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Implementing the Learning-by-Play Method to Enhance Children's Motor Development and Creativity Students

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the application of the learning by playing method in improving the motor development and creativity of students at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung. This study uses a qualitative field research method with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects consisted of the principal, teachers, and students. The application of the learning by playing method is carried out through various educational activities such as movement games, drawing, coloring, building blocks, collages, and interactive group games. The results of the study show: first, the application of the learning by playing method is carried out through active, interactive, and fun play-based learning so that students are easier to follow the learning process and are directly involved in various motor and creative activities. Second, supporting factors for the development of motor and creativity of students include interesting learning methods, the active role of teachers, and the availability of educational learning media, while inhibiting factors include limited children's concentration, excessive use of gadgets, and limited certain learning facilities. Third, the application of the learning by playing method has positive implications for the development of gross and fine motor skills, increased creativity, self-confidence, social skills, and the creation of a more participatory and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Thus, the learning by playing method is an effective learning alternative in supporting the development of early childhood in the PIAUD environment.

Keywords

Learning by Playing, Children's Motor Skills, Creativity, PIAUD, Early Childhood Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a fundamental stage in shaping children's physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative development (Hakim, 2023; Uce & Dosen, 2024). In this phase, children are in the golden age which is an important period in the process of growth and character formation (Machmud, 2014). In the context of Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD), learning is not only oriented towards mastering basic academic skills, but also emphasizes the balanced development of children's motor skills, creativity, and social skills. One important aspect of early childhood development is motor skills, both gross and fine, as these skills are directly related to physical activity, body coordination, manual dexterity, and the child's readiness to participate in subsequent learning processes (Fikriyah, 2021; Supriadi, 2025). Furthermore, creativity is also an important element that needs to be developed from an early age so that children can think imaginatively, actively, and confidently in expressing their ideas and feelings. In general, the learning process in early childhood requires the use of methods that are appropriate to the child's developmental characteristics. Early childhood tends to learn more easily through play activities than through monotonous, teacher-centered learning methods. Therefore, the learning-by-play approach is one learning strategy that is considered effective in creating an active, enjoyable, and participatory learning atmosphere (Rahmatullah et al., 2022; Yunarti & Harmaningsih, 2023). Through educational play activities, children not only gain hands-on learning experiences but also develop motor skills, creativity, communication, and social interaction naturally. This approach aligns with the principles of early childhood education, which prioritize play as the primary learning medium (Nur et al., 2020; Ridwanulloh et al., 2025).

However, social facts in society indicate that the learning process in some early childhood education institutions still faces various obstacles in developing children's motor skills and creativity. Some teachers still use conventional learning methods that focus on reading, writing, and monotonous assignments (Riyadi et al., 2023; Siti Shofiyatun et al., 2024). This condition causes children to be less active, have less space to explore, and tend to get bored quickly during learning. Furthermore, technological advancements and excessive use of gadgets in early childhood also impact children's physical activity and social interactions in daily life (Basir, 2022; Kiftiyah & Susanto, 2025a). Children spend more time playing digital games than engaging in hands-on play activities that can develop their motor skills and creativity. This situation is also evident in Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung. Initial observations revealed that some children still

experience delays in motor coordination, lack confidence in interactions, and are unable to express their creativity effectively. During the learning process, children appear more enthusiastic when participating in play activities than when receiving instructive instruction. Furthermore, teachers face limitations in developing varied and interactive learning models. Monotonous learning activities create a less lively classroom atmosphere, thus hindering children's motor skills and creativity development.

These issues demonstrate the need for learning innovations that can adapt to the developmental needs of early childhood. One solution is the use of the learning-by-play method in the learning process. This method provides children with opportunities to learn through educational and enjoyable play activities. Activities such as movement games, drawing, coloring, building blocks, collages, and interactive group games can help develop children's coordination, fine motor skills, creativity, and social skills (Hsiao & Su, 2021; Susanto, 2023). Furthermore, this method can create a more active and participatory learning environment, enabling children to feel comfortable and motivated to participate. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of developing a learning model that aligns with the characteristics of early childhood in early childhood education settings. Developing children's motor skills and creativity cannot be achieved instantly; instead, it requires appropriate stimulation through enjoyable learning activities (Adatul et al., 2023). This research is important because it can contribute to improving the quality of early childhood learning, particularly in the application of the learning-by-play method as an effective learning approach. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for early childhood education teachers in developing more innovative, creative, and developmentally appropriate learning strategies.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the application of the learning-by-play method in developing motor skills and creativity in early childhood at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung. This study also aims to determine the impact of the application of this method on the development of gross motor skills, fine motor skills, as well as creativity and self-confidence in the learning process. The novelty of this study lies in the focus of the research which integrates the development of motor skills and creativity in early childhood through a learning-by-play approach in the context of Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD). This study not only discusses play activities as a medium of entertainment, but also places educational games as a learning strategy that can simultaneously improve the development of motor skills, creativity, and social interaction in children. In addition, this study was conducted directly in a PIAUD-based kindergarten

environment, thus providing an empirical picture of the application of play learning in the context of early childhood Islamic education.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a field research approach (Miles et al., 2014; Sugiyono, 2015). Qualitative research was chosen because this study aims to understand in depth the process of implementing the learning by playing method in developing motor skills and creativity of early childhood at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung. This approach allows researchers to obtain data directly based on real conditions in the field so that the research results can describe the learning phenomenon more comprehensively and contextually. The location of the research was carried out at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that the institution implements play-based learning activities in the early childhood learning process. In addition, Daru Khoir Kindergarten has active and interactive learning characteristics so that it is relevant to the focus of the research on the development of motor skills and creativity of children through the learning by playing method.

The research subjects consisted of the principal, class teachers, and students at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung. Teachers were chosen as the primary informants because they play a direct role in the planning and implementation of play-based learning. Meanwhile, students were the primary object of observation regarding motoric development and creativity during the learning process. The principal also served as a supporting informant to obtain data related to learning policies and implementation within the school environment. Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe learning activities based on learning by play, such as movement games, drawing, coloring, building blocks, collages, and interactive group games. Interviews were conducted with teachers and the principal to obtain information regarding learning strategies, child development, and obstacles encountered in implementing these methods. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement the research data in the form of activity photos, learning tools, and student development notes.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing data relevant to the research

objectives. Data presentation was done in the form of narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding and analysis. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn based on the research findings obtained during the data collection process. To maintain data validity, this study employed source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was performed by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation from various informants. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was conducted using several data collection methods to ensure the research results had a stronger level of validity and credibility. Thus, the data obtained is expected to provide an objective picture of the application of the learning by playing method in developing motor skills and creativity of early childhood at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementing Learning by Playing to Improve Children's Motor Development and Student Creativity

The application of the learning by playing method in early childhood learning has an important role in improving the motor development and creativity of students (Kiftiyah & Susanto, 2025a; Ninik, 2018). This method places play as a central part of the learning process, allowing children to gain active, enjoyable learning experiences that align with the characteristics of early childhood development. In the context of Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD), play-based learning serves not only as a means of entertainment but also as an educational medium capable of developing children's physical, social, emotional, and creative abilities holistically (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Motorik et al., 2025). Research at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung shows that the implementation of learning by playing has a positive impact on children's motor development. Movement-based play activities such as gymnastics, group games, and interactive physical activities can train children's body coordination, balance, agility, and gross motor skills. Children appear more active and enthusiastic in participating in learning compared to conventional learning methods, which tend to be monotonous. Furthermore, activities such as drawing, coloring, building blocks, and collage also help improve children's fine motor skills, especially in hand-eye coordination and the skill of using fingers in a more directed manner.

These findings are in line with Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that early childhood is in the pre-operational stage, namely the phase when children learn through

concrete experiences, play activities, and exploration of the surrounding environment (Kurniawati & Hidayah, 2025; Nazilatul Mifroh, 2025; Rusmaniah et al., 2021). According to Bloom, playing is an important means for children to build knowledge and develop thinking skills through direct interaction with objects and their social environment (Bloom, 1981; Mufarokah, 2020). In this study, children more easily understood instructions and demonstrated motor development when learning was conducted through play activities involving physical movement and hands-on experience. Furthermore, John Dewey's theory of learning by doing is also relevant in explaining the effectiveness of the learning-by-play method. Dewey emphasized that the learning process will be more meaningful when children are directly involved in the learning activity (Lima-Nunes et al., 2013). Through educational games, children don't just passively receive material, but actively experiment, explore, and discover their own learning experiences. This is evident in the learning process at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung, where children demonstrate increased self-confidence, courage to interact, and the ability to express ideas when involved in group games and creative activities.

The implementation of learning by playing also has an impact on increasing student creativity. Children are freer to develop their imaginations through drawing, building blocks, collages, and role-playing. Children's creativity emerges when they are given the opportunity to choose colors, shape objects, or create games based on their own ideas and imagination. In this process, the teacher acts as a facilitator, providing stimulation and guidance without excessively restricting children's expression. A fun learning environment makes children more confident in expressing their opinions and producing creative work. This finding is supported by Lev Vygotsky's theory of creativity, which emphasizes that the development of children's creativity is influenced by social interactions and the learning environment (Noer Syo Im & Achmad Muhibin Zuhri, 2024; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky explained that play plays a crucial role in developing children's imagination, language, and thinking skills. Through collaborative play activities, children learn to cooperate, communicate, and solve simple problems with their peers. This is evident in interactive group play at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung, where children are more active in discussions, sharing ideas, and demonstrating improved social skills throughout the learning process.

Analytical, the implementation of the learning by playing method not only improves students' motor skills and creativity but also creates a more humanistic and child-centered learning

environment. Children are not positioned as learning objects who merely receive teacher instructions, but rather as active subjects directly involved in the learning process. This method also helps create an interactive and participatory classroom atmosphere so that children feel comfortable and motivated in learning. Thus, the implementation of learning by playing at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung, demonstrates that play-based learning is an effective strategy in supporting the motor development and creativity of early childhood. Through educational play activities, children are able to learn actively, develop physical skills, enhance creativity, and build self-confidence and social skills more optimally.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Development of Motor Skills and Creativity in Students

The motoric and creative development of early childhood students is influenced by various factors, both supporting and inhibiting. In the learning process at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung, the application of the learning-by-play method shows that the success of children's motoric and creative development is not only determined by the learning method, but also influenced by the learning environment, the role of teachers, parental support, and the students' own conditions. These factors are interrelated in shaping the optimal child growth and development process. One of the main supporting factors in the development of motoric and creative students is the use of active and enjoyable learning methods (Coppola et al., 2024). The learning by playing method provides children with the opportunity to learn through play activities that involve physical movement, exploration, and social interaction (Iffah & Aulina, 2024). Activities such as movement games, drawing, coloring, building blocks, and group games can increase children's enthusiasm for learning. They become more active, willing to try new things, and more easily express their ideas and imagination. This demonstrates that a fun learning environment can positively stimulate the motor development and creativity of early childhood (Dewi, 2021).

In addition to learning methods, another supporting factor is the role of teachers in creating an interactive and creative learning environment. Teachers at Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung, act as facilitators, providing direction and freedom for children to explore. Teachers not only convey learning materials verbally but also involve children in various practical activities and educational games. This approach aligns with Lev Vygotsky's constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and teacher guidance in supporting children's development. Through appropriate guidance, children can optimally develop motor skills and creativity (Kiftiyah & Susanto, 2025b; Syahrudin & Gunawan, 2025). Another supporting factor is

the availability of adequate learning media and resources. The use of educational play tools such as building blocks, drawing tools, coloring books, and group games helps children develop motor coordination while enhancing creativity. A safe and comfortable school environment also allows children to move freely and explore during play activities. Furthermore, parental support in providing learning stimulation at home also contributes to the ongoing development of children's motor skills and creativity.

However, the development of students' motor skills and creativity also faces several inhibiting factors. One obstacle identified is limited concentration and self-confidence in some children participating in learning activities. Some children still appear passive and shy when interacting with friends and teachers. This condition causes children to be less active in group play activities, thus hindering their social development and creativity from developing optimally. Another inhibiting factor is excessive use of gadgets in early childhood. Children who use cell phones excessively tend to be more passive and less interested in physical activities or interactive games. As a result, children's gross motor skills are less developed because daily activities are more sedentary (Id et al., 2020). Furthermore, uncontrolled use of digital media can also limit children's creativity, as they are more likely to receive instant entertainment than to create their own play activities. Limited learning resources also hinder the development of children's motor skills and creativity. Not all educational play media are readily available, requiring teachers to improvise using simple tools. Furthermore, differences in the abilities and characteristics of each child cause the development of motor skills and creativity to progress at different rates. Some children respond quickly to play-based learning, while others require more intensive support.

Thus, students' motor and creativity development is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Supporting factors such as creative learning methods, the role of teachers, learning media, and environmental support can foster optimal child development. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors such as excessive gadget use, limited resources, and low self-confidence require attention to ensure the learning process is more effective and meets the developmental needs of early childhood.

Implications of Implementing Learning by Playing on the Development of Students' Motor Skills and Creativity

The application of the learning-by-play method in early childhood education has significant implications for the development of students' motor skills and creativity. This method not only

creates a fun learning atmosphere but also provides a more active, interactive, and child-centered learning experience. In the context of Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD), play-based learning is a relevant approach because it aligns with the developmental characteristics of children who tend to learn through concrete and exploratory activities. Research results at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung indicate that the implementation of learning-by-play can have a positive impact on students' physical development, creativity, social skills, and self-confidence. The first implication is seen in children's gross motor development. Play activities involving physical movements such as gymnastics, group games, running, jumping, and body coordination games can train children's balance, agility, and motor coordination. Children become more active and do not just sit passively listening to teacher explanations. This condition indicates that the learning-by-play method can help improve gross motor skills through fun activities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of early childhood. This is in line with Jean Piaget's motor development theory, which explains that children learn through physical activity and direct interaction with their surroundings. The more movement stimulation is given, the more optimal the development of the child's body coordination will be (Nazilatul Mifroh, 2025; Sampurna & Jannah, 2025).

In addition to gross motor skills, the application of learning by play also has implications for the development of students' fine motor skills. Drawing, coloring, building blocks, collages, and playing with educational media help develop children's hand-eye coordination and coordination. Children learn to control finger movements, hold writing tools, arrange shapes, and create simple works of art based on their imagination. These activities are important tools in preparing children for the next stage of learning, particularly writing and other basic skills. During the learning process, children appear more focused and enthusiastic when activities are carried out through creative play compared to monotonous learning methods (Supriyanti et al., 2025; Yahuda et al., 2024). The next implication is seen in the development of students' creativity. The learning-by-play method provides children with the freedom to explore and express ideas more openly. Children not only follow the teacher's instructions but are also given the opportunity to create shapes, colors, and games based on their imaginations. This environment helps foster creative thinking skills, curiosity, and the courage to express opinions. Children's creativity develops because learning takes place in a non-pressuring atmosphere and provides a fun learning experience.

These findings align with Lev Vygotsky's theory of creativity, which states that children's creativity develops through social interaction and play activities. According to Vygotsky, play is an

important medium for children to develop imagination, language, and symbolic thinking skills (Nazaretsky et al., 2022). In this study, interactive group games encouraged children to collaborate, discuss, and share ideas with their peers. This interaction indirectly fostered social development while boosting children's self-confidence during the learning process. Another implication was the creation of a more participatory and humanistic learning environment. The implementation of learning by play made children feel comfortable and less stressed during learning. Children understood the material more easily because learning took place through activities close to their play world. The teacher also acted as a facilitator, accompanying and stimulating learning, rather than simply serving as a central source of material delivery. This approach helped foster a better relationship between teachers and students, enabling a more communicative and effective learning process.

On the other hand, the learning-by-play method also has implications for improving children's social and emotional skills. In group games, children learn to cooperate, share, wait their turn, and respect their peers. They also learn to control their emotions when facing victory or defeat in games. These experiences help shape children's character, making them more confident, independent, and able to interact positively with their surroundings. Thus, the implementation of the learning-by-play method has broad implications for the motor development and creativity of students at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung. This method not only helps improve children's gross and fine motor skills but also fosters creativity, social skills, and self-confidence. Play-based learning is an effective approach in creating an active, enjoyable learning environment that aligns with the developmental characteristics of early childhood.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research at Daru Khoir Kindergarten in North Lampung, it can be concluded that: first, the application of the learning by playing method is carried out through various educational play activities such as movement games, drawing, coloring, stacking blocks, collages, and interactive group games. This method is able to create an active, fun, and participatory learning atmosphere so that students are more enthusiastic in participating in the learning process. The application of learning by playing also helps improve the development of children's gross and fine motor skills through activities that involve body coordination, balance, and manual dexterity. Second, there are supporting and inhibiting factors in the development of motor skills and creativity

of students. Supporting factors include the use of interesting learning methods, the active and creative role of teachers, the availability of educational learning media, and a learning environment that supports children's play activities. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited concentration of some students, excessive use of gadgets, and the limitations of certain learning facilities that affect the optimization of motor development and creativity in early childhood. Third, the application of the learning by playing method has positive implications for student development, especially in improving children's gross and fine motor skills, creativity, self-confidence, social skills, and communication. Play-based learning can also create more humanistic and communicative learning interactions, enabling students to be more active in expressing ideas, interacting with peers, and understanding learning through direct experience. Therefore, the learning-by-play method is an effective learning alternative for supporting early childhood development in early childhood education settings.

This study still has several limitations. First, the study was only conducted at one educational institution, Daru Khoir Kindergarten, North Lampung, so the results cannot be generalized widely to all PIAUD institutions. Second, the study used a qualitative field approach, so the results emphasize the description of the phenomenon and do not measure the level of motoric development and creativity of students statistically. Third, the limited timeframe for the study resulted in observations of student development being conducted for a relatively short time, thus not being able to assess children's development over the long term. Therefore, suggestions for future researchers are to develop learning-by-play methods by presenting various educational games that are more creative, innovative, and appropriate to the developmental needs of early childhood.

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