



Fishing Game Innovation as a Strategy for Developing Fine Motor Skills and Concentration in Early Childhood

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Abstract

The development of fine motor skills and concentration are crucial aspects for promoting optimal development in early childhood. However, effective, enjoyable, and affordable stimulation strategies remain a challenge in educational practice. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a fishing game on improving children's fine motor skills and concentration. The research design used a pretest–posttest experiment with one experimental group and a control group. The instruments were fine motor observation and concentration tests, with data analysis using the Wilcoxon test using JASP. The results showed a significant increase between the pretest and posttest in fine motor skills ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$) and concentration ($p < 0.001 < 0.05$), thus the fishing game is proven to be effective in supporting early childhood development. The novelty of this study is the proof of the benefits of the fishing game not only on concentration as in previous studies, but also on fine motor skills. These findings provide empirical contributions and practical implications for educators and parents in utilizing simple games as a medium for stimulating child development.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to concentrate and maintain focus on what is being done, as well as motor skills, play a significant role in early childhood development between the ages of 0 and 6 (Gandotra et al., 2023). Concentration is an individual's ability to focus attention on a task or activity for a certain period of time without being distracted by other things (Astriana et al., 2024; Heller, 2021; Slussareff & Lukavská, 2021). Meanwhile, motor skills include large muscle activities such as walking and jumping, and fine motor activities such as grasping and moving objects (Gandotra et al., 2023; Muzakar et al., 2023). The two dimensions mentioned above are crucial in facilitating children's capacity to effectively acquire knowledge and engage interactively in their environment (Muzakar et al., 2023). However, excessive use of gadgets by caregivers during early childhood can be detrimental to both of these aspects. Parents often provide gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and computers to their young children as an alternative or substitute for parenting (Srinahyanti et al., 2019).

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However, this practice can have fatal consequences. For example, students at a kindergarten in West Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra, experienced difficulty maintaining concentration and motivation to learn due to gadget addiction (Sakinah & Indahwati, 2025). This can be caused by digital content designed with bright colors, fast movements, and sounds that stimulate dopamine, thus making children's brains accustomed to high and fast stimulation (Hutton et al., 2024). As a result, children have difficulty maintaining attention on activities that require prolonged concentration and low stimulation, such as reading or doing homework (Kostyrka-Allchorne et al., 2017; Medina et al., 2024).

Concentration and fine motor deficits during early childhood can have a significant impact on academic achievement, social interactions, physical health, and overall child development (Capio et al., 2023; Valentini, 2024). Several previous studies have been developed to address the decline in concentration in early childhood learning. Several games, such as congklak, are used to train concentration and counting (Alvisari et al., 2024), puzzles to train concentration and problem-solving skills (Sari & Putri, 2023), tebona (tapping colored balls) to train concentration and memory (Fikro & Salim, 2023), and fishing games to train concentration and patience (Nurfitriani & Nurunnisa, 2024). On the other hand, games such as folding and pasting origami, and coconut shell stages have also been developed to improve children's fine motor skills (Harahap, 2024; Tasijawa et al., 2024). However, it is rare to find game models that can integrate concentration and fine motor development simultaneously.

There is limited literature examining the simultaneous development of both concentration and fine motor skills in a single, integrated and enjoyable game model. Therefore, researchers are interested in developing a game that combines these two constructs as an innovative step that is expected to fill this gap. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a fishing game in improving concentration and fine motor skills in early childhood. The fishing game was chosen because of its ability to increase children's concentration on the target while fostering patience, thus serving as an effective tool for improving early childhood focus and fine motor skills (Nadhiroh, 2017; Nurfitriani & Nurunnisa, 2024).

This research will also explore how interactions with game elements can contribute to the simultaneous improvement of these skills. This research is expected to fill a gap in the development of educational games for early childhood. Empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of these games is expected to lead to new innovations in early childhood education practices, both in the classroom and within the family environment.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental approach. The quasi-experimental method is used to allow researchers to evaluate the effects of an intervention, comparing groups that receive treatment with those that do not. The study will use two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group will be given treatment in the form of a magnetic fishing game with three sessions. In the first session, children will be asked to catch a certain number of fish. In the second session, children will be asked to catch a certain number of fish of a certain color. Then, in the third session, the game rules are expanded again by adding categories of fish sizes to be caught, so that children learn to be more patient and focus on a particular object. These more comprehensive instructions aim to improve children's discipline and concentration skills more optimally. Then, the second group is the control group that does not receive any treatment.

The study was conducted at Prestasi Kencana II Kindergarten, Pariaman Regency, with a target group of 32 students aged 3-5 years. To avoid age and gender bias, the researcher conducted randomization to select participants into the experimental and control groups. Participants were drawn to determine who would join the experimental and control groups. Data in the study were collected using a Likert scale, using research instruments related to concentration and fine motor skills in early childhood developed by the researcher with reference to several relevant developmental theories, such as Piaget's and Vygotsky's child development theories (Erb, 2018; Payne & Isaacs, 2020). The development of this measuring instrument was also accompanied by checks to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, as well as ensuring that the measuring instrument was appropriate to the needs and characteristics of early childhood. Data were collected by conducting observations before (pretest) and after (posttest) fishing game intervention was given. The data were then analyzed using the Wilcoxon test using JASP version 19.0.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through randomization, 7 male participants were selected for the experimental group and 9 female participants for the control group. Meanwhile, 6 male participants were selected for the control group and 10 female participants for the control group. Furthermore, to provide an overview of the research construct, a descriptive test was conducted using JASP version 19.0, as shown in Table 1.

Table: 1. Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Motor Skills and Concentration

		N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Experimental Group	Fine Motor Pretest	16	19.81	3.449	13.00	25.00
	Fine Motor Posttest	16	23.88	2.553	20.00	28.00
	Concentration Pretest	16	13.44	1.590	10.00	16.00
	Concentration Posttest	16	20.06	1.948	17.00	23.00
Control Group	Fine Motor Pretest	16	21.25	4.435	14.00	29.00
	Fine Motor Posttest	16	21.19	3.103	16.00	26.00
	Concentration Pretest	16	17.75	2.490	13.00	22.00
	Concentration Posttest	16	17.25	2.380	12.00	20.00

Descriptive analysis in Table 1 shows an increase in the average posttest score compared to the pretest in the experimental group. The average score for participants' fine motor skills increased from 19.81 to 23.88. Similarly, the average score for participants' concentration ability increased from 13.44 to 20.06. However, the control group did not experience significant improvements in fine motor skills and concentration ability.

Table: 2. Uji Wilcoxon Motor Skills and Concentration of Participants

		IN	WITH	p	Information
Experimental Group	Fine Motor Pretest - Posttest	0.000	-3.296	.001	Significant
	Concentration Pretest - Posttest	0.000	-3.516	< .001	Significant

Control Group	Fine Motor Pretest - Posttest	22.500	0.000	1.000	Not significant
	Concentration Pretest - Posttest	29.500	1.610	.114	Not significant

After observing an increase in the average posttest score of the experimental group, the researchers conducted a Wilcoxon test to statistically prove whether there was a difference in the participants' fine motor skills and concentration abilities. The results showed a significant increase in the posttest scores of fine motor skills ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$) and concentration abilities ($p < 0.001 < 0.05$) of participants from the experimental group. However, these results were inversely proportional to the control group, which showed no significant changes. For more details, it is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Descriptive Plots of Wilcoxon Analysis by JASP

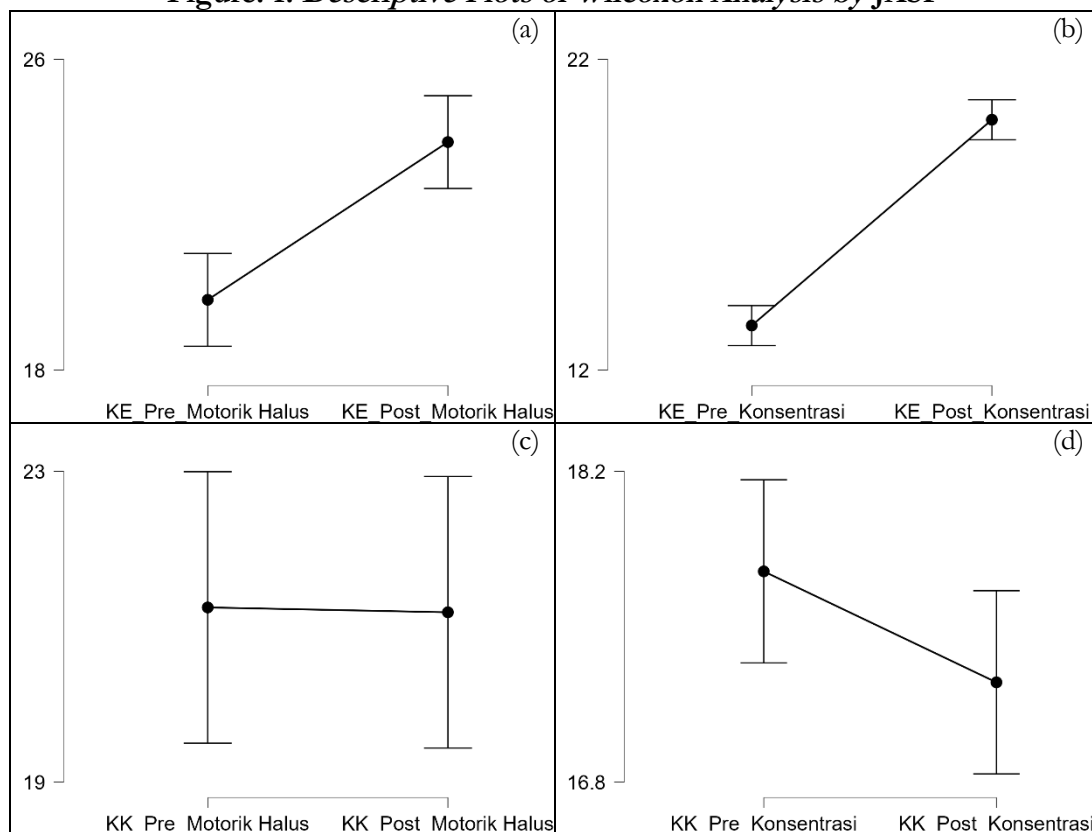


Figure 1 clearly shows the graph of changes in scores for the experimental group. Figure 1 (a), which is the result of the analysis of the experimental group's fine motor skill scores, shows a consistent upward line with relatively long error bars. This means that the intervention effectively improved fine motor skills, although the level of consistency between participants varied slightly. Figure 1 (b), which is the result of the analysis of concentration ability scores, shows a steep upward line with shorter error bars. This means that the intervention effectively improved the concentration skills of all participants with a very significant level of consistency. Although the variation between participants in fine motor skills was relatively greater than in concentration, the overall results show an increase in both variables.

Figure 1 also displays a graph of the changes in scores for the control group. Figure 1(c), which analyzes the control group's fine motor skills, shows nearly parallel lines with long error bars. This indicates no significant change in the control group's fine motor skills. Similarly, Figure 1(d), which analyzes the control group's

concentration skills, shows a downward line with overlapping error bars. This indicates a decrease in concentration among most participants in the control group. Therefore, the visualization in the descriptive plots (Figure 1) supports this finding, with the trend line in the experimental group showing a consistent increase, while in the control group it appears stable or slightly decreasing without significant change. Therefore, it can be concluded that this fishing game is effective in improving fine motor skills and concentration in participants aged 3-5 years.

The Effectiveness of Fishing Games in Improving Fine Motor Skills and Concentration in Children Aged 3-5 Years

This fishing game was developed as a stimulation method to train fine motor skills and concentration in young children. Overall, the Wilcoxon test and descriptive plots indicate that the intervention had a positive and effective impact on improving concentration and fine motor skills in young children. These findings provide evidence that the fishing game program is able to meet its goal of optimizing early childhood development. The effectiveness of fishing games in improving fine motor skills and concentration in early childhood is explained through several child development theories. Piaget explained that preschoolers understand the world by touching, holding, and manipulating objects around them (Rubtsov, 2020). Therefore, fishing activities that require children to focus on the fish's movements and control the strength of their fingers to hold and pull the fishing rod can help improve children's fine motor skills and concentration (Terrazzo et al., 2024). Another theory by Vygotsky states that child development is inseparable from social interaction and environmental support (Rubtsov, 2020). Through this concept, fishing games played in groups with the guidance of a teacher can improve children's focus while playing.

Children's fine motor skills and concentration scores consistently improve because they successfully follow instructions given (Tasijawa et al., 2024) to catch fish. Erikson explains that early childhood is in the initiative versus guilt stage, which is the phase of building self-confidence through success in activities (Om, 2022). Successfully catching fish fosters self-confidence and intrinsic motivation, allowing children to engage more in the game (Escolano-Pérez et al., 2020). This is what caused the experimental group's fine motor skills and concentration scores to increase significantly, while the control group without treatment showed no significant changes Cinar et al. (2023) have shown that improved fine motor skills often result in improved concentration skills, and vice versa. Improved fine motor skills and concentration skills will play a significant role in the future of early childhood (Brunnemann & Sparfeldt, 2017; Needham et al., 2021). Children with good fine motor skills have been shown to have good language, communication, and cognitive skills, as well as problem-solving skills (Escolano-Pérez et al., 2020; Gandotra et al., 2023). Other research also suggests that good concentration skills will function to improve children's social, emotional, and academic success (Willoughby & Hudson, 2023). Through these studies, it can be seen that developing fine motor skills and concentration is crucial with effective interventions to optimize child development.

The results of this study support previous research showing an increase in concentration in early childhood through the intervention of a fishing game (Nurfitrani & Nurunnisa, 2024). However, previous research only emphasized the concentration aspect, without highlighting its impact on fine motor skills. In contrast, this study tested a fishing game that was not only proven effective in improving concentration but also had a significant impact on children's fine motor skills. Thus, this study broadens the scope of knowledge by demonstrating that a simple game based on hand-eye coordination can provide dual benefits, namely in the cognitive

and motor domains. This is a new finding that has not been discussed in previous research, making it an important contribution to the literature on early childhood development. An important implication of this research is the novelty of the intervention. Practically, the results show that this simple, inexpensive, and easy-to-implement game can be used as an alternative learning activity in the classroom and at home, while simultaneously stimulating more than one domain of child development. Thus, this research not only strengthens existing theory but also presents a new, more comprehensive approach to supporting optimal early childhood development.

CONCLUSION

The research results successfully demonstrated that fishing games are effective in improving fine motor skills and concentration in early childhood. These findings confirm that simple, play-based stimulation can support children's holistic development through cognitive and psychomotor aspects. The novelty of this research lies in proving the benefits of fishing games on two developmental domains simultaneously, unlike previous studies that only focused on concentration. Thus, this research provides new empirical contributions while offering practical implications for educators and parents in utilizing educational games as a fun and affordable child development strategy. This study is still limited to a specific sample and short-term measurements. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants, test the long-term sustainability of the game's effects, and explore modifications to the fishing game to make it more varied and appropriate to different children's characteristics. Furthermore, measurements of other developmental aspects, such as social-emotional and creativity, could also be conducted to deepen our understanding of the game's benefits.

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