

The Application of Natural Material-Based Ecoprint Techniques in Improving Students' Creativity in Fine Arts Learning at MTsN 1 Mataram

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques in improving students' creativity in fine arts learning at MTsN 1 Mataram. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, with students who participated in fine arts learning as the research subjects. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study was carried out through the stages of planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the learning process, students were introduced to ecoprint techniques and practiced them directly by using natural materials such as leaves and flowers as media for creating artworks. The results show that the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques can improve students' creativity, as indicated by increased participation, exploration skills, as well as the diversity and originality of the artworks produced. In addition, this learning activity provided a contextual and enjoyable experience and fostered students' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Therefore, the ecoprint technique can serve as an innovative alternative in fine arts learning that focuses not only on the final product, but also on the creative process and the development of students' character

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fine arts education plays an important role in developing students' creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and expressive abilities. Art education is viewed as a means of developing creative and emotional potential through direct art-making experiences (Lowenfeld, 1975). In line with this view, effective learning does not only emphasize mastery of theory, but also students' active involvement in practice (Sudjana, 2020). In the learning process, students are not only required to understand theory, but also to apply various art-making techniques creatively and innovatively. However, in practice, fine arts learning in schools is often still conventional and provides limited space for students to explore optimally, which affects students' creativity and active participation.

One innovative alternative that can be applied in fine arts learning is the ecoprint technique. Ecoprint is a method of printing motifs on fabric or paper media by utilizing natural materials such as leaves, flowers, and other plant parts. Effective art learning should provide opportunities for students to explore and directly experience the creative process (Eisner, 2002). In addition, the use of natural materials in learning is also in line with the concept of sustainable education, which emphasizes the importance of environmental awareness in the learning process (UNESCO, 2021). Through ecoprint, students are encouraged to interact directly with nature and to develop creativity by exploring the shapes, colors, and textures of natural materials.

The use of natural materials in the ecoprint technique provides a contextual and enjoyable learning experience. Learning becomes more meaningful when students are directly involved in real experiences (learning by doing) (Dewey, 1938). In addition, recent studies show that the use of natural materials in fine arts learning can significantly increase students' creativity and participation (Sholehah et al., 2022; Ningsih & Mayar, 2023; Ngadifah & Rokhman, 2024). Students can identify various types of plants in their surrounding environment while applying them in artworks. This process encourages students to think creatively, experiment, and discover new ideas in creating art. Thus, learning does not focus solely on the final result, but also on the creative process experienced by students.

MTsN 1 Mataram, as an educational institution, has the potential to develop innovative and environment-based fine arts learning. Based on initial observations, fine arts learning at the school still requires variations in methods and media that can improve students' creativity. Therefore, the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques is a relevant solution to be implemented in the learning process. Based on this explanation, this study aims to determine how natural material-based ecoprint techniques are applied to improve students' creativity in fine arts learning at MTsN 1 Mataram. In addition, this study is expected to contribute to the development of fine arts learning methods that are more innovative, contextual, and environmentally friendly.

2. METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, which aimed to describe the process of applying natural material-based ecoprint techniques and their impact on students' creativity in fine arts learning at MTsN 1 Mataram. The research subjects were Grade VIII students who participated in fine arts learning, while the research objects were the ecoprint learning process and students' artworks. The study was conducted in the second semester of 2026. The research implementation consisted of four stages: planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The details of each stage are as follows.

1. Planning Stage

At this stage, the researcher coordinated with the school and the fine arts teacher regarding the objectives, schedule, and technical implementation of the learning activity. In addition, the researcher designed the concept for applying natural material-based ecoprint techniques, including determining the types of materials to be used, such as leaves and flowers available in the surrounding environment. At this stage, research instruments were also prepared, including observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation tools to measure students' creativity.

2. Preparation Stage

The preparation stage was carried out by preparing learning materials as well as the tools and materials needed for the ecoprint activity. The materials used included fabric or paper as the medium, along with various types of leaves and flowers as the main materials. The prepared learning materials included an explanation of ecoprint techniques, the steps for making ecoprints, and the importance of using environmentally friendly natural materials in art-making activities.

3. Implementation Stage

The implementation stage was the core of the research activity and was carried out in two sessions: material delivery and ecoprint-making practice. In the first session, students were given an explanation of the concept of ecoprint and the use of natural materials. In the second session, students directly practiced the ecoprint technique by arranging leaves and flowers on the medium, then carrying out the printing process to produce natural motifs. Throughout the activity, the researcher observed students' activities and creativity.

4. Evaluation Stage

The evaluation stage was conducted to determine the success of applying ecoprint techniques in improving students' creativity. Evaluation was carried out through observation of students'

artworks, interviews, and the distribution of questionnaires to identify students' responses and opinions regarding the learning activity that had been implemented. The data obtained were then analyzed to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the learning process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were obtained based on the stages that had been implemented, namely planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation in the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques at MTsN 1 Mataram. In the planning stage, the activity began with coordination between the researcher and the fine arts teacher regarding the schedule, materials, and technical implementation of the learning activity. In addition, a learning concept was designed by integrating the use of natural materials such as leaves and flowers as the main media in the ecoprint technique. This stage proceeded well and served as the basis for systematic learning implementation. In the preparation stage, learning materials were developed and the tools and materials to be used were prepared. Students were introduced to the basic concept of ecoprint and the importance of using natural materials as a form of environmental care. The readiness of the materials and students' initial understanding became supporting factors in the smooth implementation of the practice activity.

The implementation stage showed an increase in students' involvement in the learning process. The activity was carried out in two sessions, namely material delivery and direct practice. During the practice session, students appeared enthusiastic in collecting natural materials, arranging compositions of leaves and flowers, and carrying out the printing process on fabric or paper media. Students' creativity began to develop, as seen from the variations in motifs, the selection of materials, and their courage to experiment with visual forms and arrangements. The students' artworks showed uniqueness and originality that differed from one student to another. In the evaluation stage, data were obtained through observation, interviews, and student response questionnaires. The evaluation results showed that most students gave positive responses to ecoprint learning because it was considered interesting, enjoyable, and able to provide a new experience in creating art. In addition, students also began to understand the importance of protecting the environment through the use of natural materials.



Figure 1: process of applying chemical substances to the fabric



Figure 2: process of attaching leaves and steaming



Figure 3: ecoprint production results

The discussion of the research findings shows that the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques is effective in improving students' creativity in fine arts learning. The learning process, which involved direct experience and environmental exploration, encouraged students to become more active, creative, and innovative. In addition, the use of natural materials provided added value in the form of fostering environmental care. This finding is in line with the concept of contextual learning, which emphasizes the relationship between learning materials and students' real-life experiences. Therefore, the ecoprint technique can be used as an alternative fine arts learning method that is oriented not only toward the final artwork, but also toward the creative process and the development of students' character.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the application of natural material-based ecoprint techniques in fine arts learning at MTsN 1 Mataram has proven effective in improving students' creativity. This is shown by increased student involvement in the learning process, the ability to explore the use of natural materials, as well as the diversity and originality of the artworks produced. In addition, students' responses to the learning activity were very positive, as reflected in their high level of interest, activeness, and understanding of the ecoprint technique.

The application of ecoprint techniques not only provides an enjoyable and contextual learning experience, but also instills the value of environmental care through the use of natural materials. Therefore, the ecoprint technique can be used as an innovative alternative in fine arts learning that integrates the development of creativity and students' character education.

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