



## The Influence of Food Creation Activity on the Improvement of Picky Eater Behavior in Children Aged 5-6 Years in TK Negeri Pembina in Pemalang Regency

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine whether the food creations activity can overcome the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. This research is a type of quantitative research using the Pre-Experimental Design method with the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design approach. The subjects in this study are children aged 5-6 years or TK B in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency, totaling 30 children. The data collection technique used is an instrument in the form of a questionnaire using a Likert scale. Data analysis techniques are descriptive statistics and Paired Sample T-Test. All calculations are processed using IBM SPSS 20.

Based on the results of the Paired Sample T-test calculation, the value of  $t_{count} > t_{table}$  ( $13.482 > 2.045$ ) with a significance value of 0.000. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. In other words, that there are differences in the average pretest and posttest results, which means that there is an influence on the activity of forming food creation in overcoming picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. A significant difference can be seen from the value of  $\text{sig} (2 \text{ tailed}) < 0.05$  which is 0,000. This means that the application of activities to form food creations in this study can overcome the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. An increase in the mean value of picky eater behavior improvement in children aged 5-6 years before and after being given treatment to form food creation that is from 143.67 during pretest to 168.37 at posttest, resulting in an increase in scores of 24.70. Conclusions based on these data, there is a significant increase in the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years at TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency after being treated with demonstration methods for forming food creations, and there are several other methods for overcoming picky eater behavior, including conversing questions and answers, storytelling, and role-playing.

### How to cite

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## INTRODUCTION

Preschoolers are children aged three to five years. This time there is a significant biological, psychosocial, cognitive, and spiritual growth and development. The growth and development of preschool children are influenced by nutrition, sleep problems, dental health, injury prevention, and the way parents take care of sick children (Wong, 2008).

Preschool age is a sensitive period for the development of social aspects of children. Children of this age are sensitive to receiving various efforts to develop their full potential. Sensitive period is a period of maturation of physical and psychological functions that respond to environmental stimuli and assimilate or internalize them. This period is the beginning of the development of children's abilities so that conditions and stimuli are needed in accordance with the needs of the child so that growth and development are optimally achieved (Suharyani, 2010).

Children at preschool age, experience psychological development into toddlers who are more independent, autonomous, can interact with their environment, and can better express their emotions. Emotional overflow that usually occurs in children aged 3-5 years in the form of temper tantrums, which is easy to pop-up, cry, or scream when the child does not feel comfortable, in addition, children of this age also tend to enjoy exploring new things. The specific developmental characteristics that are formed also influence children's eating patterns. Eating disorders that occur if not addressed can develop into problems with eating difficulties (Soetjiningsih, 2008).

Eating problems in children are different from eating problems in adults and young adults. Eating behavior problems that arise can vary from choosing to eat certain foods, limiting the amount of food intake, overeating, to the occurrence of food disorders that impact on growth and development disorders. Complaints about children who have difficulty eating become a problem that is often expressed by parents when bringing their children to the doctor. These complaints occur almost evenly regardless of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Some eating problems that often arise include fussing, vomiting, being too picky, eating phobias, slow eating, and food refusal (Marmi, 2013).

Based on preliminary study data through observations on children and interviews with teachers and mothers who have preschool children in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency, it is found that as many as 82% of children experien-

ce picky eater. During the school meals and the children brought by their parents, most of them did not finish their food and still left some side dishes. Most of the eating difficulties experienced by the child refuse when given food, more than an hour to finish eating, picking out food, spilling, or dismissing the food given. Researchers also conducted interviews with several teachers and 15 mothers who are waiting for their children in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency and are asked questions about eating behavior in children, out of 7 mothers said their children had difficulty eating, which had to be forced, parents and teachers also said they did not know how to overcome their children's eating difficulties, mothers did not provide children with varied forms of food, mothers did not use attractive eating utensils, mothers only gave the same food every day and did not vary the shape and taste of food. They explains that the beginning of the behavior of eating difficulties in children is lazy to eat, or picking out food.

Most mothers, who are generally young, feel confused in dealing with this behavior and complain about their picky habits. Not many of them really understand the factors behind this behavior. Finally, they concluded each and took different steps, which they considered appropriate, to deal with their child's eating behavior. Many attempts have been made by mothers to get their children to eat, such as giving additional vitamins, and there are those who persuade give gifts if their children want to spend food, but this has no effect in overcoming the child's eating difficulties. As many as 45% of mothers feel it as a problem. In addition, there is still very little research on picky eater conducted in Indonesia, even though the knowledge of picky eater still needs to be developed.

According to Diana Damayanti (2010), Picky Eater is defined as a child who likes to be picky about food or just wants to consume the same food. It can be interpreted as a picky eater that is an eating disorder that prevents the consumption of certain foods and is reluctant to try new foods. Picky eater consumes less varied food intake and is usually low in vegetables, fruit, protein, and fiber-rich foods because of the rejection of food. Preferred and disliked foods have an important role in the choice of food, where picky eaters can show a strong preference for food. A picky eater is a normal developmental phase. However, the results of the study say three-quarters of picky-eater children begin to refuse food in the first year of life until the age of two years, culminating in the age of 3-6 years and subsequently

according to individual growth, if the picky eater is left and lasts long enough it will become a habit until adulthood.

Based on the research of Kesuma et al (2015) in the Integrated Islamic Kindergarten Bina Insani, Mojoroto Subdistrict, Kediri City in 2015 with a sample of 43 children, it showed that preschoolers who experienced picky eaters behavior (35.4%). The results of this study found (67.1%) children spent food for a long time (more than 30 minutes), (49.4%) are not interested in trying new foods, (48.1%) liked only certain foods.

The incidence of picky eater continues to increase. Research in San Francisco in 2010 found the highest incidence of picky eater in children aged over 2 years as much as 13-22%. Previous research in Indonesia showed a high rate of a picky eater. In 2009 in Palembang with a population of 200 thousand children and in Bekasi with a population of 450 thousand children are found 59.3% respectively and 70.5% of children experienced picky eater. The research in Riau in 2015 with a population of 670 thousand children was found to be children who experienced picky eaters as much as 35.4%. The research in Semarang with a population of 230 thousand children found 60.3% of children experience picky eater (Hardianti, 2018).

If this picky eater behavior is not immediately addressed from the beginning then the child will be difficult to eat in the future. Children cannot grow up to be a picky eater until adulthood. This will cause the child to be malnourished and cause suboptimal growth. Unfortunately, many parents are less responsive to the picky eater behavior (Anggraeni, 2012).

Picky eater, if left unchecked, can cause intake inadequacy that can lead to impaired growth in children. Saraswati's research (2012) found that children who experience picky eater are more at risk of having low body weight, especially in children under five, picky eater behavior that is not addressed as early as possible can cause children to be accustomed to picking out food and can cause children to lack nutritional intake. Therefore, they can influencing the nutritional status can also illustrate a pattern of food restriction which may continue and play a role in the disruption of food behavior as an adult.

Children with picky eaters usually avoid certain foods based on color, texture or smell (such as vegetables, fruits, etc.). Children will also limit food consumption to certain types of brands that are softer or lighter colors such as plain colored pasta, cheese pizza and so on. One of the ef-

forts to create physical health in preschoolers is to provide healthy and nutritious food even though at this time children often have eating problems that result in children consuming less healthy and nutritious food (Wong, 2009).

Nutrition is one of the supporting parts in the development and growth of children. Before children like and eat foods that contain balanced nutrition, children need to be introduced first about balanced nutrition (Tasuah, et al. 2019). The process of growth and development in preschool age children is closely related to the intake of nutrients consumed every day from food. There is no single type of food that contains all kinds of nutrients the body needs to ensure growth and maintain its health, except breast milk for newborns until the age of 6 (six) months. Example: Rice is the main source of calories, but poor in vitamins and minerals; vegetables and fruits are generally rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber, but poor in calories and protein; fish is the main source of protein but few calories, therefore to meet their needs for diverse nutrients, humans need to consume various types of food in sufficient quantities (Ambari, et al. 2018).

Nutritious food is food that meets our body's nutritional needs. Nutritious food sources can be obtained from anywhere, for example, nutritious food sources from vegetables that can be easily found around us. Besides being able to meet the body's nutritional needs, nutritious food can also protect us from various diseases (Mukminin et al. 2018). In order for a child's nutritional needs to be met for growth and development, children must eat a variety of foods in order to obtain a variety of nutrients needed by the body. So that children like a variety of foods, it is necessary to introduce children to various types of food. Providing a variety of foods every day can help children to get to know different types of food and make children's food choices become wider. Giving them the same food can narrow children's food choices. Children tend to choose and like foods that children normally eat. Therefore, it is always a good idea to introduce new foods at an early age to prevent children from picking on food or picky eaters.

Food serving greatly influences a child's appetite. Messy and unattractive food will make children bored before they can eat it. Attractive appearance can be the key so that children want to try new foods. Colorful foods have excellent visual appeal for children. Through the activities of forming food creations, the child will be more interested in seeing the food served. For the first time, the child may only see the food being served

but then when the child is involved in the activity of forming food creations, of course, the child will be interested in trying foods that the child has painstakingly made with his creation alone.

When children begin to like food with these creations the teacher can provide an understanding of how good food is useful for health and balanced nutrition for children. Through activities to form food creations children will be interested in consuming foods that contain balanced nutrition and are useful for children's growth and development.

Based on the description above, it is considered necessary to have research on the effect of food creation activity to overcome picky eater behavior on children aged 5-6 years and to find out how much increased improvement in picky eater behavior of children after being given the treatment of food creation activity in children aged 5-6 years so that this research can help the imagination of children to be creative and is expected to arouse children's appetite and encourage children to try new food. By always providing new food for children, the selection of children's food is much broader and can avoid children from becoming picky eaters.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method in this study uses a quantitative research approach to the type of experimental research approach. The design of this study is to use a pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest design. Pre-experimental design is an experimental design that is not actually, there are still external factors that also influence the formation of the dependent variable. Control variables and samples selected with certain techniques cause this to happen (Sugiyono, 2016). The dependent variable in this study is the picky behavior of children aged 5-6, while the independent variable in this study is the activity of forming food creations. The population in this study is 46 students of TK B in TK Negeri Pembina, Pematang Regency. Researchers took a sample of 30 kindergarten B students aged 5-6 years in the TK Pembina Negeri Pematang Regency. This research is conducted from November 6 to December 7, 2019. The data collection technique in this study uses a 5-6 year picky eater behavior scale instrument.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section contains an explanation of the results and discussion of research related to the provision of methods of creation forming activity

to improve the picky behavior of children aged 5-6 years in Kindergarten B students in TK Negeri Pembina, Pematang Regency.

**Table 1.** Pretest Result Data

| Class Interval | Total | Percentage | Category  |
|----------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| 56-98          | 2     | 6%         | Very low  |
| 99-140         | 10    | 28%        | Low       |
| 141-182        | 16    | 44%        | High      |
| 183-224        | 2     | 6%         | Very high |

The table above shows the results of the pretest about the improvement in picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years and the percentage of the number of children in a range of classes with a certain score. Pretest results about improving picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years and the percentage of the number of children or respondents in the range of classes with a certain score. Pretest result shows the number of children in the very low category there are 2 or with a percentage of 6%, the low category there are 10 children or with a percentage of 28%, the number of children in the high category there are 16 children or with a percentage of 44%, and in the very high category there are 2 or by percentages.

**Table 2.** Posttest Result Data

| Class Interval | Total | Percentage | Category  |
|----------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| 56-98          | 0     | 0%         | Very low  |
| 99-140         | 2     | 6%         | Low       |
| 141-182        | 23    | 64%        | High      |
| 183-224        | 5     | 14%        | Very high |

The table above shows the posttest results about the value of picky-eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years and the percentage of the number of children in a range of classes with a certain score. The results of the posttest after the treatment is given based on the data above can be seen that the very low category has a percentage of 0%, the low category has 2 children with a percentage of 6%. Then in the high category, there are 23 children with a percentage of 64%, and in the very high category, there are 5 children with a percentage of 14%. This shows that there is an increase in the number of independent behavioral scores of children aged 5-6 years before and after treatment is given or treatment to form food

creation.

From the data above, it can be concluded that the results of this study are that there are differences between before and after treatment with the method of forming food creations. This means the method of forming food creations influences the improvement of the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. This is evidenced by the calculation of Paired Sample t-Test as follows.

| Paired Sample t-Test |         |         |                 |      |
|----------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|------|
|                      | T       | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) |      |
| Pair 1               | Pretest | -13,482 | 29              | .000 |

Based on the calculation of statistical data uses IBM SPSS 20, the results of the t-Test are known to be Sig. (2-tailed) of  $0,000 < 0,05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there is an average difference between the results of the pretest and posttest, which means that there is an influence of the food creation in overcoming children's picky eater of children aged 5-6 years. Furthermore, from the table above it can be seen that the  $t_{\text{value}}$  is negative that is equal to -13.482, and if positively becomes 13.482. While the value of  $t_{\text{table}}$  is 2.030. Thus, because  $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$   $13.482 > 2.045$ , it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there are differences in the average pretest and posttest results which means that there is an influence of the method of forming food creations in improving picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years.

### 1. Behavioral Differences in Picky Eater Children Ages 5-6 Years Before and After Treatment

The research entitled "The Influence of Food Creation Activity on The Improvement of Picky Eater Behavior in Children Aged 5-6 Years In TK Negeri Pembina In Pemalang Regency". The discussion that will be presented by the researcher or the results of research that has been done is to determine the differences in picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years before and after being given treatment through food creation activity.

Based on the results of calculations that have been done using the Paired Sample t-Test, the value of  $t_{\text{count}}$  is greater than  $t_{\text{table}}$  i.e  $13.482 > 2.030$  and Sig. (2-tailed)  $0,000 < 0,05$ , which means  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. So, it can be explained that there are differences in picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years after app-

lying the activities to form food creation in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency.

Based on the results of the study, it shows that there are differences in improving picky eater behavior in children based on the application of forming food creations. This is shown from the results of paired sample t-test = -13,482  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted if the probability value (sig 2 tailed) is  $0,000 < 0,05$ . Analysis of the Paired sample t-test uses the level of significance between the two variables.

Based on the results of statistical calculations that have been done, the t-test data (Paired Sample t-Test) is obtained from the table -13.482 with the Sig. (2-tailed)  $< 0,05$  which means there is a difference between the pretest and posttest scores. The conclusion obtained is  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_0$  rejected means that there are significant differences in the improvement of picky eater behavior in children through the application of forming food creations. In research in the pretest group or prior to treatment, there are factors or aspects of picky eater behavior based on what researchers see when conducting related activities on how to improve picky eater behavior of children before and after being given activities to form food creations in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency. The first factor in appetite, it appears that the child does not finish eating, bringing food back and the child closes his mouth and refuses to eat when told to eat. The second factor is the diversity of food intake, children feel fed up with food served with a monotone menu and appearance that is not at all attractive to children. The center of attention of the researcher is that there are some children who only eat one type of food variant even though several food variants have been served. The third factor is psychological development. At this stage, the child begins to build his character. Therefore, children begin to show their existence by demanding autonomy for themselves, such as refusing to eat, whine, and tantrums. There are also children who still need to be accompanied when eating and eat for more than 30 minutes. However, after being given treatment by the researcher for 12 treatments there are changes in the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years in classes B1 and B2.

At Posttest or after the implementation of activities to food forming creation, there are differences, which are in the appetite factor, children want to spend their food, do not release food again, and do not refuse when given food. Then in the diversity of food intake, the child wants to try new foods, the child does not choose his food, the child eats all the variants of the existing

dishes, is interested in the food he creates himself, is attracted by the funny shape, the child eats a lot, and the child not setting aside his food. And finally, the psychological factor of the child begins to calm down, does not experience fuss or tantrums, and does not depend on parents.

At the beginning of the research, the children are not too enthusiastic with treatment, because they felt unfamiliar with new people and did not know. Then after introducing children, they begin to adapt to researchers and begin to be enthusiastic, feel happy, and interested when the treatment is ongoing. In this study, the researcher gives the activity of food forming created by the children themselves. First, children are introduced to foods that contain balanced nutrition. The researcher also introduces the benefits of vegetables and fruits that are good for children's health. Through the activity of food creations can also introduce a variety of healthy foods for the health of children's growth and development.

A nation can be said to be more advanced if the education level of the population is high, the degree of health is high, life expectancy is long and physical growth is optimal. There is a very close relationship between physical growth and mental development of children at an early age. Children with good nutritional status and healthy can more actively respond to all changes in the environment (Khomsan, 2006). Eating patterns are healthy foods and contain nutrients that are consumed regularly in order to meet the needs of the body, the right one to give so that they can expedite the growth and development of children. The pattern of food intake that is not nutritious in children for a long time will cause a lack of nutrition in the body. So that children really need nutritious food intake to support their growth and development (Heal, 1989: 42). Nutritious food is very necessary for children in the process of growth, but sometimes children do not like to consume healthy foods because of the appearance that is less attractive. This is in accordance with the opinion of Ekayanti (2007: 21) children usually do not like fruits and vegetables, this can be caused by parents who may be less skilled in serving the food menu, and the menu served is also less varied. For the sake of practicality, the food served tends to be the same. The taste of the food is less tasty or could be due to parental eating behaviors that turned out to be wrong. Meanwhile, according to Lawson (2008: 6) if the child rejects vegetables, especially green vegetables, then give another vegetable and try giving it back after a few days. Serve attractively so that children are more appetite.

Foods that are packaged with an interesting and unique presentation will be able to invite the appetite of children. Creative serving foods that are in accordance with the interests of the child will make it easier for parents to present foods that contain balanced nutrition for children. It is hoped that the activities of forming children's food creations will understand the food that contains balanced nutrition and prefers healthy food (Novita Sari, 2009: 3)

Based on the calculation of research data, there are differences in children's picky eater behavior based on the application of forming food creations. The difference between the two groups is seen during the children's activities at lunch together at school. In the posttest group, children can handle picky eater behavior well. The teacher observes the children at the time of the activity as well as the child does not need to be accompanied when eating, children can eat a variety of foods, children can spend food, and children become not choosy food. The study also found no children who tantrums because they do not want to eat.

## **2. Effect of Activities Shaping Food Creation on Picky Eater Behavior for Children Aged 5-6 Years**

The obtained results from existing data will explain the research's purpose that has been carried out about knowing the effect of activities to form food creation in overcoming picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. The results obtained are the pretest value when treatment has not been done about the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years and the percentage of the number of children or respondents in a range of classes with a certain score. Pretest results show the number of children in the very low category there are 2 children or with a percentage of 6%, the number of children in the low category there are 10 children or with a percentage of 28%, the number of children in the high category there are 16 children or with a percentage of 44%, the number of children in very high category there are 2 or with a percentage of 6%. Whereas after being given treatment the posttest value obtained about picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years, in the low category there are 2 children with a percentage of 6%, in the high category there are 23 children with a percentage of 64%. And in the very high category, there are 5 children with a percentage of 14%. This means that the picky eater behavior of children has improved for the better after the treatment. There is the influence of activities to form food creation in improving

picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years.

Improvement of picky eater behavior in children aged 5-6 years based on the application of activities to form food creations before and after the treatment is applied is explained through calculations that have been done and through descriptive analysis. From the values obtained by respondents numbering 30 children showed that the average posttest score is 143.67 the maximum pretest value is 190 and the minimum value is 95, and the ranged value is 95. Furthermore, the experimental group data shows that the posttest average value is 168.37. While the maximum value is 197, the minimum value is 136 and the range value is 61. It can be concluded that the improvement of picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years after being given treatment through activities to form food creations is higher than before being given treatment activities to form food creations.

Giving treatment in overcoming the picky eater behavior of children 5-6 years old using several methods. However, in applying the method of forming food creations activity in overcoming picky eater behavior, the teacher/educator must have adequate skills and creativity as well as adequate facilities and infrastructure. It is because, the skill will influence the success in overcoming the picky eater behavior of children.

According to Muaris (2010: 1) that the activity of forming food creations or known as bento is a one-meal meal that contains balanced nutritional values. The form of food that is served is unique and very creative so that children will love consuming it. In the dish that is served in accordance with the provisions of school children because it suits the needs recommended for the age of the child who is the age of growth. Therefore the activity of forming food creations is the right method for children to be able to create in accordance with the imagination, increase the child's appetite, and can overcome picky eater behavior in children.

Markowitz & Mc Cormick (2013: 13) states that a child who has picky eater behavior will be more selective about some foods related to texture, odor, and appearance picky eaters caused by loss of appetite can occur from mild to severe levels. Mild symptoms include decreased appetite, drinking drinks that are often left, ejecting, or spitting out food, while severe symptoms such as closing the mouth tightly or refusing to eat or drink milk at all (Judarwanto, 2006 in Kusumawardhani, et al, 2013).

Picky eater is one of the eating behaviors that affect nutritional status. Nutrition problems

not only lack nutritional status but short and thin children can also affect the child's growth and development. According to several studies if picky eating in children is not immediately handled will have an effect, such as inadequate certain nutrients that will have an impact on nutritional status (Ekstein, et al. 2010).

The activity of forming children's food creations can sharpen the brain to increase the level of creativity, by forming food creations will make creativity increase because it will create unique and funny shapes from the food made. Children pour their ideas and then the researcher gives an understanding of foods that are good for consumption and contain balanced nutrition in children. The activity of forming food creation is very liked by children, besides children can be creative according to the imagination, the child's appetite also increases and can overcome picky eater behavior in children.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of statistical calculations that have been done, the t-test data (Paired Sample t-Test) is obtained from the table -13.482 with the Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 which means there is a difference between the pretest and posttest scores. So that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, in other words, that there is a difference in the average pretest and posttest results. It means that there is an influence on the activity of forming food creation towards improving picky eater behavior in children aged 5-6 years.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the activities of forming food creations have a significant influence on the improvement of the picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years. Analysis of the research on the effect of forming food creations on the improvement of picky eater behavior of children aged 5-6 years in TK Negeri Pembina, Pemalang Regency, there is an increase in the mean value of picky eater behavior of children, that is from 143.67 to 168.37 resulting in an increase in scores of 24.70. Based on the results and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the results of picky eater behavior improvement in children aged 5-6 years before being given treatment and after being given treatment to form food creations.

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