courage to experiment through direct experience exploration.

Based on the results of observations when the teacher held this third meeting by shaping, the researcher saw that at this third meeting the children's fine motor skills developed well, because the children could create themselves according to their imagination by shaping, and the children's fingers also developed well. During the research conducted, it was found that the development of children's fine motor skills went well, because children had been trained how to use their fingers when forming with paper clay techniques, out of 10 children in the class, 8 children were able to follow the shaping activities using paper clay well and according to the direction of the teacher and 2 children still could not form perfectly.

Based on interviews with class teachers and the school principal, children can move their fine muscles, which initially were not maximal, so when children are in, teachers guide and teach children with more interesting activities to improve their fine motor skills, children are optimally polished. One of the activities carried out at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency is paper clay activity where the teacher

gives an example then the children pay attention and imitate the teacher. Teachers and researchers conduct learning evaluations to determine the level of fine motor development of children after implementing paper clay activities. During teaching and learning, teachers and researchers monitor children who are able to use their fingers well when doing paper clay. They also observe the development of children during the learning process and monitor the activities of children's fingers after doing paper clay activities. During learning, teachers and researchers give grades to children who actively participate in activities well.

Moreover, they evaluate aspects of children's fine motor development, from the initial meeting to the end by using paper clay activities until they are finished. Assessment is carried out by teachers and researchers by observing the results and activities of children. Evaluation is based on the ability of finger movements and precise wrist movements. In this activity, children participate very enthusiastically in learning. If we look at the paper clay play activities, starting from tearing, pressing until shaping, children can already move their fingers, children can already imitate shapes that children like, although some children still need teachers, the teacher tries as much as possible, according to the effort made by the teacher then the teacher can help children develop fine motor skills through paper clay activities based on observations by the researcher. From observations that the development of each child is different, it all depends on the child's characteristics. The steps taken to hone fine motor skills done by teachers and educators said that the development of fine motor skills through paper clay activities has achieved good results.

CONCLUSION

From the researcher's findings, it can be concluded that the use of paper clay media in enhancing fine motor skills in young children at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency, contributes positively to the development of fine motor skills in children. Observations during the molding process using the provided materials indicate that fine motor skills in children at TP Ar-Rahmah, Rawan Village, Probolinggo Regency, are progressing well and in accordance with the children's developmental stages. Through engaging in paper clay activities, it is evident that children's fingers are notably flexible and they can express their creativity according to their preferences, indicating their growing fondness for paper clay games. Interviews with researchers, teachers, and students reveal that paper clay media is more engaging and less dull compared to ready-made games. However, some children dislike paper clay media due to discomfort when crushing and kneading paper, or prefer fast food games.

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