



## The effect of stimulation smart book educative game tool on improving fine motor skills for early childhood

Eva Oktaviani\*, Imawan Eko Setiyono

Departement of Nursing Diploma Program, Poltekkes Kemenkes Palembang  
Jalan Stadion Bumi Silampari, Kecamatan Lubuklinggau Timur 1, Kota Lubuklinggau, Sumsel

\*Corresponding author: [evaoktaviani@poltekkespalembang.ac.id](mailto:evaoktaviani@poltekkespalembang.ac.id)

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### ABSTRAK

**Latar Belakang:** Pandemi COVID-19 telah mengakibatkan gelombang krisis global yang berdampak masif pada seluruh aspek kehidupan. Dunia pendidikan khususnya kegiatan pembelajaran juga menjadi salah satu dampak yang menjadi sorotan. Perubahan kegiatan pembelajaran dari tatap muka ke pembelajaran jarak jauh mempersulit jenjang pendidikan anak usia dini. Studi membuktikan dampak pandemi Covid-19 terhadap gangguan perkembangan motorik halus pada anak usia 3-4 tahun dengan kategori tinggi sebesar 60,71%. Usia dini merupakan masa emas perkembangan anak yang pesat, sehingga diperlukan stimulasi yang positif untuk pertumbuhan dan perkembangan yang optimal. Aspek penting yang mempengaruhi perkembangan anak secara keseluruhan adalah keterampilan motorik halus. Keterampilan motorik halus dapat dikembangkan melalui berbagai aktivitas yang menyenangkan melalui alat permainan edukasi buku pintar.

**Tujuan:** Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menguji efektivitas stimulasi permainan edukatif smart book terhadap kemampuan motorik halus anak usia dini.

**Metode:** Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian tindakan dengan rancangan nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest design. Stimulasi menggunakan buku pintar dilakukan selama lima hari dengan waktu 90 menit. Jumlah sampel 80 anak PAUD, terdiri dari 40 anak kelompok intervensi yang diberikan stimulasi buku pintar dan 40 anak kelompok kontrol tanpa stimulasi buku pintar hanya menggunakan alat permainan edukatif konvensional yang biasa dilakukan di sekolah sehari-hari. Uji statistik menggunakan model linear umum + posthoc bonferroni.

**Hasil:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada pengaruh yang signifikan kemampuan motorik halus anak usia dini yang diberikan stimulasi smart book dengan yang tidak diberikan dengan nilai  $p < 0,001$ .

**Kesimpulan:** Pembelajaran berbasis permainan edukatif dapat digunakan untuk menstimulasi ketrampilan motorik halus anak dan diharapkan dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam kegiatan pembelajaran anak dengan metode yang bervariasi.

**KATA KUNCI:** anak usia dini; alat permainan edukatif; motorik halus; smart book

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a global wave of crises that have a massive impact on all aspects of life. The world of education, especially learning activities, is also an impact that is in the spotlight. The change in learning activities from face-to-face to distance learning makes it difficult for early childhood education levels. Studies prove the

*impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on disorders of fine motor development in children aged 3-4 years with a high category of 60.71%. Early age is the golden age of rapid child development, so positive stimulation is needed for optimal growth and development. An important aspect that affects the overall development of children is fine motor skills. Fine motor skills can be developed through various fun activities through the smart book educational game tool.*

**Objectives:** *The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of smart book educational game stimulation on fine motor skills in early childhood.*

**Methods:** *This research was an action research with nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest design. Stimulation using smart books was carried out for five days with 90 minutes. The number of samples was 80 PAUD children, consisting of 40 children in the intervention group who were given smart book stimulation and 40 children in the control group without smart book stimulation only using conventional educational game tools that are usually done in everyday schools. Statistical test using general linear model + posthoc bonferroni.*

**Results:** *The results showed that there was a significant effect on the fine motor skills of early childhood who were given smart book stimulation and those that were not given with a p value of 0.001.*

**Conclusions:** *Educational game-based learning can be used to stimulate children's fine motor skills and is expected to be integrated into children's learning activities with various methods.*

**KEYWORD:** *early childhood; fine motor; educational game tool; smart book*

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially designated the disease caused by the novel coronavirus as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in February 2020 (1). The global spread of SARS-CoV-2 and thousands of deaths caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) led WHO to declare a pandemic on March 12, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a global wave of crises that had a massive impact on all aspects of life (2). The world of education, especially learning is also an impact that is in the spotlight (3). The change in learning activities from face-to-face to distance learning makes it difficult for children's education levels (4). This will certainly have an impact on children's skills, especially for early childhood. The study found that the delay in fine motor development of early childhood before the pandemic was 11.8% increasing to 60.71%

during the Covid-19 pandemic (5)(6).

Disorders of growth and development of children in Indonesia are classified as high public health problems because they are still above 30%, which is 35.7% (7). Disruption of child development will contribute to morbidity that occurs throughout the child's life cycle, transmission of poverty between generations, and in the long term can restrain the pace of development of a country (8). Early age is a golden age where all the potential that exists in children develops rapidly, so positive stimulation at this age needs to be considered because brain development can reach 80% (9).

Early childhood develops very rapidly in fundamental stages that will affect future development. An important aspect that deserves attention for early childhood development is motor skills. Fine motor development is very

important for the overall development of children because it will have an impact on the growth and intelligence of children. Fine motor skills have a major influence on children's academic abilities, self-care abilities, and social functions in children (10). Fine motor skills is a kinesthetic integration, eye-hand coordination, visual motor integration and motor skills, involve small muscles (11). Fine motor skills include coloring, drawing, using clips to put paper together, sticking pictures, folding (12). Fine motor skills can be developed through various fun activities for children, including playing. During the early period, children will tend to spend more time playing because it is a need that already exists in children (13).

Playing besides being able to express pleasure can also function to stimulate children's growth and development, namely developing emotional, social, language, motor skills (14), cognitive abilities such as counting (15), and developing muscles and energy (16). Playing can use educational game tools that will be more helpful in children's intelligence. An educational game tool (APE) is a form of game media provides benefits for improving basic abilities, such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (17) and social (18).

One of the educational game tools that includes some stimulation of children's fine motor development is a smart book. The busy book or quite book media is useful and effective in improving fine motor skills in early childhood (19) (20). Some of the terms smart books are busy book or quite book, which is a learning media made of flannel cloth that is formed into a book containing simple game activities and is designed to be more attractive which is able to stimulate children's fine motor skills such as attaching buttons, matching colors or shapes, and sewing (21).

The results of preliminary studies conducted in several PAUDs in the Taba Pingin Village, Lubuklinggau City, the majority of them have

been supported by games that support fine motor skills, but the media is less varied. Some children at intermediate\_excellent level are still not able to hold scissors properly, hold pencils well, and tie shoelaces. KPSP results also showed that 4 out of 7 children aged 3-5 years in one of the PAUD Lubuklinggau City experience fine motor delays. This situation illustrates the need for more innovative learning media. Basically, learning by playing is the concept of learning in early childhood, so they will not feel that they are learning something.

The unavailability of smart books in PAUD encourages researchers to create innovative smart book as an educational game tools, which is made of flannel and has been tested on a limited basis and validated by experts. The purpose of this study was to determine effectiveness of stimulation smart book educative game tool on improving fine motor skills for early childhood. It is hoped that with innovative and interesting learning media during the pandemic, children are more enthusiastic in learning.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was an action research with nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest research design. The design of this study used two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group, which were then given a pretest to both groups as baseline data and a posttest to evaluate the final ability. The experimental group was given treatment stimulus a smart book for 5 days within 90 minutes, while the control group was treated using conventional educational game tools at school without the smart book stimulus. This research was conducted in two PAUD IT Taba Pingin Village, Lubuklinggau City, namely PAUD IT Unggulan Ar-Risalah and PAUD IT An-Nida. The total sample consisted of 80 children from the intermediate class, 40 children for the intervention group and 40

children for the control group. The sample was determined using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The smart book media instrument was made by researchers from flannel which is proven to be safe for children and has been previously tested on users and has been validated by experts on its feasibility. Study explained that flannel can be used as a busy book educational game tool (22).

Researchers used observation and interview methods to determine the impact of stimulation using smart book on fine motor skills in early childhood. The reference used by researchers in assessing children's fine motor skills is using the Child Development Achievement Level Standard (STPPA) which was modified by researchers to measure fine motor skills. Fine motor stimulation in smart book consists of 15 indicators, namely: 1) Attaching and sorting the alphabet with adhesive; 2) Put the shoelaces into

the shoe holes; 3) Tie shoelaces; 4) Unbutton the shirt; 5) Attaching shirt buttons; 6) Pulling the zipper; 7) Glue the belt gasper; 8) Turn the clock hands according to the instructions; 9) Playing educational brushing teeth; 10) Match the geometry and paste according to the shape; 11) Counting with 10 fingers; 12) Match and paste balloon colors; 13) Counting using beads; 14) Braiding hair; 15) Playing educational fishing. All indicators were identified using a Likert scale with scoring, namely: score 1 (BB: Undeveloped), score 2 (MB: Starting to Develop), score 3 (BSH: Developing as Expected), score 4 (BSB: Very Good Development). Thus the maximum score for variables XI and X2 is 60 (4x15 indicators). The statistical test used was general linear model + posthoc Bonferroni to determine the differences in the fine motor skills of children between two groups

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

The characteristics of respondents in this study can be seen in table 1 below:

**Table 1. Characteristics of respondents in the intervention and control group**

Characteristics	Total Sample		Groups		p, $\chi^2$
	n (%)	Intervention n (%)	Control n(%)		
Gender	Male	43 (53.8)	22 (55)	21 (52.5)	1.000
	Female	37 (46.2)	18 (45)	19 (47.5)	
Age of the children	36-48 months	1 (1.2)	0	1 (2.5)	0.573
	49-60 months	25 (31.3)	12 (30)	13 (32.5)	
	61-72 months	54 (67.5)	28(70)	26 (65)	
Standard body weight for height	Very thin	7 (8.75)	4 (10)	3 (7.5)	0.974
	Thin	6 (7.5)	3 (7.5)	3 (7.5)	
	Normal	51 (63.75)	26 (65)	25 (62.5)	
	Fat	4 (5)	2 (5)	2 (5)	
	Very fat	12 (15)	5 (12.5)	7 (17.5)	
Anthropometry	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p, Ind t-test	
Height (cm)	108.10 (5.819)	110.33 (5.254)	105.88 (5.552)	0.862	
Weight (Kg)	19.2 (5.403)	19,18 (4.330)	19,22 (6.353)	0.205	

Based on **Table 1**, it can be seen that the two groups were homogeneous. The majority of respondents were male 53.8%. The majority of children's age is in the range of 61-72 months of 67.5%. Based on the standard body weight for height, the majority of the samples were in

the normal category of 63.75%. Anthropometric data analysis for all respondents was the majority of height with an average of 108.10 cm and an average weight of 19.2 kg. This shows that the respondents' anthropometric indicators are proportional to the age range.

**Table 2. Differences in children's fine motor ability between the intervention and control group**

Activities	Groups						p value
	Stimulus smart book			non smart book			
	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>range</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>range</i>	
Pretest	38.25	4.813	27-49	33.78	8.681	22-56	0.001*
Posttest	54.58	3.273	43-60	53.88	4.233	46-59	

The results of the analysis in **Table 2** show that there was a significant difference between the groups that were given the stimulus of the smart book and those who were not given the stimulus, with p-value of 0.001.

## DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents in this study were male. Some experts explain that boys tend to be more advanced in their fine motor skills compared to girls (23). The fine motor skills possessed by each individual child are different, so teachers must be able to use various creative methods to increase the potential of children's fine motor skills (24). There are several factors that are mutually sustainable in improving children's fine motor development, namely the frequency of giving stimulus, nutritional status, physical readiness, gender, and culture (25). Families have an influence on improving children's health including the fulfillment of children's basic needs (good nutrition, love, and stimulus), so that growth and development becomes optimal (26).

The results of the significance test showed that use of smart books contributes positively to improving children's fine motor skills. Educational game tools (APE) are designed according to the stages of growth and development of children's ages by taking into account the level

of safety and security of children. Smart books made of flannel are proven safe for children and have been previously tested by experts and limited to children. This is in accordance with the requirements that must be considered in APE, namely educational requirements (according to the stage of child development and constructive for children), technical requirements (the materials used are safe, durable, and do not cause conceptual errors), and aesthetic requirements (matched colors), and attractive, easy to carry (27). Flannel is proven to be safe and effective and can be made as a busy book educative medium for early childhood fine motor skills (28). The busy book flannel media can train the flexibility of the fingers, train eye and hand coordination, and an interesting visualization process accelerates children's understanding.

The results of this study reinforce previous research that the busy book game media to stimulate children's fine motor skills was significantly effective (29). Smart books can facilitate each child's unique learning style because they are designed based on the brain's ability to absorb learning (30). Children who tend to have a visual learning style like to see colorful pictures. Visual learning styles tend to like striking colors, so smart books are made with decorations that invite children's attention.

In addition, replicas of objects that are often used in everyday life such as toothbrushes, shoes, clothes and buttons make it easier for children to recognize the meaning of these activities. Hand and eye coordination such as fishing, counting beads, shoelaces facilitate the learning style of kinesthetic children. Explanations from the teacher according to the theme of each smart book activity help auditory learning styles.

This research shows that the use of used materials as media is very useful in the learning process of children from an early age, especially in fine motor skills. In this study, it was proven that the group given the smart book had a higher average fine motor skills than the control group who used the usual toys at school. Some literature explains the advantages of fine motor stimulation using used materials such as flannel can train calm, accuracy, cooperation to get used to coordinating hand movements (31). Fine motor stimulation in children in the smart book will be captured by the brain, causing coordination between the eyes and hands to produce fine motor movements. The brain, which is always stimulated with smart book media, will increase and strengthen the network of neuron cells in the child's brain (32). The more neurons that are formed, the higher the child's intellectual intelligence in fine motor skills.

Other studies that support the findings of this study also show that the average fine motor skills before and after being given smart books increases significantly (33)(34). Scientifically, it can also be explained that the activity in the busy book is received by the central nervous system of the brain so that it will capture every movement of the child in line with the maturity of the nerves and muscles. The development of children's motor stimulation can be seen clearly through the various activities in the busy book. Children will be more skilled at carrying out daily movements by learning while playing. In order to stimulate children's desire to have fun while

learning, it is highly recommended to use picture media. Therefore, smart books are appropriate learning media for early childhood, especially in increasing knowledge and fine motor skills.

The fine motor aspect is very important to monitor its development because it affects other learning strategies. The ability of children that is very important to be developed from an early age is fine motor skills because it is closely related to activities of daily life (35). Understanding motor skills can also help improve children's abilities later in the academic field and logical intelligence (36). Fine motor delay in children can be caused by a lack of stimulation. Stimulation is an activity to stimulate the basic abilities of children aged 0-5 years so that children grow and develop optimally. Research proved that there was a significant difference in the frequency of giving stimulus to children's fine motor skills (37). Every child needs regular stimulation as early as possible and continuously at every opportunity. The role of parents, especially mothers, is very important for the development of children because mothers can recognize developmental disorders of children as early as possible. Stimulation given by parents will have a 3.37 times chance to improve the development of children aged 1-3 years (38). The earlier the stimulation is given, the better the child's development will be.

The role of parents during the Covid-19 pandemic is very fundamental for early childhood to improve learning and skills as facilitators, motivators, and mentors for children (39). During pandemic, parents can play a maximum role in planning, managing, and assessing to improve learning outcomes (40). Changes that occur in learning activities with a decrease in the frequency of face-to-face and interspersed with distance learning make a significant impact for early childhood. Parents have a very extra role in providing education to children. The smart book educational game tool is very flexible and practical. It can be brought at home and at

school as a tool to provide stimulus for children, especially fine motor skills.

One of the efforts to improve the physical ability of fine motor coordination of children's eye and hand movements is through the application of playing strategies through smart book or busy book media. Play strategies can have a significant effect on children's fine motor skills (41). Smart books are compiled with several concise materials along with interesting and striking pictures, which can be used to stimulate basic fine motor skills, train hand and eye coordination, and train concentration power (42). From the results of observations during the stimulus process, children look more active and very enthusiastic about learning by using smart book media.

Busy book media can be used in play strategies to improve fine motor skills in early childhood from an average of 50% to 100% (43). Stimulus given for five days in this study was proven to improve children's fine motor skills through the smart book. The more often children practice directly on the media by moving their fingers, the better their fine motor skills. The development of busy book media as an educational game tool has been proven to be effective in improving skills, especially fine motor skills in early childhood (44). The results of this study can motivate PAUD schools to facilitate educative and innovative media in learning activities not only focus on paper pencils, so children have different atmosphere during learning activities.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be concluded that there was a significant difference fine motor skills of early childhood who were given smart book stimulation and those that were not given stimulation. The fine motor aspect is very important in the life of early childhood because it affects the growth and development of children in the future. Learning by playing using educational games is a child-

centered learning model and very important to be applied at an early age with various innovative media for learning optimally.

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