

Analysis Of The Implementation Of Clay Media In Improving The Creativity Of 5–6-Year-Old Children At Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Rempek Paud In The 2024/2025 Academic Year

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the steps taken by teachers in implementing clay media to enhance the creativity of children aged 5–6 years during the teaching and learning process at PAUD Bintang Nahdlatu Wathan in the 2024/2025 academic year. The research was conducted at PAUD Bintang Nahdlatu Wathan, Group B, with a total of 18 students. This study is a descriptive qualitative research using a case study approach. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Information was gathered from the homeroom teacher, the principal, and the students. The data analysis techniques used in this study are: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of clay media was carried out through four main stages: (1) preparation, (2) opening activities, (3) core activities, and (4) closing activities, supported by methods such as play, demonstration, experimentation, question and answer, and storytelling. The teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding the children through the learning process. The use of clay media proved effective in developing children's creativity. Through direct engagement with concrete media, children were able to explore, imagine, and dare to try without fear of making mistakes. In addition to fostering creativity, the media also supported the development of fine motor skills, cognitive abilities, emotional growth, and social skills. These findings indicate that clay-based learning not only stimulates creativity but also provides holistic benefits for early childhood development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Creativity is one aspect of child development that must be properly stimulated from an early age, because with good creativity development will improve the quality of children's lives. Children with creativity will become children who are able to compete, able to think critically with a high curiosity, and have the ability to solve problems independently by expressing their ideas and thoughts, thus creating children who grow productively and are able to innovate in life. This certainly begins with early education in early childhood education institutions. To improve the quality of learning in early childhood education, it will not be effective if teachers do not use tools such as learning media to convey material to children, because early childhood often has difficulty understanding material concepts without the use of media.

According to Neneng (in Azhari, 2023:2), every child is talented and possesses their own creativity, albeit with varying degrees of talent. Creativity in children can be enhanced; therefore,

appropriate stimulation is necessary to optimize the development of creativity from an early age. Creativity in early childhood is characterized by a strong sense of curiosity, as evidenced by the frequency with which children ask repetitive questions. Children also possess a strong imagination, which is the foundation of creativity.

The reasons why it is important to cultivate and develop creativity in children are, firstly, because by being creative people can realize themselves, and self-realization is one of the basic needs in human life; secondly, creativity or creative thinking, as the ability to see various possible solutions to problems, is a form of thinking that has so far received little attention in formal education; thirdly, being busy creatively is not only beneficial, but also provides satisfaction to the individual; and fourthly, creativity is what enables humans to improve the quality of their lives.(Munandar, 1992)

In the 2014 Permendikbud No. 146 for ages 5-6 years concerning the Standards for Child Development Achievement Levels (STPPA), a child is able to make or create a work of art in accordance with creativity which includes two-dimensional art, music, movement, dance and so on (Azhari, 2023:2). So the importance of education from an early age because it can help children develop their creativity and artistic abilities so that creative children are formed, able to innovate towards the environment, able to be independent and confident which is a provision for children to be able to pursue further education so that the role of a teacher in a child's education is very important to be able to prepare themselves for the next level of education.

Media is a tool or intermediary that teachers can use in early childhood education. Because young children often have difficulty understanding material presented by teachers without the use of intermediaries, learning media is one way to help children understand the concepts they learn in early childhood education. The use of media in the learning process can increase the effectiveness of children's learning, which is expected to improve learning outcomes.

Badru (in Mukhtar 2013:151-152) stated that various studies conducted on the use of media in learning have concluded that the learning process and outcomes of students show significant differences between learning without media and learning using media. Therefore, the use of learning media is highly recommended to improve the quality of learning.

According to Clark (in Winarti, 2023), media is an effective and alternative step in presenting effective learning for students through the main role, namely a teacher when designing a learning. According to Tafonao (in Winarti, 2023), a tool that can be used to channel messages to recipients from the sender is called learning media, so that it attracts the thoughts, attention, interests and feelings of students so that they learn.

Media is anything that can be used or utilized to stimulate a child's thinking, feelings, attention, and abilities, thus encouraging an optimal learning process. The media used must be able to transport children into their own world, a free and pure world for children to achieve various creative things, express themselves, play, and learn. The amount of new knowledge a child acquires will depend greatly on the teacher's ability and creativity in developing activities and providing the necessary supporting tools or facilities (Nenden Susilowati, 2014).

However, many current phenomena indicate a lack of creativity in children. This is due to children becoming bored and confused about how to express their ideas due to monotonous and repetitive learning media. Furthermore, teachers' inadequate use of developmentally relevant media has hindered optimal creativity development.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach. According to Bondan and Taylor (in Prastowo, 2016:22), a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used a qualitative method, where this research is presented as descriptive data in the form of written statements from someone.

The type of research used in this study is a case study. According to Creswell (in Asep, 2018:31), a case study is an in-depth and detailed study of an organization, activity, event, program, or group of individuals.

The exploration area is the location used to guide the investigation and to obtain the necessary information. Because this is a qualitative study, the presence of the researcher is crucial, as the researcher acts as the primary instrument for collecting information and data, both in the form of tools and people. In this study, the researcher acts as an observer without attempting to manipulate the objects, subjects, or phenomena. Therefore, the researcher must be honest and present data accurately.

The location of this study is Bintang Nadlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Rempek Darussalam Village, Gangga District, North Lombok Regency. This study was conducted in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects were children aged 5-6 years old as the primary subjects, teachers and educators as supporting subjects, and parents or guardians as additional supporting subjects.

The data collection techniques used are:

1. Observation

Observation is the process of observing and recording a phenomenon or facts needed by a researcher (Rifa'i, 2021:90). In this research, a researcher will conduct observations and record information in the field related to the information needed for the research.

2. Interview

An interview is a method used to obtain data by asking questions directly face to face with respondents or informants who are the research subjects (Rahmadi, 2011:75).

The researcher in this study used structured and unstructured interviews in which the researcher prepared questions in outline.

3. Documentation

Documentation is a data collection technique in the study of a number of documents (documented information) in the form of written documents or recorded documents. Documents in the form of texts, diaries, archives and collections of personal letters are examples of written documents, while photographs, cassette recordings and so on are examples of recorded documentation (Rahmadi, 2011:85).

Data analysis techniques in qualitative research are conducted simultaneously during data collection and after completion within a specified period. This analysis can be conducted through direct interaction and direct interviews. The data analysis used in this study is based on the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of several types:

“We see analysis as three concurrent flows of activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification”.

We view analysis as three streams of activity occurring simultaneously: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. (Miles and Huberman, 2014:31-32).

3. RESULTS

1. Steps for Teachers to Implement Clay Media to Improve the Creativity of 5-6-Year-Old Children at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center in the 2024/2025 Academic Year

Based on the results of the researcher's observations conducted on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at PAUD Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Rempek to find out the implementation of clay media that has been applied in schools and has been going on for quite a long time. The use of clay media is one way for teachers to stimulate the development of students, especially developing children's creativity, helping children in solving problems, developing critical thinking skills in children, increasing self-confidence, developing imagination and creativity, becoming a means to channel children's ideas and ideas, and training independence in

children. The use of learning media is not only used during core activities, so in using media, teachers make a schedule so as not to make children bored and make it easier for teachers to prepare tools and materials the day before learning activities, starting from Monday (finger paint), Tuesday (cutting and sticking), Wednesday (drawing and coloring), Thursday (origami), Friday (mixing colors), and Saturday (various shapes from plasticine and clay). However, these activities can also be changed and adapted to the child. The use of clay media is usually done on the day when children last wear their school uniforms so that when the children's school uniforms get dirty, their parents can wash them straight away after they come home from school, such as on Saturdays.

Learning activities at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD Bintang) are systematically structured to ensure smooth operation, through the development of daily learning plans (RPPH). In general, the implementation of clay media is divided into four stages, as follows:

1) Preparation Stage

- a. Teachers prepare safe and comfortable classes for children, so that children feel happy in carrying out activities.
- b. The teacher prepares the tools and materials the day before the learning activity begins. The main tools and materials used are clay, sticks, molds, plastic cups, bowls, water, a ruler for measuring and cutting the clay, and a base for coating the clay.

2) Opening Stage

- a. The teacher explains the rules and regulations before learning activities begin.
- b. The teacher explains and demonstrates how to use clay clearly.
- c. Teachers ask open-ended questions to stimulate children's curiosity and ideas.

3) Core Activity Stage

- a. Teachers give children the opportunity to experiment using clay independently.
- b. Teachers provide support and motivation to children
- c. Teachers appreciate and accept all children's work

4) Closing Stage

- a. The teacher recalls or re-discusses the activities that have been carried out.
- b. The teacher invites children to discuss the results of their work and discuss the difficulties they faced during the process of using clay as a medium.

In each stage of the activity, to support optimal learning, teachers use several learning methods, including:

1. Question and Answer Method (the teacher gives a provocative question, carried out by the teacher during the opening activity to stimulate children's reasoning and critical thinking and to arouse curiosity)
2. Demonstration (the teacher shows how to use clay media by directly practicing how the clay is mixed with water and then shaped)
3. Play method (children are given the freedom to use clay and shape it according to their wishes, starting from pinching, squeezing, cutting, mixing with water, and rolling)
4. Experimental method (children learn how to mix clay with water according to the teacher's instructions and learn to shape according to the learning theme or based on the child's own wishes),
5. Storytelling method (after creating a work, children are given the opportunity to tell their friends about their work, although most children are still shy and do not want to tell their friends about their work, they only tell their teacher).

The steps teachers take in implementing teaching and learning activities using clay media to increase children's creativity are implemented in the following ways:

1. Opening activities (30 minutes)

- a. Pray
- b. The teacher takes attendance of the children
- c. The teacher does an icebreaker before starting the lesson by singing and clapping.
- d. The teacher conveys the learning theme for the day
- e. The teacher gives a provocative question

2. Core activities (60 minutes)
 - a. The teacher gives children pictures and real forms of objects that match the theme.
 - b. The teacher prepares learning tools and materials
 - c. The teacher demonstrates how to use clay and how to shape it.
 - d. Children are given time to play with clay.
 - e. Children are given the task of forming clay according to the theme and creating according to their imagination.
 - f. Teachers accompany children who are experiencing difficulties
 - g. The teacher provides motivation to students
 - h. Teachers observe the development of children's creativity
 - i. Go out to play (15 minutes)
3. Closing activities (15 minutes)
 - c. The teacher invites children to discuss the results of their work and discuss the difficulties they faced during the process of using clay as a medium.
 - d. The teacher recalls or re-discusses the activities that have been carried out.
 - e. Pray to go home

So it can be concluded that the implementation of clay media as a teacher's effort to increase children's creativity is carried out through three stages of structured activities, namely opening activities, core activities, and closing activities with approaches that are fun and motivate children.

2. Children's Creativity Can Be Developed Through Clay Media at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center for the 2024/2025 Academic Year

Based on observations on Saturday, May 17, 2025, of the implementation of clay media by the teacher, researchers observed several developments in the students. The observations clearly demonstrated the increase in children's creativity through the process they went through and the results of their work. So based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that from the results of observations and interviews conducted in May 2025, the implementation of clay media in PAUD Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan has been implemented for quite a long time which plays an important role in increasing children's creativity, in terms of generating ideas and concepts, critical thinking, training concentration, and daring to try and be confident. This activity is carried out every Saturday from the beginning of the activity to the end of the learning activity from the children in group A until the children move up to class B which is done in stages. Guided by the homeroom teacher B, Mrs. Mar'atin Halimah, S.P, the activity is carried out on the classroom terrace by providing children with direct learning experiences with a fun approach using a variety of learning methods, namely the question-and-answer method, playing, demonstrations, experiments and storytelling.

Children's creativity is formed through several activities provided by the teacher, starting from when the teacher opens the lesson by giving a lead question to the children to train the children to think critically, after that entering the core activity, the teacher prepares tools and materials for the children to play and learn in the form of the main media, namely clay brought by the teacher from home. The soil used is still not moldable so the children are given the task by the teacher to make dough first. In the process that the children go through, the researcher observes how the children solve the problems faced, starting from the children's difficulty in measuring the amount of water that must be used to mix it with the soil. The

flexibility of the children's hands in shaping using clay is clearly seen when the children begin to squeeze the soil while providing direct experience for the children to feel how the texture of the soil is.

Based on the researcher's observations of the development of children's creativity on Saturday, May 24, 2025, during learning using clay media, the researcher found that the teacher had prepared the tools and materials used. Previously, the teacher had ensured that the tools and materials used were safe for children and appropriate for the child's age level. When the learning activity began, the teacher distributed clay to the children and let the children play with the clay so that the children could explore the texture of the clay so that the children understood and felt the rough touch when the soil had not been mixed with water. The teacher prepared a classroom that supported the development of children's creativity, namely on the classroom terrace. The teacher gave tasks that were not too difficult for the children and appropriate for their age. When forming, the children were seen using various forming techniques, such as using massage techniques when mixing water with soil, rolling techniques where children rolled the soil with their hands, printing techniques where children used molds provided by the teacher,

Based on the results of observations carried out on Saturday, May 24, 2025 from learning activities with clay characteristics. The observed creativity of children is:

- a. Children have a high level of curiosity (seen when children ask the teacher lots of questions and try to shape things with clay)
- b. Children become more focused when forming
- c. Children are able to solve problems independently
- d. Children can shape with clay using several techniques (massage, twisting, rolling).
- e. Children do experiments by mixing soil with water.
- f. Children add accessories to the shapes they create, such as dolls, adding detailed elements like eyes, tails, and legs. Cakes are accessorized with flowers, twigs, and leaves.
- g. Children are brave enough to try and aren't afraid of making mistakes. Because clay is flexible, when they make a mistake, they can overcome it by creating a new shape and aren't afraid of getting it dirty.
- h. Children maintain cleanliness by washing their hands after completing activities.
- i. The children are very enthusiastic and excited.
- j. Children are skilled at using their hands to form shapes.

From the explanation above, researchers can conclude that teachers have a very important role in supporting development of children's creativity both as facilitators and motivators who balance creating effective learning experiences using clay media for children so that the use of clay media is very effective in increasing creativity in early childhood this can be seen from the children's response when given clay they are very enthusiastic, and children are much more focused when learning. The activities given by the teacher also foster a sense of patience in children. This forms the child's personality and increases children's creativity through squeezing, shaping and experiments carried out.

4. DISCUSSION

1. Teacher's Steps in Implementing Tanah Iat Media in the Teaching and Learning Process for Children Aged 5-6

Based on observations and interviews conducted at the Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan), the implementation of clay media has played a significant role in enhancing the creativity of children aged 5-6 years. This activity is carried out in a structured manner through three main stages, namely opening, core, and closing, with a fun approach and varied learning methods such as questions and answers, demonstrations, experiments, playing, and storytelling. Clay media not only stimulates children's imagination and critical thinking skills, but also trains fine

motor skills, concentration, and courage in expressing ideas. Its implementation every Saturday allows children to explore gradually from group A to B, supported by a conducive learning environment and responsive teacher guidance.

Overall, the use of clay has proven effective as a flexible, creative learning tool suited to the characteristics of early childhood. Teachers play an active role in motivating, assisting, and evaluating children's development, while children's participation in the creations strengthens their self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Thus, this tool not only achieves academic goals but also fosters children's social and emotional skills in an inclusive and enjoyable learning environment. This is because clay is a material that can be used as a learning aid, helping students understand concepts and develop creativity (Hamalik, 2001). Furthermore, clay is a material that can be used as a learning aid, helping students develop creativity, motor skills, and cognitive abilities (Arsyad, 2013).

In line with the above explanation, the constructivist theory of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky (in Fian et al., 2024) explains that children acquire knowledge through active involvement in direct experience and through interaction with their surroundings. In Piaget's view, children aged 5 to 6 years are in the preoperational phase, a developmental stage where learning is more effective when carried out through real-life activities involving the use of the senses and motor activities. Playing and experimenting with clay media also encourages the growth of children's creative potential optimally.

This theory is supported by research conducted by Mukhtar (2013:152), who stated that based on research conducted on the use of media in learning, the learning process and outcomes of students show significant differences between learning without media and learning using media. Therefore, the use of learning media is highly recommended to improve the quality of learning.

2. Children's Creativity Can Be Developed Through Clay Media at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center for the 2024/2025 Academic Year

Based on the results of the implementation of clay media at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD Bintang) for the 2024/2025 academic year, it can be concluded that this media plays a significant role in developing the creativity of children aged 5-6 years. Activities that are systematically designed and adapted to children's developmental levels have been proven to stimulate imagination, fine motor skills, and critical thinking skills. Children demonstrate high enthusiasm in experimenting with clay, such as twisting, rolling, and shaping various objects, reflecting the development of visual creativity and courage in expression. Furthermore, clay-based learning also encourages children's independence, focus, and responsibility in completing tasks and cleaning up after activities.

Holistically, the implementation of clay not only enhances creativity but also contributes to children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Through a hands-on approach and varied learning methods, children gain real-life experience exploring ideas, solving problems, and expressing their ideas through their work. Thus, the use of clay at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Preschool has proven effective as a fun, flexible learning tool that optimizes children's overall creative potential.

This aligns with E. Paul Torrance's view that creativity is the ability to think divergently, namely generating a variety of ideas (fluency), finding various ways to solve problems (flexibility), generating original ideas (uniqueness), and developing and elaborating on the ideas that emerge. In the process of shaping and processing clay, children are trained to express their imaginations into tangible works, think flexibly about the forms they want to create, and explore through direct experience (Hanim 2022). Through this process, children not only learn creatively but also develop their own understanding through active involvement in real-life activities. When children are given the opportunity to learn directly through concrete activities such as playing with clay, this can significantly enhance

their abilities and creativity. Furthermore, the success of this learning process is also supported by a combination of appropriate teaching methods, systematic activity planning, and encouragement and direction from teachers. In line with this, Carl Jung (in Alfina et al., 2024) stated that psychoanalytic theory views creativity as the result of overcoming a problem, which usually begins early. where a creative person is seen as someone who has had a traumatic experience, which is dealt with by bringing up conscious and unconscious ideas mixed into creative innovative solutions.

All of these elements make clay media an effective learning tool in encouraging the growth and development of children at the Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan PAUD.

This theory aligns with Abraham Maslow's theory of needs (in Sit et al., 2016). Maslow's theory emphasizes that humans have a series of needs arranged hierarchically, from the most basic to the most complex. These needs include physiological needs, safety, belonging and love, esteem, self-actualization, and aesthetic needs.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the results and data analysis that researchers have conducted for one month at PAUD Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan in the analysis of the implementation of clay media in increasing the creativity of early childhood children has been carried out optimally in class group B. All series of activities given by the teacher run according to expectations and in accordance with the achievements of children's development which are used as indicators of children's creativity.

1. Teachers' Steps in Implementing Clay Media in the Teaching and Learning Process at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center in the 2024/2025 Academic Year

The implementation of clay media in PAUD Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan has been implemented by teachers for quite a long time. In the teaching and learning process, teachers prepare a Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH) by including clay play activities that are in accordance with the theme that is structured through a series of activities, namely: 1) Preparation, 2) Opening Activities, 3) Core Activities and 4) Closing Activities with Supporting Methods such as: 1) Play Method, 2) Demonstration, 3) Experiment, 4) Question and Answer, and 5) Storytelling, then the teacher prepares the tools and materials that will be used in the activity, instructs the children for the activity with facilitate and guide children during activities.

2. Children's Creativity Can Be Developed Through Clay Media at Bintang Nahdlatul Wathan Early Childhood Education Center for the 2024/2025 Academic Year

Children's creativity is formed through activities involving clay as a learning medium. Children develop their creativity through direct experience with real learning media, which can be touched, seen, and shaped according to their wishes. Through learning methods applied by teachers, children experiment with shaping clay without fear of making mistakes, dare to try, focus on shaping, and never give up when they make mistakes. Activities provided by teachers challenge children, thus training them to think critically and innovatively by creating shapes according to the theme given by the teacher or forming objects according to their wishes. From shaping activities with clay media, children benefit not only in the development of their creativity but also improve the development of children's fine motor skills, cognitive, emotional, and social skills as a whole.

6. SUGGESTION

Based on the research results process, there are several suggestions that need to be put forward here, namely:

- 1) Teachers are expected to continue innovating in designing learning activities that utilize concrete media such as clay. Using a variety of methods and providing opportunities for children to explore are crucial to maximizing their creative potential.
- 2) Principals are expected to support teachers in implementing creativity-oriented learning, particularly by providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as clay and supporting tools. Furthermore, there needs to be encouragement to organize training, workshops, or learning communities for teachers to improve professional competence and learning innovation in early childhood education settings.
- 3) Future researchers are advised to explore more deeply the use of alternative media that also contribute to the development of children's creativity, or examine other developmental aspects related to the use of clay, for example social skills and language skills in early childhood.

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