

STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER SERVICES IN CREATIVITY TO MAKE INSPIRATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

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ABSTRAK

Peningkatan kualitas pelayanan guru PAUD merupakan aspek penting dalam mengembangkan kreativitas dan alat peraga pendidikan yang inspiratif.. Teknik Participatory Action Research (PAR) digunakan untuk meningkatkan pelayanan guru PAUD dalam mendorong kreativitas dan menghasilkan alat peraga pendidikan yang inspiratif melalui Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (PKM). PKM dimulai dengan fase perencanaan kolaboratif dengan guru PAUD, dan pemangku kepentingan terkait lainnya. Tim PKM melibatkan guru dalam serangkaian lokakarya dan pertemuan untuk mengetahui kebutuhan dan berpartisipasi aktif dalam sesi pelatihan, kegiatan praktik, dan sesi refleksi selama tahap implementasi. Mereka didorong untuk mencoba teknik baru, mendiskusikan pengalaman mereka, dan bekerja sama untuk mengatasi masalah dan hambatan yang muncul selama proses berlangsung. Tim PKM memberikan dukungan dan arahan yang berkelanjutan, memupuk suasana kolaboratif dan berdaya di mana instruktur dapat meningkatkan kreativitas mereka dan membangun sumber daya instruksional yang menarik. Dampak PKM dievaluasi menggunakan berbagai pendekatan pengumpulan data, termasuk survei, observasi, wawancara, dan pencatatan praktik kreatif instruktur dan materi pedagogis yang dihasilkan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan diri, pengetahuan, dan kemampuan guru PAUD meningkat secara signifikan dalam merancang dan membuat alat peraga pendidikan yang inspiratif. Studi ini menghasilkan rasa kepemilikan, pemberdayaan, dan pertumbuhan profesional berkelanjutan dengan mengintegrasikan guru PAUD sebagai peserta aktif dan mitra penelitian. Ini juga memudahkan para guru yang berpartisipasi dan komunitas pendidikan anak usia dini yang lebih besar untuk menyebarluaskan dan berbagi praktik-praktik unggulan. Temuan ini dapat membantu para pendidik, peneliti, dan pembuat kebijakan menciptakan dan mengimplementasikan intervensi yang kolaboratif dan sesuai konteks untuk meningkatkan kreativitas guru dalam pendidikan anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: *Guru Paud, Kreativitas, Alat Peraga Pendidikan yang Inspiratif*

ABSTRACT

Improving the quality of PAUD teacher services is essential in developing creativity and inspiring educational aids. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) technique is used to improve PAUD teacher services by encouraging creativity and producing educational teaching aids that are inspiring through Community Service (PKM). PKM begins with a collaborative planning phase with PAUD teachers and other relevant stakeholders. The PKM team engages teachers in workshops and meetings to identify needs and actively participates in training sessions, hands-on activities, and reflection sessions during implementation. They are encouraged to try new techniques, discuss their experiences, and work together to overcome problems and obstacles that arise along the way. The Joint Community Service team provides ongoing support and direction, fostering a collaborative and empowered atmosphere where instructors can leverage their creativity and build engaging instructional resources. The impact of the Joint Community Service was evaluated using a variety of data collection approaches, including surveys, observations, interviews, and recordings of the instructor's creative practices and the resulting pedagogical materials. These

findings indicate that the self-confidence, knowledge, and abilities of PAUD teachers significantly increase in designing and making educational teaching aids that are inspiring. This study generates a sense of ownership, empowerment, and continued professional growth by integrating PAUD teachers as active participants and research partners. It also makes it easier for participating teachers and the more prominent early childhood education community to disseminate and share best practices. These findings can help educators, researchers, and policymakers create and implement collaborative, context-appropriate interventions to enhance teacher creativity in early childhood education.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Teacher, Creativity, Inspirative Educational Tools*

PENDAHULUAN

Early childhood education (PAUD) has an important role in shaping character and preparing quality young people [1]–[4]. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve the quality of early childhood education services in order to meet the increasingly complex needs of children [5]. One of the factors that can affect the quality of early childhood education services is educational teaching aids [6]. Educational teaching aids are tools used by teachers to provide learning opportunities for children [7], [8]. Effective educational teaching aids can help children understand the concepts taught easily and attract their interest in learning [9], [10]. However, there are still many schools or early childhood education institutions that do not yet have adequate educational aids. In addition, most of the available educational aids are still limited to conventional shapes and types, making them less attractive to children.

Innovation and creativity in learning are needed so that children can be actively involved in the learning process. In the context of early childhood education learning, media or educational aids that are creative and interest children can increase the effectiveness of learning [11], [12]. In addition, learning media can increase children's motivation and learning outcomes [13]–[15]. Therefore, it is necessary to make efforts to increase teacher creativity in making educational teaching aids that are inspiring.

Community service can be a solution to improving the quality of PAUD education services through creativity in making inspiring educational aids. Through community service, students or lecturers can collaborate with early childhood education teachers to make educational aids that are interesting and effective. This community service activity can involve several stages, such as training in making educational aids, assistance in the use of educational aids, and evaluation of the results of using educational aids.

Several studies have shown that training and mentoring can increase teacher creativity in making educational tools [16]–[18]. In addition, the use of educational aids can improve children's learning outcomes in the basic concept material of numbers and letters in PAUD [19].

Therefore, community service can be an effective solution to improving the quality of PAUD education services through creativity in making inspiring educational teaching aids.

In addition to the research previously mentioned, several other studies have also shown the importance of using educational aids in early childhood education services. For example, research by [20] shows that the use of educational aids improves early childhood storytelling ability. In addition, research by Dewi, *et.al* [21] regarding improving children's gross motor skills can be carried out through the use of educational teaching aids in early childhood education. Other research also shows that the use of educational aids that are inspiring and creative can help increase motivation and interest in learning in early childhood [22]–[24].

From the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the use of educational aids in PAUD education services can improve various aspects of child development, such as motor skills, storytelling abilities, and learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers in early childhood education services need to understand the importance of using educational teaching aids that are inspiring and creative in facilitating the learning process in early childhood. In addition, improving the quality of early childhood education services also requires support and collaboration from various parties, such as the government, educational institutions, and the wider community.

According to the results of previous research, community service in making educational teaching aids that are inspiring can improve the quality of early childhood education services through creativity in making educational aids that are attractive and effective. Community service can involve stages of training, mentoring, and evaluating the results of using educational teaching aids. It is hoped that through this community service, PAUD teachers can increase their creativity in making educational teaching aids that are inspiring, help children understand the concepts being taught more easily, and attract children's learning interest.

METHOD

The Community Service Program organized by the Student Association of the Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. The research methodology in this community service article uses the participatory action research (PAR) method. The PAR method is a participatory research method that involves stakeholders in every stage of research, from planning to implementation and evaluation. The purpose of the PAR method is to empower the community or group under study to take actions that can improve their quality of life. The target of community service is kindergarten teachers, totaling 20 people who are members of cluster II of the Koto Tengah sub-district.

Table 1. Data on the Number of Kindergarten Teachers in Cluster II Kindergarten, Koto Tangah District, Padang City

No.	Kindergarten	Count
1	Qn	4
2	JR	3
3	AYA	2
4	AM	3
5	NI	3
6	VB	2
7	AS	3
Jumlah		20

The following are the steps in the PAR method used in this study: 1) Problem identification and planning stages. This stage is carried out by identifying problems or needs in PAUD education services through discussions with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the local community. After that, action is planned that can be taken to overcome the problem. 2) Data collection stage. This stage is carried out by involving stakeholders in collecting the required data, such as through observation, interviews, or questionnaires. The data obtained will be the basis for developing solutions or taking actions. 3) Action implementation stage. This stage is carried out by involving stakeholders in implementing the planned actions or solutions. In this research, the action taken is the development of educational teaching aids that are inspiring and creative. 4) Evaluation and reflection stage. This stage is carried out by involving stakeholders in evaluating the results of actions or solutions that have been taken. This evaluation can be done through discussions, interviews, or questionnaires. After the evaluation is carried out, reflection will be carried out to evaluate the success or failure of the actions or solutions that have been taken, as well as determine the further actions that need to be taken.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results:

The results of our research using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach through Community Service (PKM) in improving PAUD teacher services to encourage creativity and produce inspirational educational aids reveal a significant impact on various relevant aspects.

First, we found a consistent increase in the self-confidence of PAUD teachers after participating in a series of workshops and meetings in PKM. Teachers feel more confident in designing and manufacturing innovative and engaging educational aids. They develop confidence in their ability to face challenges and obstacles while developing teaching aids. This high self-confidence positively impacts teacher motivation and commitment to improving the quality of early childhood learning.

Second, through collaboration with the PKM team and related stakeholders, PAUD teachers experienced a substantial increase in their knowledge. They can access new resources, exchange information with peers, and gain insight into best practices in developing educational aids. Teachers develop a deeper understanding of instructional design principles, innovative teaching methods, and creative strategies to enhance children's learning experiences. This increase in knowledge provides a strong foundation for PAUD teachers to implement more creative and relevant approaches to their teaching.

Third, the ability of PAUD teachers to design and make educational teaching aids that are inspiring has increased tremendously. Through active participation in workshops, training and hands-on sessions, teachers are provided opportunities for creative exploration and the development of innovative teaching aids. They learn about using different materials and techniques to create engaging learning experiences for children. Teachers actively apply the new knowledge and skills they acquire during PKM, leading to the development of educational aids that are interesting and relevant to the context of early childhood education.

In addition, our research also shows a positive impact in terms of ownership, empowerment, and professional growth for PAUD teachers. Teachers feel ownership of and are actively involved in developing inspirational educational aids. They feel supported and valued by the PKM team and other stakeholders, strengthening collaborative bonds and increasing motivation to strive to implement the best practices they have acquired. Teachers saw growth in their knowledge and skills and increased confidence in leading creative and innovative learning.

Our results also show that the impact of PKM is not only limited to the PAUD teachers involved but also impacts the broader early childhood education community. Teachers participating in PKM can share the best practices they have developed with their peers and the education community. Creates a collaborative environment where valuable experience and knowledge can be shared and used more widely to improve the quality of early childhood education.

Discussion:

The results of our research show that the Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR) through Community Service (PKM) is practical in improving PAUD teacher services in developing creativity and producing educational teaching aids that are inspiring. PKM provides a collaborative platform where PAUD teachers can actively participate in learning, share experiences, and develop the knowledge and skills needed to design innovative educational aids. Through a series of workshops, training, and hands-on activities, PAUD teachers experience an increase in their confidence, knowledge, and ability to design attractive educational aids. They feel supported and involved in their personal and professional development in an empowered and collaborative environment. In addition, PKM also has a broader impact through the dissemination of best practices developed by the teachers involved. Contributes to improving the quality of early childhood education by enriching children's learning experiences and enhancing teachers' creativity in educational communities.

This research provides valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers in developing and implementing collaborative and context-appropriate interventions to enhance teacher creativity in early childhood education. In a changing context, it is essential to encourage teachers' active participation and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and innovative practices to achieve continuous improvement in ECD education services.

In the following, the researcher attaches some documentation during the community service program.



Fig. 1 Brochure



Fig 2. Opening



Fig 3. Implementation of community service activities



Fig 4. Closing

CONCLUSION

Through implementing the Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR) through Community Service (PKM), the findings of this study provide several important conclusions. First, active collaboration between the PKM team, PAUD teachers, and relevant stakeholders creates an empowered and collaborative environment where PAUD teachers can increase their creativity. This collaboration plays a crucial role in developing inspiring educational teaching aids. Second, PKM provides space for PAUD teachers to try new techniques, discuss their

experiences, and work together to overcome problems and obstacles that arise. This process promotes continued professional growth and enhances teachers' confidence, knowledge, and skills in designing and creating inspiring educational aids. Third, the PKM evaluation uses various data collection approaches, including surveys, observations, interviews, and recordings of instructors' creative practices and the resulting pedagogical materials. This data collection method provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of PKM on improving PAUD teacher services. Fourth, this study's findings indicate that PKM impacts participating PAUD teachers and helps disseminate best practices into the broader early childhood education community. This creates opportunities for knowledge sharing and more comprehensive collaboration in enhancing teacher creativity in early childhood education.

In conclusion, the PAR approach through PKM provides a practical framework for improving PAUD teacher services in encouraging creativity and producing inspiring educational aids in integrating PAUD teachers as active participants and research partners. PKM has a positive impact by increasing the self-confidence, knowledge, and abilities of PAUD teachers. These findings provide valuable guidance for educators, researchers and policymakers in designing collaborative and contextual interventions to enhance teacher creativity in early childhood education.

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