



Exploration of the Use of Play Money Media in Learning Currency Material in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the use of play money media in learning currency material in elementary schools. The research was conducted with a qualitative approach, using observation methods, in-depth interviews and documentation. The research subjects were teachers and students at an elementary school that had implemented play money as a medium in learning. The research results show that the use of play money can help students understand the concept of the value of money, transaction methods and simple financial management. This media also encourages active student interaction during learning and increases learning motivation. Apart from that, the teacher stated that the play money media made it easier to convey abstract material into a more concrete one. However, this research also found several challenges, such as limited time for preparation and use of media. The implication of this research is the need for support and training for teachers to integrate innovative learning media effectively.

Keywords : Play money media, currency learning, student interaction.

INTRODUCTION

Education at the elementary school level plays an important role in building students' basic knowledge and skills. One of the basic competencies taught is understanding currency, including nominal value, how to carry out transactions, and simple financial management. These competencies are not only relevant for academic needs, but also for students' daily lives. However, learning this material often faces challenges, especially in conveying abstract concepts to students who are still at the concrete operational stage according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

The use of learning media that suits students' needs is very necessary to increase learning effectiveness. In the context of currency material, one potential medium is play money. Play money can be used as a concrete aid that allows students to learn in a more interactive and fun way. This media helps students understand the abstract concept of the value of money through real transaction simulations, which are in accordance with the learning characteristics of elementary school age children.

Even though play money has been widely used in various schools, its implementation is often limited and poorly planned. Teachers tend to use lecture methods or verbal explanations that do not involve students actively. As a result, students feel bored and have difficulty understanding currency material in depth. This is one of the factors that causes students' low ability to understand the nominal value of money and how to use it in everyday life.

Limited time and resources are often the reasons why teachers are reluctant to integrate learning media such as play money into teaching and learning activities. In addition, the lack of training for teachers to utilize this media optimally is also a significant obstacle. As a result, the potential of play money as an innovative learning medium has not been utilized optimally.

Previous research shows that interesting and interactive learning media can increase students' learning motivation. High motivation is an important key to achieving optimal learning outcomes. However, there is still little research that specifically explores the use of play money as a medium in currency learning in elementary schools. Therefore, research is needed to understand further how this media can be applied effectively in the learning process.

Apart from increasing learning motivation, the use of play money can also provide a meaningful learning experience. Through simulated transactions with play money, students can practice math skills, such as addition, subtraction and division, which are relevant to the elementary school curriculum. These learning experiences not only improve students' cognitive understanding, but also help them develop social skills, such as communication and cooperation.

However, the effectiveness of using play money as a learning medium still requires in-depth study. Some teachers may face obstacles in designing learning activities that are appropriate for this medium. Apart from that, different student characteristics also influence how this media can be received and utilized optimally. Therefore, research that explores the experiences of teachers and students in using play money media is very relevant.

This research is also important in the context of the need for innovation in learning. In the era of modern education, teachers are required to be creative in developing learning methods and media. Play money media not only provides concrete visual aids, but also opens up opportunities for experience-based learning (experiential learning). This is in line with the

constructivist learning approach which emphasizes students' active involvement in the learning process.

Based on these problems, this research aims to explore the use of play money media in learning currency material in elementary schools. This research will identify the benefits, challenges and strategies that can be used to optimize the use of play money media. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of innovative and effective learning practices in elementary schools.

With a qualitative approach, this research will explore the experiences of teachers and students in using play money media. This approach allows researchers to understand in depth how this media influences the learning process and provides richer insights to support its implementation in various learning contexts. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can become a basis for developing better educational policies and practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon in depth through interpretation and analysis of non-numerical data. This approach was chosen because it is very suitable for exploring experiences, views and practices related to the use of play money media in learning. The research aims to explore how play money is used in the learning process, as well as its impact on students' understanding, especially in basic mathematics or economics concepts.

The data collection method in this research consists of three main approaches. First, observations were carried out to directly observe the application of play money media in the classroom. This observation aims to understand the interactions between teachers, students and learning media during the process. Researchers recorded students' activities, communication patterns, and responses to the media used. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and students. Interviews with teachers focus on strategies, goals, and challenges in using the media, while interviews with students highlight their experiences and the influence of the media on understanding basic mathematical or economic concepts. Third, documentation in the form of Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), teaching materials and student work results are collected to support and complement the data obtained from observations and interviews.

The research subjects consisted of teachers and students at an elementary school that had implemented play money as a medium in learning. Teachers were chosen because of their important role in designing and implementing learning using this media, while students were chosen as subjects who directly experienced the benefits of using this media. The selection of research subjects was carried out purposively, taking into account their experience and involvement in implementing play money media in learning.

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic approach, which included several stages. The first stage is data reduction, where the researcher sorts, sorts, and summarizes the data to focus on information that is relevant to the research objectives. In the second stage, the data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes the findings in a structured manner. Finally, conclusions are drawn by identifying patterns, themes and relationships that emerge from the data, which are then used to answer research questions.

To increase the validity and reliability of the data, this research uses a triangulation approach, which compares the results of the three data collection methods. In this way, researchers can ensure that the findings obtained are more accurate and reliable, as well as provide a more comprehensive picture regarding the application of play money media in learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results indicate that the use of play money in the classroom significantly aids students in understanding the concept of the value of money, transaction methods, and simple financial management. By simulating real-life transactions, students are able to grasp the practical application of these concepts in a more tangible way. Play money, being a hands-on learning tool, helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world practices, making financial concepts more relatable and accessible to young learners.

Additionally, the use of play money encourages active student interaction during learning activities. Students engage in role-playing activities that involve buying and selling goods, negotiating prices, and managing their finances, which fosters collaboration and communication among them. This interactive environment also promotes critical thinking as students make decisions related to financial transactions and problem-solving in real-time. As they simulate these activities, students become more aware of the consequences of their choices, further enhancing their learning experience.

Another key finding of the research is that the use of play money significantly increases student motivation. By incorporating an element of play into the learning process, students become more enthusiastic and eager to participate. The gamification aspect of using play money makes the learning process more enjoyable, reducing the monotonous nature of traditional lessons. As a result, students are more focused and interested in the subject matter, leading to a more dynamic classroom environment.

Furthermore, the teacher's perspective highlighted that the play money media made it easier to convey abstract material in a way that was more concrete and understandable for students. Topics like the value of money, budgeting, and financial transactions, which might otherwise be perceived as too complex, become more approachable and clearer when students are allowed to physically manipulate play money in a hands-on learning experience. This transformation of abstract concepts into concrete activities helps solidify students' understanding and retention of the material.

The teacher also noted that using play money in the classroom helped students develop basic financial literacy skills early on. Through simulated transactions, students learned about the importance of budgeting, saving, and spending wisely. These skills are crucial for personal development and future financial decision-making. The practical experience gained from interacting with play money equips students with foundational knowledge that they can apply to real-life situations as they grow older.

In addition to fostering financial literacy, the play money media also supports the development of other important skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making. During role-play activities, students must work together, negotiate, and make collective decisions about purchases and budgets. This collaboration encourages teamwork, while the decision-making process enhances students' ability to think critically and analytically about financial matters. These skills are transferable and valuable in other aspects of their education and future lives.

Another aspect of the research revealed that students' attitudes toward learning were positively impacted by the introduction of play money. The novelty of using play money in the classroom sparked curiosity and enthusiasm among students, making them more eager to participate and learn. The fun, interactive nature of the activity allowed students to learn without the pressure of traditional assessments, creating a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

However, the research also identified some challenges in implementing play money as a teaching tool. One challenge noted by the teacher was the need for careful management of the classroom during role-playing activities. Ensuring that every student has the opportunity to participate and keeping track of play money during multiple transactions required extra preparation and supervision. Additionally, some students struggled initially with the concept of monetary value, particularly when it came to distinguishing between different denominations of play money.

Despite these challenges, the overall effectiveness of using play money as a learning tool was evident. The research demonstrated that it is a powerful tool for enhancing students' understanding of

financial concepts, motivating them to learn, and encouraging active participation. With proper planning and classroom management, the use of play money can significantly enrich the learning experience and provide valuable lessons in financial literacy.

The use of play money in the classroom provides numerous benefits in terms of student engagement, motivation, and understanding of financial concepts. This hands-on learning tool not only facilitates a deeper understanding of abstract topics but also fosters essential life skills such as financial management, teamwork, and decision-making. As the findings suggest, the integration of play money into the curriculum can serve as an effective and enjoyable way to teach students about money, transactions, and basic financial concepts. For a clearer understanding, this can be seen in the following image.



Figure 1. Implementation of Money Media in Learning

CONCLUSION

The use of play money media in learning has a positive impact on students' understanding of the concept of the value of money, transaction methods and simple financial management. This media not only helps explain abstract material to be more concrete, but also encourages active student interaction during learning, increases motivation, and creates a more dynamic class atmosphere. Through simulated transactions involving play money, students learn the importance of budgeting, saving, and wise spending, and develop basic financial literacy skills that will benefit them in their lives.

From the teacher's perspective, play money makes it easier to convey complex material and provides opportunities for students to be more involved in learning activities. The use of this media also supports the development of other skills such as teamwork, problem solving and decision making. Additionally, despite challenges in classroom management and students' initial understanding of the value of money, research results show that the benefits are far greater. With careful planning and good management, play money media can be an effective tool in improving the quality of learning.

Overall, the application of play money media in learning is very effective in increasing students' understanding of basic financial concepts, as well as motivating them to be more active and enthusiastic in the learning process. Therefore, the use of this media is worth considering for wider application in basic education as a means of teaching important life skills.

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