



Fantasy Story Gymnastics: Solutions for Increasing the Locomotor Activity of Early Childhood

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Abstract

The locomotor activity of children is a crucial element of gross motor development in early life that need proper stimulation. This research intends to evaluate the effectiveness of fantasy gymnastics as a stimulation technique. This research examines the impact of a fantasy gymnastics intervention on the development of locomotor abilities in preschool children at an Early Childhood Education Institution in Indonesia. The locomotor activity of learners is a crucial element in early childhood gross motor development that necessitates suitable and adequate stimulation. The used methodology is quantitative, using a pre-experimental design characterized by a one-group pretest-posttest format. The sampling method used was purposive sampling, with a total of 10 children from group B2. The tools used for data collecting included testing and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 30 software via a paired sample t-test with a significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. The data analysis yielded a significance value of 0.001, which is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). Consequently, researchers may ascertain that the hypothesis (H_a) in this study is validated, indicating that narrative fantasy gymnastics significantly influences the locomotor abilities of early childhood pupils via the execution of experimental story fantasy gymnastics activities.

INTRODUCTION

Early infancy is a phase of swift growth for people, including substantial advancements in both physical and psychological dimensions (Komari & Aslan, 2025; Nasution et al., 2024; Setiadi et al., 2024; Suryani et al., 2024). Early infancy is a pivotal phase; by age four, children's intellect reaches 50%, by age eight it attains 80%, with the remaining 20% acquired after age eight (Fajarwati & Arini, 2023; Siswina et al., 2016). This stage is often identified as the golden age, a golden period in which children show extraordinary capacity in responding to various stimulations from the external environment. The golden age is a critical

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and opportune time for utilizing the diverse intellectual potentials of youngsters to develop superior human resources (Sari, 2024).

Early childhood learners need early childhood education. Early childhood education is an effort to stimulate, direct, and provide education that supports the development of potential abilities in children (Hasanah, 2018; Karwati, 2016). This education can be useful for forming a foundation for growth and physical development of fine motor and gross motor and other developments (Aghnaita, 2017; Nada et al., 2024; Pura & Asnawati, 2019). Education in early childhood includes education to children from birth to six years, which focuses on providing appropriate stimuli so that aspects of children's growth and development can run optimally (Adatul'aisy et al., 2023; Bening & Ichsan, 2022; Chamidiyah, 2015). An educator as an early childhood education teacher, both teachers and parents, plays an important role in being able to provide good basic motion learning so that students can benefit, which consists of locomotor, non-locomotor & manipulative movements (Muslihin, 2020).

A fundamental ability that must be cultivated in early childhood learners is gross motor skills, particularly locomotor movements (Adam et al., 2023; Andini et al., 2022; Apriliani et al., 2020). Locomotor motion refers to the movement of the body, specifically the act of transporting a child's body from one location to another using various means, such as leaping, running, and walking, which constitute fundamental locomotor activities (Brantasari, 2020; Rahman et al., 2020; Suryono et al., 2022). Locomotor movement activities need instruction and supervision from instructors or parents to ensure youngsters do them properly and get benefits. Training locomotor motions in early life helps gross motor development, since these movements engage the majority or all of the child's body (Simahate & Munip, 2020).

Locomotor movements have various benefits, namely controlling body movements and coordination, improving healthy lifestyles, improving body skills, increasing physical strength and health and training children's courage (Nurulita et al., 2024). Good locomotor movements can also improve the development of large muscle movements so that children's development becomes optimal (Dwijayanti & Supriyoko, 2020; Setyawan et al., 2018; Sutini, 2018). In addition, locomotor activities also help early learners acquire the basic motor skills needed to live a healthy and physically active life (Djuanda & Adipura, 2020). Some of these benefits will support every development because each development will influence other developments (Ariyani & Adhe, 2018). In this case, it can be understood that locomotor movements are so important to be improved in early childhood so that children can effectively be able to perform various exploratory movements in their world, can stimulate the potential within themselves, and can live healthy and physically active (Fajarwati & Arini, 2023; Julianti et al., 2023; Nisa & Suwardi, 2019; Suryono et al., 2022).

The literature points to early childhood locomotor activities with various solutions offered. However, early childhood locomotor activities are still one of the problems among educational issues in the field today. Researchers observed various signs indicating that the locomotor skills of children aged 5-6 years in an Early Childhood Education institution in Indonesia were not properly developed. It is seen that children's ability is still low in walking along a straight line, running in a directed manner, and jumping with good balance. One of the causes is the lack of learning activities that can stimulate children's movements in a varied and fun way (Efendi et al., 2023; Hadassah & Tapilaha, 2023; Kalamak et al., 2023; Rambe et al.,

2024; Satrial et al., 2024). The findings show that the lack of media variatives and the limited provision of learning media to stimulate children's locomotor movements in schools, the provision of learning media is not in accordance with the developmental needs of children and learning materials, the lack of teacher understanding of basic locomotor movements, and the lack of basic motion stimulation make children's locomotor abilities still low and not optimal (Julianti et al., 2023; Rahmadini et al., 2022). Many learning methods and media can be used to improve early childhood locomotor movement skills so that the problem of early childhood locomotor activity can be overcome (Yuniastuti, 2015).

Various existing literature, researchers found that in overcoming early childhood locomotor activities, there is a need for innovative learning methods, one of which is fantasy story gymnastics. Huda et al., (2021) found that fantasy gymnastics performed by early childhood, can improve motor development (including locomotor). Locomotor movements are very closely attached and cannot be separated in children's gross motor development, for this reason it is necessary to stimulate their locomotor abilities in accordance with the age group (Nisa & Suwardi, 2019). Furthermore, Alim et al., (2023) revealed that gymnastics (including fantasy story gymnastics) can help the development of locomotor movement abilities such as walking, running, jumping, jumping, skipping, fast running, and walking. In addition, Fitri et al., (2021) also found that fantasy gymnastics presented in Islamic Fable Stories makes it easier for teachers to teach children to understand fantasy gymnastics so that it helps children's imagination and motor development (including locomotor) when carrying out fantasy gymnastics. The results of Ghin et al., (2024) also show that the basic motion elements found in the 10 fable stories of The Adventure of the Ingenious Deer are dominated by using locomotor basic motion elements, namely 26 locomotor basic motion elements.

Fantasy gymnastics is a gymnastic activity that combines movement with children's imagination, such as imitating the movements of animals, objects, or characters in stories. According to Novita et al., (2022) suggests that fantasy gymnastics is a fantasy activity imitating a movement carried out with a method to emphasize imagination in children. The advantages of fantasy gymnastics can train locomotor movement skills in children and increase children's imagination by giving freedom of movement, so that they are able to be creative according to their imagination (Astuti & Nur, 2022; Sit, 2022). When doing regular fantasy gymnastics can make children accustomed to moving their limbs, able to master movements, stronger muscles, and an increase in gross motor skills (Novita et al., 2022). This activity is considered capable of stimulating children's locomotor abilities optimally.

So in this explanation, the researcher assumes that there is a need for story fantasy gymnastics activities to solve the problem of locomotor activities of early childhood learners. This research is current and has never been studied by other researchers in the field of early childhood education. So researchers are interested in examining this problem empirically in scientific research that focuses on story fantasy gymnastics: a solution to increase the locomotor activities of early childhood learners.

METHODS

This research used a quantitative methodology using a pre-experimental design (Qur'ani & Syafril, 2025; Rambe et al., 2025; Saputri et al., 2025). The used design is a one-group pretest-posttest design, which entails evaluating the dependent variable in a single group of individuals both before to and after to

the administration of therapy or intervention. This strategy enables researchers to assess the treatment's impact by comparing pretest and posttest outcomes. The subjects of this research included students from the Ulul Ilmi Kindergarten Education Institution in Padang, Indonesia. The data source was derived from 18 pupils. A sample of 10 early childhood learners was selected using a purposive sampling approach. The subject of investigation is the impact of fantasy gymnastics on children's locomotor skills. This research used locomotor ability assessments and activity recording as tools. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 30 software, employing the paired sample t-test method to assess significant differences between pretest and posttest outcomes (Arto et al., 2025; Basrudin et al., 2024; Chrustiana et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Following the establishment of study issues and goals, data collecting was conducted to assess the impact of local wisdom-based ecoprint batik activities on creativity at the Ulul Ilmi Kindergarten Education Institute in Padang. This study was carried out across five sessions in the experimental group, including one pre-test, three interventions, and one post-test. Additionally, the pretest and posttest data were analyzed by a value comparison test utilizing SPSS 26 as follows.

Data collection is conducted to assess the impact of fantasy gymnastics exercises on locomotor skills, as outlined in the issue formulation and study goals. This study had five sessions in the experimental group, including one pre-test, three treatment sessions, and one post-test.

Additionally, the pretest and posttest data were analyzed by a comparative assessment of pre-test and post-test values using SPSS 30 as follows.

Table 1. Comparison of pre-test and post-test statistics of experimental class

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min- imum	Max- imum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	10	11	16	13,10	1,595
Posttest	10	18	21	19,40	0,843
Valid N (listwise)	10				

According to Table 1, which presents a comparison of the pre-test and post-test statistical findings in the experimental class, the lowest score in the pre-test was 11, the highest score was 16, the mean was 13.10, and the standard deviation was 1.595. In the post-test, the lowest score was 18, the highest score was 21, the mean was 19.40, and the standard deviation was 0.843. This research used the hypothesis testing approach (t-test) for data analysis, which was previously validated using normality and homogeneity tests using SPSS 30. The normality test seeks to ascertain whether the data in the two sample groups follows a normal distribution (Lovisia, 2018). This research use the Shapiro-Wilk test for assessing the normality of sample data distributions with a limited sample size.it does not exceed 50 samples. The determination of normalcy is contingent upon the significance value; specifically, a significance value of <0.05 indicates an aberrant data distribution, while a significance value is >0.05 signifies a normal data distribution. The normality test findings for the experimental class were examined using SPSS in this research.

Table 2. Shapiro wilk normality test

Tests of Normality			
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pretest	,912	10	,295
Posttest	,890	10	,172
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.			
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction			

The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, as shown in Table 2, due to the sample size being less than 30 individuals. Additionally, the pre-test data acquired is 0.295, which exceeds 0.05. The conclusion is that the data follows a normal distribution, since the significance level found is greater than 0.05.

Table 3. Homogeneity test

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest	Based on Mean	,24	1	6
Posttest		381		,169
	Based on Median	,429	1	6
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,429	1	4,73
			2	,543
	Based on trimmed mean	,2,3	1	6
		40		,177

The significance value (Sig.) from table 3 is 0.169, which exceeds 0.05. It is determined that a considerable difference exists between the averages before and after therapy. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that fantasy gymnastics exercises have an impact on children's locomotor ability.

Upon establishing the homogeneity of the data, the subsequent step is to perform a hypothesis test or t-test to evaluate the previously specified assumptions. This research used the Paired Samples T-Test for hypothesis testing, appropriate when the data satisfies the criteria for normality and homogeneity of variance as determined by prior testing. The requirements for hypothesis testing dictate that if the significance value (α) > 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted; conversely, if the significance value (α) < 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing (t-test)

Paired Samples Test									
Paired Differences									
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference									
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest - pos test	- 6,300	1.377	0,423	-7,257	- 5,343	- 14,895	9	,001

The statistical analysis of the hypothesis test shown in table 4 yielded a significance value of 0.001, which is below the critical threshold of 0.05. This discovery supports the dismissal of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the endorsement of the alternative hypothesis (H_a). The consequence is that a statistically significant difference exists in children's locomotor abilities before and after the intervention of fantasy gymnastics practices. Consequently, it may be inferred that involvement in fantasy gymnastics exercises significantly enhances children's locomotor abilities.

A t-test revealed an enhancement in children's locomotor movement abilities at an Indonesian Early Childhood Education Institution. The enhancement in children's locomotor ability scores was more pronounced in the post-test findings compared to the pre-test results, attributable to the use of engaging activities, namely fantasy gymnastics tale activities. So that it shows that fantasy gymnastics activities have an effect in one of the Indonesian Early Childhood Education Institutions.

The findings in this study are in line with the results obtained by [Hidayati et al., \(2024\)](#), which showed a significant increase in children's gross motor skills after being treated with story-based fantasy gymnastics. These results indicate that gymnastic activities packaged in the form of stories can increase children's interest and participation, thus having a positive impact on their locomotor development. The implementation of fantasy gymnastics for four weeks contributed significantly to the improvement of children's locomotor abilities, especially in the aspects of balance, coordination of movements, and muscle strength. This strengthens the assumption that a fun and imaginative approach such as fantasy gymnastics can stimulate children's motor system more optimally than conventional methods. Furthermore, [Hasibuan et al., \(2024\)](#) also emphasized that fantasy gymnastics is not only effective in developing gross motor aspects, but also has a positive influence on psychosocial aspects, such as creativity and self-confidence. These findings reinforce the argument that innovatively designed physical activities can meet children's holistic developmental needs, which include physical, cognitive, and emotional.

Consequently, prior study findings substantiate the assertion that fantasy gymnastics serves as an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing locomotor abilities in early infancy. This study aims to ascertain the impact of fantasy gymnastics on the development of locomotor movements in children aged 5-6 years, highlighting the significance of incorporating play and storytelling elements into motor learning activities within early childhood education.

Research findings and literature evaluation indicate that fantasy gymnastics exercises significantly enhance children's locomotor skills in an Early Childhood Education Institution in Indonesia. Consequently, it can be inferred from the supplied data analysis that children's locomotor movement skills in the post-test are superior to those in the pre-test. The average score of children on the post-test surpasses that of the pre-test. It may be stated that fantasy gymnastics exercises significantly impact the locomotor skills of children at an Indonesian Early Childhood Education Institution.

CONCLUSION

One of the keys to success so that early learners can develop and improve their locomotor activity abilities, various activities are needed. Increasing the ability of locomotor activities of early childhood learners is certainly through a long process and must be influenced by various aspects, including by doing

story fantasy gymnastics activities. This study has succeeded in proving that an early childhood learner that there is an effect of story fantasy gymnastics on the ability of locomotor activities of early childhood learners with the implementation of experimental story fantasy gymnastics activities. This means that various activities can be carried out such as story fantasy gymnastics which must continue to be trained so that they can hone the locomotor activity abilities of early learners.

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