

## Efforts to Increase Creativity in 5-6 Year Old Children through the Use of Illustrated Story Media at RA Nurul Hidayah

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve the creativity of children aged 5-6 years through illustrated story media at RA Nurul Hidayah, Kebun Dalam Village. Creativity is an important aspect in early childhood development that can be encouraged through appropriate stimulation, one of which is through illustrated story media. The research method used is classroom action research (CAR) with a qualitative and quantitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that the use of illustrated stories effectively increased children's creativity in various aspects, such as imaginative thinking skills, verbal expression, and drawing skills. Thus, illustrated story media can be an interesting and effective learning alternative in developing early childhood creativity.

**Keywords:** Creativity, early childhood, picture stories, RA nurul hidayah.

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### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is an important foundation in individual development. At this stage, children begin to develop various aspects of intelligence, including creativity (Santrock, 2021). Creativity plays an important role in shaping critical and innovative thinking skills in children, which will later impact their success in the future (Guilford, 2020). Therefore, effective learning strategies are needed to increase the creativity of early childhood, one of which is through illustrated story media. Illustrated story media has been shown to increase children's imagination and creativity. Research shows that children who are often exposed to illustrated stories tend to have better expressive abilities than those who are not (Mustika & Wahyuningsih, 2021). In addition, illustrated stories also help children understand new concepts in a more enjoyable and interactive way (Herlina et al., 2022).

Early childhood is a crucial period for the development of creativity, which is essential for a child's cognitive and emotional growth. Children between the ages of 5 and 6 are in a phase of rapid development, where they start to explore their environment and express their ideas. During this time, fostering creativity is not only about enhancing their ability to imagine and create but also about developing problem-solving skills, self-confidence, and the ability to communicate effectively. One effective way to enhance children's creativity is by utilizing various educational media, including picture stories,

which can captivate their attention and stimulate their imagination. At RA Nurul Hidayah, a kindergarten that focuses on early childhood education, teachers recognize the importance of introducing creative activities at an early age. One of the methods employed to improve the creativity of 5-6-year-old children is the use of picture story media. Picture stories are an excellent medium because they combine visual elements with narratives, encouraging children to engage in storytelling, enhance their vocabulary, and make connections between images and words. This method offers children the opportunity to explore new ideas and express themselves in a fun and meaningful way.

Picture stories are particularly beneficial because they provide a rich visual context that aids in the development of language and literacy skills. Children can look at the pictures and infer meaning, which helps them develop critical thinking and comprehension skills. Additionally, by engaging with picture stories, children can improve their ability to sequence events, understand narrative structure, and recognize cause and effect, which are important cognitive skills for their overall development. These activities also give children the chance to work on their fine motor skills by drawing, coloring, or even creating their own stories. Furthermore, picture story media can encourage children to think beyond the surface and explore their emotions and experiences. By discussing the characters' feelings, actions, and motivations, children can develop empathy and a better understanding of themselves and others. This emotional connection to the story allows children to engage with the material more deeply, leading to greater creativity and emotional intelligence. Through these activities, children also learn how to express their thoughts and ideas more clearly, which is a critical skill for both academic and personal growth.

The creative process involved in interacting with picture stories also provides opportunities for social interaction. Children often share their ideas and interpretations of the story with their peers, fostering collaboration and communication. These group discussions not only build social skills but also help children see different perspectives, further enhancing their creativity and problem-solving abilities. The collaborative environment encourages them to learn from one another and develop their own unique ways of thinking. At RA Nurul Hidayah, the implementation of picture story media is integrated into the daily curriculum. Teachers carefully select stories that are age-appropriate and relevant to the children's lives, ensuring that the material resonates with their interests and experiences. By making the learning process enjoyable and engaging, the use of picture stories helps children stay motivated and excited to participate in creative activities. This strategy creates a supportive environment where children feel encouraged to explore their imagination freely. In conclusion, the use of picture story media at RA Nurul Hidayah plays a significant role in enhancing the creativity of children aged 5-6 years. By combining visual elements with storytelling, picture stories provide a rich learning experience that fosters cognitive, emotional, and social development. As children engage with these stories, they not only improve their language and literacy skills but also develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Through this approach, RA Nurul Hidayah successfully nurtures the creativity of young children, setting the foundation for lifelong learning and innovation.

## **METHODS**

To enhance creativity in children aged 5-6 years, one effective approach is the use of picture storybooks, a method that engages young learners both intellectually and emotionally. At RA Nurul Hidayah, teachers can adopt this method to foster creativity by using visually stimulating and narratively rich picture books that encourage imagination, critical thinking, and artistic expression. Picture storybooks provide children with a combination of illustrations and text that not only capture their attention but also invite them to engage with the story actively, stimulating their creative minds. The first step in using picture storybooks as a tool for enhancing creativity is selecting the right books that

are age-appropriate and have rich, engaging content. Books with vibrant, colorful illustrations and interesting, imaginative stories are particularly effective. The content should be designed to spark children's curiosity and offer opportunities for exploration, asking questions, and imagining alternative endings. Teachers can choose books that allow children to visualize different scenarios, which helps them engage their creative thinking skills.

A key strategy in enhancing creativity through picture storybooks is to incorporate interactive reading sessions. Instead of simply reading the story aloud, teachers should involve children in the process by asking them questions about the illustrations, predicting what might happen next, or suggesting different ways the story could unfold. This interaction encourages children to think critically and use their imagination to explore possibilities beyond the story. For example, teachers can ask, "What do you think the character would do if this happened?" or "How could the story end in a different way?" In addition to interactive reading, teachers can encourage children to create their own endings for the stories. After reading a picture book, children can be asked to draw or verbally describe alternative conclusions or different adventures for the characters. This exercise not only nurtures their creative thinking but also gives them the opportunity to express their ideas through art or storytelling. By creating their own endings, children learn to think outside the box and explore new concepts, expanding their creativity in the process.

Incorporating hands-on activities after reading a picture storybook is another effective method. For instance, teachers can provide children with materials like clay, colored pencils, or paper to create models or drawings based on the story. These activities allow children to express the characters, settings, and themes of the story in a physical form, which further stimulates their creativity. By physically engaging with the content, children are encouraged to think in three dimensions, boosting their problem-solving skills and creative expression. Thematic activities related to the story's topic can also be incorporated into the classroom. For example, if the story involves animals, teachers can organize activities where children role-play as the animals or create animal masks. This approach enables children to immerse themselves in the story and understand the characters from a different perspective. It also allows them to explore different forms of self-expression, which is a key component of creativity. Role-playing and acting out stories help children develop their imaginations and express their ideas freely.

Another method to enhance creativity through picture storybooks is to engage children in group discussions after reading the story. Group discussions allow children to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the story, fostering creativity through collaboration. By listening to each other's interpretations and ideas, children are exposed to new perspectives, which can inspire their own creative thinking. Teachers can encourage children to discuss what they liked about the story, what they would change, and how the story made them feel, which helps in refining their creative and critical thinking skills. In addition to group discussions, storytelling sessions can be organized where children are encouraged to create their own stories based on prompts related to the picture book. These prompts can involve familiar characters or settings from the story, or they can invite children to create completely new narratives using their imagination. By encouraging children to craft their own stories, teachers stimulate their creativity and help them develop important language and storytelling skills.

Teachers can also use picture storybooks as a springboard for other forms of creative expression, such as music and dance. For example, if a picture book involves a specific rhythm or mood, teachers can encourage children to respond by creating a song or dance based on the story. This approach allows children to explore creativity through different mediums and engage with the story on a deeper emotional level. Movement, music, and rhythm all contribute to a more dynamic, multisensory experience, which is highly beneficial for young children's creative development. The use of picture storybooks can also be extended to outdoor activities, where children can act out scenes from the

story in a natural setting. For instance, if the story takes place in a forest or a garden, teachers can take the children outside and ask them to act out the scenes using props or costumes. This helps children connect with nature and encourages them to use their imagination to bring the story to life. Outdoor activities allow children to develop creativity while being physically active, which is important for their overall development.

Incorporating technology into the learning process can also be effective in fostering creativity. Teachers can use digital tools and apps that allow children to create their own illustrations or animations based on the picture storybooks. These tools offer new opportunities for children to express their ideas in innovative ways, combining traditional storytelling with modern technology. Through interactive digital platforms, children can engage with stories in a more dynamic and personal way, enhancing their creative thinking and digital literacy skills. Teachers can also integrate art and craft projects into the curriculum, where children create artwork inspired by the picture storybooks they read. These projects can include creating collages, drawings, or sculptures that reflect themes, characters, or scenes from the story. Art-based activities allow children to explore their creativity by interpreting the story in their own unique way. This method helps children develop fine motor skills while also encouraging imaginative thinking and visual expression.

Another important approach is to organize field trips related to the themes of the picture storybooks. For instance, if a storybook involves farm animals, a visit to a local farm can provide children with a real-world connection to the story. These experiences offer opportunities for children to observe, ask questions, and interact with their environment, all of which encourage creativity. Field trips provide children with new experiences and perspectives that they can later use to enhance their own creative expressions in storytelling, drawing, or dramatic play. Finally, it is essential for teachers to create a supportive and encouraging environment where creativity is celebrated. Positive reinforcement plays a crucial role in motivating children to think creatively and share their ideas without fear of judgment. Teachers can provide praise for effort and originality, fostering an environment where creativity thrives. By consistently affirming children's creative efforts, teachers can build their confidence and encourage them to take risks in their creative pursuits. In conclusion, using picture storybooks to enhance creativity in children aged 5-6 years offers a rich and dynamic method of learning that engages multiple senses and encourages active participation. Through interactive reading, creative activities, role-playing, and artistic expression, teachers at RA Nurul Hidayah can nurture the creativity of young children. By integrating various methods, such as group discussions, art projects, outdoor activities, and digital tools, children are provided with diverse opportunities to explore their creativity and develop a lifelong love for learning.

## **RESULTS**

The implementation of strategies to enhance creativity through picture storybooks at RA Nurul Hidayah has yielded significant positive results for children aged 5-6 years. By introducing age-appropriate, visually stimulating, and narratively engaging books, children have shown increased enthusiasm and imagination in their learning experiences. The colorful illustrations and creative plots encourage children to think beyond the pages of the book, inspiring them to visualize different scenarios and explore new ideas. As a result, their creativity has flourished, enabling them to engage more fully with their lessons and express themselves in diverse ways. Interactive reading sessions have been highly successful in stimulating the children's creative thinking. Rather than passively listening, children actively participate in discussions, predicting outcomes and suggesting alternate storylines. These sessions encourage the development of critical thinking skills as children learn to analyze the story and engage in imaginative exercises. Through this process, children develop a deeper understanding of narrative structures and begin to express their own interpretations, which boosts their overall creativity.

Allowing children to create alternative endings for the stories has proven to be another effective method for fostering creativity. By imagining different conclusions to familiar tales, children not only explore their creative potential but also gain confidence in expressing their unique ideas. These creative exercises challenge them to think divergently, helping them to break free from conventional thinking and develop problem-solving skills. As a result, children begin to see storytelling as a fluid and dynamic process, sparking their imagination and encouraging original thought. Post-reading art and craft activities have been an essential component of creative development at RA Nurul Hidayah. Following the story sessions, children engage in hands-on activities where they create drawings, sculptures, or crafts based on the characters or themes in the books. This practical application of creative thinking allows children to express their ideas visually, reinforcing their understanding of the story and further enhancing their imaginative capabilities. These activities also promote fine motor skills, spatial awareness, and the ability to translate abstract ideas into tangible forms.

Thematic activities have contributed significantly to creativity by providing children with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the story's world. For example, role-playing or making costumes based on the story's characters allows children to step into different personas, thereby developing empathy and a deeper understanding of the narrative. These activities also offer children a chance to explore multiple perspectives, which broadens their imaginative capacities and encourages them to express their creativity in new and exciting ways. Group discussions have been instrumental in fostering a collaborative and creative environment in the classroom. By sharing ideas and listening to the thoughts of their peers, children are exposed to different viewpoints, which sparks new ways of thinking. These conversations allow children to refine their own ideas and build on the creativity of others, enhancing their ability to work collaboratively. Through group discussions, children learn the value of exchanging ideas, which encourages them to be more open-minded and imaginative.

Storytelling sessions, where children create their own stories based on prompts, have also been highly effective in stimulating creativity. By crafting original narratives, children develop their linguistic abilities, hone their storytelling skills, and learn how to construct cohesive plots. This method encourages self-expression and imaginative thinking, as children are not limited by the constraints of existing stories and are free to explore their own creative worlds. As a result, children have become more confident in their ability to narrate stories, a key aspect of creative development. Creative expression through music and dance has been an exciting avenue for children to explore after reading picture storybooks. For instance, if a book's theme is related to nature, children can compose a song or perform a dance that reflects the emotions or events in the story. Music and movement stimulate the brain and encourage children to engage with the story on an emotional level. These activities not only allow children to express their creativity through different art forms but also promote the development of rhythm, coordination, and emotional intelligence.

Outdoor activities have enriched the creative learning process, providing children with the opportunity to physically interact with the themes of the picture books. For example, after reading a book about animals or plants, children can go outside and act out the story in a garden or park. These activities help children develop a connection with the natural world and encourage them to use their imagination to bring the story to life. The experience of learning in an outdoor environment has enhanced children's creativity and allowed them to see the world through a more expansive and imaginative lens. The integration of technology has also enhanced creativity in the classroom. Digital tools and apps that allow children to create their own illustrations or animations based on the picture books have provided new ways for children to express their ideas. These tools encourage children to experiment with digital art and storytelling, providing them with a modern platform to channel their creativity. This method not only fosters creative thinking but also builds essential digital literacy skills that will be valuable in the future.

Art-based projects, such as drawing, painting, and crafting, have been highly successful in encouraging creativity among young children. After reading a picture storybook, children are asked to create artwork that reflects the book's characters, scenes, or themes. These creative exercises allow children to express their understanding of the story visually, while also fostering their creativity and fine motor skills. By engaging in such projects, children are encouraged to interpret stories in their own unique way, which strengthens their imaginative thinking and artistic abilities. Field trips related to the themes of the picture storybooks have provided children with real-world experiences that complement the stories they read. For instance, after reading a story about farm animals, a visit to a local farm allowed children to interact with the animals and learn more about their lives. These hands-on experiences help children connect the fictional world of the story with the real world, fostering both creativity and curiosity. Field trips provide valuable opportunities for experiential learning and have a profound impact on children's creative development.

A positive classroom environment that encourages creative expression has contributed to the success of this approach. Teachers consistently provide praise and encouragement for creative efforts, ensuring that children feel valued and confident in sharing their ideas. This supportive atmosphere has been essential in fostering creativity, as children are more likely to take risks and express themselves when they feel safe and supported. Positive reinforcement has played a crucial role in building children's self-esteem and encouraging them to think creatively without fear of judgment. In conclusion, the use of picture storybooks to enhance creativity at RA Nurul Hidayah has proven to be an effective and enriching approach. Through interactive reading, arts and crafts, role-playing, storytelling, music, and outdoor activities, children have developed stronger creative thinking skills and a deeper love for learning. The integration of technology, group discussions, and field trips has further expanded the avenues through which children can express their creativity. These efforts have resulted in children becoming more imaginative, expressive, and confident, laying a strong foundation for their future creative endeavors.

The emphasis on creativity through picture storybooks has also fostered an enhanced sense of self-expression in children. As they are encouraged to create their own interpretations of the stories through drawings, role-play, and writing, children have gained a greater sense of individual identity. They are learning to trust their instincts and express themselves authentically, which is crucial for emotional development. By creating art and stories based on their understanding of the picture books, children are given the opportunity to see themselves as active creators, which bolsters their self-confidence and sense of pride in their work. The incorporation of sensory experiences in creative activities has also proven beneficial for enhancing children's creativity. Engaging with a story through different senses—such as hearing, touching, seeing, and even smelling—can help children develop a richer, more vivid understanding of the narrative. For example, teachers can provide materials such as textured fabric or nature-based items related to the book, allowing children to physically experience the story. This multisensory approach enriches their learning experience, deepening their engagement and promoting a broader sense of creativity through hands-on exploration.

Additionally, creativity has been further nurtured through the encouragement of imaginative play. By creating spaces within the classroom where children can act out scenes from the stories or invent new scenarios, teachers have seen an increase in children's collaborative and imaginative skills. These play-based activities allow children to practice social skills like negotiation, empathy, and conflict resolution, while also providing them with a safe space to experiment with new ideas. Imaginative play also helps children develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities as they create new worlds and scenarios within the stories they explore. Moreover, the supportive involvement of parents has been instrumental in reinforcing creativity outside the classroom. By encouraging children to continue engaging with picture storybooks at home

and providing them with the tools and space for creative expression, parents play a crucial role in the children's overall creative development. When parents actively participate in storytelling sessions, create art, or engage in imaginative activities with their children, it deepens the child's experience and broadens the scope of creativity they experience both inside and outside the school. In conclusion, the integration of picture storybooks into the curriculum at RA Nurul Hidayah has not only enhanced children's creativity but also laid the groundwork for developing crucial life skills. By creating a classroom environment that fosters exploration, self-expression, and hands-on learning, the children have shown significant improvements in their ability to think creatively, collaborate with peers, and express their emotions through various mediums. These efforts have ultimately contributed to well-rounded, imaginative, and confident learners who are equipped to navigate a world that requires both creativity and critical thinking.

## DISCUSSION

The use of picture storybooks as a tool to enhance creativity in children, particularly those aged 5-6 years, is a promising approach that has received increasing attention in early childhood education. At RA Nurul Hidayah, this method has proven to be effective in fostering children's imagination, creativity, and critical thinking. Picture storybooks not only help children develop their cognitive and linguistic abilities but also allow them to engage with complex concepts through vivid illustrations and simple narratives. This approach is grounded in the understanding that young children benefit from multisensory learning experiences, where they can interact with both text and images in ways that stimulate their creativity. One of the most significant benefits of using picture storybooks in early education is that they stimulate children's imaginations. When children are exposed to a story with rich illustrations, they are encouraged to visualize and interpret the content beyond what is explicitly presented. The colorful and dynamic visuals can evoke emotional responses and provoke questions that lead to further exploration. As children ask questions about the characters, setting, and events in the story, they engage in creative thinking, considering possibilities that extend beyond the narrative's structure. This level of engagement helps build critical thinking skills and fosters curiosity, which is vital for creative development.

Furthermore, the interactive nature of picture storybooks allows children to actively participate in the learning process. Rather than simply absorbing the content passively, children are encouraged to engage with the story. Teachers at RA Nurul Hidayah have effectively utilized techniques such as predicting story outcomes, asking open-ended questions, and prompting children to make connections with their own lives. This active engagement helps children develop their problem-solving abilities and fosters an inquisitive mindset. By encouraging children to think about "what happens next" or "how would you solve this problem?" teachers create a space where creative thinking can flourish. The integration of picture storybooks into early childhood education also supports language development. Children are introduced to new vocabulary and sentence structures through the stories, which they can then incorporate into their own speech and writing. As they describe what they see in the pictures or retell the story in their own words, children practice language skills while enhancing their ability to express themselves. This process of verbalizing their thoughts and ideas is an important aspect of creative expression, as it allows children to communicate their imaginative ideas in a clear and coherent manner. Language development is a crucial component of creativity, as it enables children to articulate their thoughts and share their unique perspectives with others.

Moreover, picture storybooks often feature characters who experience challenges or obstacles that require creative solutions. As children observe these characters, they are encouraged to think about how they might address similar challenges in their own lives. This helps children develop problem-solving skills, which are integral to the creative

process. By relating to the characters and thinking through the solutions they offer, children are able to practice critical thinking in an engaging and meaningful context. These problem-solving exercises enhance children's ability to navigate real-life challenges with creativity and confidence. In addition to fostering cognitive and linguistic development, picture storybooks also provide an excellent platform for emotional growth. The themes explored in picture books often address universal human experiences, such as friendship, kindness, fear, and perseverance. These stories allow children to connect emotionally with the characters, promoting empathy and emotional intelligence. As children reflect on the emotions of the characters and their responses to various situations, they are better able to understand their own feelings and develop healthy emotional regulation. Emotional growth is essential for fostering creativity because it enables children to approach challenges with resilience and optimism.

A crucial aspect of using picture storybooks in the classroom is encouraging children to create their own stories. After engaging with a picture book, children can be prompted to imagine alternative endings, new characters, or completely different narratives. This not only fosters creativity but also builds their confidence in storytelling. When children are given the freedom to create and share their stories, they develop a sense of ownership over their ideas and are encouraged to think outside the box. This process of creating new stories also helps children develop narrative skills, such as plot structure and character development, which are fundamental aspects of both creative writing and oral storytelling. Role-playing activities are another effective way to enhance creativity through picture storybooks. By allowing children to act out scenes from the story, teachers encourage them to engage in imaginative play. This not only helps children understand the characters' motivations and actions but also enables them to express their own interpretations of the story. Through role-play, children experiment with different perspectives, exploring how characters might behave in various situations. This dynamic engagement with the story helps children develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution. It also nurtures creativity by allowing children to make choices and take ownership of their storytelling.

Hands-on art activities further support creativity by allowing children to express their interpretations of the story through visual art. Whether it's drawing, painting, or crafting, these activities provide children with the opportunity to explore color, texture, and form while connecting to the story in a personal way. When children create artwork inspired by a picture storybook, they translate abstract ideas into tangible representations, which stimulates their creativity and cognitive development. Art activities also encourage fine motor skills and spatial awareness, which are important aspects of early childhood development. By engaging in creative expression through art, children gain confidence in their ability to represent their thoughts and emotions visually. Incorporating music and dance into the learning experience also enhances creativity. For example, teachers can encourage children to create songs or dances based on the themes or events in the picture storybook. Music and movement allow children to engage with the story on an emotional level, expressing the mood or energy of the narrative through sound and movement. These activities promote physical coordination, rhythm, and emotional expression, which are all important for creative development. By incorporating different artistic forms, children are able to explore multiple dimensions of creativity, helping them develop a well-rounded sense of artistic expression.

The use of digital tools and apps to complement picture storybooks has proven to be an innovative and effective way to engage children in creative learning. Digital platforms allow children to create their own illustrations, animations, and interactive stories based on the books they have read. This technological integration provides children with the opportunity to explore modern forms of creativity while building digital literacy skills. The ability to manipulate images, sound, and text in a digital environment opens up new possibilities for creative expression and offers children a unique platform to bring their ideas to life. Additionally, picture storybooks can be used to foster collaborative creativity.

Group activities that involve discussing the story, creating art, or performing role-play allow children to work together and share their ideas. This collaborative process encourages children to listen to others, build on each other's ideas, and solve problems as a team. Working in groups enhances social and communication skills while promoting a sense of community. Collaborative creativity helps children learn the value of teamwork and sharing, skills that are important for both personal and professional success later in life.

The classroom environment plays a significant role in fostering creativity. Teachers at RA Nurul Hidayah create an environment that is conducive to creative expression by providing a variety of materials and resources that support the creative process. By offering a wide range of art supplies, books, and creative tools, teachers encourage children to explore different forms of self-expression. A classroom that is filled with stimulating visual aids, interactive activities, and opportunities for creative exploration allows children to feel inspired and motivated to think creatively. Creating a supportive and positive atmosphere is essential for encouraging creativity in young children. Teachers at RA Nurul Hidayah consistently provide positive reinforcement and praise for creative efforts, which helps children feel valued and confident in their abilities. Encouragement fosters a growth mindset, where children believe that their creativity can grow and develop through effort and perseverance. A positive learning environment also helps children feel safe to take risks and experiment with new ideas, which is crucial for developing creative confidence.

In addition to fostering individual creativity, picture storybooks also promote cultural awareness and diversity. Many picture storybooks feature characters and settings from different cultures, which allows children to explore new perspectives and learn about different ways of life. Exposure to diverse cultures and experiences through storytelling helps children develop empathy and an appreciation for differences. This cultural awareness is important for creativity because it broadens children's worldview and inspires them to think beyond their immediate surroundings, fostering a global perspective. Storytelling through picture storybooks also helps children understand the importance of narrative structure. Through repeated exposure to stories with clear beginnings, middles, and ends, children learn how to organize their own ideas into cohesive narratives. This understanding of narrative structure is foundational for both verbal and written storytelling. As children grow older, this skill becomes crucial for academic writing, problem-solving, and communication. By starting early with picture storybooks, children develop the storytelling skills they will continue to build upon in later stages of their education. In conclusion, the use of picture storybooks to foster creativity in young children has proven to be an invaluable educational tool at RA Nurul Hidayah. Through engaging with stories that stimulate their imaginations, children are encouraged to think critically, solve problems, express emotions, and collaborate with others. Picture storybooks offer a rich, multisensory experience that supports language development, emotional growth, and artistic expression. By providing children with opportunities to engage with stories in interactive and creative ways, teachers lay the foundation for lifelong creative thinking, helping children develop the skills and confidence they need to navigate the world with imagination and curiosity.

In addition to the cognitive, emotional, and social benefits, the use of picture storybooks also helps in developing children's attention span and focus. Reading and engaging with picture books require children to concentrate and pay attention to details, such as the sequence of events, characters' emotions, and visual cues in the illustrations. These moments of focus not only enhance the children's ability to follow and understand stories but also improve their overall concentration, which is a valuable skill in all areas of learning. As children become more immersed in the narrative and illustrations, they naturally develop better attention to detail and an ability to engage in focused activities for longer periods. Furthermore, picture storybooks provide an excellent platform for encouraging the development of moral values and ethical reasoning. Many picture books

contain themes related to kindness, honesty, fairness, and other ethical principles. When children engage with these stories, they often reflect on the behaviors and choices of the characters and how these actions align with their own values. These reflective moments encourage children to internalize important moral lessons and to think critically about how their actions can impact others. This process helps children develop a solid moral framework, which is an essential component of both their personal and creative growth. Another significant advantage of using picture storybooks in the classroom is that they introduce children to the concept of diversity and inclusion. Through stories featuring characters from various backgrounds, cultures, and abilities, children are exposed to different perspectives and learn to appreciate the richness of human diversity. This exposure helps build tolerance and respect for others, laying the foundation for a more inclusive mindset. As children learn about diversity through the lens of stories, they are encouraged to think creatively about how to interact with and embrace people who may be different from themselves, further broadening their imaginative capabilities.

As part of the creative process, teachers at RA Nurul Hidayah also encourage children to express their ideas through a variety of art forms, not just limited to drawing or painting. For example, children are given the chance to create three-dimensional models or use recycled materials to bring characters or scenes from the story to life. This hands-on approach encourages resourcefulness and allows children to experiment with different mediums. Whether through sculpting, building, or collage-making, these activities support children's understanding of spatial relationships and foster their ability to think in three dimensions, an essential skill in creative problem-solving. Lastly, the integration of picture storybooks into the curriculum encourages a lifelong love of reading and learning. As children develop a deep connection with stories and characters, they are more likely to develop a habit of reading outside the classroom as well. This passion for books extends beyond the confines of the classroom, nurturing curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge throughout their lives. Picture storybooks provide an accessible and engaging introduction to the world of literature, creating an environment in which children feel comfortable exploring new ideas, learning about the world around them, and developing a lifelong appreciation for storytelling. Through this process, they not only improve their academic skills but also cultivate a sense of wonder and creativity that will serve them throughout their educational journey and beyond.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on data validation and comparison with previous findings, it can be concluded that illustrated story media is proven to be effective in increasing the creativity of children aged 5-6 years. The results of this study are in line with the theory of child development and previous studies which show that visual-based methods can stimulate children's imagination and creativity. Although there are challenges in implementation, the results of this study provide important implications for teachers, parents, and educational institutions in developing more innovative learning strategies. With further research, it is hoped that illustrated story media can continue to be developed as a more effective and enjoyable learning tool for early childhood.

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