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The Role of Teachers in Developing Creativity In Elementary School Age Children

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of elementary school teachers in fostering creativity in student learning development through the application of innovative learning methods and contextual learning environments. This research employs a descriptive quantitative approach involving 30 fifth-grade students from three schools SDN 106161 Laut Dendang, SDS Nahdlatul Ulama Medan, and SD Addini Medan Tembung and one teacher respondent from each school. Data were collected through creativity questionnaires distributed to students and interviews conducted with fifth-grade teachers to understand their roles and strategies in promoting creativity. The results showed that students' learning creativity was in the moderate to quite good category, with average scores of 66.6% at SDN 106161 Laut Dendang, 62.5% at SDS Nahdlatul Ulama Medan, and 71.8% at SD Addini Medan Tembung. Based on the teacher interviews, it was found that teachers serve as facilitators, motivators, and innovators who encourage students to think critically, explore new ideas, and express their creativity freely in the classroom. The findings imply that teachers' active participation and innovative teaching strategies play an important role in enhancing students' creative abilities. Therefore, strengthening professional development for teachers and improving collaboration between schools and families are necessary to create a more supportive learning environment. The implications of this study emphasize the

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importance of integrating contextual and project-based learning to nurture students' creativity and problem-solving skills. Additional materials used include creativity questionnaire sheets, teacher interview guidelines, and classroom documentation that support the validity of the findings.

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is a crucial foundation for shaping a child's character, potential, and overall thinking skills, including developing creativity. Creativity is one of the essential competencies of the 21st century that needs to be instilled early on so that children can think critically, innovatively, and adapt to changing times (Dwiprabowo et al., 2024). At the elementary school level, the role of teachers is crucial in determining the direction of students' creative development, as they act as facilitators, motivators, and guides in the learning process. According to (Anwar et al., 2023), teachers who are capable of acting as facilitators can help students develop their creative thinking potential through active, innovative, and enjoyable learning.

Elementary school children's creativity does not develop spontaneously but is influenced by various internal and external factors. (Fitriyani, 2018) states that factors influencing creativity include the family, school, and community environments. In the school context, teachers play a strategic role because they interact directly with students every day. Teachers are required to create a conducive learning environment, provide opportunities for students to explore, and value every idea that emerges from them (Ni'mah, 2022). Thus, the role of teachers is not limited to teaching but also as guides in shaping children's creative mindsets.

Previous research also shows that the use of innovative learning strategies influences student creativity. (Fuadiyah, Putri, and Mahfudloh, 2025) emphasized that teachers who implement project-based learning are able to encourage students to think critically and creatively in solving problems. Similarly, (Setiawan, Wardani, and Permana, 2023) demonstrated that the project-based learning approach is effective in enhancing student creativity in thematic learning because it provides space for freedom of thought and experimentation.

In addition to the learning approach, the learning environment also plays a crucial role. (Wahid, Purnomo, and Ulya., 2020) emphasize that utilizing the school environment as a learning resource can stimulate students' creativity by providing contextual learning experiences. However, (Artati, 2023) adds that in addition to school, the family and community environment also play a significant role in the development of children's creativity. Families that provide emotional support and opportunities for expression will help children develop self-confidence and original thinking skills. Therefore, developing student creativity should involve synergy between teachers, families, and the community.

Based on these findings, the researcher felt the need to conduct field research to determine the extent of the role of teachers in fostering creativity in elementary school-aged children, and whether there were other factors that influenced the development of this creativity. This research was conducted through direct observation and the distribution of

questionnaires in three different elementary schools, namely SDN 106161 Laut Dendang as the main school, SDS Nahdlatul Ulama Medan as the second school, and SD Addini as the third school. Each school involved 10 5th grade elementary school students and 1 teacher as research respondents. The selection of three schools with different backgrounds was intended to allow the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence student creativity, both from the role of teachers and the family and community environment.

According to Kurniawan (2018), creativity is a person's ability to produce something new, useful, and valuable through divergent thinking. Therefore, fostering creativity in elementary school children is not only the responsibility of teachers but also part of an education system that supports freedom of thought and innovation. Safi'i (2019) added that creative learning strategies are key to developing the potential of both gifted and regular children in the context of elementary education. Therefore, the role of teachers in designing and implementing learning oriented towards developing creativity is crucial to shaping an innovative generation.

Through this study, the researchers aimed to determine whether the role of teachers in the three schools was optimal in fostering student creativity, or whether there were still obstacles and influences from other external factors. This is crucial to serve as a basis for evaluating and developing more effective learning strategies to foster creativity in children from an early age. In line with Susanto (2019), creative teachers are able to transmit the spirit of creativity to their students through challenging, inspiring, and enjoyable learning activities. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of basic education, particularly in the comprehensive development of student creativity across various elementary school environments.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach to analyze the level of student learning creativity in several elementary schools: SDN 106161 Laut Dendang Tembung, SDS Nahdlatul Ulama Medan, and SD Addini Medan Tembung. This approach was chosen because it can provide an objective picture of the level of student learning creativity based on questionnaire and interview data collected from respondents.

The research subjects consisted of 30 fifth-grade students divided across three schools. The sample was selected purposively, considering student involvement in learning activities and their availability to complete the questionnaire. The research instruments used were a learning creativity questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

The questionnaire was compiled based on several creativity indicators, including divergent thinking skills, idea development skills, academic risk-taking skills, and collaborative problem-solving skills. The assessment scale used was a Likert scale with a score range of 1–4, namely: 4 = Always, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was calculated by adding up the overall scores, then averaging them for each school. Furthermore, the scores obtained were categorized into five levels, namely: 81–100% = Very High, 61–80% = High, 41–60% = Moderate, 21–40% = Low, and ≤ 20% = Very Low.

The collected data was then analyzed descriptively and quantitatively. The total score was calculated based on the maximum score from the questionnaire questions, then converted to a percentage using the following formula:

$$PS = \frac{SA}{SM} \times 100\%$$

Figure 1. Percentage Score Formula

Information :
PS = Percentage Score
SA = Actual Score (sum of all scores from all students)
SM = Maximum Score
= 10 students x 15 questions x highest indicator score (4)
= 600 Maximum Score

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were also conducted with fifth-grade teachers to strengthen the quantitative findings. These interviews focused on the learning strategies teachers use to foster creativity, the forms of appreciation given to students, and the factors that support and inhibit creativity in the learning process. Thus, the interview data complemented the questionnaire results, providing a more comprehensive picture of students' learning creativity.

Based on the analysis results, it was found that at SDN 106161 Laut Dendang Tembung, the average score reached 66.6 (medium category), with a fairly varied distribution where 20% of students were in the very high category and 30% of students were in the low category. At SDS Nahdlatul Ulama Medan, the average score of student creativity was 62.5 (medium category), with most students in the high category (40%) but there were still 30% who were in the low category. Meanwhile, at SD Addini Medan Tembung, the average score reached 71.8 (sufficient/good category), although there were still some students with low scores (65–68).

Overall, this study indicates that student learning creativity in the three elementary schools is in the moderate to good category. However, interview results confirm that further improvement efforts are needed through the implementation of more varied, creative, and innovative learning strategies so that all students can achieve higher and more equitable levels of learning creativity.

RESULTS DISCUSSION

Research result

1. Results of the Student Learning Creativity Questionnaire at SDN 106161 Laut Dendang, Tembung

   At SDN 106161 Laut Dendang, Tembung, the distribution of learning creativity questionnaires was also conducted to 10 fifth grade students. The scores obtained ranged from 50 to 81. The highest score was obtained by the tenth student with a score of 81, while the lowest score was obtained by the ninth student with a score of 50. The total overall score was 400, resulting in an average of 66.6 which is included in the medium category. The distribution of categories shows that there are 2 students (20%) in the very high category, 2 students (20%) in the high category, 3 students (30%) in the medium category, and 3 students (30%) in the low category. These results indicate that student learning creativity in this school is quite varied with an average in the medium category, and there is still an equal proportion between students with medium and low creativity.

$$\textit{Percentage Score} = \frac{400}{600} \textit{ x 100\% = 66.6\%}$$

2. Results of the Student Learning Creativity Questionnaire at Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School Medan

The distribution of learning creativity questionnaires conducted to 10 fifth grade students of Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School Medan showed a variation in scores between 53 and 83. The highest score was obtained by the fourth student with a score of 83, while the lowest score was obtained by three students, namely the third, fifth, and seventh students with a score of 53. The total score was 375, resulting in an average of 62.5 which is in the medium category. If we look at the distribution of categories, there is 1 student (10%) in the very high category, 4 students (40%) in the high category, 2 students (20%) in the medium category, and 3 students (30%) in the low category. These results indicate that in general the learning creativity of students in this school is at a moderate level with a tendency for most students to be in the high category, although there is still a group of students who need special attention because they are in the low category.

$$\textbf{\textit{Percentage Score}} = \frac{375}{600} \textbf{\textit{x 100\% = 62.5\%}}$$

3. Results of the Student Learning Creativity Questionnaire at Addini Elementary School, Medan Tembung

Based on the results of the distribution of learning creativity questionnaires conducted to 10 fifth-grade students of Addini Elementary School, Medan Tembung, an average score of 71.8% was obtained. This indicates that in general, students' learning creativity is in the sufficient or good category, although it has not yet reached the very high category. The data also shows a quite striking difference between students, where some students obtained high scores (90–91) indicating very good learning creativity, while several other students were in the range of 65–68 indicating that learning creativity is still low. Thus, it can be concluded that students' learning creativity is generally quite good, but still needs to be improved through more varied, innovative learning strategies, and active student involvement so that all students can achieve a higher and more equitable level of learning creativity.

$$\textbf{\textit{Percentage Score}} = \frac{431}{600} \textbf{\textit{x 100\% = 71.8\%}}$$

4. Results of Teacher Interviews Regarding the Creativity of Fifth Grade Elementary School Students

Interviews with fifth-grade teachers regarding children's creativity indicate that teachers play a crucial role in fostering the development of student creativity. Teachers encourage students to express their opinions by providing equal opportunities for all students, valuing every idea without distinguishing between right and wrong, and offering simple praise to boost self-confidence. In training students to be brave in trying new things, teachers emphasize that failure is part of the learning process. For example, in science experiments, students are guided to discover the shortcomings of their experiments themselves. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to experiment, for example in projects or artwork, without limiting materials and forms.

Furthermore, teachers use strategies to foster students' curiosity by starting learning with stimulating questions or everyday phenomena relevant to their lives, as well as using visual learning media. They also emphasize the importance of perseverance by encouraging students to try again after failure and by providing examples of successful individuals who never gave up. Rewards in the form of praise, achievement stars, and

displays of student work serve as a form of appreciation for students' originality. Through group work, teachers foster student creativity by providing space for exchanging ideas and listening to peers' opinions. They also emphasize that teacher, parent, and environmental factors are equally important in influencing student creativity, so collaboration between the three is essential to maximize the development of children's creativity.

Discussion

Based on the results of the learning creativity questionnaire conducted in three elementary schools, namely SDN 106161 Laut Dendang, SD Nahdlatul Ulama Medan, and SD Addini Medan Tembung, it was found that the level of students' learning creativity in general was still in the moderate to quite good category, although there was variation between schools.

SDN 106161 Laut Dendang obtained an average score of 66.6, which is also in the medium category, with a fairly balanced distribution between the very high, high, medium, and low categories. This finding indicates a fairly wide variation in creativity among students. This can be explained through Guilford's theory of creativity, which emphasizes that divergent thinking skills do not develop uniformly in all children, but are influenced by internal factors (motivation, interest, curiosity) and external factors (family, teacher, and school environment).

Meanwhile, at Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School in Medan, the average score of 62.5 indicates a moderate category, with a distribution of students tending to be more in the high category (40%). This indicates that the majority of students have good creative potential, but there is still a group of students (30%) with low creativity who need more attention. This condition is in line with the opinion of Munandar (2012) who stated that children's creativity in elementary school can develop optimally if the learning environment provides space for freedom, appreciation, and intellectual challenge.

In contrast to the two previous schools, Addini Elementary School Medan Tembung showed a higher average score of 71.8%, which is in the fairly good category. Some students even achieved very high scores (90–91), although some still fell into the low category (65–68). This condition indicates a significant gap in creativity among students. This is in line with research by Suryani (2020), which found that varied, innovative, and project-based learning strategies can enhance student creativity. However, if not implemented evenly, student creativity results tend to be unequal.

In addition to the questionnaire results, interviews with fifth-grade teachers from the three schools confirmed that teachers play a crucial role in fostering student creativity. Teachers strive to create a conducive learning environment by providing opportunities for all students to express their opinions, value ideas, and provide appreciation through praise or simple rewards. Teachers also employ a contextual learning approach by linking material to everyday phenomena and providing space for students to experiment, both in science and art lessons. These findings align with Vygotsky's view that children's creativity develops through social interaction, adult guidance, and opportunities for independent experimentation.

When comparing schools, it is clear that although the average learning creativity is in the moderate category, the distribution patterns differ. Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School, Medan, tends to have more students with high creativity, while Laut Dendang Elementary School 106161 shows a more balanced variation, while Addini Elementary School has a better average but with a fairly wide gap between students. This suggests that learning environment factors, teacher methods, and parental support significantly influence students' creativity levels.

In general, these results confirm that the development of students' learning creativity cannot be left to their own devices but requires specific strategies from teachers. Some strategies that can be optimized include: the use of project-based learning methods, the use of

visual media, the habituation of group discussions, and the recognition of original student ideas. Furthermore, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the surrounding community is a crucial factor in ensuring the equitable development of children's creativity.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in helping elementary school children develop creatively is very important and has a direct impact on students' creative thinking abilities. The results of the study in three elementary schools showed that the level of student learning creativity was in the moderate to quite good category, with differences in ability influenced by teaching methods, environmental support, and the role of teachers in the classroom. Teachers not only provide material, but also act as facilitators who create active, innovative, and enjoyable learning, as well as motivators who help students increase their self-confidence and courage in creating. The use of project-based learning strategies, the use of visual media, and contextual approaches have been proven to be able to improve students' creative abilities. However, research also shows that student creativity has not developed evenly due to limited tools, time, and teachers' understanding of creative approaches. Therefore, it is necessary to improve teacher competence through continuous training, support from school policies that encourage learning innovation, and collaboration with parents and the environment so that the development of student creativity can develop optimally, sustainably, and in accordance with the demands of 21st-century competencies.

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