

Implementation of Finger Painting Media in Expressing Children's Emotions in Early Childhood Education Ummul Habibah

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of *finger painting* as a tool to help children express their emotions at PAUD Ummul Habibah. Theoretical frameworks used in this study include Erik Erikson's theory of emotional development and art-based approaches in early childhood education. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that the use of *finger painting* media is proven effective and provides a fun and open space for children to express emotions such as happiness, anger, fear, and sadness. This sensory experience not only fosters creativity but also serves as a therapeutic means to help children understand and channel their emotions positively. Furthermore, teachers can more easily recognize children's emotional states through the colors, patterns, and behaviors observed during the activity. The teacher's empathetic and responsive role is a key success factor, helping children interpret and control their feelings through positive interaction. Overall, *finger painting* creates a pleasant learning environment and supports the comprehensive emotional development of children.

Keywords: *Finger Painting*, Emotional Expression, Early Childhood.

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2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era
<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE/index>

Introduction

Early childhood has a need to express their emotions and creativity. At an early age, children begin to develop the ability to recognize and express their feelings. However, children often find it difficult to express their emotions in an effective way. Therefore, methods that can help children develop their expressive and creative abilities are needed. One way to meet this need is through art activities, such as *finger painting*. By using *finger painting*, children can express their feelings and ideas through colors and shapes. This activity can also help them develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. The technique of painting directly with dyes is called *Finger Painting*, which is the technique of painting with the fingers of the hand directly without the help of tools. Thus, children can replace brushes with their fingers directly. This study aims to find out how the implementation of finger painting media can help children in PAUD Ummul Habibah in expressing their emotions.

The benefits of *Finger Painting* are to increase children's thinking skills and make children to do their creativity through the imagination that exists in children, and *Finger Painting* can train children's courage to explore with various colors, as well as train small muscles, as well as eye and hand coordination. From the above opinion, the author concludes that *Finger Painting* is a technique of drawing using the fingers of the hand through a color paint tool made with food ingredients so that it is not harmful to children who are poured into paper or cardboard. This activity can train children's fine motor skills and also the creativity that children have (M Hasibuan, 2024).

One of the important aspects that needs to be developed from an early age is emotional intelligence, namely the ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately and be able to build positive social relationships with others. Emotional intelligence not only affects children's ability to manage personal emotions, but also plays a major role in the formation of character, empathy, and social skills that are provided for in later life. Children who have good emotional intelligence tend to be more adaptable, have self-control, are able to resolve conflicts, and show a tolerant attitude towards differences. (Eliana, 2025)

The role of teachers is crucial in helping children understand, express, and regulate their emotions. Teachers who have an understanding of children's emotional development will be more sensitive to children's feelings and able to provide appropriate responses. They can use various strategies, such as individual approaches, role-playing activities, storytelling, light discussions, or using visual media to help children recognize and manage their emotions in a healthy way. (Mhd. Habibu Rahman, 2020)

In the context of education, understanding children's emotional development is very important for educators and parents. This is because healthy emotions can contribute to a child's learning ability. Children who are able to manage their emotions well tend to be better prepared to learn, collaborate, and participate in social activities. Conversely, children who have difficulty managing their emotions may face challenges in learning and interacting with their peers. (R Nofianti, 2024)

In the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) environment, teachers have an important role in creating learning situations that are fun, safe, and support children's emotional exploration. PAUD Ummul Habibah as one of the early childhood education institutions, realizes the importance of a holistic approach in shaping children's character and emotional development. Therefore, the use of *finger painting* media in learning activities not only aims to develop fine motor aspects, but also becomes a vehicle to stimulate healthy emotional growth.

However, in its implementation, the implementation of *finger painting media* in PAUD institutions does not always run optimally. Some of the challenges that often arise include limited facilities and infrastructure, lack of understanding of educators about the emotional meaning behind children's work, and lack of parental involvement in the

children's learning process at home. Therefore, there is a need for further study on how the implementation of *finger painting media* is carried out in real terms in the field, especially in PAUD Ummul Habibah, and the extent to which the media is able to help children express their emotions.

In providing guidance to humans, the Qur'an and hadith discuss many different types of human emotional expressions when facing or experiencing something. The expressions displayed are very rich, including primary expressions and secondary emotions. Primary emotions are basic emotions that are considered biologically that have been formed since the beginning of birth. Among the primary emotions are joy, sadness, anger and fear. While secondary emotions are more complex emotions than primary emotions. Secondary emotions are emotions that contain self-awareness or self-evaluation, so their growth depends on a person's cognitive development. These various emotions arise in humans in certain conditions and situations and their control is determined by different abilities in each individual himself (Sukatin, 2020).

In the Islamic view, children are a mandate imposed by Allah on their parents, therefore parents must maintain and maintain the trust. Therefore, there is no reason for parents to ignore the education of children in the family. In fact, all education experts agree that the Family is the first and main educational institution in providing educational provisions for quality human resource developers. (S.Rozana, 2020)

The golden development period of a child begins when it is still an infant, making this stage of development unique and distinctive. In accordance with Law no. 146 of 2014 which regulates learning standards for early childhood, there are six aspects of development that must be considered, namely: physical and movement development, thinking development, development in art, development in social and emotional interaction, development in religious and moral values, and also development in literacy or language. (Asmidar Parapat, 2023).

Education for early childhood is very important because education for early childhood is the basis for the formation of human character as a whole. Therefore, character education today is absolutely necessary not only at school, but at home and in the social environment. It absolutely needs to be formed for the survival of this nation." Character education is education for 237 million Indonesians". After all, character is the key to individual success. Because discipline is one of the important aspects that must be formed and developed in an effort to make human beings with good personalities. With discipline, getting used to obeying existing rules or agreements to do good deeds. Basically, discipline is an absolute necessity in childhood considering that this period is the most appropriate time for the formation of children's disciplined character. Every child has the potential to understand the rules that develop at every stage of his life. Discipline is needed to help children's personal and social adjustments. Through discipline, children can learn to behave in an approved way and in return they can be easily accepted by their social environment. (RD Utami, 2020).

Thus, it is important for all parties, both educators, parents, and educational institutions, to understand that children's emotional expressions can not only appear in the form of behavior or verbal language, but also through art media. *Finger painting* is one of the most relevant art forms used at an early age because it combines sensory, motor, and affective aspects in a balanced manner. Therefore, the implementation of this activity needs to be designed in a structured but flexible manner in order to meet the overall goals of children's development.

Literature Review

A. Media *Finger Painting*

1. Definition of *Finger Painting*

Finger painting comes from English, where "*finger*" means finger and "*painting*"

means painting. Therefore, finger painting can be interpreted as painting using fingers. This *finger painting* method involves using fingers to paint by applying colorful liquids on cardboard or a piece of paper. *Finger painting* is a form of drawing activity that is carried out by applying a color mixture (color porridge) directly using the fingers, palms, and wrists. *Finger painting* is creating paintings using the fingers or producing various beautiful doodle creations that can be painted with the fingers. In this activity, children are required to paint using their fingers, and are not allowed to use tools such as those usually used in drawing and painting activities, such as pencils, crayons, brushes, and so on. (Indriyani, 2024).

2. Characteristics of Finger Painting Media

Some of the characteristics of *finger painting* that make it effective as a learning medium for early childhood include:

- Simple and easy to do: Children only need paint and paper, as well as the freedom to use their fingers to create.
- Stimulates the sensory aspect: Direct contact with paint provides a rich sensory experience and stimulates the sense of touch.
- Facilitates the expression of emotions and creativity: Children are free to choose colors, create shapes, and channel emotions through hand movements.
- Develops fine motor skills: Finger movements when painting help strengthen the small muscles in the child's hand, not demanding perfect results. (Muhammad Rafiki, 2019)

3. The Function of Finger Painting in Early Childhood Learning

In the context of learning in PAUD, finger painting has several important functions, including:

- As a medium of emotional expression: Children can express feelings of joy, anger, fear, or sadness through the choice of colors and shapes.
- As a medium for cognitive development: Children learn to recognize colors, shapes, patterns, and spatial concepts through exploration.
- As a social development tool: In group activities, *finger painting* encourages children to share, collaborate, and appreciate each other's work.
- As a means of therapy: For some children, *finger painting* also functions as a therapeutic medium to overcome anxiety or trauma. (Nina Astria, 2015)

4. Finger Painting in Early Childhood Education Perspective

The implementation of *finger painting* activities is highly dependent on the active role of parents and teachers in providing appropriate support and stimulation to children. Lack of opportunities to explore the environment from an early age and overprotective parenting from parents can be factors that affect the delay in fine motor development in children. This can cause children to lack the facilities and stimuli needed for learning. (Faza Sayly Rohmah, 2024).

Vygotsky, (1978) emphasized that play and art activities are very important in children's development because they become a bridge between the real world and the symbolic world. Through activities such as *finger painting*, children not only play, but also build meaning from their emotional and social experiences.

B. Early Childhood Emotional Development

1. Definition of Emotional Development

Etymologically, the term "*emos*" comes from the word "*emotus*" or "*emovere*," which refers to an impulse or feeling that drives an individual to a reaction, such as a feeling of joy that encourages laughter. Social-emotional development is a child's ability to feel, manage, and express a variety of emotions, both positive and negative. It involves the development of social relationships acquired through learning experiences in the

surrounding environment. According to Elias in Rahayu, social-emotional learning is a process in which a person develops the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to understand, manage, and express social and emotional aspects through the formation of relationships and problem-solving. In early childhood, children increasingly understand that a situation can trigger a variety of emotions, and facial expressions can reflect certain emotions. These emotions can affect behavior and also affect the emotions of others. (Indriyani, 2024)

2. Stages of Early Childhood Emotional Development

Social-emotional development in children develops progressively along with the stimulus received and age. In addition, when the process of social-emotional development increases, it is also accompanied by other developments such as the child's sensitivity window, being able to control mood, and tolerance. Children's social-emotional abilities are divided into three main aspects, namely self-awareness, sense of responsibility, and proportional behavior. Children's social-emotional development develops naturally in line with the child's age. Therefore, providing stimuli that are appropriate for the child's age is very important in supporting their development. (Indriyani, 2024).

3. Factors Affecting Emotional Development

Children's emotional development is influenced by various factors, including:

- Family: Parents and home environment are major factors. Responsive and compassionate parenting will support the development of positive emotions.
- Social environment: Interaction with peers and teachers in the PAUD environment provides children with the opportunity to learn to share, wait for their turn, and resolve conflicts socially.
- Media and culture: Cultural values and the way adults express emotions help shape children's understanding of socially accepted emotional expressions.
- Stimulation of play and art activities: Activities such as role-playing, drawing, or painting can be a medium for children to express their emotions freely. (Ramdini, 2019)

4. The Importance of Developing Emotional Expression in Early Childhood

Emotional expression is an important part of a child's development because it is directly related to:

- Children's mental health: Children who are able to express their emotions in a healthy way will have an easier time coping with stress and frustration.
- Social development: Children learn to build healthy relationships, understand the feelings of others, and respond appropriately to social situations.
- Fear: That is a typical feeling in children. Almost every age phase, a child experiences fear with different levels.
- Shyness: That is, fear characterized by withdrawal from relationships with strangers. This shame is always caused by fellow human beings. (Lubis, 2019)

5. The Role of Educators in Supporting Emotional Development

Teachers in early childhood education have an important responsibility in helping children recognize and express their emotions. Educators need to:

- Provide support when the child experiences an emotional outburst.
- Provide activities that allow children to explore feelings, such as art, role-playing, or storytelling.
- Observe and understand children's nonverbal expressions as a form of communication.
- Implementing rules and regulations that apply in schools. (Dio Ivanca Salsabila, 2023)

Research Methodology

This research is designed to look at the strategies used by teachers in helping to manage children's emotions in PAUD Ummul Habibah. This research is a descriptive qualitative research that begins with an observation process of teacher learning activities,

especially strategies used in helping to manage children's emotions. In addition, the researcher also observes children's emotions at PAUD Ummul Habibah. After the data in this study has been collected, then all data will be analyzed using three stages, namely data condensation, data display and verification. This research was carried out at PAUD Ummul Habibah which is located at Gg. Sedayu II No. 112 Kelambir Lima Kebun Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency.

Results

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers from observations and interviews at PAUD Ummul Habibah, it was found that teachers have implemented various strategies in implementing finger painting activities as a medium to help children express their emotions, which include:

1. Learning strategies that contain positive emotional elements: Teachers consistently use soft, expressive, and empathetic language when accompanying children. When children feel disappointed that the colors are not made to their liking, the teacher calms them down with positive words such as "It's okay, your results are still good, this color is beautiful too." These simple actions help children learn to turn disappointment into confidence, while also understanding that mistakes are not something to be feared.
2. Habits and routines in *finger painting* activities: Teachers form a consistent routine before and after finger painting activities, such as praying together, introducing color themes, and reviewing works. These routines foster a sense of security and togetherness in children. With a regular pattern of activities, children become more focused and able to prepare themselves emotionally before working.
3. Play approach and self-expression: *Finger painting* activities are carried out in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. Children are free to choose colors according to their mood. From the observations, children who are happy tend to choose bright colors such as yellow and orange, while children who are still prefer brown or green. The teacher appreciates each work without comparing the results between children. Thus, children feel accepted and appreciated for every form of expression they display.
4. Individualized approach: Teachers also take a personal approach to children who have difficulty controlling emotions. For example, a child who is easily angered because the paint is spilled or the drawing is considered ugly by a friend, will be guided calmly. The teacher invites the child to have a light conversation about his feelings and calms them down with gentle words. This approach makes the child feel understood and easier to control his feelings.
5. Social support and collaboration: In addition to teachers, *finger painting activities* also involve the roles of peers and parents. In certain activities, children are invited to work together to create large group works. This activity trains children to interact, learn to wait for their turn, and appreciate the work of friends. The collaboration also teaches children the value of empathy and cooperation from an early age.

The results of research at PAUD Ummul Habibah show that the application of *finger painting* is very effective as a medium of emotional expression in early childhood. Through this activity, children can communicate their feelings in a natural and fun way. This activity helps children understand the feelings that arise in them, such as joy, sadness, anger, or fear, as well as turn negative emotions into positive experiences.

This finding is in line with Erik Erikson's theory, especially at the initiative vs guilt stage, where children need to be given space to take initiative and create without fear of failure. Through *finger painting*, teachers provide children with the opportunity to express themselves freely and develop confidence in their work. This also supports the formation

of positive self-concept from an early age. In addition, Vygotsky's theory of social interaction also strengthens this finding. According to Vygotsky, children's development is influenced by social experiences and support from adults. In *finger painting activities*, the interaction between teacher and child creates a "proximal development zone" where children

Learn to manage emotions through direct guidance, example, and warm communication. Teachers act as mediators who help children understand the emotions of themselves and others.

From the results of the interview, it is known that teachers at PAUD Ummul Habibah also use children's works as material for reflection. Colors, shapes, and expressions when painting are indicators for teachers to recognize the emotional state of children. Children who use dark colors repeatedly, for example, will be paid closer attention so that teachers can provide the emotional support needed.

Finger painting *activities* also play a role in stimulating children's sensory and fine motor aspects, which are closely related to emotional development. Direct contact between fingers and paint provides a sensory experience that can calm children. Gentle finger movements on paper can be a form of natural therapy that helps children channel stress or tension in a healthy way. However, the implementation of *finger painting activities* still faces several obstacles, such as the limitations of tools and materials, as well as differences in the level of parents' understanding of the importance of art activities in shaping children's character. Teachers get around this by utilizing simple materials such as watercolors from food coloring and used paper that are still suitable for use. Even though it is simple, the results of the activity still have a real positive impact on children's emotional development. In addition, *finger painting* also helps children learn to regulate emotions gradually. When a child's hand comes into direct contact with paint, they learn to deal with new sensations, whether it's amused, dirty, or cold. This process teaches children to adjust to new experiences and control their emotional reactions.

The role of teachers in accompanying activities is also a key factor. Teachers who are sensitive to changes in children's expressions are able to give the right response at the appropriate time. Teachers at PAUD Ummul Habibah have shown a responsive attitude, such as giving gentle directions, calming children who are starting to show their emotional expressions, and inviting children to tell stories about their paintings. This empathetic attitude of teachers creates a positive emotional climate in the classroom, which is needed in early childhood personality development.

This activity also forms reflective habits in their children learning to understand their own feelings, assess emotional situations, and express them through color and shape. Therefore, the implementation of *finger painting media* at PAUD Ummul Habibah has proven to be a means of holistic learning that supports children's emotional and social growth in a sustainable manner.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research that has been conducted at PAUD Ummul Habibah, it can be concluded that the implementation of finger painting media has a very important role in helping early childhood express and manage their emotions. Through this activity, children gain free space to express their feelings through colors, shapes, and finger movements directly on paper. These sensory experiences not only foster creativity, but also become a therapeutic means that help children understand and channel emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and fear in a positive way. With fun and non-stressful activities, children feel freer, confident, and able to show natural self-expression according to their emotional state.

The role of teachers in *finger painting* activities is a key factor in the success of this process. Teachers at PAUD Ummul Habibah are able to guide children with patience,

empathy, and attention, so that every child feels valued and understood. Teachers not only function as teachers, but also as emotional companions who help children interpret and control their feelings through positive interactions. The individualized approach and gentle communication make this activity a forum for meaningful social and emotional learning. In addition, teachers also use children's work as a reflection to understand their emotional state, so that they are able to provide more appropriate and humane educational responses.

Overall, *finger painting* activities at PAUD Ummul Habibah not only function as an art medium, but also as a pedagogical approach that balances children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Through this activity, children learn to recognize themselves, build confidence, and interact with peers in a healthy way. The implementation of *finger painting* has been proven to be able to create a fun, meaningful learning atmosphere, and support children's overall emotional development. Thus, it can be said that *finger painting* is an effective and relevant learning medium to be applied in early childhood education as a means of fostering emotional intelligence from an early age.

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