

# Fun-Cooking for Early Childhood in Increasing Creativity for Learning at Home During Covid-19 in West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Children's;  
Creativity;  
Fun cooking

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### Article history:

Received 2022-02-15  
Revised 2022-07-26  
Accepted 2022-12-22

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## ABSTRACT

Creative activities cannot be conducted by children freely at home due to COVID-19, a pandemic that shifted the learning system to online. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of fun-cooking as a strategy for increasing children's creativity through fun cooking. It was conducted on children aged 5-6 years (Early Childhood) in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. A descriptive qualitative method was used through a case study approach. Furthermore, 3 fun cooking menus were used, including fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate. The data was collected using observation instruments. The results showed that each child develops creativity based on 3 categories, including less good (KB), quite good (CB), and good (B). Therefore, fun cooking can increase children's creativity with preparation, implementation, and completion stages.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) aims to develop abilities, shape character and habituation so that children's potential will increase with a strong character of faith and always be responsible for themselves and the environment. Playing as a group is absolutely necessary to develop creativity, imagination, feelings, will and motivation Early Childhood included The Special Needs Children (Budiarti; 2018). Because currently in the Covid-19 pandemic, what is meant by playing as a group is playing with family members at home through playing fun cooking.

The global of Covid-19 outbreak with symptoms of cough, shortness, fever then gives early warning to children to get used to maintaining distance, introducing a new way of greeting, initially kissing the hand is changed to simply giving hand signals, wearing masks, maintaining hand hygiene, consuming healthy food and preventing anxiety so that the immune system is strong and pray at home. The importance of adhering to health protocols, prevention is better than cure when sick. Cognitive refers to mental activity about how information is entered into the mind, stored, and transformed and recalled and used in complex activities such as thinking.

The use of internet technology in Early Childhood during this pandemic helps children to increase children's motivation in improving ways of thinking, exploration, and action through play experiences

[3]. The problem can be formulated, namely how fun cooking can increase motivation by stimulating learning and can take advantage of the environment at home.

Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) is the main cause of changes in the teaching and learning process. Educational institutions are adapting to the online-based learning method that reduces children's interest, especially in early childhood. Children prefer physical motor activities that increase their creativity. However, the policy of learning at home disrupts children's creative activities because each parent's ability to stimulate their creativity is different.

The children's creativity could be increased by fun cooking activities that involve processing and presenting dishes made from various ingredients and methods. These activities are conducted in a happy and fun atmosphere, stimulating children's creativity in playing groups.

In 2019, Lestari's study entitled *Increasing Creativity Through Fun Cooking in Group A RA Az Zahra Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta*, showed that children's creativity increased through fun cooking activities. They freely explore new and more interesting food media and edible products, making them happy. Furthermore, children become more fluent in communicating and exploring their talents and creative potential. This inspired a study entitled *Developing Fun Cooking in Increasing the Creativity of Children aged five to six or Early Childhood*.

Gallagher in Habibi (2020: 6) stated that creativity is a mental process conducted by individuals through new ideas or products or communicating between the two. According to Su-priadi in Lestari (2019: 20-21), creativity is an ability to raise something new, such as ideas or real works different from existing ones. In line with this, children's creativity is divided into cognitive and affective characteristics. Cognitive characteristics relate to cognition and thinking processes, including fluency, flexibility, and originality in thinking and elaboration, developing, enriching, or detailing ideas. In contrast, affective characteristics relate to attitudes, including curiosity, imagination, feeling challenged by pluralism, the courage to take risks, and appreciation.

From the term fun-cooking, fun means joyful, and cooking means a verb to cook (Echols and Shadily in Setyawati, 2013). According to the complete Indonesian dictionary by Fajri and Senja (in Setyawati, 2013), cooking means processing or making snacks. Therefore, fun cooking entails the preparation, implementation, and completion stages. In this study, children made three fun cooking menus, including fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate.

## 2. METHODS

This is a descriptive qualitative study that describes existing symptoms or real conditions. It is a case study conducted in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, in June-July 2021, with five children aged five to six. Data were collected through observation and documentation and were analyzed through the reduction and display stages before concluding. The fun-cooking activities conducted by the children produced three menus, including fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate through the preparation, implementation, and completion stages.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

The fun cooking activities resulted in the following findings:

AK

AK achieved creativity development descriptors in various categories. In the first descriptor, good creativity was achieved by cutting fruit using the mold selected. This was seen when coordinated physical motor skills and made fruit prints that matched the mold's flower shape. Watermelons, bananas, and papayas were cut into flower shapes without external help. In the second descriptor, AK achieved good creativity by selecting oranges, bananas, and papayas in one skewer to make fruit satay. The fruits were sorted into orange for oranges and yellow for bananas and papayas. In the third descriptor, good creativity was achieved by mixing orange, white, and pink colors to make a 3-layered

pudding with orange at the bottom, white in the middle, and pink on the top. Quite good creativity was achieved in the fourth descriptor when AK used a fish-shaped chocolate print and a smiley emoji to mix colors. However, the results were less than perfect on removing the chocolate from the mold. In the fifth descriptor, different products were produced from the examples provided, achieving good creativity. This was seen when AK produced fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate that differed from the exemplified products in color, shape, and combination. In the sixth descriptor, AK made layered pudding and chocolate characters using toppings different from his friends, such as choco chips and seres, achieving quite good creativity. The results differed from his friends' because AK did not want an imitation. A fun-cooking menu of fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate was neatly presented in the seventh descriptor. Furthermore, good creativity was achieved in the eighth descriptor by inquiring about the tools and materials used. In the ninth descriptor, AK inquired about the next step during the fun-cooking activity. He decorated the layered pudding by stacking several toppings from imagination, achieving good creativity in the tenth descriptor. Therefore, AK achieved four quite good (CB) and six good (B) creativity development descriptors.

#### AR

After conducting fun-cooking activities, AR achieved creativity development descriptors with various categories. In the first descriptor, good creativity was achieved by cutting water-melons, bananas, and papayas using a ribbon-shaped mold, coordinating physical motor, and utilizing fruit prints. Also, good creativity was achieved in the second descriptor by combining oranges, bananas, papaya, and mangoes in one skewer to make fruit satay. This was followed by the next skewer with a combination of banana, papaya, and watermelon. In the third descriptor, AR mixed pudding colors to make three and two-layered pudding, achieving good creativity. He did not wait for the pudding to solidify when mixing, making the color mixture not neat but still beautiful on solidifying. The layer pudding was made using orange, pink, white-orange, and white-pink. In the fourth descriptor, good creativity was achieved by selecting a fish-shaped chocolate mold and producing fish character chocolate with a good mix of colors. However, he produced cracked and cut chocolate and needed help to make a whole character. In the fifth descriptor, AR produced works that differed from the examples presented in color, shape, and combination, achieving good creativity. In the sixth descriptor, unique layer pudding and chocolate characters were made using the toppings. AR achieved good creativity in the seventh and eighth descriptors by neatly presenting a fun cooking menu and inquiring about the tools and materials used, respectively. In the ninth descriptor, the child inquired about the next step, achieving good creativity. He decorated layer pudding from imagination and made long wooden images as sticks and boats in the tenth descriptor. Therefore, AR achieved five quite good and five good creativity development descriptors.

#### ZA

After conducting the fun-cooking activity, ZA achieved creativity development descriptors with various categories. In the first descriptor, quite good development was exhibited by cutting fruit using a mold quite well but produced an incomplete circle of fruit pieces. ZA combined fruit when making satay, showing good creativity development in the second descriptor. Fruit colors were sorted into orange from oranges, yellow from bananas, and red from watermelons, resulting in fruit satay with different color patterns. In the third descriptor, the pudding was made by mixing colors into three layers with different patterns such as pink, orange, white, and white orange, as well as color gradations. Furthermore, good creativity was achieved in the fourth descriptor by using a flower-shaped chocolate mold and a smiley emoji. ZA mixed the brown colors in the mold and decorated them with colorful toppings. However, he still needed help pressing the chocolate out of the mold, resulting in a partially incomplete character chocolate. In the fifth descriptor, good creativity was exhibited by producing works that differed from the examples provided in terms of color patterns, gradations, and toppings. These included doll images and character chocolates in various color mixtures. In the sixth

de-scriptor, unique pudding layers and chocolate characters were made by mixing colorful top-pings. Moreover, the chocolates were decorated with brown, pink, and blue colors mixed with different toppings. In the seventh descriptor, ZA neatly presented fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate with a clean arrangement. He showed less good creativity development in the eighth descriptor by inquiring about the tools and materials used, unlike during the activity when he was often silent. The same score was achieved in the ninth descriptor when ZA inquired about the steps during the fun cooking activity. In the tenth descriptor, the layered pudding was decorated from imagination, indicating quite good creativity development. He drew a hello kitty doll in his house using toppings such as seres and choco chips but produced an incomplete character. Therefore, ZA achieved two less good, four quite good, and four good creativity development descriptors.

#### AM

After conducting the fun-cooking activity, AM achieved the creativity development de-scriptors with various categories. In the first descriptor, good creativity was exhibited by cut-ting fruit using a heart-shaped mold, producing perfect fruit pieces. AM coordinated his fine motor skills when cutting watermelons, bananas, and papayas without help. In the second de-scriptor, fruit satay was made by sorting the fruits into yellow from bananas, orange from oranges and papayas, and red from the watermelons. As a result, the satay was made with the same fruits and arrangements, showing good creativity. The same score was achieved in the third descriptor by making three layers of pudding with different color arrangements. The first pudding cup had white and pink, the second cup had pink, orange, and white, while the third cup had orange and pink colors. AM achieved quite good creativity in the fourth descriptor by using a flower-shaped chocolate mold and the smiley emotion to make characters with various colors and toppings. However, the character chocolate dried up and could not be separated from the mold, producing an imperfect shape. In the fifth descriptor, quite good creativity was exercised by producing works that differed from the examples provided. AM imitated the exemplified arrangement when making fruit satay from oranges, papaya, bananas, and water-melons and demonstrated a teddy bear character when making the pudding layer. The charac-ter chocolates made differed from the examples provided in color gradation and toppings loca-tion. In the sixth descriptor, unique layer pudding and chocolate characters were made using toppings, showing quite good creativity. This was seen when decorating the layered pudding as a teddy bear. Also, character chocolate was decorated using choco chips and colorful top-pings following the mold's shape, though it was not very neat. In the seventh descriptor, AM showed good creativity by neatly presenting a fun cooking menu. He achieved the same score in the eighth descriptor by inquiring about the tools and materials used when making fruit sa-tay, layer pudding, and character chocolate, exhibiting braveness. Also, AM inquired about what to do during the fun cooking activity, showing good creativity in the ninth descriptor. In the tenth descriptor, the layered pudding was decorated by drawing a teddy bear on top from imagination, showing a good achievement. Therefore, AM achieved three quite good (CB) and 7 good (B) creativity development descriptors.

#### DI

After conducting the fun-cooking activity, DI achieved creativity development descriptors with various categories. In the first descriptor, good creativity was exercised by cutting fruit using a star-shaped mold, though some pieces were not perfectly shaped. The same score was achieved in the second descriptor when making fruit satay by combining yellow from oranges and bananas, orange from papayas, and red from watermelon. In the third descriptor, good creativity was exhibited by making layer pudding using two colors mixed in one cup. Four cups of layered pudding were made with white and pink colors. In the fourth descriptor, DI showed quite good creativity by using chocolate molds in flowers, fish, and smiling emoti-cons. However, he still needed help to remove the chocolate from the mold to get a perfect shape. In the fifth descriptor, the work produced differed from the example provided in color, topping combinations, and the characters' shape, indicating good creativity.

DI decorated or made layer pudding and chocolate with unique toppings, showing quite good creativity. The layer pudding was decorated with a mouse head shape and a wall clock, though it was not neat, while the chocolate was decorated with his favorite topping. In the seventh descriptor, good creativity was indicated by neatly serving fruit satay, layer pudding, and character chocolate. However, less good creativity was shown in the eighth descriptor by inquiring about the tools and materials used. The same score was achieved in the ninth descriptor when DI inquired about the next step during the fun cooking activity. However, creativity was quite good in the tenth descriptor by decorating the layered pudding with toppings into the mouse's head, and wall clock shapes from imagination, though it was not neat. Therefore, DI achieved two less good (KB), four quite good (CB), and four good (B) creativity development descriptors.

### 3.2 Discussion

This study found that fun-cooking activity increases creativity. People are considered creative when they have cognitive and affective characteristics. This is in line with Guilford in Habibi (2020), which stated that creativity includes cognitive and affective characteristics. After performing fun cooking activities, cognitive characteristics were shown in fluent thinking skills by solving problems in new ways. Furthermore, originality thinking skills were reflected in producing original products. Affective characteristics such as curiosity and imagination or fantasy were also developed. This supports Desmita's opinion in Sari (2018) that creative individuals have a strong imagination, the freedom to think, and curiosity. In fun-cooking, children find different things from other creative activities, such as combining ingredients and colors. They also serve the products and enjoy the results directly.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Fun-cooking activities increase children's creativity in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, with the following steps: 1) The preparation stage involves preparing tools and materials, places, and observation instruments. The stage also entails preparing places to wash hands to comply with the COVID-19 health protocol and documentation tools. 2) The implementation stage involves inviting children to wash their hands and sit in a circle according to a predetermined distance. It also involves introducing the fun-cooking activities, tools and materials used, and the steps and examples to children. They are taught how to make, decorate, and serve food made. Additionally, children are guided and observed as their fun-cooking activities are documented. 3) The completion stage involves chatting with children about the fun-cooking activities and inviting them to clean the activity location.

An interesting conclusion from the research here is the finding of the problem formulation, namely independence in choosing activities. When sharing, the brain will produce the hormone dopamine which produces feelings of happiness and the hormone oxytocin which reduces stress, which causes motivation and increase children's creativity. (Fabio; 2018)

Children can share food by playing fun cooking at home with others as a form of concern for their own health during the pandemic. Playing fun cooking through cooking healthy food is needed by the child's body so that the immune system is strong, producing happy feelings and reducing the stress that causes motivation.

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