The Effect of Theme-Based Storytelling and Flash Card on Nutritional Knowledge in Early Childhood Education

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Article Info

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of theme-based storytelling and flashcards nutrition knowledge in Early Childhood Education (ECE). This research was a quantitative research with quasi-experimental equivalent pre-test – post-test control group design. The population was Kindergarten Merpati group in Margorejo, Pati which have 251 children. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. The samples were Pertiwi Kindergarten Langenharjo (32 children), Pertiwi Kindergarten Dadirejo (32 children), Pertiwi Kindergarten Penambuhan (32 children). Data were obtained from non-test techniques consisting of interview, documentation, and observation. Observations were made to see the children' activities before and after intervention about nutritional knowledge through a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by paired sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance. Furthermore, post hoc tests were used to analyze the most optimal interventions. The results showed that the theme-based storytelling method improved children' nutritional knowledge by 24.45%, the theme-based flashcard media improved children' nutritional knowledge by 31.84%, the theme-based flashcard was the most influential intervention on children' nutritional knowledge improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood enters the golden age phase, which requires coaching through educational stimuli so that children can have optimal developments. One of these developments can be done by enrolling children in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. Lamb & Anhert (2006) states that the presence of children in ECE program provides short or long term benefits for children and their associations. Children' education at the age of 3 to 6 years is a very important period to be aware of long-term changes, so it is very important to ensure that ECE children are in an environment that is well-maintained and safe (Mofrad, 2012).

ECE National Standards in Indonesia explain that there are six aspects of child development based on age. Among the six aspects are the physical motor that refers to health and safety behaviors. The 2013 ECE curriculum also has basic competencies that expect children to have healthy living behaviors, as stated in the Basic Competencies, including knowing how to live healthily. To help children know how to live a healthy life, knowledge about nutritious food is necessary (Winarno, 2001).

The growth and development of children depend on good nutrition. Some nutrients needed by children are carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals following the General Guidelines for Balanced Nutrition in Indonesia. As a result of careless eating habits at school, there is an imbalance in food intake, and this results in disorders of growth and development systems of children such as malnutrition, digestive disorders, eye disorders, mouth sores, bleeding gums (Dewi, Arrofi, and Erwin, 2011). So, the role of the school environment for children' knowledge about nutritious food is very necessary. One of ECE Program that exists in Indonesia is kindergarten.

According to Basic Health Research report (2018) the comparison of children' development index with aged 3-6 years in Indonesia is 88.3% less than Thailand and Vietnam, with the nutritional status of early childhood being very thin and underweight is 10.2%, while being overweight is 8%. Central Java Provincial Health Office data for 2017 states that Pati Regency ranks 4th out of 35 districts/cities about the number of early childhood' malnutrition status. In Pati Regency especially Margorejo, based on interviews with health center officials, it was found that in 2018 the status of malnutrition was 1,6%, lack of nutrition was 7,1%, normal nutrition was 87,9% and over nutrition was 3,4%. The existence of these problems requires quite a serious handling. Interventions need to be made to improve the quality of human resources, primarily children, to grow and develop properly.

Based on the interviews and observations in Merpati Kindergarten Group, it was found that every day no less than 5 street vendors selling in kindergarten, so that most of the children prefer to buy unhealthy snacks in the situation. In interpreting food, children only understand likes and dislikes, while foods that be consumed are usually fatty, high-carbohydrate, and sweets such as bread, sausages, candy, pop-ice, ice cream, and snacks. This happens because of the lack of children' knowledge about good nutrition, so children have to be given the knowledge to understand the importance of nutrition for the body (Dejesetya, 2016).

To improve children' knowledge about nutritious food, the role of a teacher is very important. The learning model given by the teacher is one of the most effective methods to support students in receiving food (Hendy, and Raudenbush, 2000). Likewise, in providing an understanding of nutritious food also requires interesting and student learning center. During the observation, the writer found that learning about nutritional knowledge was still dominated by the teacher through the lecture method. So, innovative learning models are needed to optimize children' development.

One of the active learning that can be applied for kindergarten children is storytelling. Umayah (2016) stated that through storytelling, children get some of the social knowledge with religious, moral values, this proves that storytelling can improve not only cognitive aspect, but also social abilities and moral values. Furthermore, storytelling activities facilitate

children to have the opportunity to develop their asking ability. Asking questions is an ability possessed by children to express curiosity (Hariyadi, 2014). Then, the storytelling method can make children more active and engaged in the learning process. Theme-based storytelling methods in this study were the transfer of information from teacher to children using finger puppets about food with the benefits and consequences of consuming it related to nutrition knowledge.

Another alternative that can be done to provide kindergarten children with nutritional understanding is through the game method using flashcard. Playing cards is one of the activities carried out by children because by playing; children can do activities that stimulate and encourage their abilities and potential possessed (Sugiyanto, 2009). Flashcard contains nutritional messages in picture form. This media is very easy to apply because children are still interested in games (Febriani, 2016). Flashcard media can improve early language skills (Hartawan, 2018) and improve early childhood memory (Khasana, Hendrawijaya, and Imsiyah, 2018). The theme-based flashcard in this study was a medium-sized picture card of 10x15 cm presented with information on each picture that is used to convey information to children in the learning process based on a certain theme.

Based on the description previously, this study focuses on (1) knowing and analyzing the effect of the theme-based storytelling method on children' nutrition knowledge in the *Merpati* Kindergarten Group Margorejo, Pati, (2) knowing and analyzing the effect of the theme-based flashcard media on children' nutrition knowledge in *Merpati* Kindergarten Group Margorejo, Pati, (3) knowing and analyzing the differences of theme-based storytelling and flashcards on children' nutrition knowledge in *Merpati* Kindergarten Group Margorejo, Pati.

METHODS

This research was a with quasi-experimental equivalent pre-test – post-test

control group design. In this design, three classes are compared, namely the two experimental classes that are given the storytelling and flashcard theme-based with a control class that runs following the habits at the school used lecture method. Measurements were made before and after the intervention. The teaching material for preschool children was nutrition knowledge.

The study population was preschool children in Merpati Preschool Program Group Margorejo, Pati that consist of 251 kids from the various preschool program. The sampling technique used in this study was Purposive Sampling, where the sampling was determined by certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2017). The samples in this study were children aged 5-6 years in *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Langenharjo, *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Dadirejo, and *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Penambuhan. The independent variables in this study were storytelling and flashcard. The dependent variable in this study was children' nutritional knowledge.

The data collection used in this study was non-test techniques that consist of interview, documentation, and observation. The observation was done to see the activities of preschool children before and after interventions through a questionnaire. This observation activity is intended as a substitute for nutritional knowledge tests for children. The data needed prerequisite tests, which included tests of normality and homogeneity. After that, the data were analyzed using paired sample t-test and one-way ANOVA. Furthermore, post hoc tests to analyze the use of storytelling or flashcard that have the most optimal interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of children' nutritional knowledge in Merpati Kindergarten Group Margorejo, Pati can be seen from the results of the children' nutrition knowledge. Data obtained from questionnaires filled out by *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Langenharjo (32 children), *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Dadirejo (32 children), *Pertiwi* Kindergarten Penambuhan (32 children). From the data that observed, it could be seen the scale

of children' nutritional knowledge. Based on the average value of children nutritional knowledge scale, it can be seen the level of children' nutritional knowledge before and after the intervention, which can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Children' Nutritional Knowledge Scale Before and After Intervention

Information	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test control	31.19	4.34
Post-test control	31.84	3.98
Pre-test storytelling	30.97	3.79
Post-test storytelling	38.50	2.30
Pre-test flashcard	30.94	3.36
Post-test flashcard	40.78	3.15

Based on Table 1, the average value of children' nutritional knowledge in three classes is different before and after the intervention. Furthermore, it can be seen that the standard deviation also experienced good development because the value is getting smaller. The smaller standard deviation value indicates that children' nutritional knowledge is evenly distributed, which means that each child' grades are close to their average value.

The early step that should be done regarding the effect of storytelling and flashcard theme-based, a prerequisite test was needed on the scale of children' nutrition knowledge through the results of pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The prerequisite tests needed are normality test and homogeneity test. The normality test results for the research data obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Information	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	
	Statistic	Sig
Pre-test control	.142	.075
Post-test control	.114	.200
Pre-test storytelling	.111	.200
Post-test storytelling	.117	.200
Pre-test flashcard	.105	.200
Post-test flashcard	.129	.189

Table 2, significant values of the normality of pre-test and post-test for three classes were greater than the α value used, which is 0.05. Thus all the scores of social children's nutritional knowledge level in pre-test control, post-test control, pre-test storytelling, post-test storytelling,

pre-test flashcard, and post-test flashcard were normally distributed. Then pre-test and post-test data were tested for homogeneity. Homogeneity test results of preschool children' knowledge data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

Information	Levene statistic	Sig
Pre-test	.824	.501
Post-test	4.264	.021

Table 3, it can be seen that the Levene test conducted for the results of pre-test has a homogeneous variant, and for the posttest, it has a non-homogeneous variant. But many previous authors find that statistical tests such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) are immune to data inhomogeneity, provided that the sample sizes in the groups being compared are equivalent. In this study, it is clear that the kindergartens that were observed had the same number of children that were 32 children so that further testing could still be done to know about the hypothesis.

The first hypothesis to be tested was about the effect of theme-based storytelling methods on children' nutrition knowledge. The data that be tested were the average levels of children' nutritional knowledge before and after the instruction of nutrition knowledge through theme-based storytelling. Next, the paired sample t-test was performed. The results of the test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Average Test of Children' Nutritional Knowledge in Storytelling

Information	Mean	Sig
Pre-test average	30.9688	.501
Post-test average	38.5313	.021
t-test result	t = -12.99	0.00

Table 4 it is known that the difference in the average level of early childhood' nutritional knowledge before and after the theme-based storytelling method was 7.56. t_{value} = 12.99 with a probability of 0.000, while compared with α the value used (0.05), the calculated probability value is less than α value, so the hypothesis in this study is accepted. Its means that there was a significant effect of theme-based storytelling methods on children' nutritional knowledge showed by the

improvement of children' nutritional knowledge scale. The improvement percentage of pre-test to post-test was 24.45%.

The significant effect of theme-based storytelling methods on children' nutritional knowledge is in line with the findings of previous studies. Kusumaningtyas (2016) states storytelling can make children focus on the information provided by others to children so that it gives an effect on children' nutritional knowledge. Supriatin (2018) also show that storytelling influences the level of consumption of vegetables and fruit in preschool children, where vegetables and fruit are one of the requirements in fulfilling balanced nutrition.

Suryandi, Hariyanto, and Metrikayanto (2018) provide recommendations for using different age group categories, and different variables are also evidenced in this study. The research was conducted using storytelling methods in health education to increase the consumption of vegetables and fruit in elementary school children. Whereas in this research storytelling method used to improve children' nutrition knowledge in Early Childhood Education, especially Kindergarten.

Second, the hypothesis that needs to be tested was about the effect of theme-based flashcard on children' nutrition knowledge. The data were the average levels of children' nutritional knowledge before and after the instruction of nutrition knowledge through theme-based storytelling. Next, the paired sample t-test was performed. The results of the test can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Average Test of Children' Nutritional Knowledge in Flashcard

Information	Mean	Sig
Pre-test average	30.9375	.501
Post-test average	40.7813	.021
t-test	t = -14.98	0.00

Table 5 it is known that the difference in the average level of children' nutritional knowledge before and after the theme-based flashcard was 9.84. The value of t was 14.98 with a probability of 0.000, while compared with α value used (0.05), the calculated probability value

is less than α value, so the hypothesis in this study is accepted. Its means that there was a significant effect of theme-based flashcard on early childhood' nutritional knowledge showed by the improvement of children' nutritional knowledge scale. The improvement percentage of pretest to posttest was 31.84%.

Several experts in some previous researches have mentioned the significant influence of flashcard, that flashcards can influence children' nutritional knowledge (Maslakah, and Setyaningrum (2017), Virmando, Anantanyu, and Kusnandar (2018), Zubaedah, and Lestari (2017). Ariyani (2017) stated that playing therapy with the use of flashcard influences children' nutritional knowledge. Flashcard design needs to be adjusted to the child' condition so that children are motivated to get optimal knowledge.

Third, the hypothesis that needs to be tested was about the effect differences of theme-based of storytelling and flashcard. Children' average nutrition knowledge for three classes was on a different level that could be presented in Figure1.
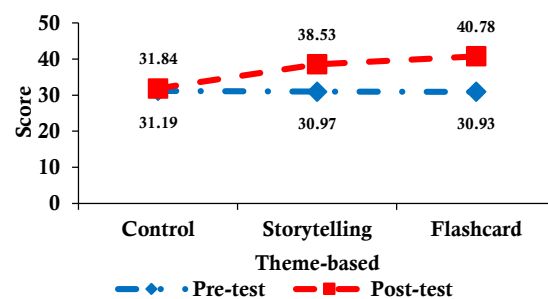

Figure 1. The Difference between Pre-test and Post-test of Children' Nutritional Knowledge Scale

So, it is necessary to analyze the variance test to find out the most optimal method that can be used in nutrition knowledge. The results were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance Test Result

Information	Sig
Pre-test	.978
Post-test	.000

Based on Table 6, it could be seen that the probability value of 0.978 in pre-test data and 0.000 in post-test data. When compared with α value used (0.05), the probability value of pre-test was greater and post-test value was less than α value or 0.978 > 0.05 and 0.000 < 0.005. So it is known that there is no difference in the pre-test, and there is a difference in post-test between the three classes. Thus, the hypothesis in this study is accepted, or it means that there is a significant difference in the effect of theme-based storytelling and flashcard on children' nutritional knowledge.

The interventions that given to children had a different average with control class. So, Post Hoc test was needed to know the most influential intervention. The test results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Post Hoc Test

	Comparison	MD	Sig
Pre-test	Control – Story	.15625	.986
	Control – Flash	.18750	.979
	Story – Flash	.03125	.999
Post-test	Control – Story	-6.6875	.000
	Control – Flash	-8.9375	.000
	Story – Flash	-2.2500	.017

Table 7 it is known that during the pre-test, there were no differences in children' learning outcomes. But at the posttest, all learning outcomes were different. This is appropriate with the statement of Diazgranados, Borisova, and Sarker (2017) that a good environment (the presence of children in pre-school education) can play a role in determining the developments of children, one of them regarding nutritional knowledge.

Viewed from Table 7, the storytelling method can be used to improve children' nutritional knowledge. Age of early childhood development would prefer things related to the world of fantasy as a story. According to Moeslichtoen, as quoted by Indarni (2012) there are many media that can be used to convey stories such as books, costumes, dolls, and pictures. This research was done by storytelling used books and finger puppets to tell stories about nutritious food.

The example of storytelling scenario with dialogues in *Bahasa* conveyed to children in the learning process could be seen in Figure 2, know that the storytelling scenario that used in learning process related to children' daily life. This can provide learning experiences about nutritional knowledge by children independently of their imagination. This statement is supported by Asy'ariyah, Arief, and Krisnana (2014) which states that in the storytelling process there will be an absorption of knowledge conveyed by the narrator to the audience (children).

Adi :	*Aku lebih suka makan roti ini dari pada mie instan. Roti bisa membuat tubuh kita menjadi kuat karena sebagai sumber tenaga kita*
Rio :	*Mie instan juga bisa membuat kita menjadi bertenaga karena mie adalah sumber kekuatan kita*
Adi :	*Memang benar mie adalah sumber tenaga, tetapi mie tidak sehat untuk tubuh kita, karena bahan yang digunakan tidak sehat misalnya ada peyedap rasanya, ada saos nya juga*
Rio :	*Oh..gitu ya...aku baru tau ini kalau mie intstan ini tidak baik untuk kita*
Adi :	*ya... lebih baik kita makan roti keju ini dan susu, karena susu kedelai adalah sumber protein bagi tubuh kita*

Figure 2. The Scenario Example for Storytelling

Based on Table 7, if the three samples are seen as a whole, the most different is the flashcard, although, from an average, there is only a small difference between flashcard and storytelling. This is supported by Lusiana statement (2012) that education for young children must be adjusted to their developmental period, which is still dominated by games as a medium of knowledge transfer. Hazhari, Handayani, & Sunarto (2019) also state that the world of children is the world of playing. Sartika research results (2011) showed that the improvement of children' nutritional knowledge before and after the intervention using the word card media (flashcard).

The difference effect between the flashcard and storytelling can also be explained according to Piaget's developmental theory which states that early childhood is in the pre-operation stage where children need more concrete experiences (Suherman, Turmudi, Suryadi, Hernan, Suhendra, Prabawanto, Nurjanah, and Rohayati, 2003). Then the flashcard in this study can be used to provide concrete experiences to children about nutritious food more optimally. The example of flashcard was used in this research could be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The Example of Flashcards

The application of the flashcard where students are allowed to directly hold the flashcard and play according to the teacher's rules can improve children' nutritional knowledge. Piaget thinks that children need to participate directly to gain learning experiences (Blake, and Pope, 2008). This is also relevant with Selviyanti, Ichwanuddin, Judiono, Suparman, and Tiara (2019) which states that flashcard media is more effective in improving the general message knowledge of balanced nutrition because through flashcard games each child can participate making it easier to remember and improve knowledge.

CONCLUSION

From the results, it can be concluded that there is an effect of the theme-based storytelling method on children' nutritional knowledge in ECE especially in Kindergarten stage which means the application of the more storytelling method is well-prepared, the better the level of children' nutrition knowledge. Furthermore, there is the effect of theme-based flashcard media on children' nutritional knowledge in ECE especially in Kindergarten stage which means that the better the use of flashcard media, the better the level of children' nutrition knowledge. Also, there are differences in the effect of theme-based storytelling methods and theme-based flashcard media on children' nutritional knowledge in ECE especially in Kindergarten stage where flashcard are better than storytelling based on the average value of children' nutritional knowledge scale.

The stimulus of children' nutritional knowledge besides being taught with interesting learning methods, it needs support from parents to introduce healthy food. To optimize children' nutritional knowledge, parents and ECE institutions have to work together to provide nutritious food at home and at school. That effort can make children in ECE more familiar with nutritious food.

CONCLUSION

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