

Improving Creativity Through Cooking Class Play Activities for Children Aged 5–6 Years at Pertiwi Karangsari Kindergarten

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Abstract

This study aims to improve the creativity of children aged 5–6 years through cooking class play activities at TK Pertiwi Karangsari. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects were 24 children, comprising 13 girls and 11 boys. Data collection techniques included observation and documentation using a creativity assessment sheet as the research instrument. The indicators of creativity covered fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The results showed a continuous improvement in children's creativity in each cycle. In the pre-cycle stage, the percentage of children in the "Very Well Developed" (BSB) category was 29.17%. This increased to 50% in Cycle I and reached 87.5% in Cycle II. Therefore, cooking class play activities were proven effective in enhancing early childhood creativity. This activity provided opportunities for children to express themselves, explore ideas, and produce independent work in a joyful learning environment.

Keywords: *creativity, cooking class, early childhood*

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood represents a period of rapid and fundamental development that serves as the foundation for future life. During this phase, appropriate stimulation is crucial to optimizing all aspects of development, including creativity. Creativity is the ability to produce new ideas or works that are original and meaningful.

According to (Supriadi, 2025), creativity is an individual's capacity to generate something new, whether in the form of ideas or tangible works that are relatively distinct from what already exists. Torrance states that creativity encompasses four main aspects: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. In early childhood, creativity is observable through play, drawing, sculpting, and other explorative activities. Play

is the world of the child. Through play, children learn to develop their imagination, divergent thinking skills, and social abilities (Khuzaimah et al., 2021). One form of play activity that can stimulate creativity is a cooking class. A cooking class is not merely a cooking activity; it is an educational endeavor involving fine motor coordination, color selection, decision-making, and freedom of expression.

Based on initial observations at TK Pertiwi Karangsari, children's creativity is still categorized as low. Out of 24 children, the majority are still at the "Starting to Develop" (Mulai Berkembang) stage. Learning tends to be monotonous and relies heavily on student worksheets (LKA), resulting in a lack of opportunities for children to explore freely. Therefore, innovative learning that is both enjoyable and contextual is required. Cooking class activities were chosen as a solution because they provide a hands-on experience that allows children to create, experiment, and express their ideas freely.

The research question for this study is: How can the creativity of children aged 5–6 years be improved through cooking class play activities at TK Pertiwi Karangsari?

According to (Khairi, 2018), creativity is a divergent thinking ability involving fluency, flexibility, and originality in generating ideas. In the context of early childhood, creativity includes exploration, imagination, and innovation that occur spontaneously during various play and learning activities. This aligns with the view of (Hamzah, 2020), who emphasizes that a child's creativity develops through social interaction and a supportive environment.

(Sudirman, 2021) defines creativity as the ability to think about something in a new and unusual way and to produce unique solutions to a problem. In young children, creativity is reflected in various forms, such as role-playing, drawing, singing, or storytelling. According to (Dacholfany & Hasanah, 2021), creativity in early childhood is closely linked to intrinsic motivation. Children who feel free to explore and express themselves tend to demonstrate higher levels of creativity. An environment that provides freedom, support, and stimulation also plays a vital role in facilitating the development of a child's creativity.

Furthermore, Torrance as cited in (Kurniawan et al., 2023) identifies four aspects to measure creativity: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. In early childhood, these aspects can be observed through daily activities involving creative play, art, and environmental exploration. In early childhood education practice, creativity can be developed through child-centered learning methods. This approach provides children with the opportunity to experiment, explore, and develop their own ideas without fear of making mistakes. Teachers and parents serve as facilitators who create a conducive environment to encourage the child's creativity.

The effectiveness of cooking classes in enhancing creativity lies in the simultaneous integration of cognitive and sensory aspects. While decorating cakes, children undergo a mental process of visualizing the final result, which according to (Mulyasa, 2022), constitutes a form of spatial and imaginative intelligence training. This activity challenges children to explore materials with various textures and colors, thereby triggering flexibility in thinking as they adapt their designs to the available media. Consistent with this, (Ariyanti, 2016) explains that hands-on experience (learning by doing) in manual skill activities stimulates a child's curiosity, which serves as the primary driver for originality in their work.

Furthermore, the democratic learning atmosphere in cooking classes removes psychological barriers such as the fear of making mistakes. The freedom to choose toppings or determine decoration patterns creates a sense of ownership over the creation. This is emphasized by (Susanto, 2022), who asserts that children's creativity will not emerge under the pressure of rigid instructions; instead, it flourishes when children feel that every part of their exploratory process is valued. Consequently, the increase in scores from Cycle I to Cycle II is not merely a performance metric, but a reflection of the children's growing confidence in expressing unique ideas through concrete media (Guslinda & Kurnia, 2018).

2. METHODS

This research employs the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, following the Kurt Lewin model, which consists of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Rahman et al., 2018). The study was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings (Syaifudin, 2021).

This research consists of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Arikunto, 2021). The planning stage involves the preparation of instructional tools, followed by the acting stage where the cooking class intervention is actively implemented in the classroom. During this process, the observing stage is conducted to systematically monitor changes in the children's behavior and creativity (Kunandar, 2008). Finally, the reflecting stage is carried out to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention to determine the steps for the subsequent cycle. The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings, to ensure the validity of the improvement in learning outcomes achieved (Mustafa et al., 2022).

The subjects of this study are 24 children aged 5–6 years at TK Pertiwi Karangsari, consisting of 13 females and 11 males. The selection of subjects in this age group is based on the developmental characteristics of early childhood within the golden age, a period where stimulating creativity through hands-on experience is highly effective for cognitive growth (Susanto, 2022). The choice of location at TK Pertiwi Karangsari also considers accessibility and the availability of facilities that support the implementation of project-based learning methods.

Research Subjects The subjects of this research are 24 children aged 5–6 years at TK Pertiwi Karangsari, comprising 13 girls and 11 boys.

Data Collection Techniques (Firdaus et al., 2023):

- Observation: Using children's creativity assessment sheets.
- Documentation: In the form of activity photos and children's work.

Research Instruments The instrument used is an observation sheet with the following creativity indicators (Erika & Suripah, 2022):

- Fluency
- Flexibility

- Originality
- Elaboration

Data Analysis Techniques The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis by calculating the percentage of achievement in each category (Muliawati et al., 2019):

- VWD (Very Well Developed / *Berkembang Sangat Baik*)
- DAE (Developed As Expected / *Berkembang Sesuai Harapan*)
- SD (Starting to Develop / *Mulai Berkembang*)
- ND (Not yet Developed / *Belum Berkembang*)

The research success criteria are established when 80% of the children achieve the VWD (Very Well Developed) category (Parnawi, 2020)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The creative abilities of children aged 5–6 at TK Pertiwi Karangsari have not yet fully improved. This is due to a lack of enthusiasm among the children, who frequently feel bored because the teachers lack innovation in the learning process, which tends to be monotonous. Based on the data obtained during initial observations of 24 children at TK Pertiwi Karangsari, 17 children (70.83%) reached the SD (Starting to Develop) level of creativity. However, the initial observation also found that 7 children (29.17%) had already reached the DAE (Developed As Expected) level. Regarding the creative abilities observed during the pre-cycle phase, children were not yet able to decorate cookies using simple, complex, or free patterns according to their own creativity.

Table 1
Percentage Data of Children's Creativity Assessment (Pre-Cycle)

No.	Assessment Criteria	Score	Number of Children	Percentage
1	ND (Not yet Developed)	1	0	$0/24 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
2	SD (Starting to Develop)	2	17	$17/24 \times 100 \% = 70,83 \%$
3	DAE (Developed As Expected)	3	7	$7/24 \times 100 \% = 29,17 \%$
4	VWD (Very Well Developed)	4	0	$0/24 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
Total			24	100

Based on the pre-cycle data in the table above, out of 24 children at TK Pertiwi Karangsari, 17 children (approximately 70.83%) reached the SD (Starting to Develop) level of creativity. Furthermore, the initial observation found that 7 children (29.17%) reached the DAE (Developed As Expected) level, and 0% reached the VWD (Very Well Developed) level. The results of the pre-cycle observations are presented more clearly in the following chart:

Figure 1
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities (Pre-Cycle)

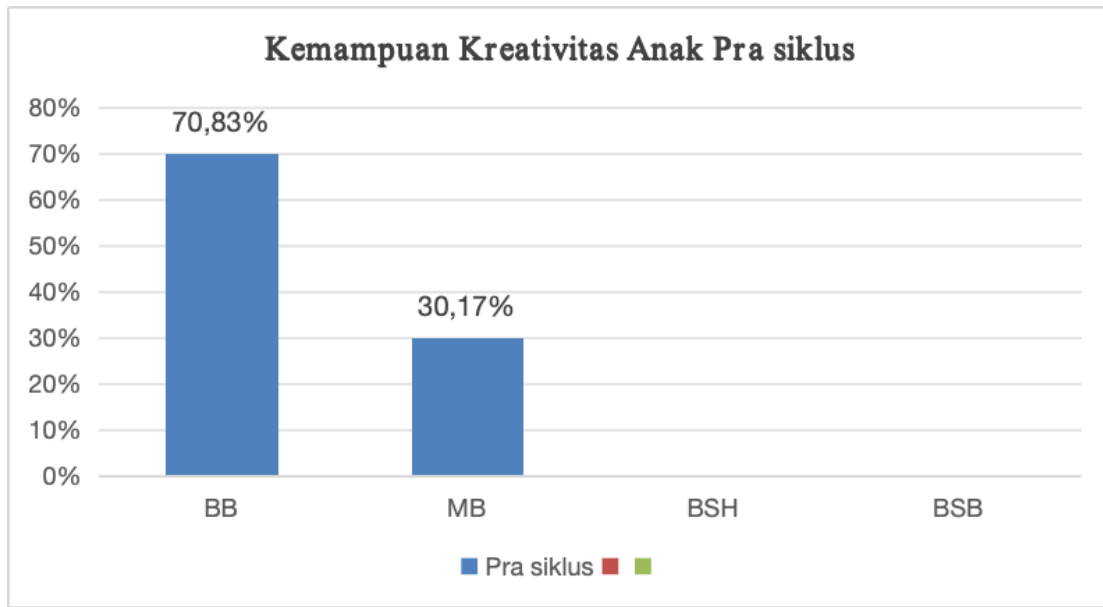


Table 2
Percentage Data of Children's Creativity Assessment – Cycle I, Session 1

No .	Assessment Criteria	Score	Number of Children	Percentage
1	ND (Not yet Developed)	1	0	$0 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
2	SD (Starting to Develop)	2	9	$9/24 \times 100 \% = 37,50 \%$
3	DAE (Developed As Expected)	3	11	$11/24 \times 100 \% = 45,83 \%$
4	VWD (Very Well Developed)	4	4	$4/24 \times 100 \% = 16,67 \%$
Total			24	100 %

Based on the data in the table above, it is evident that implementing Cooking Class play activities in the learning process had a positive impact during Cycle I, Session 1. In this session, 4 children (16.67%) achieved a score of 4 (VWD), 11 children (45.83%) achieved a score of 3 (DAE), and 9 children (37.50%) achieved a score of 2 (SD).

Figure 2
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities – Cycle I, Session 1

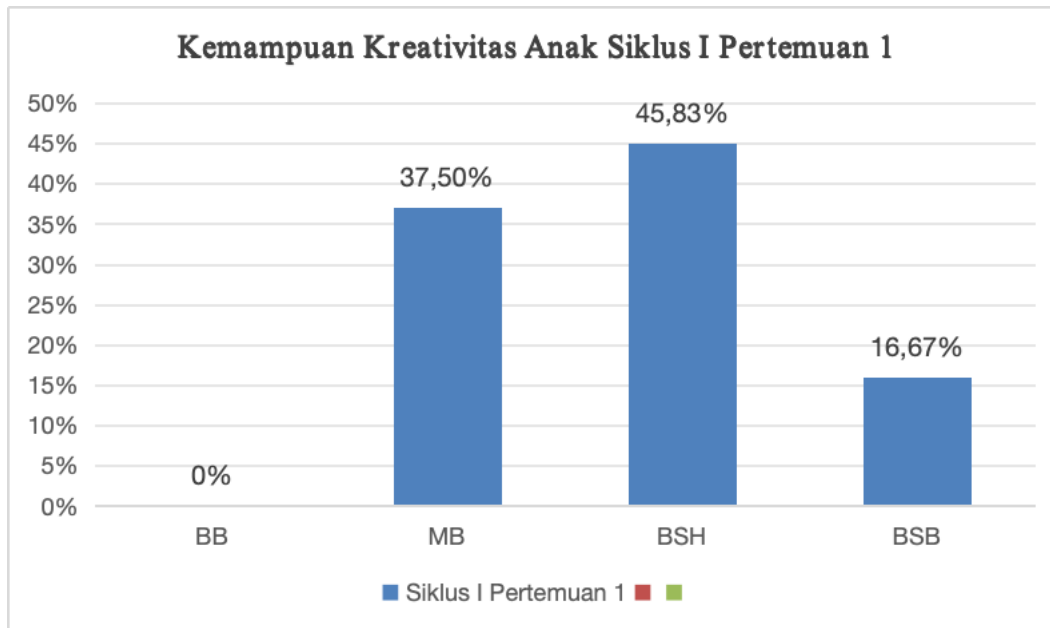


Table 3
Percentage Data of Children's Creativity Assessment – Cycle I, Session 2

No.	Assessment Criteria	Score	Number of Children	Percentage
1	ND (Not yet Developed)	1	0	$0 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
2	SD (Starting to Develop)	2	7	$7/24 \times 100 \% = 29,17 \%$
3	DAE (Developed As Expected)	3	5	$5/24 \times 100 \% = 20,83 \%$
4	VWD (Very Well Developed)	4	12	$12/24 \times 100 \% = 50,00 \%$
			total 24	100 %

Based on the data in the table above, the positive impact of implementing Cooking Class activities continued in Cycle I, Session 2. In this session, 12 children (50.00%) achieved a score of 4 (VWD), 5 children (20.83%) achieved a score of 3 (DAE), and 7 children (29.17%) achieved a score of 2 (SD).

Figure 3
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities – Cycle I, Session 2



Figure 4
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities – Cycle I, Sessions 1 & 2

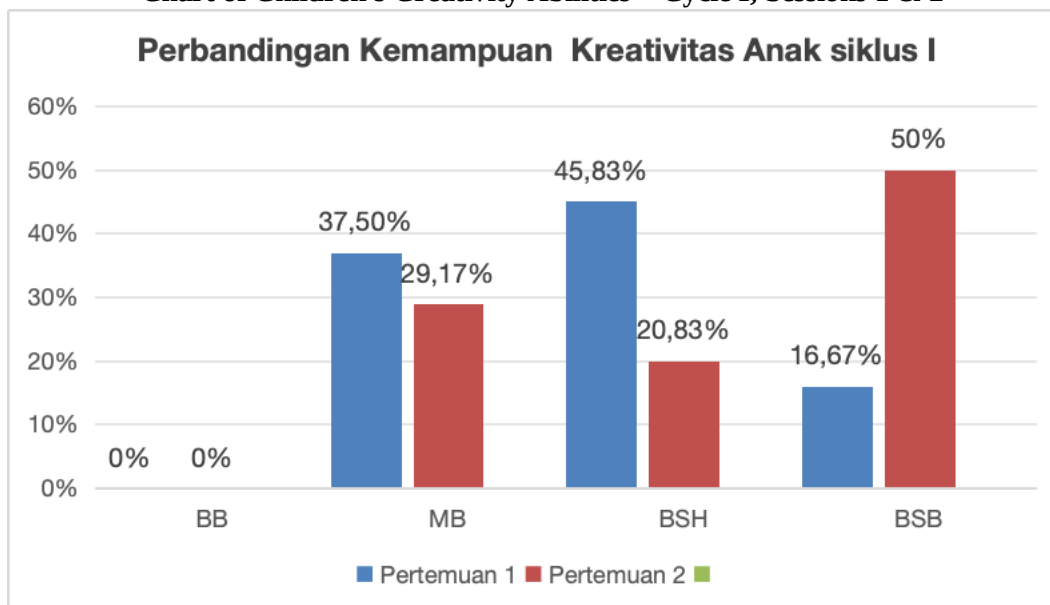


Table 4
Percentage Data of Children's Creativity Assessment – Cycle II, Session 1

No.	Assessment Criteria	Score	Number of Children	Percentage
1	ND (Not yet Developed)	1	0	$0 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
2	SD (Starting to Develop)	2	0	$0 \times 100 \% = 0 \%$
3	DAE (Developed As Expected)	3	3	$4/24 \times 100 \% = 16,7 \%$
4	VWD (Very Well Developed)	4	21	$20/24 \times 100 \% = 83,3 \%$
Total			24	100 %

Based on the data above, the positive impact of the action was further observed in Cycle II, Session 1. In this session, 21 children (83.3%) achieved a score of 4 (VWD), and 3 children (16.7%) achieved a score of 3 (DAE), while no children remained in the SD or ND categories.

Figure 5
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities – Cycle II, Session 1



Table 5
Percentage Data of Children's Creativity Assessment – Cycle II, Session 2

No	Assessment Criteria	Score	Number of Children	Percentage
1	ND (Not yet Developed)	1	0	0 x 100 % = 0 %
2	SD (Starting to Develop)	2	0	0 x 100 % = 0 %
3	DAE (Developed As Expected)	3	3	3/24 x 100 % = 12,5 %
4	VWD (Very Well Developed)	4	21	21/24 x 100 % = 87,5 %
			Total 24	100 %

Based on the data in the table, the positive impact of the Cooking Class activities culminated in Cycle II, Session 2. In this session, 21 children (87.5%) achieved a score of 4 (VWD), and 3 children (12.5%) achieved a score of 3 (DAE), with 0 children in the SD and ND categories.

Figure 6
Chart of Children's Creativity Abilities – Cycle II



After conducting two sessions in Cycle II, the data reveals a significantly high increase in children's creativity compared to Cycle I. The percentage of children achieving a score of 4 in Cycle II reached 87.5% (21 children), a sharp increase from Cycle I, where only 20.83% (5 children) reached that score. Furthermore, 12.5% (3 children) achieved a score of 3, and no children remained at a score of 2. This improvement indicates that the rise in higher-category scores reflects a successful increase in the quality of learning within this Classroom Action Research.

The activity of decorating cookies provides a space for free expression without pressure. Children can choose colors, determine patterns, and develop ideas according to their imagination. This supports the view of (Susanto, 2021) that a child's creativity develops optimally in a supportive and democratic

environment. Additionally, the hands-on approach in the cooking class aligns with the principles of early childhood education that emphasize learning by doing. Children do not just observe or listen; they actively practice and create. Thus, cooking class activities have proven to be an effective, fun, and meaningful learning strategy for enhancing children's creativity.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that cooking class play activities are effective in enhancing the creativity of children aged 5–6 years at TK Pertiwi Karangsari.

This improvement is evidenced by the percentage of the VWD (Very Well Developed) category, which rose from 29.17% in the pre-cycle phase to 87.5% in Cycle II. These activities provide opportunities for children to explore, imagine, and express their ideas freely, allowing their creativity to develop optimally.

It is recommended that early childhood education (ECE) teachers implement cooking class activities as an innovative and enjoyable learning alternative. Furthermore, schools should support these initiatives by providing adequate facilities and safety-standardized tools to ensure a conducive learning environment. Ultimately, this study suggests that integrating sensory-based play into the curriculum is essential for fostering holistic cognitive and creative growth in the early years.

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