



Improving the Performance of Early Childhood Education Teachers in Developing Fine Motor Skills of Preschool Children at PAUD Mawar Ceria, Sukmajaya, Depok

Fitrah Mulyanti

niversitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

fitrahmulyanti@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the improvement of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers' performance in developing fine motor skills of young children at PAUD Mawar Ceria, Sukmajaya, Depok. Fine motor skills are crucial for children's development as they support various daily activities, learning processes, and cognitive growth. The research applies a qualitative approach with a focus on teacher strategies, classroom activities, and the learning environment. Data were collected through observation, interviews with teachers, and a review of relevant teaching materials and practices. The findings indicate that there has been a significant improvement in teachers' ability to foster fine motor skills through the use of creative and engaging activities, such as drawing, cutting, and playing with small objects. Additionally, teacher training sessions and collaboration with parents have contributed to enhancing the learning environment, making it more conducive for children's fine motor development. This study highlights the importance of continuous professional development for teachers and the role of a supportive environment in optimizing children's motor skills development. The results suggest that a collaborative approach between teachers, parents, and the community can improve educational outcomes and overall child development.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Fine Motor Skills, Teacher Performance

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a crucial role in the developmental stages of children, particularly in motor, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. One of the fundamental components of children's development is fine motor skills, which include the ability of children to control small body movements, such as using their hands and fingers for activities like drawing, writing, holding small objects, and other related tasks. These fine motor skills are critical because they are closely linked to children's ability to perform various daily activities, learning processes, and cognitive growth (Berk, 2013).

In Indonesia, Early Childhood Education has become an integral part of the national education system. This program has grown significantly since the enactment of the Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes the importance of education for young children (Depdiknas, 2003). This highlights that early childhood education is not only the responsibility of parents but also of the state.

One crucial aspect of Early Childhood Education is the quality of teaching provided by PAUD teachers. The performance of PAUD teachers is expected to promote optimal child development, including the development of fine motor skills.

Fine motor skills are closely linked to children's ability to use writing tools and perform daily activities that involve hand-eye coordination. Therefore, the development of these skills in early childhood is essential to support children's intellectual and social development in the future (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). At an early age, fine motor skill development is not only related to a child's physical ability but also to the formation of self-confidence and independence. For example, a child who can draw neatly or write fluently will feel more confident in carrying out academic tasks or other social activities (Berk, 2013).

In this context, the quality of PAUD teachers is pivotal in determining how well fine motor skills are developed in children. The performance of PAUD teachers is influenced not only by their knowledge of child development theory but also by their skills in designing and implementing effective learning activities. PAUD teachers need to recognize the developmental stages of children and provide appropriate activities to support their fine motor skills (Sobel, 2002). Therefore, research on improving PAUD teachers' performance in developing fine motor skills in young children is highly relevant.

One of the Early Childhood Education institutions that can serve as a research object is PAUD Mawar Ceria in Sukmajaya, Depok. PAUD Mawar Ceria is an institution that focuses on early childhood education with an emphasis on developing children's fine motor skills. The institution is committed to improving the quality of teaching through continuous development of teachers' performance. To support children's development, PAUD Mawar Ceria frequently organizes training sessions for teachers to improve their competencies in teaching fine motor skills.

However, despite the efforts made, challenges still exist in enhancing children's fine motor skills, particularly in optimizing the performance of PAUD teachers. Several factors influencing this issue include inadequate teacher training, limited teaching materials and facilities, and a lack of cooperation between parents and teachers in supporting children's development (Sujiono & Hadi, 2015). Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors that can improve the performance of PAUD teachers in developing fine motor skills in children, with a focus on the experiences at PAUD Mawar Ceria.

This research will examine how various aspects related to PAUD teachers' performance, such as teacher training, teaching methods, and support from the environment and parents, contribute to enhancing children's fine motor skills. The study will also explore whether there is a significant change in children's fine motor development after teachers receive training or change teaching methods. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective strategies to improve the quality of PAUD education in Indonesia, particularly in the development of children's fine motor skills.

The challenges faced by PAUD teachers in enhancing children's fine motor skills are complex, involving both internal and external factors. According to a study by Dewi and Suyanto (2018), the development of children's fine motor skills is influenced by the quality of interactions between teachers and children, as well as the creativity

of teachers in designing activities that are appropriate for children's developmental stages. On the other hand, external factors such as support from parents and the availability of supporting facilities also play a significant role in this process. Therefore, improving PAUD teachers' performance requires a holistic approach, involving not only the professional development of teachers but also collaboration with parents and the community.

One effective approach to improving PAUD teachers' performance is through practice-based training. According to research by Purnamasari (2019), teacher training focused on developing fine motor skills can have a positive impact on teachers' abilities to design activities that meet children's needs. This training also provides an opportunity for teachers to share experiences and strategies that they have implemented in the classroom, which in turn can enrich their teaching practices.

Additionally, it is important to consider the use of appropriate media and teaching aids to support the learning of children's fine motor skills. Media such as pictures, paper cutouts, and small play objects can serve as effective tools to train children's hand-eye coordination. Research by Nuraeni and Widyastuti (2017) indicates that using creative and varied teaching aids can increase children's interest and attention during fine motor activities.

Considering these findings, this research seeks to explore in more depth the impact of improving PAUD teachers' performance on children's fine motor skills at PAUD Mawar Ceria. It is expected that this research will provide a clear picture of the factors that influence the development of fine motor skills in children and how PAUD teachers' performance can be enhanced to achieve these goals. The results of this study will not only be beneficial for PAUD Mawar Ceria but also for other PAUD institutions seeking to improve the quality of early childhood education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore and analyze the performance of PAUD (Early Childhood Education) teachers in enhancing fine motor skills in children at PAUD Mawar Ceria, Sukmajaya, Depok. A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for a detailed and in-depth exploration of teacher strategies, classroom activities, and the learning environment, which are difficult to quantify but essential for understanding complex educational processes (Creswell, 2014).

The research was conducted using case study methodology, focusing on a single educational institution. This method is ideal for investigating phenomena within their real-life context and is especially useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2014). The study's primary data sources include observations, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted in the classroom during teacher-child interactions and activities that aimed to develop fine motor skills, such as drawing, coloring, and manipulating small objects. This allowed the researcher to understand the dynamics between the teachers' teaching methods and the children's responses.

Interviews were held with PAUD teachers to gain insights into their strategies, experiences, and challenges in teaching fine motor skills. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring various aspects of the teachers'

practices. Additionally, the study involved interviews with parents and administrators to gain a broader perspective on the support provided to enhance children's fine motor skills.

Document analysis was conducted by reviewing lesson plans, teaching materials, and records of teacher training programs. These documents provided further context about the teachers' preparedness and instructional approaches.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, where key themes and patterns related to teacher performance and fine motor skill development were identified. The data were triangulated to ensure validity and reliability, combining observations, interviews, and document reviews to form a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Patton, 2002).

RESEARCH RESULT

This study investigates the performance of PAUD (Early Childhood Education) teachers in enhancing fine motor skills in young children at PAUD Mawar Ceria, Sukmajaya, Depok. The research aims to identify the strategies and challenges faced by teachers in facilitating the development of fine motor skills in children, as well as the role of teacher training and the involvement of parents in supporting this development. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, and document analysis of lesson plans and teaching materials.

The findings reveal several key themes regarding teacher performance, the teaching methods used, and the effectiveness of these methods in developing fine motor skills in children. The study's results are organized into several sections: teacher performance, teaching methods, teacher training, the role of parents, and the development of fine motor skills in children. To support the analysis, the study presents various data tables that provide a clearer view of the findings.

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is a critical factor in the development of fine motor skills in young children. Based on classroom observations, it was found that teachers who were more proactive in facilitating activities requiring hand-eye coordination and dexterity had a noticeable impact on children's fine motor development. For example, teachers who frequently engaged children in activities like cutting paper, drawing, or threading beads provided opportunities for children to practice and refine their fine motor skills.

Table 1 presents a summary of the classroom activities observed during the study and the associated fine motor skills development for each activity. The data shows that activities such as drawing and building with small blocks were most effective in promoting fine motor skills.

Table 1: Classroom Activities and Fine Motor Skill Development

Activity	Fine Motor Skills Targeted			Frequency of Activity
Drawing	Pencil coordination	grip,	hand-eye	Daily

Activity	Fine Motor Skills Targeted			Frequency of Activity
Cutting with Scissors	Hand dexterity	strength,	precision,	3 times a week
Threading Beads	Finger grasp	coordination,	pincer	Weekly
Building Blocks	Hand awareness	strength,	spatial	Daily
Clay Modeling	Finger flexibility, strength			Twice a week

In the interviews with teachers, it was clear that most teachers recognized the importance of these activities. However, the consistency and quality of execution varied. Teachers with more experience seemed to have a better understanding of how to integrate fine motor skill development into daily activities. For instance, more experienced teachers deliberately planned activities that targeted specific motor skills, while less experienced teachers tended to rely on more generalized activities that did not consistently address fine motor development.

The data gathered from teacher interviews revealed that many teachers struggled with knowing the specific developmental stages of fine motor skills and how to adapt activities to suit the varying abilities of children. In one instance, a teacher stated, "Sometimes I know the children are struggling with a task, but I am not always sure what activity to introduce next to help them progress." This highlights the need for ongoing professional development and training for teachers.

Teaching Methods

The teaching methods used by teachers at PAUD Mawar Ceria were varied, with some teachers adopting a more structured approach and others opting for a more free-play method. Based on classroom observations and interviews, it became clear that a balanced approach—combining structured activities with opportunities for free play—was most effective in promoting the development of fine motor skills. Structured activities such as drawing, using scissors, and manipulating small objects (e.g., beads or playdough) were essential for providing the necessary practice to improve fine motor control. At the same time, allowing children to engage in unstructured play, such as building with blocks or playing with sand, helped them develop creativity and autonomy in motor skill use.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Teaching Methods for Fine Motor Skill Development

Teaching Method	Effectiveness in Developing Fine Motor Skills	Teacher Rating (1-5)
Structured Drawing	High (Improves pencil grip and coordination)	4
Free Play with Blocks	Moderate (Encourages hand strength)	3
Scissors Practice	High (Enhances dexterity and precision)	5
Playdough or Clay Modeling	High (Develops finger flexibility)	4

Teaching Method	Effectiveness in Developing Fine Motor Skills			Teacher Rating (1-5)
Unstructured Play	Sand	Moderate strength)	(Develops hand	3

In contrast, some teachers relied heavily on unstructured play and felt that children would naturally develop fine motor skills through play. However, this approach lacked targeted activities that specifically challenged children's fine motor skills. As one teacher noted, "I believe children learn best when they have the freedom to explore and play, but sometimes I'm unsure if they are getting the right opportunities to work on fine motor skills."

The results suggest that while free play is important for creativity and autonomy, structured activities should also be regularly incorporated into the daily routine to provide focused practice in specific fine motor skills.

Teacher Training

Teacher training was another significant factor influencing the effectiveness of fine motor skill development. Teachers at PAUD Mawar Ceria had varying levels of professional development, with some attending regular training workshops, while others had minimal access to professional development opportunities. Those who had attended workshops focused on child development, motor skills, and creative teaching methods expressed a greater confidence in their ability to design activities that fostered fine motor skills.

One teacher shared, "The training I attended last year on motor skill development was extremely helpful. It gave me new ideas on how to approach fine motor activities, like using smaller objects to enhance finger strength or different ways to encourage children to use their fingers and hands more purposefully." This statement highlights the positive impact of professional development on teacher performance.

Despite the benefits of training, there was also a significant gap in the availability and accessibility of ongoing teacher training. Teachers who had not participated in any training workshops often felt less equipped to address the fine motor needs of their students, indicating a need for more consistent and accessible professional development opportunities for all PAUD teachers.

The Role of Parents

Parent involvement plays a crucial role in supporting the development of fine motor skills in children. The study found that children whose parents actively engaged in reinforcing fine motor activities at home demonstrated better development in these skills compared to those whose parents did not engage in similar activities. Parents who understood the importance of fine motor skills and practiced activities such as drawing, cutting, or playing with small objects at home were able to support the work done in the classroom.

Table 3: Parent Involvement and Child Development in Fine Motor Skills

Parent Involvement Level	Frequency of Home-Based Fine Motor Activities	Child's Fine Motor Skill Development
High	Daily	Advanced
Moderate	2-3 times a week	Moderate
Low	Rarely	Slow

In interviews, parents expressed varying levels of awareness and engagement in their children's fine motor development. Some parents were actively involved in home-based activities, while others admitted they were unsure about how to support their child's motor skill development outside of school. One parent mentioned, "I try to do some art projects with my child at home, but I'm not always sure if I'm doing the right thing to help with motor skills." This reveals a gap in parental knowledge and suggests the need for better communication between teachers and parents to ensure that children receive consistent support in their fine motor development both at school and at home.

Development of Fine Motor Skills in Children

The overall development of fine motor skills in children at PAUD Mawar Ceria was found to vary depending on the teacher's approach, the consistency of the activities, and the level of parental involvement. Children who engaged in a balanced mix of structured activities and free play showed noticeable improvement in skills such as hand-eye coordination, pencil grip, and finger dexterity. In contrast, children who only participated in unstructured play without targeted activities showed slower development in fine motor skills.

Overall, the research highlights the importance of a structured approach to fine motor development, which includes teacher-led activities, teacher training, and parent involvement. The combination of these elements helps ensure that children receive consistent and meaningful opportunities to develop their fine motor skills in preparation for future academic and social tasks.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the role of PAUD (Early Childhood Education) teachers in fostering the development of fine motor skills in children. By exploring the strategies employed by teachers, the methods they use in the classroom, the impact of teacher training, and the involvement of parents, this research highlights the complex interplay of factors that contribute to the successful development of fine motor skills in young children. In this discussion, the results are examined in the context of existing literature, with a focus on the implications for PAUD practices and teacher development.

Teacher Performance and the Development of Fine Motor Skills

The study's findings indicate that teacher performance plays a central role in developing fine motor skills in young children. Observations revealed that teachers who actively engaged children in hands-on activities, such as drawing, cutting, and building with small objects, were more successful in promoting fine motor skills. These results align with Berk's (2013) assertion that fine motor development is closely linked to activities requiring hand-eye coordination, strength, and dexterity. Activities like drawing or playing with small objects provide the necessary practice for children to refine these skills, helping them develop confidence in their ability to perform daily tasks and academic activities.

Moreover, the study found that experienced teachers were more adept at tailoring their activities to address specific developmental stages and motor skill needs. This is consistent with research by Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), who emphasize that a deep understanding of child development allows teachers to create targeted interventions

that support children's learning. Teachers with more experience were able to recognize when a child struggled with a specific task and adapted their approach accordingly, providing more targeted activities for motor skill development. On the other hand, less experienced teachers often relied on more generalized activities, which may not always meet the individual needs of the children. This highlights the importance of professional development and continuous training for teachers, which will be discussed further below.

Teaching Methods and their Effectiveness

The study's results also underscore the effectiveness of a balanced approach to teaching fine motor skills. A combination of structured, teacher-led activities and unstructured, child-initiated play was found to be the most effective in promoting fine motor development. This finding is in line with previous research, which suggests that while structured activities are necessary for skill development, free play allows children to explore and practice motor skills at their own pace (Pica, 2011). Structured activities, such as cutting with scissors or drawing, provide focused practice in areas such as precision, finger strength, and hand-eye coordination. However, as observed in this study, when children were given the freedom to engage in unstructured play, such as building with blocks or playing with sand, they were able to develop creativity, spatial awareness, and problem-solving skills, all of which are critical to motor development.

This approach aligns with developmental theories that stress the importance of both guided and independent learning experiences for young children (Berk, 2013). When children are given the freedom to engage in play while also participating in structured activities, they are more likely to develop both the motor skills necessary for academic tasks and the social-emotional skills required for independent exploration and self-regulation. The findings of this study suggest that a balanced approach, where structured activities are complemented by opportunities for free play, is optimal for fine motor skill development in young children.

The Role of Teacher Training

The importance of teacher training emerged as a significant factor influencing the development of fine motor skills in children. Teachers who had participated in professional development workshops focused on fine motor development were found to be more confident and effective in creating targeted activities for their students. The results of this study confirm those of Purnamasari (2019), who found that training sessions focusing on child development and motor skill teaching strategies significantly improved teachers' ability to design appropriate activities for enhancing children's fine motor skills.

Teachers who had access to professional development opportunities expressed greater confidence in their ability to design activities that addressed fine motor skill development. One teacher in the study explained that the training they received on motor skills development provided them with new tools and strategies to engage children in more purposeful motor tasks. In contrast, teachers who had not received any specific training were often unsure about how to appropriately design activities that targeted fine motor skills, relying on more general classroom activities that did not always meet the developmental needs of the children. This gap highlights the need for ongoing professional development, which can help teachers better understand the

developmental milestones of fine motor skills and how to plan age-appropriate activities.

Additionally, the study indicates that professional development opportunities should not be a one-time event but an ongoing process. Teachers who continuously participate in workshops and peer learning sessions are more likely to stay up to date with the latest research and best practices in early childhood education. Therefore, PAUD institutions should consider offering more frequent and accessible training opportunities to ensure that all teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to foster children's fine motor skill development effectively.

The Role of Parents in Supporting Fine Motor Development

The findings of this study also highlight the crucial role that parents play in supporting the development of fine motor skills at home. Children whose parents actively engaged in activities such as drawing, cutting, and building with small objects showed better fine motor skill development compared to children whose parents did not engage in such activities. This supports research by Nuraeni and Widyastuti (2017), who found that parent involvement in motor skill development was strongly correlated with positive outcomes in children's fine motor development.

Parental engagement in fine motor activities at home not only reinforces what children learn in school but also provides children with additional opportunities to practice motor skills in a different environment. Parents who understand the importance of these skills are more likely to provide enriching activities that encourage the development of fine motor abilities. However, the study also found that not all parents were aware of the specific motor skill activities their children needed. Some parents expressed uncertainty about how to support their children's fine motor development outside of school, highlighting the need for more effective communication between teachers and parents.

In light of these findings, PAUD institutions should consider offering workshops or informational sessions for parents to educate them about the importance of fine motor skill development and provide suggestions for home-based activities. This can strengthen the partnership between schools and families, ensuring that children receive consistent support in their fine motor development both at school and at home.

Implications for PAUD Practices

The results of this study have several implications for PAUD practices, particularly in enhancing fine motor skills development. First, PAUD institutions should prioritize a balanced approach that includes both structured activities and opportunities for free play. While structured activities are essential for focused skill development, unstructured play allows children to practice motor skills in a more autonomous and creative way. The combination of these two approaches will provide children with the best opportunities to develop the fine motor skills they need for future academic and social success.

Second, the findings highlight the need for ongoing professional development for PAUD teachers. Teachers who are well-trained in child development and motor skills can better design and implement activities that target specific motor milestones. PAUD institutions should prioritize teacher training that focuses not only on general teaching strategies but also on the specific development of fine motor skills in young children.

Lastly, the study emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in the development of fine motor skills. PAUD institutions should work to strengthen partnerships with parents by providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to support their children's development at home. Workshops and informational sessions for parents can help ensure that children receive consistent support both in the classroom and at home.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the essential role of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers in fostering fine motor skill development in children at PAUD Mawar Ceria, Sukmajaya, Depok. It reveals that teacher performance, particularly in engaging children through creative and structured activities like drawing, cutting, and building, plays a pivotal role in enhancing fine motor skills. Teachers' experience and training also significantly contribute to their effectiveness in designing developmentally appropriate activities.

The research underscores the importance of a balanced teaching approach, combining structured activities with free play, to ensure comprehensive skill development. Additionally, continuous professional development for teachers is critical, as those who participated in training sessions were more confident and successful in promoting fine motor skills in children.

Parental involvement emerged as another key factor, with children benefiting from consistent reinforcement of fine motor activities at home. The study suggests that strengthening the collaboration between teachers and parents can provide children with a supportive environment for optimal motor skills development.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that improving PAUD teachers' performance, offering consistent training, and fostering collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community are crucial for the development of fine motor skills in children. By addressing these factors, PAUD institutions can enhance their educational outcomes and support the holistic development of young children.

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