

Kindergarten Teachers' Understanding of the Creative Play

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Abstract: This article describes the results of research on ECE teachers regarding their understanding of the creative play. Creative play in early childhood education is defined as play-based learning that combines creativity and higher-order thinking skills to stimulate aspects of development in the context of constructing children's attitudes, knowledge, and skills in this millennial era. This creative play-based learning is known as HOTS learning for early childhood. This research was carried out in a survey by filling out a Google Form which was distributed through several WhatsApp groups. 400 respondents contributed to sending answers and were analyzed using the Excel application to find out the tendency of ECE teachers to understand the creative play. The results of this study found that ECE teachers tend not to understand creative play in early childhood. They tend to design play activities that are separate, not intact, and still at the C2 level in the cognitive realm.

Keywords: creative play, ECE, HOTS

INTRODUCTION

Playing for early childhood has more meaning than just having fun. Children play in various ways, involving existing energy and deep thinking. The child dives into the thinking of his peers, adults, and the surrounding nature in various ways known by adults as playing. Children touch, support, taste, squeeze, throw and even frequently risk by hurting themselves, so that they can develop attitudes, think for new knowledge and choose actions that are appropriate to the situation experienced. In the 21st century, a child is prepared as an active learner in order to acquire the characteristics known as 4C, namely creative, critical thinking, collaborative and communicative. A child is expected to be able to adapt to all the situations he faces and solve the problems faced. Thus the child will be able to think critically and take advantage of the opportunity to work with others. Children are expected to be able to collaborate and communicate what they feel, think or expect. Children are not only expected to get the final result but they are trained to learn to complete the process in real conditions, in the form of simulations or examples developed by adults in the form of stories, case examples or others.

Previous research on creative play activities are not found in many articles in national journals. Most studies are more associated with the relationship of play activities as a form of learning or stimulation to stimulate the potential of certain aspects or relate to a particular field of study. Some of the studies that can be found on the content that trains critical thinking are more directed at research on the application of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) especially in early mathematics and language. This can be seen in studies by Uzlak and Suryana [1], Hesterman and Targoska [2], Meilani and Faradiba [3], Tabi [4], Nisa' and Karim [5]. Previous research from various countries on creative play was traced in the following studies, Antara [6], Sumsion, Grieshaber, Ardle et.al [7], Dwirahmah [8], Hakkarainen [9], leaning on the importance of play based on teory Vygotsky that children learn from social interactions that can be set up by

the teacher. This shows that so far the meaning of creative play in early childhood educational institutions, the study of creative play, and the development for science have not been studied too much.

As the name suggests, creative play is characterized by the involvement of children's creativity when playing. Learning in ECCE, especially in most ECCE institutions in Indonesia, has indeed been proclaimed to be done with a play approach. Almost all ECCE teachers will say that play in early childhood serves to stimulate developmental tasks and improve the child's attitudes, knowledge and skills as their basic potential. Meaningful learning experiences will be interpreted by children well if children do almost all activities in a way that is liked, comfortable and fun. The child will be able to build new knowledge and demonstrate physical, motor, language, and thinking skills well if the child is given the opportunity to perform his own tasks. Play activities in ECCE are designed with an integrative holistic approach. Teachers act only as facilitators and mediators. These are most of the statements that will be delivered by ECCE teachers with various backgrounds. The background referred to here is not only from the formal educational background possessed, but also from the experience of working or attending other education or training, it could be the background of the professional status, some are professional or have not been certified. The background may also be influenced by the institution in which to work, whether from the formal or the non-formal path.

Mayesky quoted Bredenkamp (2012) saying that the curriculum is a way that teachers can choose to develop the right knowledge and skills for children while learning. Learning will be more fun for children if the play activities carried out are something that is known and provides an opportunity to develop their creative thinking skills. Children's creativity will arise if the child has basic knowledge and skills on the medium of play tools or situations on which the rules of bermian are based. Teachers in planning play activities that develop children's creative thinking skills need to understand the knowledge and skills that children have so that they can develop activities and play environments that allow children to think creatively. Thus, it can be interpreted that creative play is a play activity that gives children the opportunity to develop thought processes, attitudes and skills from those they already know to be broader and deeper to build new meaningful learning experiences.

Zund, Ryffel, Magnenat et.al [10] interpret creative play as a play activity that gives children the opportunity to involve their imagination in exploring the surrounding environment. Piscitelli and Penfold [11] argue that creative play is a basic philosophy for developing intergenerational play, that is, play that contributes significantly to the improvement of thinking ability, physical development and social skills as well as emsoi balance. Meanwhile, Chou [12] mentioned the characteristics of creative play based on the tracking of previous studies, including (a) being free, having autonomy and being easy to follow, (b) children focusing and concentrating while playing. From these three opinions, it can be concluded that creative play aims to enable children to develop imagination and creativity to improve and / or develop every aspect of development, thinking ability and learning experience.

The results of the study by Moller-Skau and Lindstol [13], Putri and Widyasari [14], Yang and Hu (2019), Louis, Fler and Hammer [15] on the development of creative thinking in learning activities in ecce need to be preceded by learning objectives designed by teachers. Palupi [16], Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey et.al [17], Azhima [18], Marwiyati and Istiningsih [19] prove how play activities can be designed to develop various aspects of development, cooperate or train children's critical thinking with stages in a scientific approach. Kang, Jun and Park (2022), Chen and Huang (2022), Ward [20] see the importance of the learning environment as a medium as a facility that children can manipulate to stimulate their thinking abilities and developmental tasks.

Hence, this paper wants to narrate the results of a survey of ECCE teachers and prospective educators in understanding the creative play that has been designed and applied. This study is limited to seeing how the teacher's tendency in designing creative play activities is preceded by writing learning objectives in the learning plan and developing creative play activities with STEAM content.

METHOD

This study is a descriptive study that aims to find out tendencies of the teacher's understanding of creative play. There were 400 respondents consisting of prospective teachers, uncertified teachers and certified teachers. Prospective educators are students of the Early Childhood Education Teacher Education study program who have worked as teachers. Uncertified teachers are teachers who have not attended Teacher Professional Education or have attended teacher professional education but have not graduated. Certified teachers are teachers who have obtained a professional teacher certificate through teacher professional education, either in the form of Teacher Professional Further Education (PLPG) or in the form of Teacher Professional Education.

The population in this study was all respondents who submitted or filled out a Google form shared randomly through Whatsapp groups, where the researcher was recorded as a member. In order to obtain valid data, all answers sent will be used as data for analysis. In other words, this study applies total sampling as a technique. Of the 400 respondents, 22 were students (5.5%), the rest were teachers. There are 180 teachers (45%) who have not been certified, 190 teachers (47.5%) who have been certified, and there are 8 people (2%) who claim to have attended professional education but have not succeeded. There were 47 teachers (11.75%) who worked as teachers for less than 5 years, as many as 90 people (22.5%) worked between 5 to 10 years. A total of 124 teachers (31%) stated to work between more than 10 to 15 years, and there were 139 teachers (34.75%) who worked more than 15 years.

The data was collected using a questionnaire in the form of a Google form which was then processed using an Excel application to see the percentage of the number of answer tendencies chosen by respondents. The findings were then analyzed descriptively to provide theoretical arguments about the tendency of facts obtained from the results of this survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Creative play activities begin with writing down the learning objectives in the lesson plan. The lesson plan is usually prepared by before the learning activities are carried out according to the rules of the mutually agreed institution. There are teachers who wrote the day before, some who were a week before, but some only wrote down the drafts under special conditions.

Table 1. Time to Design Play Activities

Once a week	94
Everyday	293
Only	13
Grand Total	400

Of the 400 respondents, 293 people (73, %) designed play activities the day before they were implemented, 94 people (23.5%) designed a week in advance and only 13 people (3.25%) designed play activities at only a certain time. Designing play activities in EARLY CHILDHOOD is usually done by writing an RPPH, a daily learning implementation plan, which is usually prepared by the teacher the day before. Writing the RPPH is

based on the weekly plan development matrix of the length of the theme to be taught. Setting up RPPH is usually based on mutual agreement between teachers. This agreement can be based on the decision of the school leadership or some based on an agreement between the schools that are members of the kindergarten association in the district. With the RPPH, teachers can design planned play activities and construct attitudes, knowledge, and skills from each content of developmental aspects based on indicators according to the applicable curriculum, in this case the average teacher applies the 2013 curriculum or known as K13 PAUD.

Good learning planning will be based on learning objectives as a benchmark for learning success. However, in the ECCE RPPH based on the K13 OF ECCE, there is no standard rule that requires teachers to write down learning objectives. The writing of the subject matter based on sub-themes or sub-themes and the writing of basic competency indicators (KD) is considered to have represented the goal of achieving learning outcomes. However, since the implementation of the teacher professional education program (PPG), teachers who have been certified understand the need to write down learning objectives in the daily learning design, as a basis for conducting assessments.

Table 2. Writing Learning Objectives

Only for activities of an incidental nature	2
Never	6
Yes, it is written in detail according to the indicators	303
Yes, but only outlines are written	89
Grand Total	400

Of the 400 respondents, 191 of them were professional teachers. However, from the respondents' answers, there were 303 people (75.75%) who answered that they wrote learning objectives according to the indicators on basic competencies (KD) that day they would score. This means that most teachers assume that writing indicator content according to indicators has represented writing the learning objectives they want to measure. While the second tendency is for teachers to write down the learning objectives in an outline only. Usually the teacher only writes down the learning objectives related to the subject matter to be explained. For activities in ECCE, this means writing according to the theme or part of the theme/topic being discussed.

Basically, learning in ECCE is carried out with play activities that are expected to be in accordance with the interests of children. This play activity should be designed as a complete integrated activity or known as holistic integrative, meaning that the play activity is a way of stimulating every aspect of the child's development intact both in the realm of attitudes, knowledge and acting skills. Therefore, play activities must be designed as a play activity known as creative play, that play is not as a play activity that represents each aspect of development with only one realm, Play should be designed as one activity that is able to be a forum for stimulation of every aspect of development and in each of these aspects children have a basis for knowledge development, acquire the skills to act as well as have the ability to behave as expected.

Table 3. Opinions about Creative Play

Play activities are designed to stimulate some aspects of a child's development	6
Play activities are designed without the need for learning objectives as long as they are in accordance with the theme and basic ability indicators	28
There are 6 aspects of child development based on PERMENDIKBUD no. 137 of 2014 that can be stimulated alternately	201

In designing play activities refer to STPPA with indicators according to the age stage of the child	25
Play activities are designed based on indicators that represent basic abilities in PERMENDIKBUD no. 146 of 2014	78
Stimulation of all aspects of development is carried out with one play activity (integrated)	12
Play activities are designed to accommodate the stimulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills together in all aspects of development	30
Play activities are designed to give children the opportunity to learn by observing, questioning, investigating, hypothesizing and communicating their experiences	10
Grand Total	400

A total of 201 teachers (52.5%) argued that creative play should refer to the achievement of child development based on the Child Development Achievement Standard (STPPA) at the end of a certain age stage stipulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture no. 137 of 2014. In the application of the curriculum, the teacher should refer to the curriculum that has been established at the same time as the regulations on the reference of the final stage of development. The ECCE curriculum is established with PERMENDIKBUD No. 146 of 2014 with K13 PAUD. However, from this data, it can be known that not all teachers understand the function of the curriculum as an operational indicator to achieve the abilities mastered by children at the end of a certain age. K13 ECCE divides developmental achievement indicators based on core competencies into four basic competencies from the realm of attitudes, knowledge and skills. The realm of attitudes is divided into two competencies, namely basic religious competencies and basic social-emotional competencies. So in understanding K13 ECCE, children need to stimulate the developmental task of each aspect of development by understanding the conceptual basis (realm of knowledge), the skills to act based on the concepts understood and have the attitude chosen to be applied. Thus, teachers can find out which indicators have been achieved by children to build potentials in every aspect of their development. From that reference, teachers can also develop creative play better. Unfortunately only 12 teachers (3%) chose the choice that creative play is the stimulation of all aspects of development carried out with one (integrated) play activity or chose a play activity designed to accommodate the stimulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills together in all aspects of development (7.5%).

The choice of answer that creative play should refer to the achievement of child development based on the Child Development Achievement Standard (STPPA) at the end of a certain age stage stipulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture no. 137 of 2014 is not entirely wrong because teachers think that the final results on aspects of child development are important. This is the reason why teachers end up ignoring how the playing process can be achieved because when referring to STPPA there are no measurement criteria, only the final result of the developmental aspect. Teachers assume that the play activities designed meet the standards of stimulation in certain aspects of development, so the teacher does not consider the involvement of the creative process how children develop a conceptual understanding of an activity carried out. As a result of this, the child performs only on the basis of the teacher's instructions. The creative process arises based on the teacher's instructions, not carried out in a way how the child understands the activities being carried out based on the concept that is understood so that creative actions will appear based on the imagination of the concept being understood. Under such conditions at least the realm of attitude is in accordance with the direction of the teacher. Aesthetic attitudes, being able to appreciate the work, being willing to try new things, daring to put forward ideas as the usual attitudes accompanying the creative process will not be very noticeable when the child plays.

The process of creative play will occur if the teacher gives the child the opportunity to develop imagination while playing. Children learn to know and reconstruct concepts from initial experiences, try and solve problems from the variety of play that is in demand, develop curiosity and various attitudes through the activities that are being carried out. Therefore, teachers need to design in advance the learning objectives to be achieved as a foothold to help prepare the invitation with a variety of plays that bridge the emergence of the child's creative process. The child's creative process is not only related to artistic or motor ideas, but the child's ability to assimilate new knowledge and reconstruct with experiences that have been done or play activities are actually the initial stage of their experience, will trigger the emergence of creative processes in language, cognitive and even social emotional aspects. Children learn to solve problems, satisfy curiosity by making their play activities a day's project, a few days and even weeks later.

From the data on the distribution of respondents, it can be known that most of the teachers are certified teachers who have worked for more than 5 years or even more than 15 years. If you look at the distribution, it can be said that most respondents have a minimum formal education of bachelor's education, because the requirements to be certified must have completed an undergraduate. Thus, most teachers should have a basis for understanding how play activities as a learning process in early childhood should be carried out and how the meaning of play for early childhood to develop creative potential that hones critical thinking, communication, and problem solving skills in addition to practicing values through good habituation can be designed. But from the choice of answers about creative play, it can be known that most teachers tend to choose play activities that represent the achievement of certain aspects of development, so they ignore indicators of how knowledge, skills and attitudes can be trained through play to achieve developmental tasks in each aspect.

Under implemented conditions, most ECCE teachers have based their play design on learning objectives that are more aimed at achieving aspects of development. The teacher designs play activities for the stimulation of aspects in the form of assignments, so the tendency that arises is that the child performs the instructions that the teacher instructs. The learning objectives made refer to the achievement of the child's potential at the end of age so as to ignore the complete indicators of the child's ability to mastery concepts (knowledge), creative actions that may be stimulated (skills) and attitudes that need to accompany when the activity is carried out. Learning objectives are the initial foothold for conducting assessments as a basis for evaluation at the end of age or at the end of the learning period. Creative play characterized by the complete involvement of each realm in all aspects of development will not be achieved if the play activity is only as a tool to measure one side of the developmental aspect on one content of the learning realm. Creativity that involves imagination in all potential aspects together will train the ability to think critically, communicate, solve problems, balance socio-emotionally, and direct children to innovate.

CONCLUSION

From the data that has been described, it can be concluded that most teachers understand creative play as a play activity that will help children achieve abilities at the end of age, not in the process of stimulating attitudes, knowledge and skills as a whole. Most teachers have understood the importance of learning objectives and have planned for each daily activity to be carried out, but these learning objectives are directed at achieving stimulation of developmental aspects not on the basic competencies of attitudes, knowledge and skills, so most respondents rely on the criteria of success in PERMENDIKBUD no. 137 of 2014.

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