



# The Influence of Loosepart Media in Enhancing Early Childhood Creativity

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## Abstract

It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on society, especially in early childhood. Government policies to study from home increase stress both among parents and students. Teachers must design fun learning for children to attract children's interest in learning from home. This study provides an overview of the influence of loose part materials on children's creativity to provide an overview to educators and parents to utilize loose part materials in the surrounding environment. This research is qualitative descriptive research with the subjects in this study were children aged 4-7 years. Meanwhile, the sources of information or informants can be teachers and parents. Data collection in the field using observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis technique used is a data reduction technique to focus attention and select the data needed in research, presentation of data, and withdrawal of conclusions. The results show that loose part media has a tremendous influence on the development of children's creativity. Children can explore and experiment with loose parts to form works according to their imagination.

**Keywords:** Loosepart, early childhood, creativity

## Introduction

Covid-19 Pandemic has a tremendous impact on the community, especially early childhood who are "hidden victims" of this pandemic. Many cases are found as a result of this pandemic, such as increased behavioral problems and stress during pandemic times. Behavioral problems include lack of socialization, anxiety disorders, depression, and others. With conditions like this, parents overcome it by giving gadgets to children.

Though giving gadgets to children, if done excessively, can cause adverse effects, including children becoming lazy, lacking confidence, lacking the ability to communicate, being more introverted, and so on (Midayana et al., 2021). To overcome this, educators and parents need to design games suitable for children following the stage and development of children that can encourage children's creativity. Games in early childhood are designed to develop children's

growth and development. Growth in children is related to physical changes such as height, weight, and so on. At the same time, the result in children is associated with the development of children's psychological abilities such as aspects of religious and moral values, physical, motoric, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and art (Fida, 2012).

According to Suyadi & Ulfah (2013), they are Playing as an approach to learning in early childhood using strategies, methods, materials/ materials, and exciting media assembled into a fun game for children. By playing, children build their knowledge by exploring, imagining, creating, discovering, digging, and making an understanding of the objects around them. Playing is an approach to learning in early childhood using strategies, methods, materials/ materials, and exciting media assembled into a fun game for children. By playing, children build their knowledge by exploring, imagining, creating, discovering, digging, and making an understanding of the objects around them. Children can get a sense of pleasure by playing, but the game itself tends to cause boredom. So there needs to be help and encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers to get a sense of pleasure from the game he does.

Loosepart media, commonly known as loose material, is a learning medium that can be moved, changed or recombined in a different way adapted to children's imagination and creativity (Theresa Casey & Robertson, 2016). Bahan loose part is very cheap and easy to find around us. Through this medium, children can develop their imagination by creating, thinking critically, combining, innovating, experimenting, and exploring, building new knowledge from their learning experience. Various types of loose part materials usually used as a learning medium for early childhood are natural basic materials, plastics, metals, wood and bamboo, glass and ceramics, yarn and fabric, and packaging materials (Haughey & Hill, 2017). These materials are very often found and found in the environment around us. This material is very cheap and may even not need to cost money if we use it because it is available in nature. Children can play freely without adult intervention by experimenting and exploring this material to gain a rich learning experience.

Creativity is the potential one has in finding, combining, and creating something new into work or product that can be used to solve problems faced by humans in specific fields (Bastian, 2020). Creativity in early childhood can arise through fun games that suit their interests. Therefore, educators in PAUD institutions need to design active, innovative, creative, practical, and fun learning to provide stimulation to children so that children's creativity can develop optimally.

Factors supporting early childhood creativity are: a) Stimulation from parents, b) Parents provide facilities for children to do creativity, and c) accompany children in creativity. While the factors inhibiting creativity are: a) there is no encouragement of exploration, b) Parents provide less stimulus for the child's creativity, and c) parents do not provide facilities that support children's creativity (Renawati & Suyadi, 2021). Some of these factors are very important to consider by teachers in providing stimulation to students' creativity. Giving the right stimulus can lead to student comfort in learning so that student creativity can develop optimally. This can be shown when in learning, children can provide ideas or ideas and incredible work by the teacher.

Learning activities using loose part-based media can be a solution for educators in developing children's creativity in school. Imamah & Muqowim (2020) suggest that Loose part-based learning can provide flexible learning because it allows all children to play freely, and the role of parents or teachers does not dominate when children play. By playing freely, children will get various games and be able to create various experiences in play. Playing freely here does not mean that children can play freely. But the teacher is here as a facilitator for children when they play. The teacher provides direction and guidance to children when playing.

Research on the use of loose part media to increase early childhood creativity has been conducted by Alkifudin & Suhanadji (2020). His study describes the application of loose part media in the form of planning, presentation, application, and follow-up (Alkifudin & Suhanadji, 2020). In increasing children's creativity, teachers also need to understand the use of loose part media. After understanding the use of loose part media, the teacher can apply it to students so that learning can be optimally absorbed.

In their research, Mulyati & Sukmawijaya (2013) revealed that creativity is essential in early childhood. The ability of creativity in children can be introduced by making skills from used goods. Used goods that are not used can be processed into valuable objects for both children and parents. In addition, using used goods for children's learning materials can reduce household waste.

In a study conducted by Setyowati et al. (2021), it was stated that using educational game tools as learning media for students could be done by utilizing used goods in the surrounding environment. Using used goods as teaching materials for children and reducing environmental pollution can also increase creativity in children. In addition, learning media is very easy to obtain around us without paying or being free. Children are more interested and fun to play, learn and be creative using these used goods. Another study conducted by Mutahijhah et al. (2021) states that loosepart media is very suitable to be used to increase constructive creativity for children. Used goods are one of the components of this loosepart media. Children can use this media to learn and play by exploring with the media. Children are free to be creative, try, and combine various loose parts provided by the teacher in building their knowledge. However, the research conducted focused on the influence of loosepart media on children's creativity, so that educators, educational institutions and parents are interested in using loosepart media as a medium of learning and play for their children. This loose part material is very fun for early childhood so that with this research, it can be used as a reference for teachers or parents in designing games made from loose parts

## **Literature Review**

### *Early Childhood Play and Games*

Play is a fun activity for children and valuable to develop the various potentials that they have as a whole, including aspects of social development, emotions, and personality, children's play activities can optimize the rate of stimulation both from the outside and from within, actualizing the potential in solving the problems they face in real life, both through self-

awareness and with the help of others (Friends, parents, siblings, and teachers) (Khadijah & Armanila, 2017).

Play activities have a massive function for aspects of early childhood development, namely recognizing themselves to the outside world, emotional development (feeling happy, sad, passionate, disappointed, proud, angry, and fearful), social development (social interaction, cooperation, saving resources, caring for others), and helping children master social conflicts and traumas, in solving problems they face in real life, both through self-awareness and with the help of others (Fadlillah, 2017).

Play is a means of socialization, and it is hoped that play can provide opportunities for children to explore, discover, express feelings, create, and learn fun. Like Plato and Aristotle, Froebel considers playing activities with practical value. That is, playing as a medium to improve specific skills and abilities in children. Play also serves as a means of refreshing to restore one's energy after tired work and is infested with saturation.

The stage of early childhood play is the exploration stage, the game stage, the play stage, and the daydreaming stage. Until the baby is about three months old, their game is only limited to being able to see people and objects and make less well-coordinated efforts to reach for an object shown in front of him. In the first year, the child has started to be able to use game tools, which initially can only explore his toys. But after they are between the ages of 2 and 3, children begin to imagine that toys have a nature of life and can move, talk and feel. Children's skill in using game tools reaches their peak between 5 and 6 years. After entering school, the type of children's games is very diverse. At first, they continue to play with toys, especially when alone. Besides that, they feel interested in games, sports, hobbies, and other mature forms of play. As puberty approaches, children begin to lose interest in games they used to enjoy and spend a lot of time daydreaming, which is typical of teenagers when they make sacrifices when they think they are not treated well and are not understood by anyone (Ardini & Lestaringrum, 2018).

The theories related to play in early childhood are as follows:

- a. Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson developed the Theory of Psychoanalysis. Freud (2021) Freud said that through play, children could overcome traumatic experiences or frustrations that children have experienced. Erikson (1993), in his book, considers that play is an important activity for children to release emotions and develop self-esteem when they can master their body and some social skills.
- b. Piaget's theory of cognitive development sees that humans have a structure of cognitive patterns, both mental and physical, that form the basis of a person's activities and behaviors that are closely related to the stages of child growth. This cognitive theory tests play activities to intellectual development. This theory believes that human affection and emotion arise from the same process in the stages of cognitive growth and development (Piaget & Inhelder, 2008).
- c. Vigotsky's theory emphasizes that social relationships influence cognitive development. This is because children first gain knowledge of their social life and then develop cognitive development. Through play, the child will think and find ways to solve existing problems. Play theory is considered very important to support and become a reference in the activity

of play and determine the stage of development of children both from the aspects of language, cognitive, social-emotional, affection, and motor physics. All of this is explained by the theories that have been presented by several experts such as Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky above (Vygotsky, 2020).

The factors that can affect the development of children's play areas are as follows (Ardini & Lestarinigrum, 2018):

- a. Health. Healthy children have a lot of energy to play compared to less healthy children, so healthy children spend a lot of time playing, which requires a lot of energy.
- b. Intelligence. Intelligent children are more active than less intelligent children. Intelligent children prefer intellectual games or games that stimulate their thinking a lot, such as drama games, watching movies, or reading intellectual readings.
- c. Gender. Girls play less as a learning method for early childhood and spend a lot of energy such as climbing, running around, or other physical activities than boys. This difference does not mean that girls are less healthy than boys, but society's view that girls should be gentle and behave kindly.
- d. Milieu. Children who are raised in an environment that provides less equipment, time, and playroom for children, will cause children to play activities to decrease.
- e. Socioeconomic status. Children raised in families with high socioeconomic status are more widely available than children raised in low-income families.

The types of play for early childhood are as follows (Fadlillah, 2017):

- a. In social space, the teacher observes the child's way of playing and will get the impression that the child's participation in play activities with his friends will show a different degree of participation. Preterm grouping play activities based on the degree of participation of a person in play; unoccupied play (no matter), solitary play (solitary), onlooker play ((audience), parallel play (parallel play), associative play (associative), and cooperative play (cooperative).
- b. Playing with objects is a play activity when children use or play with particular objects, and these objects can be fun entertainment for children. Therefore, early childhood education institutions must prepare various games while providing things that can be used safely and comfortably by children in playing. Types of playing with objects include practical play, symbolic play, and playing by the rules.
- c. Early childhood education is often faced with various problems, both related to the field of development and related to social relations. Through role-playing, children try to explore human relationships by demonstrating them and discussing them so that they can jointly explore feelings, attitudes, values, and various problem-solving strategies. As a learning model, role-playing is rooted in the personal and social dimensions. From the personal dimension, this model seeks to help children find meaning in social environments that benefit them. Through this model, children are invited to learn to solve personal problems faced with the help of social groups consisting of classmates.

### *Media Loosepart*

Loosepart was introduced by a New York architect named Simon Nicholson and came into use in 1971. After Nicholson published an article titled "Theory of Loosepart", Nicholson described the loose part as a variable and gave an example. Loosepart media is a learning medium with the Reggio Emilia approach (Farwati, 2021). Early childhood play activities are very effective using loose part materials because they can be moved, carried, combined, combined, redesigned, aligned, separated, then put together differently. Materials that include the loose part in the form of plastic, stone, buttons, wood, twigs, leaves, cotton, and others are very safe to use as the primary material for early childhood.

Some of the advantages of loose part materials compared to other factory-made toys are:

- a. Loosepart materials are easy to get in the environment around us and are very cheap even if we can get free or free like natural materials.
- b. Children can design games they like every day.
- c. Children are free to make various types of games that are in demand according to the child's imagination.
- d. Children can experiment and explore building their knowledge by dismantling, reuniting, subsuming, combining, transferring, and moving according to the child's imagination.
- e. Children become increasingly busy with their games because they are exciting.
- f. Children are increasingly interested in games by socializing with their friends.

Some loose components are natural basic materials, plastics, fabrics and threads, wood and bamboo, ceramics, used goods, and grains. Metal. Loose parts have an open nature, so they are very supple, easy to change, add, modify, etc. Because of the nature of loose parts that are open and as lose material, loose parts have a meaning: a) Do not use glue, b) Not using scissors, c) The material is maintained intact to be used repeatedly, d) Don't help your child do it with your hands, but guide them with questions.

### *Early Childhood Creativity*

Sit et al. (2016) mention in their book that Fakhriyani (2016) argued that creativity is the ability of a person who in everyday life is associated with special achievements in creating new things or something that already exists into new concepts, finding ways of solving problems that most people cannot find, making new ideas that have never existed, and seeing the possibilities that will occur. The creative stages are preparation, concentration, incubation, illumination, and production. Preparation for creativity is mostly done on the basis of "interest". The success of great men is achieved and endured, not by sudden leaps, but by hard effort. The concentration stage is a continuation of the study process at the preparatory stage, but more intensively. The concentration stage is the concentration time, the time of weighing, the time of testing, the initial time, to try and experience failure, trial and error. If from that effort of concentration, not born successful in a reasonable time, concentration peaks into a kind of madness. Incubation is a time where little by little we are free from the wrinkles of thinking, work habits, the prevalence of user ways.

The illumination stage is the most enjoyable because it is the most enjoyable part of creation. Because the phase when everything is clear and the application for problem-solving, problem solving, working, new answers suddenly seem like lightning. At the time of the illumination stage, it came. We're like drunk people. We are very happy indescribable. This can be understood because the illumination stage arrives shortly after a solid concentration and disappointment that is often not small. Find ideas, solutions, solutions, and new ways of working, and we must intervene to make it happen. Work skills are an essential part of creative work. No matter how many ideas, ideas, inspirations, or good dreams are found, they will all disappear like dew in the sun if they cannot be realized. So creative people must have work skills both individually and in groups.

Creativity has excellent benefits for children's lives in the future. Because the soul of a creative child has the values of creativity, namely: a.) creativity gives children great pleasure and personal satisfaction that has a real influence on the development of his personality. For example, nothing can give a child a greater sense of satisfaction than creating something of their own, whether it's a house-shaped, made from a chair flipped and covered in a blanket, or a picture of a dog. And there is nothing more diminishing his self-esteem than criticism or mockery of the creation of the question of what form it makes. b) being creative is important for young children to add spice to their game activities center of their life. If creativity can make the game fun, they will feel happy and satisfied. This will instead foster suitable personal and social adjustments. c) achievement is of great importance in the adjustment of their lives, so creativity helps them achieve success in meaningful areas and are viewed favorably by people who mean to them will be a source of excellent ego satisfaction. d) The important and often forgotten value of creativity is leadership. At every age level, the leader must contribute something to the group that is important to the group members, and the donation may be in the form of proposals for new and different play activities or in the form of recommendations on how special responsibilities to the group (Hurlock, 1950).

Some of the reasons for the importance of creativity need to be planted early on, namely:

- a. By creating, people can realize self/actualization, a basic need on the seventh level of the eight needs in human life. Creativity is a manifestation of a fully functioning individual.
- b. Creativity or creative thinking, the ability to see various possible solutions to a problem, is a form of thinking that, until now, still lacks attention in education.
- c. Busying yourself creatively is beneficial (for the personal self and the environment) and provides satisfaction to the individual.
- d. Creativity is what enables people to improve their quality of life. In this era of development, the well-being and success of society and the state depend on creative contributions in the form of new ideas, discoveries, and technologies.

## **Methods**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Thus, qualitative descriptive research is research conducted to describe phenomena or events that occur today with observation techniques, interviews, content analysis, and other data collection methods to

present the responses and behavior of the subject. The qualitative approach is considered suitable for this study because it can explore children's behavior after playing the loose part. The topics in the study were children ages 4-7. At the same time, the source of information or informants can be teachers and parents. Data collection in the field is done using observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis technique used is a data reduction technique to focus attention and select the data needed in research, presentation of data, and withdrawal of conclusions.

### **Result and Discussion**

Learning by utilizing loose part media significantly affects six aspects of learners' development, including:

1. Religious and Moral Values (NAM) When learners play a loose part by using natural materials such as stone, gravel, stems, leaves, and water, they understand well that these materials are God's creation that needs to be maintained.
2. Physical Motor (FISMOT) appears when learners use the fingers of their hands to touch, roll, grasp, move, stack, and push various loose part components. Learners also perform multiple movements to train strength, stability, balance, flexibility, and agility. These physical activities teach the child's eye, hand, and foot coordination in gross and fine motor movements.
3. Cognitive (KOG) When playing using loose parts, learners are invited to think logically and critically and solve simple problems. This cognitive process needs to be honed early on in learners.
4. Language (BHS) When learners play using loose parts, children generally express feelings or ideas seen from speech or babble.
5. Social-Emotional (SOSEM) When the loose part is played freely according to the choice and will of the child so that the child is not afraid of being wrong and more confident. In playing, learners can use it independently alone or play with friends in groups.
6. Art When learners play by using loose parts, creativity learners arise because learners are free to make designs shown through real works.

In addition, the influence of using these media for these learners is to be able to develop their creativity according to their imagination of learners. Sometimes a child's imagination is more than an adult's imagination. Many of the work of learners is made from loose part material because it is very diverse and easy to find. The influence of the use of loose part media for learners in TK Tunas Bhakti Ngalian, according to Bunda Sarinah class B said that:

"When I assess learners, it turns out that the loose part media greatly affects the development of learners in the form of abilities in terms of spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Because with one ingredient, children can change the shape into a variety of creativity as they wish".

Bunda Suwati, a class A trustee at Tunas Bhakti Ngalian Kindergarten. He said that:

"The use of this media greatly affects the development of learners, let alone during pandemics like this which is learning with a learning system from home. Because this



loose part of media is very cheap, easy to get, and unwittingly by parents, this media greatly affects the development of their children. But sometimes some parents are still reluctant to find the materials used in BDR learning for reasons of busyness or not having time so that there are still children who do not send their duties”.

The opinion of parents who always accompany their children in learning from home, as conveyed by Mrs. Atik Feri Madyawati, parents of Ananda Arta group B TK Tunas Bhakti Ngalian, in his interview with researchers:

"If my child prefers to play with the ground, play in the car, make toys with used bottles, or natural materials such as bananas than playing with factory-made toys such as cars, Lego etc. If Mas Arta is more accustomed to playing with the materials around because I can not buy toys from the factory. If at home Arta made the land into a mountain, the land was made at home, he played in the yard, playing bananas to be made a gun, to make othok-othok."

Similarly, Mother Wiwik Mulyani from KB Ar Rohmah Ngaglik said that this loose part media is very suitable to be used as a learning medium for early childhood. Children can experiment with objects around them as they please, children can be creative indefinitely, and sometimes because it is too fun for children to play with the loose part, I, as a teacher, do not think children can make objects that I never thought that the child could make.

In line with Bunda Wiwik Mulyani, Bunda Suryanti from KB Among Putro Jangkang Sleman also said that by playing loose parts, children become more creative. For example, when playing with sand, teachers exemplify making mountains, and children imitate what teachers do. Children develop in groups to create rivers with sand rocks, twigs, and leaves and drain water into artificial rivers like rivers in real life.

Related to this loose part of media, Bunda Sri Sundari from KB Among Putro jangkang Sleman also gave his opinion,

“when using used materials, children make cardboard as hallways, and children are very happy with their friends to play the hallways, then after being satisfied to play the hallways, children make cardboard into houses. They are engrossed in playing with the houses with the cardboard, and all the items are put in the artificial house made of cardboard. Maybe the child imagines the cardboard like a home in real life."

Bunda Siti Basiroh from TK Al Ikhlas Ngaglik Sleman also gave her opinion related to the creativity of children playing using loose part media, namely

"During sports activities, I make halang rintang games using bottle media, aqua glasses, pieces of paper, and used tires. My son is very enthusiastic about the game I designed. After playing with their teacher, some children invite their friends to design their games according to their ideas. They use pieces of wood, used bottles, used tires, and anything they find around them. They play along with their friends in change."

Loose part media significantly affects the development of children because, at first, a loose part will nourish the child's curiosity. Naturally, this curiosity will encourage the child to manipulate in such a way according to the child's idea. Then from the interest, the child began to explore with loose part materials and play trial and error. By playing trial and error, the child

tries to realize the idea or idea. This child begins to explore with loose part materials. Experimenting will train children to be able to express their own opinions based on their experiences. The idea or idea that the child pours in the loose part will eventually lead the child to a work that he believes is the result of his thoughts. This is the creative process that the child goes through.

Initially, the teacher gave guidance and direction to children in using this loose part material to play. The child then tries to play a game according to the teacher's direction. Then the child continues trying, observing, designing, and combining various toys with loose parts. These toys continue to be developed by children who are unknowingly engrossed in playing with the media and doing real works that sometimes the teacher doesn't imagine they can do these works.

Children's creativity can be shown during other learning sessions in class or at home. For example, when drawing freely, children sometimes draw games designed when playing with loose part media. When playing outbound outdoors, children sometimes give their ideas and ideas related to the design of the game carried out by the teacher. Sometimes during breaks playing outdoor games, children design their games with their friends using used media and other loose parts around them, such as stones, leaves, twigs, and so on. When discussing learning materials in class, children often share their ideas and ideas that are sometimes unimaginable to the teacher. At home, children sometimes design games with various objects around them to play with their siblings using materials such as cardboard, used tires, wood, small stones, and others.

## Conclusion

Playing using loose part material can increase children's creativity, starting from dabbling, then continuing to experiment with the material. Children are more engrossed and busy with their games to make their ideas into real works. Children's creativity can be seen when making various toys made from loose parts during learning. In the discussion of material in class, children convey their ideas and ideas. When playing outdoors, children design games with their friends. And when free to draw, the child draws the toys he likes. When at home, children design games with their siblings with used goods.

This study only provides an overview of how loose part media affects children's creativity. Of course, it is necessary to develop how to design learning with loose part media so that learning for children feels fun and enjoyable. It is hoped that researchers who will research similar things should be more creative in designing and processing media made from loose parts. Because this loose part of media is enjoyable for children, teachers must be creative in developing these learning media so that children are enthusiastic about learning.

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