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AN ANALYSIS OF MORAL VALUES REFLECTED IN ANDREA HIRATA'S NOVEL LASKAR PELANGI

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Abstract

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students' creative thinking skills through the implementation of the Experiential Learning model at SMPN 2 Pangsid. The research employed a quantitative approach using a pretest–posttest comparative design. The participants consisted of 20 students selected through purposive sampling, with 10 students from Grade 7A and 10 students from Grade 8A. Data were collected using a creative thinking test based on four indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality tests, and Independent Samples t-Test with the assistance of SPSS software. The findings revealed that there was a significant improvement in students' creative thinking skills after the implementation of the Experiential Learning model in both grades. Grade 7 students demonstrated a higher and more consistent increase in posttest scores compared to Grade 8 students. The statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in pretest scores between the two grades, while a significant difference was found in posttest results, confirming the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning model in enhancing creative thinking skills. These results suggest that Experiential Learning is an effective instructional approach for fostering students' creative thinking through active engagement and meaningful learning experiences.

Keywords: creative thinking skills, experiential learning model, comparative analysis, junior high school

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADE 7 AND GRADE 8 STUDENTS' CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS USING THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

Sam Hermansyah, Jimmy Cromico

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human potential and preparing individuals to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and dynamic world. In the context of the 21st century, education is no longer limited to the transfer of knowledge, but emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Among these competencies, creative thinking has become a crucial skill that enables students to generate original ideas, solve problems innovatively, and adapt to rapid social and technological changes.

Creative thinking refers to the ability to produce ideas that are fluent, flexible, original, and elaborated. These four dimensions allow students not only to understand learning materials, but also to transform knowledge into meaningful and innovative outcomes. In junior high school education, creative thinking skills are particularly important, as students at this stage experience cognitive development that shapes their reasoning, imagination, and problem-solving abilities. However, in many classroom practices, learning activities remain teacher-centered, emphasizing memorization and convergent thinking, which limits students' opportunities to explore ideas creatively.

Observations conducted at SMPN 2 Pangsid indicate that students' creative thinking skills are not yet optimally developed, especially in English learning activities. Students tend to rely on teachers' explanations, show limited initiative in expressing ideas, and experience difficulties in generating varied and original responses. These conditions suggest the need for innovative instructional models that actively engage students and provide meaningful learning experiences.

One instructional approach that aligns with the development of creative thinking skills is the Experiential Learning model. Experiential Learning emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. This model encourages students to become active participants in the learning process by connecting theoretical knowledge with real-life experiences. Through experiential activities, students are stimulated to explore ideas, reflect on learning outcomes, and apply new concepts creatively, which supports the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Experiential Learning positively influences students' creativity, engagement, and learning outcomes. However, limited research has focused on comparative analyses of creative thinking skills across different grade levels within the same educational context. In particular, differences in creative thinking development between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students have not been sufficiently explored, even though students at these levels may exhibit distinct cognitive characteristics and learning needs.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students' creative thinking skills using the Experiential Learning model at SMPN 2 Pangsid. By comparing students' creative thinking abilities before and after the implementation of Experiential Learning, this research seeks to examine the effectiveness of the model and identify differences in creative thinking improvement between the two grade levels. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of teaching practices, particularly in promoting creative and student-centered learning in junior high schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative thinking is an essential component of higher-order thinking skills that supports students in generating original ideas, solving problems creatively, and adapting to changing learning contexts. In educational settings, creative thinking enables learners to actively construct knowledge rather than merely receiving information. Scholars such as Torrance emphasize that creative thinking involves cognitive processes that lead to the production of novel and meaningful ideas, making it a crucial competency in 21st-century learning.

Creative thinking skills are commonly measured through four main indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Fluency refers to the ability to generate numerous ideas, while flexibility reflects the ability to view problems from different perspectives. Originality emphasizes uniqueness and novelty of ideas, and elaboration involves developing ideas in detail. These indicators provide a comprehensive framework for assessing students' creative potential in classroom learning activities.

At the junior high school level, the development of creative thinking skills is particularly important because students experience significant cognitive growth during this stage. Learning environments that encourage exploration, imagination, and active participation are more likely to stimulate creativity. However, conventional teacher-centered instruction often limits students' opportunities to express ideas freely, which may hinder the development of creative thinking skills.

One instructional model that supports active and meaningful learning is Experiential Learning. Proposed by Kolb, Experiential Learning is based on the principle that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. This model positions students as active learners who learn by doing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting, rather than passively receiving information.

Kolb's Experiential Learning model consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Through these stages, students are encouraged to connect learning materials with real-life experiences, reflect on their actions, and apply newly acquired concepts. This learning cycle provides opportunities for students to think creatively, explore various solutions, and develop deeper understanding.

Previous studies have shown that Experiential Learning positively influences students' creative thinking skills, learning motivation, and engagement. However, most studies focus on a single grade level and do not examine differences in creative thinking development across grades. Therefore, a comparative analysis between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students is necessary to understand how Experiential Learning affects creative thinking skills at different developmental stages, which forms the basis of this study.

METHODS

This chapter describes the research design, participants, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques used in this study.

The research employed a quantitative approach using a comparative pretest–posttest design. This design was selected to examine differences in students' creative thinking skills before and after the implementation of the Experiential Learning model, as well as to compare the results between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students. The Experiential Learning model

was applied to both groups during the instructional process.

The participants of this study consisted of 20 students from SMPN 2 Pangsid selected through purposive sampling. The sample included 10 students from Grade 7A and 10 students from Grade 8A. These classes were chosen based on similar academic characteristics and learning conditions to ensure the comparability of the groups.

The research instrument used in this study was a creative thinking test designed to measure students' abilities based on four indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The test was administered twice, as a pretest before the implementation of the Experiential Learning model and as a posttest after the learning intervention. The instrument was validated by experts to ensure its content validity.

Data collection was conducted through the administration of the pretest and posttest. After the pretest, the Experiential Learning model was implemented during classroom instruction by following Kolb's learning cycle, which included concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. At the end of the instructional period, the posttest was administered to measure changes in students' creative thinking skills.

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean and standard deviation of students' scores. Normality tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions for parametric testing. An Independent Samples t-Test was then applied to compare the creative thinking skills of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students. The results of the analysis were used to determine the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning model and the differences in creative thinking skills between the two grade levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented based on the analysis of students' creative thinking skills before and after the implementation of the Experiential Learning model in Grade 7 and Grade 8 at SMPN 2 Pangsid. The data were obtained from pretest and posttest scores administered to both groups.

The pretest results indicated that the initial creative thinking skills of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students were relatively comparable. The mean pretest score of Grade 7 students was slightly lower than that of Grade 8 students; however, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that both groups started from a similar baseline level of creative thinking skills prior to the intervention.

After the implementation of the Experiential Learning model, both Grade 7 and Grade 8 students showed an improvement in their creative thinking skills, as reflected in the posttest scores. The increase in scores indicates that the learning model had a positive impact on students' ability to generate ideas, explore multiple perspectives, and elaborate their responses.

A comparison of posttest results revealed that Grade 7 students achieved higher mean scores than Grade 8 students. This finding suggests that Grade 7 students responded more positively to the Experiential Learning model, demonstrating greater gains in creative thinking skills after the learning intervention.

Descriptive analysis of the four creative thinking indicators showed improvements in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in both groups. Grade 7

students demonstrated more consistent improvement across all indicators, particularly in fluency and flexibility, which reflect the ability to generate multiple and varied ideas.

The normality test results indicated that the data were normally distributed, allowing the use of parametric statistical analysis. This confirmed that the assumptions required for further inferential testing were met.

An Independent Samples t-Test conducted on the pretest scores showed no significant difference between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students, supporting the comparability of the two groups at the beginning of the study. This result strengthens the validity of the comparative analysis.

In contrast, the Independent Samples t-Test on the posttest scores revealed a statistically significant difference between the two grades. This finding indicates that the implementation of the Experiential Learning model led to different levels of improvement in creative thinking skills between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students, with Grade 7 students demonstrating higher gains.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Experiential Learning model effectively enhances students' creative thinking skills. The improvement observed in both Grade 7 and Grade 8 students supports the theoretical assumption that learning through direct experience and reflection promotes higher-order thinking skills, including creativity.

The absence of a significant difference in pretest scores between the two groups indicates that both grades had similar initial levels of creative thinking skills. This condition allowed the observed posttest differences to be attributed primarily to the learning intervention rather than to pre-existing disparities between the groups.

The higher improvement observed among Grade 7 students may be explained by their developmental characteristics. Grade 7 students tend to be more open to new learning experiences and demonstrate higher curiosity, which may have made them more receptive to the Experiential Learning approach. The active and experiential nature of the model may have stimulated their engagement and creativity more effectively.

The improvement across all creative thinking indicators suggests that Experiential Learning provides a comprehensive learning environment that supports multiple dimensions of creativity. Activities involving real-life experiences, reflection, and experimentation encourage students to generate ideas fluently, approach problems flexibly, produce original responses, and elaborate their ideas in greater detail.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that report positive effects of Experiential Learning on students' creativity and engagement. The results reinforce the view that student-centered learning models are more effective than traditional instruction in fostering creative thinking skills.

Based on the results of this study, Experiential Learning can be recommended as an effective instructional model for junior high school teachers seeking to enhance students' creative thinking skills. Future research may involve larger samples or different grade levels to further explore the impact of Experiential Learning on creativity development.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to conduct a comparative analysis of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students' creative thinking skills using the Experiential Learning model at SMPN 2 Pangsid. Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the implementation of the Experiential Learning model was proven to be effective in enhancing students' creative thinking skills. Both Grade 7 and Grade 8 students demonstrated significant improvements in posttest scores compared to their pretest results, indicating that learning through direct experience, reflection, and active experimentation positively supports creativity development.

Second, there was no significant difference in students' creative thinking skills between Grade 7 and Grade 8 students before the learning intervention. This finding indicates that both groups had relatively similar initial levels of creative thinking skills, allowing a valid comparison of learning outcomes after the implementation of the Experiential Learning model.

Third, a significant difference was found in the posttest results between the two grades after the implementation of Experiential Learning. Grade 7 students showed higher improvement in creative thinking skills compared to Grade 8 students. This result suggests that the Experiential Learning model may be more effective for students at earlier stages of junior high school who tend to be more receptive to active and exploratory learning approaches.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the Experiential Learning model is an effective instructional approach for fostering students' creative thinking skills in junior high school education. The results contribute to the development of student-centered learning practices and provide empirical evidence supporting the use of experiential-based instruction to enhance creativity in classroom learning.

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