

THE EFFECT OF ICE BREAKING ON THE CONCENTRATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AT TK IT IBNU KALDUN CIREBON

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of the ice breaking method on early childhood learning concentration at Ibnu Kaldun Cirebon IT Kindergarten. Along with the importance of concentration in the learning process, this study uses a quantitative approach with an experimental design. The study subjects consisted of 30 children aged 5-6 years who were divided into two groups: an experimental group that applied the ice breaking method and a control group that did not use it. Data was collected through observations and questionnaires filled out by educators. The results of the analysis showed that the experimental group experienced a significant increase in learning concentration compared to the control group, with a p value < 0.05. This indicates that the ice breaking method plays an important role in increasing children's attention and involvement in learning. This study recommends the application of ice breaking techniques as part of the teaching method in kindergarten to help children focus and improve their learning outcomes. These findings are expected to provide a positive sensation to educational practices at the early childhood level and provide guidance for educators in designing effective activities.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education has an important role in shaping children's character and learning base. One of the main challenges faced by educators at this stage is maintaining children's concentration during the learning process (Apriyanti, 2020; Cahyani & Khunaifi, 2024; Kim, 2020; Kruszewska et al., 2022; Ratih et al., 2021). At Ibnu Kaldun Cirebon IT Kindergarten, teaching is often hampered by children's inability to maintain focus, especially when they are faced with new and more complex material. Learning concentration is the ability to concentrate on a specific task, without being distracted by external or internal factors (Le, 2021).

Indonesia has cultural and regional diversity, which influences teaching methods. Early childhood education in Indonesia has begun to receive more attention in recent years, along with increasing awareness of the importance of a strong educational foundation. Learning concentration includes the ability of individuals to focus on learning activities. According to Bloom (1956), concentration is key in the learning process, allowing students to understand information better. Sari (2019) added that a positive learning environment can increase student concentration. However, the challenge remains the same: keeping the child's attention. Therefore, the use of innovative methodologies such as ice breaking is very important to enrich children's learning experiences.

Ice breaking is a technique designed to make the learning atmosphere more interactive and fun. Hidayati (2020) explained that ice breaking can be in the form of games or light activities that aim to break the ice. This activity not only increases students' interest but also encourages active participation in learning. Several studies, such as those conducted by Santosa (2021), show that ice breaking

techniques can increase student motivation and engagement, which has an impact on their concentration. The ice breaking method is increasingly popular among educators as a strategy to attract attention and facilitate interaction between children before starting a learning session. Ice breaking not only aims to lighten the atmosphere, but also serves to raise children's spirits, reduce anxiety, and create a more conducive environment for learning (Beilock, 2015; Broderick et al., 2021; Darmayanti et al., 2023; Fitria, 2023; Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015). In this case, this study is very relevant to explore how far the use of ice breaking can affect children's learning concentration..

The formulation of the problem in this study is: 1) How does the ice breaking method affect the concentration of early childhood learning at Ibnu Kaldun Cirebon IT Kindergarten?. 2) Is there a significant difference in learning concentration between the group that uses ice breaking and the group that does not? 3) What are the factors that affect the effectiveness of the ice breaking method in this context? The objectives of this study are: 1) Analyzing the effect of ice breaking on early childhood learning concentration. 2) Measuring the difference in learning outcomes between the two groups tested. 3) Identify the factors that affect the effectiveness of ice breaking in learning. The results of this research are expected to contribute to educators and educational institutions in designing more effective teaching methods. By understanding the importance of ice breaking, teachers can create a more interactive and engaging atmosphere for children, which in turn can facilitate a better learning process.

METHODS

This study employed an experimental design involving two groups: an experimental group, which received ice-breaking treatment, and a control group, which did not. The design aimed to analyze the effect of ice breaking on children's concentration in learning. The study sample consisted of 30 children aged 5-6 years, randomly divided into two groups of 15 students each, ensuring uniformity in educational background and previous learning achievements. Data were collected through structured observation, where educators recorded student behavior and participation, and a questionnaire with 10 items measuring concentration levels, such as attention and interaction during learning. The research process included preparation, implementation at Ibnu Kaldun Cirebon IT Kindergarten, data collection, and analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics. An independent two-sample t-test was conducted to identify significant differences in concentration between the experimental and control groups, with regression analysis used to identify influencing factors.

RESULTS

Result

Initial measurements of the concentrations of the two groups showed that the experimental group had an average score of 60, while the control group had 58. This mean indicates that both groups were at a fairly low concentration level before the application of ice breaking. After the treatment, the concentration score of the experimental group increased to 75, while the control group only reached 62. The t-test showed a $p < 0.05$, which indicates a significant difference in learning concentration between the experimental and control groups. This confirms that ice breaking has a positive impact on students' concentration.

Discussion

The study provides compelling evidence that ice-breaking techniques can significantly transform the learning environment for young children. By introducing activities that are both fun and engaging, educators can capture the interest of students and foster a greater willingness to participate in learning sessions. This increased interest is crucial, especially in early childhood education, where maintaining student engagement can be challenging. When children find learning enjoyable, they are more likely to be attentive and actively involved in the educational process.

One of the key benefits of ice-breaking activities is their ability to stimulate both the brain and body, creating a more dynamic learning experience. Young children, in particular, have a natural need for movement and interaction, and ice-breaking activities cater to this by encouraging physical activity and mental alertness. This dual stimulation is important for maintaining concentration, as it keeps children engaged and focused on the task at hand. By moving beyond passive listening, children become active participants in their learning, which enhances their overall educational experience.

The role of interaction in the learning process cannot be overstated. Ice-breaking activities often involve group work or discussions, which help children develop important social skills while also

reinforcing the material being taught. When children are given opportunities to interact with their peers, they are more likely to retain information and understand concepts more deeply. This interactive approach also helps build a sense of community within the classroom, making children feel more comfortable and confident in their learning environment.

However, the successful implementation of ice-breaking activities depends largely on the skill and creativity of the educator. It is not enough to simply include these activities in the lesson plan; educators must be adept at selecting and executing ice breakers that are appropriate for the age group and learning objectives. This requires a deep understanding of the students' needs and preferences, as well as the ability to adapt activities on the fly to suit the dynamics of the classroom. When done correctly, ice-breaking activities can transition from mere formalities to powerful tools that enhance learning.

To avoid the pitfalls of monotony, it is essential for educators to vary the types of ice-breaking activities used in the classroom. Repetition can lead to boredom, which undermines the purpose of these activities. By introducing new and diverse ice breakers, educators can keep the learning experience fresh and exciting. This variety also caters to different learning styles, ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual preferences, can benefit from these activities.

The study's findings suggest that integrating ice-breaking activities into regular classroom routines can have a profound impact on students' learning outcomes. By creating an engaging and interactive learning environment, educators can help children develop a positive attitude toward learning, which is crucial for their long-term educational success. When students enjoy learning, they are more likely to be motivated to excel and to approach new challenges with enthusiasm and confidence.

The implications of these findings for early childhood education are significant. As educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance of fostering a positive learning environment, ice-breaking techniques offer a practical and effective means of achieving this goal. By making learning more enjoyable and engaging, these activities can help lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. This is particularly important in early childhood, where attitudes toward education are being formed.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for educators. As the effectiveness of ice-breaking activities hinges on the educator's ability to implement them skillfully, it is crucial that teachers receive training and support in this area. This could include workshops, peer coaching, and access to resources that provide new ideas for ice-breaking activities. By investing in the professional growth of educators, schools can ensure that ice-breaking techniques are used to their full potential.

Finally, the research underscores the need for further exploration into the long-term effects of ice-breaking activities on learning outcomes. While the study demonstrates the immediate benefits of these techniques, more research is needed to understand how they impact student engagement and achievement over time. Future studies could also examine how ice-breaking activities can be adapted to different educational contexts and age groups, further expanding the potential benefits of these techniques.

In conclusion, the adoption of ice-breaking activities in early childhood education offers a promising avenue for enhancing student engagement and improving learning outcomes. By creating a fun, interactive, and dynamic learning environment, educators can foster a positive attitude toward learning that will benefit students throughout their educational journey. However, the successful implementation of these activities requires skilled and creative educators who are committed to continuously refining their approach. With the right support and training, ice-breaking activities can become an integral part of the educational experience, helping to cultivate curious, motivated, and successful learners.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the ice-breaking method significantly enhances early childhood learning concentration at Ibnu Kaldun Cirebon IT Kindergarten, creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment that positively impacts children's attention and engagement. The study recommends the regular application of ice-breaking activities in kindergarten learning sessions. Future research could delve into the long-term effects of these techniques on concentration and engagement, explore how different types of ice breakers influence cognitive and social development, and assess their effectiveness across various educational settings and age groups. Additionally, further studies could

investigate the potential for integrating ice-breaking activities with other instructional strategies to optimize learning outcomes in early childhood education.

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