

THE INFLUENCE OF SEX AND CLASS TOWARDS STUDENTS' CREATIVITY AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS SINCE THE EARLY AGE

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***Abstract:** The background of this article is the lack of ability to express opinions in early childhood. With the centralized learning approach used in the teaching of children at an early age, schools emphasize memorizing, writing and reading, while the ability to speak and express opinions is limited. The variables studied were sex, status, creativity and the ability to express opinion. This study aimed to determine the differences between the students' ability in expressing opinions between male and female students from class I and class II by considering their learning creativity. The results revealed that there is a relationship between class and sex, which have an influence student opinion expression or decision making and creativity.*

***Keywords:** ability, class, creativity, decision making and sex.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The education system implemented in the educational management nowadays is too centralistic by positioning teachers as the implementer of curriculum. This made the students unable to improvise and develop their creativity in planning and conducting student-oriented learning process.

The Regulation Number 23 of the year 2002 about Child Protection, Clause 10, explicitly stated that speaking their mind was children's right. Every child had a right to state their opinion and be heard. Children also had a right to receive, find, and give information appropriate with their level of intelligence and age in order to develop them selves based on ethics and moral values. In other words, nurturing and developing children's creativity and ability to speak their mind in early childhood was an important thing. It needed to be paid more attention to because it was the first foundation of children's development.

Various articles in the media, supported by actual data, showed a fact of the high level of difficulty children faced in learning at school. When children began their education at elementary school, they became shy and uncommunicative. They

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would only speak when they were asked to recite a text or to count, which shaped them to become a machine of memorization and recitation. Children only focused on their effort to memorize whatever they heard and saw at school. There was no effort to socialize which would indicate that the children were dynamic creatures who had a right to speak and to be heard by adults in their surrounding.

Considering this reality, if the children were continuously exposed to the monotone and one-directional learning, it would produce a 'dry', uninteresting, rigid, and very tedious learning situation. Children were urged to show obedience by listening more without a chance to speak their mind and state their opinions.

2. METHOD

This research belonged to the ex-post facto research because it outlined the relationship between a treatment with the natural variables of sex (gender) and class and the moderator (level) variable of creativity. The variables in this research included: (1) independent variable, (2) attribute variable, and (3) dependent variable. The independent variables in this research were sex (gender) and class; the attribute variable was creativity; and the dependent or criteria variable for this research was the ability to state opinion. The variable of sex consisted of male and female. The variable of class consisted of class I (first graders) and class II (second graders). The variable of creativity consisted of high creativity and low creativity.

The population in this research was all students of beginner classes in SD Mitra Binaan Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Jakarta (Elementary School Partner of the Faculty of Education Study of Jakarta State University). From that population, the sample for this research was chosen through stratified cluster random sampling. The composition of each subject of the sample of this research was displayed in the following Table 1.

Table 1
Sample of the Research

<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Sex</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
Tinggi	I	8	8	16
	II	8	8	16
Rendah	I	8	8	16
	II	8	8	16
Total		32	32	64

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ability to State Opinion

The conception of children participation in Indonesia was known since the government ratified the Convention of Children's Rights (CCR) through the Presidential Decree No. 36 of the year 1990. Clause 12 of the CCR stated that the nation (the government) guaranteed that children would be able to form their own opinion. In the Regulation No. 23 of the year 2002, the Protection of Children was reinforced in Clause 10 which stated that every child bear a right to state opinion, to receive, look for, and give information (Landsdown, 2001) appropriate to their level of intelligence and age in order to develop them selves based on ethics and moral values.

Children needed to be urged and motivated to state their opinion. Children were provided opportunity to learn and understand the process of problem solving. Victoria Johnson CS (2002) noted that children had a good understanding of their surrounding environment and of the causes of the problems befell them.

A communication model that the students were familiar with needed to be developed. For example, the model provided opportunities for students to discuss the problems they faced in daily life through the method of socio-role play; a method that they could understand easily; or through other media that allowed the students to offer their potentials to each other.

Communication skills were closely related with language skills, because language was the primary tool of communication. Improving the communication skills would mean improving the language skills.

Ability or skill to state opinion in children (students) was a realization of the right to participate. Ability to voice opinion was defined as a communication skill using verbal language via the process of stating ideas, opinion, thoughts, agreement, wishes, and/or information concerning an event, or other matters, to other people through certain channels.

The concept of ability to state opinion could also be approached using the understanding of the assertiveness concept. Sikone (2006) noted that many children felt afraid or shy to state their opinion openly. They tended to prefer being quiet and sitting silently than having a dialogue, let alone a debate, with teachers or their peers. The teaching learning process at school was often hindered by this reality.

Siswandi (2006) mentioned that language, as a tool of communication, could be utilized for several purposes, based on what the speaker intended to express: to deliver factual information (identify, report, asking question, and correcting

people); to express intellectual stance (expressing agreement or disagreement, et cetera); to express emotional state (happy, unhappy, expectation, satisfaction, et cetera); to express moral stance (apologizing, regretting, acknowledging, et cetera); to express command (asking, inviting, warning, et cetera); and to socialize (say greetings, introduce one's self, congratulate others, et cetera). The concept of the ability to state opinion could also be approached through the understanding of the assertiveness concept.

School as a formal education institution that directly interacted with children was required to instill assertive attitude. The educators should begin the effort so that students would possess assertive attitude. The characteristics of assertive students, as suggested by Fensterheim and Baer, included; freedom of stating opinion and ideas through words and action; ability to communicate directly and openly; ability to start, continue, and end a conversation in a good manner; ability to reject and state disagreement on others' opinion or anything that was unreasonable and negative; ability to ask for and provide help for others when needed; ability to express emotion, both the positive and negative emotions, in appropriate manner; possession of active attitude and opinion toward life; ability to accept limitation of themselves by keep trying to achieve what they want as best as they could, so that they would still have self-esteem whether they succeed or failed. Assertive attitude and behavior were important for children because such attitude and behavior would facilitate them socializing and building relationship with their surrounding effectively.

Sex

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, gender was a word commonly used to differentiate the sex of people (male or female). Sex itself was a genetic way to create and pass down individual characteristics in a population. There was a difference between the word 'sex' and 'gender'; the word 'sex' described physical and biological traits of people. It could be said that someone was 'physically' a male or female. The word 'gender' described the character or psychological traits of someone. It could be said that someone who *felt or did something* was feminine (female-like) or masculine (male-like).

Considering the physical development of children, there were differences of brain development between boys and girls. Whitleson in Bahaudin (2000) noted that boys were faster in specific development of the right brain than the girls. Meanwhile, girls acquired and mastered language faster than boys. According to Dryden and Vos¹, girls were faster in mastering the skills of speaking, language learning, and reading than boys.

¹ Cordan Dryden and Jeannete Vos, *Revolusi Cara Belajar: Belajar akan Efektif kalau Anda dalam Keadaan Fun*, terj. World Transalton Service (Bandung Kaifia: 200) p. 229.

Dembo² noted that male was aggressive, free, competitive, adventurous, and was better at the learning that needed reasoning and spatial skills. Hughes³ agreed that male was better at lesson that needed reasoning and spatial skills. Parson in Sarwono⁴ suggested that girls' ability was better in doing tests concerning language use, memorization, esthetic reactions, and social matters. Other comparison was provided by Garry in Sunarto⁵ who mentioned that in the measurement of speaking fluency, female was commonly better than male.

From the description above, it could be concluded that sex was biological identity, both physically and mentally, embedded and innate in human since their birth.

Creativity

Kamus Besar bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language) defined creative as having force of creation, ability to create.⁶ Creativity was considered a habit or custom, a part of the daily actions and ideas. Halliwell in Anna Craft described creativity in education as the 'flexibility of creative force' and emphasized that flexibility depended on the anticipation and imagination and was supported by strong organization and assessment.

Guilford⁷ suggested that creativity was a very particular condition, attitude, or situation, which was nearly impossible to formulate comprehensively.

Creativity was important for life and creative behaviors needed to be developed since early childhood, because by creating, a child could self-actualize. Actively performing creative activities was not only provided benefit but also satisfaction. Through creativity, children could increase their life quality, develop their ability in finding various alternatives to solve problems, be able to make decision without help from others, and be able to put meaning to their activities in the form of enjoyment of generating ideas and perseverance in pursuing interests.⁸

Every child in their early age had a potential to be creative. However, the development of the creativity was highly individual and varied from one child to another. It meant that the creativity development of each child was unique, depended on supports and stimulus received by the child in his/her early childhood.

² Myron H. Dembo, *Teaching For Learning* (Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing Co. 1981), p. 129.

³ J.M. Hughes, *Educational in America*, New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1982), p. 239.

⁴ Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono, *Psikologi Sosial*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1999) p. 169.

⁵ Sunarto and B. Agung Hartono, *Perkembangan Peserta Didik*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999), p. 9

⁶ Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Bahasa. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2008).

⁷ Guilford, *Participation Works!* (New Economic Foundation, 2001), p. 32

⁸ Latri M. Margono, "Anak-anak Pengungsi Masih dapat Kreatif Bermain, Studi tentang leasure", Makalah untuk Hari Anak Nasional, 2005.

Further in the development of children of early age, the personal awareness, emotional health, socialization, communication, and cognitive and motor skills were very important and had to be considered as functions of interaction.

Based on the outlined description above, it could be concluded that creativity was a child's ability that reflected fluency, flexibility, and originality in thinking, and ability to elaborate an idea.

Level of Class

Level of class in this research was the categorization based on the level of children's development to facilitate the acquisition of learning achievement. Level of class in the perspective of psychology also measured the level of psychological and intellectual developments of children (students). Referring to the psychological perspective about students' participation Johnson noted that for several decades, the psychology theory had focused more on the universal analysis of children's development as individuals and what the children could not do in certain stages of their lives.

Findings and Discussion

From the research, the data concerning ability to state opinion, sex, class, and creativity level of the children (students) were found, and then analyzed descriptively.

Data of Male Students' Ability to State Opinion (A1)

Data of male students' ability to state opinion theoretically had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84 and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a male student could achieve was 74 and the minimum score was 42, with the average score of 59.09 and variance of 75.055.

Data of Female Students' Ability to State Opinion (A2)

Data of female students' ability to state opinion theoretically had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84 and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a female student could achieve was 77 and the minimum score was 24 with the average score of 52.50 and variance of 116.194.

Data of Class I Students' Ability to State Opinion (B1)

Data of Class I students' ability to state opinion theoretically had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84

and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a class I student could achieve was 77 and the minimum score was 32, with the average score of 58.53 and variance of 102.322.

Data of Class II Students' Ability to State Opinion (B2)

Data of Class I students' ability to state opinion theoretically had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84 and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a class II student could achieve was 74 and the minimum score was 24, with the average score of 53.06 and variance of 95.931.

Data of Ability to State Opinion in Students with High Level of Creativity

Theoretically, data of students' ability to state opinion in students with high level of creativity had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84 and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a student with high creativity could achieve was 77 and the minimum score was 24, with the average score of 55.56 and variance of 126.835.

Data of Ability to State Opinion in Students with Low Level of Creativity

Theoretically, data of students' ability to state opinion in students with high level of creativity had a range of score of 12 - 84, which meant that the maximum score to be achieved, theoretically, was 84 and the minimum score was 12. Empirically, the maximum score a student with high creativity could achieve was 74 and the minimum score was 32, with the average score of 55.03 and variance of 85.644.

4. ANALYSIS REQUIREMENT TESTING

Normality Test

The table above showed that the value of calculated Lilliefors (L_{calc}) on each group was lower than the value of table Lilliefors (L_t). Therefore, it could be concluded that the research sample was derived from a population with normal distribution, so that the parametric statistical analysis could be used in this research.

Homogeneity Test

The whole result of calculation could be seen in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2
Summary of the Homogeneity Test on the Score Variance of Ability to State Opinion in the Two Groups of A and B

Source of Variance	Highest Variance	Lowest Variance	F calculated (F_{calc})	$F_{t(0,05;31,31)}$	Remarks
Group A1 and A2	116.1935	75.0554	1.5481	1.8221	Homogen
Group B1 and B2	102.3216	95.93145	1.0666	1.8221	Homogen
Group C1 and C2	126.8437	85.6442	1.0666	1.8221	Homogen

Homogeneity Test of Variance in the Eight Groups Cells in Research Design (A1B1C1, A2B1C1, A1B2C1, A2B2C1, A1B1C2, A2B1C2, A1B2C2, A2B2C2)

The homogeneity test of variance was conducted on the score of ability to state opinion of the eight groups. The summary of the calculation result could be seen in the following Table 3:

Table 3
Summary of Homogeneity Test of Variance Score of Ability to State Opinion

Group	S^2	Collective Variance	B Value	χ^2_{calc}	$\frac{\chi^2_t}{95;3 \quad 99;3}$		Conclusion
A1B1C1	57.3571						
A2B1C1	102.5714						
A1B2C1	60.0000						
A2B2C1	127.4286						
A1B1C2	58.8393	86.3996	108.4446				
A2B1C2	143.0714			5.2256	7.82	11.3	
A1B2C2	104.8571						Homogen
A2B2C2	37.0714						
Total	361.5958						

Legend:

S^2 = Variance

B Value = Barlett Value

χ^2_{calc} = Value of chi square calculation

$\chi^2_{t(95;3)}$ = Value of chi square on table χ^2 with $dk = 3$ and $\alpha 0,05$

$\chi^2_{t(99;3)}$ = Value of chi square on table χ^2 with $dk = 3$ and $\alpha 0,01$

Table 4 indicated that the homogeneity test using Barlett test produced F_{calc} value lower than F_{table} value with significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it could be

concluded that the research sample was derived from a homogen population, so that the parametric statistical analysis could be used in the analysis of this research.

The discussion on the research finding, based on the descriptive data of students' ability to state opinion and hypothesis testing, could be described as follows:

First Hypothesis; in this research it was found that there was a highly significant difference of ability to state opinion among boys (male students) and girls (female students), in which the male students' ability to state opinion was higher than the female students'.

Second Hypothesis; the second hypothesis testing showed that the ability to state opinion of Class I students, both male and female, was higher than the ability to state opinion of Class II students.

Third Hypothesis; the findings on the third hypothesis indicated that there was no influence of the interaction between class and sex towards students' ability to state opinion.

Fourth Hypothesis; the findings on the fourth hypothesis showed that there was no influence of interaction between sex and creativity towards students' ability to state opinion. It meant that both male and female students with high level of creativity had the same level of ability to state opinion. Meanwhile, male and female students with low level of creativity also had the same level of ability to state opinion.

Fifth Hypothesis; the findings on the fifth hypothesis indicated that there was influence (effect) of the interaction between class and creativity towards students' ability to state opinion. Class I students' and class II students' abilities to state opinion were different, in terms of creativity. The findings indicated that the abilities to state opinion of class I and class II students' with high level of creativity were different. Meanwhile, the abilities to state opinion of class I and class II students' with low level of creativity were different.

Sixth Hypothesis; the testing of the sixth hypothesis indicated that there was no influence (effect) of the interaction between sex, class, and creativity towards students' ability to state opinion. This hypothesis was the root of the previous hypothesis. The findings proved that the interaction of the three aspects was not a factor or cause of the differences in students' ability to state opinion.

5. CONCLUSION

Male students' ability to state opinion was higher than that of female students'; while class I students' ability to state opinion was higher than that of class II students' at SD Mitra Binaan Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Jakarta (Elementary School Partner of the Faculty of Education Study of Jakarta State University).

The ability to state opinion of male and female students with the same level of high creativity was not different; and the ability to state opinion of male and female

students with the same level of low creativity was not different, either. The effect or influence of interaction between sex and creativity on the ability to state opinion in early age was not significant. Meanwhile, the effect or influence of interaction between sex and class on the ability to state opinion on early age was also not significant.

At SD Mitra Binaan Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Jakarta (Elementary School Partner of the Faculty of Education Study of Jakarta State University), class I students' ability to state opinion was higher than that of class II students' with the same level of high creativity; and class I students' ability to state opinion was higher than that of class II students' with the same level of low creativity. The influence of the interaction between class and creativity towards the early age children's ability to state opinion was significant.

The ability to state opinion on class I and class II male students with the same level of high creativity or low creativity was not different. It was similar with the class I and class II female students with the same level of high creativity or low creativity; their ability to state opinion was not different. Between male and female students of class I with the same level of high or low creativity, there was no difference in terms of ability to state opinion. There was also no difference in ability to state opinion between the male and female students of class II with the same level of high creativity or low creativity. The influence or effect of the interaction between sex and class towards students' ability to state opinion in its relation with creativity was not significant.

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