

The Effect of Reggio Emilia Approach on Children's Creativity from the Islamic Psychology Review

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ABSTRACT

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The development of self-creativity in children needs to be performed because they possess the interests and talents that are expected to be honed or developed. Therefore, this study aims to test the effect of the Reggio Emilia approach on children's creativity from the Islamic Psychology review. A total of 36 students aged 5-6 years were selected as participants using purposive sampling. Data were collected using the pre-experiment with One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The result showed that children's creativity increased through aptitude and non-aptitude. This study indicates that 22 and 14 students had Islamic verbal creativity in the average and above-average category respectively. Therefore, the Reggio Emilia approach positively affects children's creativity.

Keywords: Teacher Strategy; Character Building; Online Learning; Covid-19

ABSTRAK

Pengembangan kreativitas diri dalam anak perlu dilakukan. Karena pada dasarnya setiap anak memiliki kecenderungan minat dan bakat sejak dini yang masih dapat diasah dan dikembangkan. Realitanya anak belum bisa menghasilkan karya sendiri, masih mengikuti instruksi guru, serta meniru hasil kerja teman. Penelitian ini bertujuan menguji pengaruh Reggio Emilia Approach terhadap kreativitas anak dari tinjauan Psikologi Islam. Metode penelitian menggunakan pra eksperimen One Group Pretest- Posttest Design. Subyek penelitian 36 siswa usia 5- 6 tahun melakukan Reggio Emilia dalam pembelajaran berbasis Islam. Sampel menggunakan purposive sampling. Tingkat kreativitas anak meningkat melalui aptitude dan non-aptitude. Dalam hal kreativitas verbal ke-Islaman berdasarkan Islamic Verbal Creativity, sebanyak 22 siswa dari 36 siswa berkategori rata- rata, sebanyak 14 siswa kreativitasnya di atas rata- rata. Reggio Emilia Approach berpengaruh positif terhadap kreativitas anak.

Kata-kata Kunci: Strategi Guru; Pendidikan Karakter; Pembelajaran Daring; COVID 19.

INTRODUCTION

Every child has the right to be educated to improve and reach a great height in life. According to Islam, children are open with natural tendency and ready to be colored to what life tends to bring. Prophet Muhammad explained that "Every child is born due to Fitrah, but its parents try to make him a Jew or a Christian...". Also, the study of [Ghaza & Levy \(2015\)](#) showed that teachers help students to learn naturally by allowing them to play with their environment. [Baum & Julie Viens \(2005\)](#) indicated that children's intelligence is developed by learning through play. In the act of learning, students do think about plants, animals, clouds, rocks, and pay attention to caterpillars' life, as well as others ([Eberle, 2014](#)). Furthermore, play is a central place for development because it connects objects with children's imaginations ([Eshach & Fried, 2005](#)).

Creativity is not limited to pragmatic because it embodies a new view about the shape of a particular problem. Therefore, a creative individual uses his mind and heart optimally, possesses a spiritual cognitive, learns different knowledge, as well as absorbs it properly to produce something useful ([Kozhevnikov et al., 2021](#) and [Nashori & Diana, 2003](#)). For instance, children reduce dependence on gadgets, become more productive, and think flexibly because they make new toys, produce paintings, and utilize items from around.

According to [Munandar \(2009\)](#), creative students have a strong curiosity, ask questions and opinions, are free to express opinions, have an interest in the art field, see problems from various angles, have a sense of humor, broad imagination, and original ideas in solving problems.

The survey and pre-study results showed that 50% or 18 children failed to do their work because they are less creative. Meanwhile, a total of 15 students fully follow the teacher's instructions and often imitate their friend's work while 19 of them failed to develop ideas and imagination because learning in the form of remembering, monotonous, conventional, and partial activities are dominant. Therefore, children become less interested, feel bored, and lazy to participate in daily activities.

This study is in line with [Parwoto \(2016\)](#) that creativity and Reggio Emilia's approach are different while observing children's cognitive development in kindergarten. However, this study focuses on the Reggio Emilia Learning Model with the question to be answered in the form of "Does the Reggio Emilia Approach affect children's creativity?".

According to Islam, a creative man shows self-image as a servant that only prays to Allah and is beneficial to a fellow human being ([Mujimo, 2013](#)). [Ward \(2013\)](#) indicated that parental education performed in areas of life including work, school, and recreational activities help to develop children's creativity. Also, the study emphasized

that parents' reaction to student's' creative thinking is very important in developing personality.

Hurlock (1999) showed that children's creativity is needed in life because it inspires people through the Qur'an and as-Sunnah. Therefore, creativity needs to continue till it is properly honed.

Reggio Emilia is one of the learning models that foster Islamic creativity because it contains universal values including the fulfillment of rights and needs as well as paying attention to student's' development and their environment. This approach serves as a reference in terms of improving children's creativity due to the use of projects as the main method (Santin & Torruela, 2017). The Reggio Emilia model is designed to foster individual and group creativity through an experience-based learning process. This approach enables children to follow the ideas of class members and respond to stimulation in problem-solving. The Reggio Emilia model allows students to quickly come together while learning because it improve and develop creativity.

Teachers use this approach to promote children to be more confident and introspective while interacting with people. This lead to a competent attitude, high curiosity, broad imaginative power, inventiveness, and a desire for interaction. Therefore, the Reggio Emilia approach help to develop children's creativity and construct their way of learning. Children's learning needs to be adjusted to their level due to expressive, communicative, and scientific ways of thinking.

According to Ward (2013), different experiences that children have to pass through stimulate their thinking to produce a wide range of ideas. Therefore, creativity is needed to prepare students in facing the future because it helps them to find ideas, view problems from new dimensions, and combine a series of concepts in their minds.

Creative thinking in children is performed through imagination that is developed in the form of *ijtihad* to anticipate early childhood problems. This ultimately leads to individuals with strong faith and good morals because they are not negatively affected (Sutrisno, 2006). Creativity is developed through imagination because students' ability to create something new starts from their way of thinking. Therefore, creative thinking begins by providing opportunities for children to perform various experiments. The first experiment enables the student to seek a way to make the swing move quickly, while the second allows them to ask a friend for help to pull and push the swing forward. Furthermore, creative thinking has several possibilities in solving a problem.

Children's low creativity is explained in the Qur'an and quoted by Quraish Shihab that humans are one of the unique types of Allah's creatures (*khalqan akhar*). "... Certainly, We create man from an extract of clay and placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging (womb). Thereafter, We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot and the clot into a lump where bones are made and covered with flesh. Allah is the best of creators because through Him, humans are developed into another creation." (Surah Al-

Mu'min: 12-14). Children's low creativity needs to be solved because it enables them to always follow the teacher's instructions, imitate friend works, and fail to develop their ideas and imagination.

The Reggio Emilia approach in responding to the 21st Century challenges was performed by Sasmita, Tarwiyah, and Sumadi (2021) but unable to prepare students in having the abilities because it is a child-oriented model. According to Putri (2020), "The design of kindergarten facilities based on the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia in Bandung City" indicated that early childhood education is good in providing knowledge on developmental psychology theory and schools visions.

Meanwhile, the study of Sayekti (2016) showed that Reggio Emilia is a curriculum directed at students in making learning programs better in the future. Also, it contributes to early childhood education learning and develops children's creativity to make become them better individuals such as Muhammad al Ghazali, Muhammad Naquib al Attas, Ismail Raji al Faruqi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and others.

METHOD

This study uses the Reggio Emilia approach to develop children's creativity with the following procedures:

1. Approach used

This study focuses on a project where ideas emerge from children because the learning model leads to their interests (Kim & Darling, 2009).

2. This study's role collaborating with the teacher

This role enables the children to read prayers before performing any activities. The study becomes interesting because it develops ideas and observes, as well as prepares activities related to the students' interests. Also, it connects the power of ideas, potentials, and teaches children to be active and constructive, or creative. The teachers observe and become good listeners because they are to guide the children's experiments, be friendly, and document their work. Also, the tutor facilitates students with Atelier/Atelierista made from recycled or natural materials.

3. Project focus

Project activities foster children's creativity because it is based on reality.

4. The function and role of the children

Children practice leadership where curriculum and activities are tailored to their interests. Also, students learn from the mistakes made in their experience rather than being corrected. There is a meaningful relationship between children and families, as well as the Creator.

The study was conducted for 1.5 months using the pre-experiment with One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. A total of 36 students aged 5-6 years from Malik's class in Asy-Syaffa Kindergarten school in Magelang was selected as participants using the

purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a creativity scale and was measured through the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. The TTCT uses the Aptitude including fluent, flexible, and original thinking skills, detailing, and judging abilities, as well as Non-Aptitude that comprises of curiosity, imaginativeness, feeling challenged by pluralism, taking risks, and appreciating. Furthermore, the Creative Characteristics Scale and Verbal Creativity Test (SKKTKV) consisting of 6 subtests were used to measure creativity concerning Islamic characters. This character includes understanding people, helping one another, working together, respecting friends' opinions, accepting others' work, as well as producing polite and gentle verbal language.

In addition to the creativity scale, observation was used as an auxiliary method. Data were analyzed using quantitative statistics through editing, coding, and tabulation. Also, data were tested for normality with one sample Shapiro Wilk using the paired sample t-test parametric statistic test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis results, the scores and data categories are obtained as follows:

1. The creativity level of early childhood due to gender, score, and category before being subjected to the Reggio Emilia approach

Table 1. Children's Creativity Level

No	Gender	Score Range	Average
1	Male	59-76	67.5
2	Female	58-90	69

Table 1 shows that from a total of 36 students, the male and female highest creativity scores are 76 and 90 with average scores of 67.5 and 69 respectively.

2. The creativity level of early childhood based on gender, score, and category after being subjected to the Reggio Emilia approach

Table 2. Creativity level based on gender

No	Gender	Score Range	Average
1	Male	59-95	77
2	Female	62-96	89

Table 2 above shows that out of 36 students, the average score of male students increase from 67.5 to 77 after being subjected to the Reggio Emilia approach of 59-95. Meanwhile, female students have 89 as the highest creativity scores.

3. The creativity level of children in each aspect after getting the Reggio Emilia approach

The creativity level of Asy-Syaffa Kindergarten children is indicated in the aptitude and non-aptitude aspects. The following tables show the creativity level for each aspect.

Table 3. Creativity level based on aspect

Gender	Aspect	Indicator	Score Range
Male	<i>Aptitude</i>	Fluent thinking	41
		Flexible thinking	43
		Original thinking	44
		Detailing/ assessing	47
	<i>Non-aptitude</i>	Curiosity	57
		Imaginativeness	54
		Feeling challenged	48
		Dare to take risks	37
		Appreciative	38

Table 3 shows the male student's creativity scores in aptitude and non-aptitude aspects to be 43.7 and 46.8 respectively. Meanwhile, the aptitude includes fluent, flexible, and original thinking, as well as detailing/assessing, while the non-aptitude comprises curiosity, imaginativeness, feeling challenged, daring to take risks, and being appreciative.

Table 4. Aptitude and non-aptitude creativity scores of female students

Gender	Aspect	Indicator	Score range (average)
Female	<i>Aptitude</i>	Fluent thinking	51
		Flexible thinking	49
		Original thinking	52
		Detailing/ assessing	49
	<i>Non-aptitude</i>	Curiosity	48
		Imaginativeness	50
		Feeling challenged	41
		Dare to take risks	39
		Appreciative	52

Table 4 shows the female creativity scores in aptitude and non-aptitude aspects to be 50.52 and 46 respectively. Meanwhile, the aptitude includes fluent, flexible, and original thinking, as well as detailing/assessing, while the non-aptitude comprises curiosity, imaginativeness, feeling challenged, daring to take risks, and being appreciative.

Data were collected from a total of 36 students using the oral test to measure the children's Islamic verbal creativity. Table 5 below shows the categories of students' Islamic creativity.

Table 5. Categories of Islamic Creativity (Verbal)

	IVC	
	Frequency	%
Below average	0	0
Average	22	61
Above average	11	31
Superior	2	5
Very Superior	1	3
Total	36	100

IVCQ= *Islamic Verbal Creativity*

Table 5 shows that 22 students have Islamic verbal creativity with an average category of 61%, while others are in a scattered one including above average, superior, and very superior. Therefore, the overall average of Asy-Syaffa Kindergarten childrens' creativity in the aptitude and non-aptitude aspects is 46.9 and 46.4, respectively. This indicated that most of the students in this school poses creative thinking abilities.

The Reggio Emilia activities collaborate with the subjects including 3 meetings of TPQ (Al-Qur'an learning), 1 meeting of Qur'an reading art, and 1 meeting of computers per week. This approach enables the subjects to provide memorization of short letters, daily prayers, and prayer readings. The Reggio Emilia model increases children's creativity because it allows the classroom and objects to become a fun place where they learn to make decisions. This approach also helps the students to see the relationship between learning activities and the experiences obtained (Acuna, 2019).

The Reggio Emilia model positively affects the aptitude and non-aptitude aspects including fluent, flexible, original, and detailed thinking skills, and curiosity. This is in line with the study of Amal (2019) that the application of this approach affects the language skills of early childhood. The creativity of Islamic psychology review is interpreted as the ability to compare and differentiate, make categories, explain causes, determine reliable sources, create analogies, and make decisions (Surah Al-Anám: 50, Surah Al-Baqarah:1-5, 2:219, 49:6, Surah An-Nahl: 75, and 3:159).

Meanwhile, the ability to compare and differentiate starts from ideas, thoughts, and perspectives because it provides responses based on evidence, cause, and effect. This ability tends to be improved by allowing the children to play with water and sand, plasticine or playdough, numbers, and letters, measuring water, shapes or objects, form patterns, as well as comparing and differentiating various forms of hijaiyah letters. The Reggio Emilia approach makes it possible for children to carry out these activities.

Also, some of the activities to hone creativity include playing blocks, classifying shapes, sizes, and colors. Children classify worship places as moral and religious

centers as well as identifying hijaiyah letters based on color. Meanwhile, the Asy-Syaffa Kindergarten students believe that nature, humans, animals exist because Allah is regarded as the creator, rain is caused by cloudiness, balloons expand due to air, and others. Teachers instill knowledge in children to let them be aware of people to be trusted. This normally happens through the way teachers speak, act, and behave to their students.

Children become creative by creating analogies which occurs while an individual looks for the similarities of events and connects particular phenomena to what they have experienced. For instance, children tend to relate apples to tomatoes, oranges, pears, and others because they have been introduced to it. Also, students can analogize hijaiyah letters (alif) as a form of sticks and others.

The ability to make decisions helps to develop children's creativity by training them to have 2-3 choices including going with dad for a walk, or shopping with mom, staying home with a favorite cat, and reading the Qur'an once, twice, or thrice a week. Liang, *et al.* (2021) showed that a person's Islamic creativity is strongly influenced by family background, parents, and activities given before school.

The results showed that the Reggio Emilia approach influence early childhood creativity. This model is interesting because students can learn through interaction with people in an environment. The Reggio Emilia approach gives children the opportunity to be competent, resourceful, curious, imaginative, communicate with others, and be more inventive. Furthermore, it describes children understanding through symbolic language including drawings, playing drama, and writing. Students revise of drawings if the teacher allows them to repeat the activity and modify each work. Also, the teacher pays close attention to all the results of children's development in solving problems due to their understanding.

This study differs because the Reggio Emilia approach affects children's creativity by adding Islamic activities. However, this model tries to solve problems, apply knowledge, and make habits in daily life. The Asy-Syaffa Kindergarten school work with the parents to develop students' creativity.

The development of children's creative thinking is determined by the stimulation experienced at an early age. Therefore, students tend to have good creativity if they are provided with positive and constructive things from childhood. Parental and educational services provided at home and school greatly determine children's creativity. This is in line with the study of [Cheung \(2012\)](#) that parents, teachers, and the community need to work together to make students more creative. Therefore, creativity become a domain that needs to be developed in students from childhood to optimize potential values. In conclusion, in-depth studies including original thinking skills, building curiosity, and imaginative growth have to be performed.

CONCLUSION

Reggio Emilia's approach affects children's creativity because it provides an opportunity for them to produce their work, develop ideas and imagination, and prefer to be active. Also, it allows students to construct new toys from old ones and use natural objects as well as surroundings. Children's creativity help to increase aptitude and non-aptitude. This study shows that a total of 22 and 14 students have Islamic verbal creativity in the average and above-average category respectively. The Reggio Emilia approach positively affects fluent, flexible, and original thinking skills, as well as curiosity. Creativity is very clear where Islam provides space for all its people to think and find new ideas.

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