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Greetings: Innovations in Morning Greetings

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Abstract

Morning greetings are an important part of creating a positive atmosphere for children at school. At TK Hasanah Pekanbaru, an innovation was introduced by applying varied greetings to allow children to express themselves freely when greeting their teacher. This study aims to explore the impact of varied greetings on the emotions and enthusiasm of early childhood learners. The research used a qualitative descriptive method with observation and documentation techniques. The results show that varied greetings help children feel more appreciated, confident, and excited to join learning activities. Moreover, teachers can more easily understand children's emotions from the greetings they choose. Options like hugs, high-fives, love symbols, or hand waves allow children to greet according to their mood. This activity also teaches social-emotional values such as love, empathy, and self-protection. In a simple way, this activity brings a significant positive impact to the school environment, making it warmer and more joyful

Keywords: *Varied Greetings; Social-Emotional; Children.*

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INTRODUCTION

Each individual experiences a sense of warmth and positive acceptance. Children from diverse backgrounds feel valued, protected, and encouraged to develop. Teachers employ pedagogical practices that are intended to facilitate collective success and establish equitable conditions. They cultivate collaborative relationships between teachers and students, ensuring that children's learning requirements are met and their educational aspirations are optimally supported (Sunanih, 2025). The development of a text-rich environment entails more than the mere introduction of letters and words; it involves the creation of opportunities that facilitate more profound communication and language development in young children. In such an environment, children have the opportunity to acquire new vocabulary and to explore diverse modes of self-expression. This fosters a more profound comprehension of the world around them (Mutoharoh & Rusmalina, 2024).

Learning activities are defined as a series of activities involving physical and mental aspects, namely actions and thoughts that are interrelated and inseparable. This activity is designed to enhance self-quality through the implementation of specific methodologies, encompassing the deliberate and purposeful engagement of the five senses. The learning process for children is characterized by activities tailored to their developmental level, particularly play (Amiliya & Aminah, 2020; Nespeca, 2012; Prastist, 2016; Susanti et al., 2024; Trenggonowati et al., 2018; Wahyuningsih et al., 2020; BY Wulansari, 2017; Betty Yulia Wulansari & Sugito, 2016). Play is characterized as voluntary and initiated by the child, serving as a means to address their developmental needs within a designated timeframe (Jumriah et al., 2025; Risnajayanti, 2023; Sutapa, 2018).

Teaching strategies in early childhood education (PAUD) are approaches designed to support early childhood development in achieving optimal development according to their unique characteristics. This approach is predicated on various child development theories, including constructivism, sociocultural theory, and cognitive development. These elements underscore the significance of experiential learning and social interaction in the educational process. One influential theory is Jean Piaget's constructivism, which emphasizes that children acquire knowledge through active exploration. Piaget's (2025) seminal work posited that students develop their skills through interactions with their environment. The establishment of harmonious communication between teachers and students is a prerequisite for the creation of effective teaching and learning interactions. This integration of educational and learning processes is instrumental in achieving specific learning objectives. The selection of suitable learning methods or models, contingent upon the nature of the material being presented, constitutes a pivotal responsibility for educators (Sukmawati, 2024).

It is widely recognized that the morning period is of significant importance for children in the context of their educational experiences. The transition from the comfort of one's residence to the vibrant environment of the academic institution undoubtedly necessitates a period of adjustment. Teachers have been shown to play a significant role in creating a warm and pleasant atmosphere from the moment children arrive at school. One method of achieving this objective is through the implementation of morning greetings, with a particular emphasis on the utilization of diverse greeting techniques. Greetings are a form of respect and appreciation between individuals. This act functions as a catalyst for the initiation of positive interactions. In educational settings, the practice of greeting has been shown to cultivate

values of politeness and respect, which are foundational for the development of positive relationships among school members (Nurhasanah & Saptorini, 2024).

In Hasanah Kindergarten in Pekanbaru, the morning greeting typically involves a simple handshake. While this method demonstrates efficacy, it remains somewhat limited in its scope and does not fully empower children to articulate their thoughts and feelings. The implementation of a multifaceted greeting protocol was initiated in response to the observation of this phenomenon. This protocol entails the incorporation of diverse forms of greeting that facilitate the expression of children's sentiments. These forms include gestures such as handshakes, embraces, and symbols of affection. It is noteworthy that the implementation of such gestures is not uncommon in other educational institutions. The greeting underwent subsequent innovation through the incorporation of variations such as high-fives, expressions of encouragement, and gesticulations. As Indriyawati et al. (2025) demonstrate, these various options grant children the opportunity to select how they wish to greet their teachers in the morning. The varied greeting is carried out prior to the lesson, wherein children are permitted to select the type of greeting according to their preferences. The distinction between the conventional greeting and the alternative greeting lies in the incorporation of supplementary salutations that are characterized by creativity, uniqueness, and an element of amusement. These additional greetings have the potential to engender a sentiment of joy, fostering an environment that fosters the development of children's enthusiasm for learning. A variety of salutations are employed, incorporating conventional greetings and augmenting them with additional salutations selected from the array of available options, contingent on the prevailing images. As demonstrated in the study by Dahlia et al. (2024), the children initiate the practice of varied greetings by first greeting the teacher in a general way. They then place their hands on the image representing their chosen greeting, and finally, they give the appropriate greeting.

Simple choices, such as these, can have a substantial impact. The implementation of these varied greetings has been demonstrated to engender feelings of value, confidence, enthusiasm, and heightened preparedness for school activities among children. It has been demonstrated that the subjects of this study have been exposed to a series of educational experiences designed to inculcate principles of decorum, altruism, and fervor. These educational experiences have been administered in the morning hours. Additionally, the rapport between teachers and children is strengthened, fostering a more positive and enjoyable atmosphere. This innovation is significant because it has never before been implemented at this educational institution. The incorporation of a more extensive array of salutations can be regarded as a modest undertaking.

The Indonesian populace has historically recognized the significance of early childhood education. The provision of education from an early age is a judicious and suitable course of action. According to Rachman et al. (2024), early childhood is an ideal period for developing children's potential and honing their intelligence. Furthermore, the implementation of diverse greeting activities affords educators the capacity to promptly identify the emotional states of their students. For instance, if a child abruptly ceases to employ their customary greeting, it may serve as an indication for the teacher to allocate greater attention to the child and approach them with caution and gentleness. This pedagogical approach entails the transformation of the teacher from an educator to a companion of the child's emotions. This activity is characterized by its simplicity and significant impact. Teachers, in turn, are tasked

4 | Judul Penelitian

with providing a selection of options, such as a choice board or images depicting morning greetings, allowing children to select according to their sentiments. This activity does not necessitate specialized equipment or a significant investment of time; however, its outcomes have the potential to enhance social connections, cultivate self-assurance, and inspire a desire to learn. Furthermore, it can contribute to the establishment of a positive and nurturing school environment.

This underscores the importance of further research and development in this area. The rationale behind the selection of this study is twofold. Firstly, it had not yet been implemented at Hasanah Kindergarten in Pekanbaru. Secondly, it contains important values that align with the goal of early childhood education, namely the development of confident, caring, and happy-hearted children. The greeting protocols employed in this study incorporated a diverse array of salutations, emphasizing positive and felicitous expressions. The utilization of negative images, such as anger or sadness, was eschewed in order to cultivate a positive attitude toward learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employs a qualitative descriptive research method. The study was conducted at Hasanah Kindergarten, a preschool located in Bina Widya District, Tobek Godang Village, in the city of Pekanbaru. The present study was conducted on Tuesday, May 28, 2025, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects of this study were children in the 4-6 year age group at Hasanah Kindergarten who were directly involved in the morning greeting activities using the varied greeting method. The implementation of the research study involved several stages. Initially, the researcher conducted observations in the field. Then, the researcher implemented varied greetings and directly observed the activity's implementation. Specifically, the researcher observed the implementation of varied greetings carried out in the morning before entering the classroom. In this setting, children select the available and desired greetings and perform them. The data were collected through a checklist of observations of direct interactions between children and teachers during the activity, as well as through documentation in the form of photographs. This methodological approach served to strengthen the results of the observations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of varied greetings commences with the teacher determining the forms of greeting to utilize. The diverse greeting methods employed in this study incorporated positive and felicitous greetings. The present study did not employ negative images such as anger or sadness, with the objective of fostering a positive attitude toward the lesson. The following is a list of the varied greetings that children can choose from: How do they greet the teacher in the morning?

1. The handshake is executed in the conventional manner, characterized by the act of shaking hands and the subsequent kiss on the teacher's hand by the child.
2. The act of physical affection, specifically the gesture of a teacher embracing or hugging a child.
3. The child's gesture of forming a love symbol with his hands and presenting it to his teacher is indicative of his emotional state and relational intentions.

4. The child's comporment is characterized by a marked enthusiasm, which is evident in his gesture of raising his hand and displaying his thumb.
5. Waving , namely the child waving to his teacher
6. The child performs a gesture known as a "high five" by extending their arm and making a "clapping" motion with their hand. This action is accompanied by a leap towards the teacher, which is a physical expression of enthusiasm or excitement.

The following images depict a variety of greeting gestures employed by educators at Hasanah Kindergarten in Pekanbaru, which are available for selection by the children.



Figure 1. Various types of greetings.

The teacher has determined the various greetings. The subsequent phase entails the affixation of pictorial representations of the diverse salutations to the walls of each classroom at Hasanah Kindergarten, located in Pekanbaru. The following image depicts the teacher affixing the various greetings to the wall adjacent to the classroom entrance:



Figure 2. The teacher affixes a variety of greeting images to the classroom walls.

6 | Judul Penelitian

The instructor has affixed a series of greeting images to the classroom wall in close proximity to the entrance. The subsequent phase involves the implementation of various greetings in the morning as the children enter the classroom. Initially, the instructor requests that the students form a neat row at the front of the classroom, as illustrated in the accompanying image:



Figure 3. The children arrange themselves in an orderly line before the class.

Following the establishment of an orderly line by the students, the instructor will proceed to exhibit a series of salutations. The students will then be prompted to select their preferred option by placing their hands on the corresponding image. Thereafter, they will be expected to extend the designated greeting to the instructor, in accordance with the image selected. The following illustration serves as a visual reference:



Figure 4. The educator presents a case study for the students' consideration.

Following the presentation of an exemplar by the instructor, the pupil is prompted to emulate the action by selecting a greeting image that aligns with their preference and subsequently extending the same greeting to the instructor. The subsequent illustration offers a visual representation of this process:



Figure 5. The implementation of a variety of greetings is imperative.

The morning greeting activity, which incorporates a variety of greetings, has been implemented at Hasanah Kindergarten in Pekanbaru. The implementation of this activity has had a very positive impact on the children. These varied greetings, with their assortment of choices, empower children to ascertain their own preferred or desired form of greeting, which may be indicative of their mood or emotions. The provision of these options fosters a sense of

autonomy and agency, thereby enhancing their emotional well-being in the morning. Additionally, teachers can observe children's emotions through the greetings they select. For instance, if a child who is typically exuberant on a given day opts for a more subdued gesture, such as waving with their hands down, this could be indicative of a state of despondency or low spirits. The utilization of diverse salutations by the children has been demonstrated to engender a more receptive environment for the teachers, who are then able to offer their students undivided attention.

In the context of the classroom environment, the instructor conveys to the students that salutations serve not only the purpose of conveying respect and politeness, but also function as a medium for expressing affection and fostering positive connections with peers and educators. The instructor elucidates that the act of greeting fosters a sense of affection and familiarity, thereby facilitating a deepening of interpersonal bonds. This is also encompassed within the framework of social-emotional learning, a pedagogical approach that aims to cultivate children's capacity to discern and articulate their emotional states. In the preliminary activity, children select images that align with their personal inclinations or emotional states. In addition, the instructor poses inquiries regarding the rationale behind the students' selections. Subsequently, the cultivation of the capacity to care for friends is imperative. The selection of varied greeting movements is informed by the prevailing mood, thereby instilling in children the understanding of the significance of empathetic concern for their peers' emotional well-being. A diverse array of salutations has been demonstrated to foster self-assurance and engender a conducive classroom environment. The selection of preferred greetings by children has been shown to cultivate self-confidence, thereby enhancing the overall atmosphere of the classroom. This positive sentiment is further reinforced by the promotion of a sense of joy, contributing to an overall more comfortable atmosphere.

Intriguingly, during the activity, one child disclosed a preference for discretion in selecting a hug, indicating a nuanced understanding of social nuances. This reaction is a natural response. The teacher then proceeded to articulate a nuanced perspective on physical affection, underscoring the importance of respecting individual physical boundaries while acknowledging the value of emotional connection. The instructor then proceeded with an icebreaker activity, during which she delineated which body parts should not be touched by others without authorization. This approach not only reinforces character education but also serves as a safeguard against potential risks to children from an early age.

The aforementioned greeting activity is characterized by its simplicity; nevertheless, it is associated with substantial benefits, particularly in terms of fostering a more intimate rapport between teachers and children. Observations indicate that the children exhibit heightened levels of enthusiasm and self-assurance. The atmosphere at school in the morning is characterized by a warmer and more pleasant ambiance, which fosters a sense of comfort and acceptance among children. This greeting also instills values such as compassion, freedom of expression, and self-protection.

CONCLUSION

The greeting rituals observed at Hasanah Kindergarten in Pekanbaru deviate from conventional practices. The present study exclusively employed positive and felicitous greetings, thereby excluding negative images such as anger or sadness. The positive impact of these varied greetings on children has been well-documented. It has been demonstrated that

8 | Judul Penelitian

students who have recently entered school exhibit increased levels of enthusiasm, confidence, and contentment. The variety of greetings enables children to articulate their emotions as they choose, while teachers can discern their emotions through the greetings they select. This activity has been demonstrated to facilitate the development of positive emotional intelligence in children, fostering the capacity to experience and express affection for others, to prioritize the well-being of their peers, and to engage in self-care practices. While seemingly unassuming, the practice of varied greetings has been demonstrated to be highly advantageous in fostering warm relationships between teachers and children, thereby engendering a school atmosphere characterized by comfort and affection. The implementation and development of this activity in other schools is a worthy endeavor.

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