

Enhancing Children's Creativity Through Ecoprint Activities in Arts Learning at Pembina Tamban Baru State Kindergarten

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Abstract

Creativity is one of the essential competencies that should be developed in early childhood because it supports children's ability to think imaginatively, solve problems, and express ideas through meaningful learning experiences. This study aimed to improve children's creativity through the implementation of ecoprint activities in arts learning. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of two cycles with four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 15 children in Group B. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative techniques. The findings demonstrated a continuous improvement in children's creativity throughout the intervention. Creativity achievement increased from 25.00% in the pre-cycle to 31.67% in Cycle I Meeting I, 60.48% in Cycle I Meeting II, 65.95% in Cycle II Meeting I, and finally 82.38% in Cycle II Meeting II, exceeding the predetermined success criterion of 75%. Overall, children's creativity improved by 57.38 percentage points. The findings indicate that ecoprint-based arts learning effectively promotes children's creativity by encouraging exploration, imagination, originality, and active participation through direct interaction with natural materials. Therefore, ecoprint can be considered an innovative and environmentally based learning strategy for fostering creativity in early childhood education.

Keywords

Arts Learning; Creativity; Early Childhood Education; Ecoprint.



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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a fundamental role in laying the foundation for children's overall development, including the development of creativity. Creativity is one of the essential competencies that should be nurtured from an early age, as it contributes to children's ability to think critically, solve problems, use their imagination, and express ideas effectively.

According to Munandar (Utami munandar, 2009), creativity is the ability to generate new, original, flexible, and meaningful ideas or products. Therefore, learning activities in kindergarten should provide children with meaningful opportunities to develop their creative potential through engaging educational experiences (N. Baiti & Muhammad Afif Rahman, 2022).

One of the most effective approaches to fostering children's creativity is through arts education. Artistic activities provide opportunities for children to explore, experiment, and express their ideas freely without pressure to produce uniform outcomes. In early childhood education, arts learning emphasizes the creative process rather than the final product, thereby promoting self-confidence, creative thinking skills, and aesthetic appreciation. However, in practice, arts instruction in many kindergartens is still dominated by coloring activities or copying teacher-prepared examples. (N. B. Baiti et al., 2025) Such practices limit children's opportunities to create independently. Mayesky argues that overly structured arts instruction may inhibit children's creativity because it does not provide sufficient freedom for them to explore their own ideas and imagination (Novianti et al., 2025).

One innovative art-based learning activity that is well suited to the characteristics of young children is **ecoprint**. Ecoprint is a natural printing technique that creates patterns using leaves, flowers, or other plant materials on media such as fabric or paper (Sumanto, 2005). Besides being environmentally friendly, this activity provides children with concrete learning experiences through the use of natural materials found in their surroundings (N. Baiti et al., 2022). During the ecoprint process, children are encouraged to select natural materials, arrange their compositions, and create unique patterns based on their own imagination. According to Beaty, as cited in Susanto et al., the use of natural materials in art activities enhances children's curiosity, sensory experiences, and creativity through exploratory learning (Pertiwi et al., 2024).

Preliminary observations conducted at TK Negeri Pembina Tamban Baru revealed that the creativity of Group B children remained relatively low. Assessment was based on seven indicators of creativity: the ability to express ideas, attempt different approaches to completing tasks, produce work that differs from peers, add details to artwork, actively ask questions during activities, demonstrate imagination in creating artwork, and confidently explain the results of their work. The findings indicated that all children (100%) were classified in the Not Yet Developed (NYD) category. These results suggest that the existing learning practices have not provided optimal stimulation for developing children's creativity.

These findings indicate the need for innovative learning strategies that allow children to explore freely while interacting with their environment. Ecoprint is considered a promising alternative for arts education because it not only promotes creativity through the creation of unique artworks but also develops cooperation, carefulness, and environmental awareness. Therefore, the implementation of ecoprint activities is expected to become an effective instructional strategy for fostering creativity among young children.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to describe the development of children's creativity through ecoprint activities in arts learning at TK Negeri Pembina Tamban Baru.

METHODS

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the spiral model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. (Norlaila & Hermina, 2021) The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle implemented through these four sequential stages until the predetermined indicators of success were achieved. (Sanjaya, 2016) This design was selected because it provides a systematic approach to improving the learning process through continuous reflection and instructional improvement (Utomo et al., 2024).

The study was conducted at Pembina Tamban Baru State Kindergarten, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 15 children in Group B, including six boys and nine girls, together with the classroom teacher who implemented the learning activities. The researcher was responsible for planning the intervention, conducting observations, and analyzing the research findings. Participants were selected purposively based on the need to improve children's creativity through arts learning activities (Arikunto & Suhardjono, 2021).

The intervention consisted of ecoprint-based arts learning, in which children created artwork using natural materials such as leaves and flowers. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. Children's creativity was assessed using seven indicators: expressing ideas, trying different ways to complete tasks, producing unique artwork, adding details to artwork, asking questions during activities, demonstrating imagination, and confidently explaining their work (Wijaya et al., 2023). Data were analyzed descriptively using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Quantitative data were calculated using percentage analysis $P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$ The study was considered successful when most children achieved the Developing as Expected (DAE) category or higher. (Arikunto, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of ecoprint activities in arts learning was conducted through two cycles, each consisting of two meetings. Children's creativity was assessed using seven indicators: expressing ideas, trying different ways to complete tasks, producing unique artwork, adding details to artwork, asking questions during activities, demonstrating imagination, and confidently explaining their work. The findings indicate a continuous improvement in children's creativity following the implementation of ecoprint-based learning.

Prior to the intervention, the preliminary observation (pre-cycle) revealed that all 15 children were classified as Not Yet Developed (NYD). The total score obtained was 105 out of a maximum score of 420, resulting in an achievement percentage of 25.00%. These findings indicate that the existing arts learning activities had not optimally stimulated children's creativity. Children tended to imitate the teacher's examples, were reluctant to express ideas, and showed limited confidence in producing original artwork.

During Cycle I Meeting I, children participated in ecoprint activities by exploring leaves and flowers available in the school environment. Creativity increased to 31.67%, indicating an initial positive response to the learning activities. Although most children still required teacher guidance, they began to demonstrate curiosity and willingness to experiment with natural materials.

Improvements in the instructional strategy were implemented in Cycle I Meeting II by providing children with greater opportunities to independently select natural materials and arrange ecoprint patterns according to their own imagination. As a result, the creativity score increased substantially to 60.48%, with many children beginning to express ideas more confidently and produce more varied artwork.

Further refinement of the learning process was conducted during Cycle II. Teachers minimized direct demonstrations, expanded the variety of natural materials, and encouraged children to present and explain their artwork. These improvements resulted in creativity scores of 65.95% in Cycle II Meeting I and 82.38% in Cycle II Meeting II. The final achievement exceeded the predetermined success criterion of 75%, indicating that the intervention was successful in enhancing children's creativity.

Table 1. Improvement of Children's Creativity

Research Stage	Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
Pre-cycle	105	420	25.00%	NYD
Cycle I Meeting I	133	420	31.67%	Beginning to Develop
Cycle I Meeting II	254	420	60.48%	Developing as Expected
Cycle II Meeting I	277	420	65.95%	Developing as Expected
Cycle II Meeting II	346	420	82.38%	Very Well Developed

Overall, children's creativity increased by **57.38 percentage points**, from **25.00%** during the pre-cycle to **82.38%** at the end of Cycle II.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that ecoprint activities effectively enhanced children's creativity in arts learning. The gradual improvement observed throughout the two research cycles indicates that learning activities emphasizing exploration, experimentation, and direct interaction with natural materials provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop creative thinking and artistic expression.

During the initial stage of the study, children tended to depend heavily on teacher instructions and produced similar artwork because learning activities were primarily teacher-centered. After ecoprint was introduced, children became more actively involved in selecting leaves and flowers, designing their own compositions, and experimenting with different patterns. This learning process encouraged originality, flexibility, and confidence, which are fundamental characteristics of creativity.

These findings are consistent with Munandar's theory, which states that creativity develops optimally when children are provided with opportunities, encouragement, and a supportive learning environment. Ecoprint activities offered children the freedom to express ideas without being restricted to predetermined examples, thereby fostering divergent thinking and creative expression.

The results also support Mayesky's view that art activities should emphasize the creative process rather than the final product. In this study, children were encouraged to explore natural materials and create unique artworks based on their own imagination. Consequently, each child produced different artistic outcomes, reflecting individual creativity rather than imitation.

Furthermore, the findings are in line with Guilford's theory of divergent thinking, which emphasizes the ability to generate multiple ideas and alternative solutions. Through ecoprint activities, children demonstrated greater flexibility in selecting materials, arranging patterns, and solving artistic challenges independently. Similarly, Torrance argues that creativity develops through meaningful learning experiences that encourage exploration and originality. The present study confirms that ecoprint provides such experiences by integrating environmental exploration with artistic expression.

Therefore, ecoprint can be considered an innovative and effective learning strategy for early childhood arts education. Besides improving creativity, this activity also promotes environmental awareness, self-confidence, curiosity, and active participation in classroom learning. The significant increase in creativity from 25.00% to 82.38% confirms that ecoprint-based arts learning provides meaningful educational experiences that support children's holistic development.

CONCLUSION

This classroom action research demonstrated that the implementation of ecoprint activities effectively enhanced the creativity of Group B children at Pembina Tamban Baru Timur State Kindergarten. Through two research cycles, ecoprint-based arts learning provided opportunities for children to explore natural materials, express their ideas, experiment with different artistic compositions, and produce original artwork in a child-centered learning environment. The learning process also encouraged greater confidence, active participation, and creative expression through direct learning experiences (*learning by doing*).

The findings revealed a substantial improvement in children's creativity, increasing from 25.00% during the pre-cycle to 82.38% at the end of Cycle II, representing an overall improvement of 57.38 percentage points. The final achievement exceeded the predetermined success criterion of 75%, indicating that ecoprint is an effective instructional strategy for fostering creativity in early childhood arts education. Therefore, ecoprint can be recommended as an innovative, environmentally based learning approach that promotes creativity, imagination, and active engagement among young children. Future studies are encouraged to

investigate the application of ecoprint in different learning contexts, age groups, or developmental domains to further enrich early childhood educational practices.

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