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Implementation of Early Childhood Education Kits Learning in Higher Education Student: Ex-post Facto Study of Open University Students

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ABSTRACT: The ECE kit is practical and has benefits in the lecture process for The Open University ECE Bachelor's study program, which aims to produce professional ECE teachers who can work globally. This research aims to see the results of implementing the ECE kit 2023 from the perspective of students as ECE kit users. This research is an ex-post facto research with 890 student participants who completed the ECE kit implementation questionnaire. The results of the research show that the use of the ECE kit can liven up the learning atmosphere in the classroom. The use of ECE kits as effective media in student teaching practice classes has an impact on learning outcomes. Most students who use ECE kits (52.4%) strongly agree that it is easier for students in their class to understand learning themes if they use ECE kits. Also, 60.1% of students strongly agreed that using ECE kits made students more enthusiastic—teaching practice students. Students in teaching student classes are motivated and enthusiastic about participating in learning with the APE in the ECE kit.

Keywords: early childhood education, learning kits, higher education students, open university

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1 INTRODUCTION

Science and technology are constantly developing and bringing significant changes to various dimensions of human life, including economic, social, cultural, and educational aspects. Therefore, to continue adapting to changes, adjustments are needed, especially those related to teaching factors in schools. One of these factors is the learning media teachers/potential teachers must learn and master to deliver learning objectives well in their classes. Learning media is important in the learning process, especially in the context of learning that requires practice (Mweene & Muzaza, 2020). When teachers use appropriate learning media in their classes, students understand better. The use of appropriate learning media will also increase student motivation and lead to increased learning outcomes (Kamaliya et al., 2022).

The Open University (OU) always tries to improve the quality of its learning process, including developing quality teaching materials for each course. Teaching materials are designed as independent teaching materials per the independent learning concept implemented at the Open University. The teaching materials provided for students are Basic Material Books (BMP) and supporting equipment (specifically practical/um and practice courses). The Open University ECE Teacher undergraduate study program aims to produce professional ECE teachers who can participate globally. The curriculum includes 12 practical courses to support achieving these goals. In several practical courses, apart from BMP, students also receive supporting equipment in the form of ECE kits, which consist of several educational game tools (APE) designed as demonstration tools during the learning process. ECE kits are used when students carry out tutorial activities, whether face-to-face, web, or online. The tutorial implementation pattern requires 3 assignments at meetings 3, 5, and 7. Especially for the 12 practical courses in the Early Childhood Education Teacher Study Program, the tutorial assignments, especially Assignment 1 and Assignment 3, are designed using the ECE kit that they have received as APE when conducting learning in their respective ECE classes. Educational game tools are instruments in the form of methods, methods, or tools that a person uses to educate children by emphasizing the concept of playing while learning (Nurwidaningsih et al., 2019).

During registration, educational teaching aids (ETA) in ECE 1 and 2 kits are given. ECE Kit 1 is given to high school students (AKPMM) at the beginning of the semester, and ECE Kit 2 is given to undergraduate students (Science) in semester 1 (3 semesters). Students will use this ECE kit as a learning medium in the ECE class where they teach. In 2009, Aisyah and Budi conducted evaluation research on ECE kits with the results being: (1) 14% of respondents did not receive ECE kits during the lecture process, (2) there were no clear guidelines for using ECE kits, and (3) ECE kits were felt to be reasonably practical and had benefits in the lecture process for practical courses. ECE Kit 1 has been produced since 2007, and ECE Kit 2 has been produced since 2015 when the Undergraduate Input Undergraduate Program (AKPMM) began to be implemented. The ECE kit production process involves several parties. Apart from the study program as a

team that formulates and controls the quality of goods and services, there is also the P2BAM-UT (Multimedia Teaching Materials Production Center in UT) in terms of producing ECE kits and the teaching materials service center for distributing teaching materials to students.

This ECE kit is used by all Universitas Terbuka undergraduate study program students spread throughout Indonesia with all its heterogeneity. The students have various characteristics ranging from differences in demographics, motivation, learning patterns, and level of understanding regarding learning content. These differences cause different feedback from students and influence the learning process. Apart from that, science-related developments related to ECE encourage evaluating and updating existing teaching materials. Many studies on the implementation of learning media have been carried out, some of which have resulted in the conclusion that the appropriate use of learning media has big implications for learning outcomes (Apriani, 2019; Hekmatiar & Umam, 2020; Muhammad et al., 2022; Sahronih et al., 2019). However, there has never been a study on the implementation of ECE kits 1 and 2, so an evaluation needs to be carried out to determine how the implementation of ECE kits has been achieved so far.

Initial observations have been carried out on several parties related to ECE kits, starting from the distribution process of ECE kits to students and the effectiveness of ECE kits from the tutor and student side. The distribution process for ECE kits is quite good; however, 30% of tutors and students still need to receive ECE kits. Regarding its effectiveness, according to the tutor, the ECE kit is still quite relevant to current ECE learning, but several APEs in the ECE kit need improvement. Based on the problems presented, this research will focus on implementing ECE kits in 2023 from the perspective of students as ECE kit users.

2 METHOD

This research is ex-post facto research to examine cause and effect relationships that the researcher does not manipulate or treat (designed and implemented). It goes on to say that ex-post facto research is carried out on programs and activities that are ongoing or have occurred (Sugiyono, 2010). Ex-post facto research has no controlling variables and usually no pre-test. Data collection used an ECE kit implementation questionnaire (online), which was distributed through tutorial classes, both face-to-face tutorials, web tutorials, and online tutorials. The questions in the questionnaire included the effectiveness and efficiency of ECE kits, the suitability of ECE kits for Course Learning Outcome (CLO), and the suitability of ECE kits for their use in supporting learning. This research involved all 2nd-semester students and above, practical course tutors, and PJ BA UT students spread throughout Indonesia. The population of this study was 25,056, and the sample consisted of 2877 ECE Program students. Data processing uses simple statistical techniques that aim to display descriptive data. The data presented is the factual condition of implementing ECE kits at the Open University over several years.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Eight hundred ninety students, ranging from semester 2 to semester 9, filled out the ECE kit implementation questionnaire. 31% of students often use ECE kits in practical course learning, but only 17% of students always use them (see Figure 1), some even never use ECE kits in completing practical course learning. This was then explored in FGDs with students and interviews with tutors.

The result of the FGD was that several tutors did not provide instructions in class so that students would use the ECE kit as a learning medium when carrying out practical tutorial assignments according to the course (Dryden & Neenan, 2020; Shane-Simpson & Bakken, 2022). As a result, many students do not bring the ECE kit during the tutorial because they need to understand that the ECE kit will be used during the tutorial (Chandrawati, 2018; Fuentes, 2020).

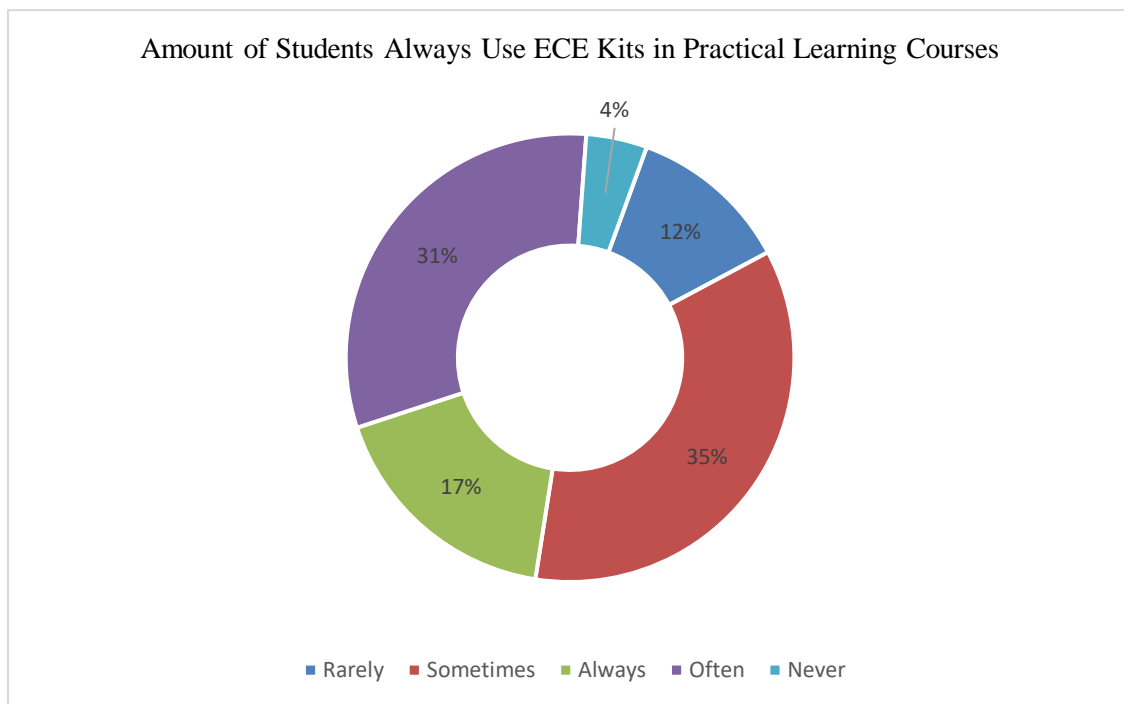


Figure 1. ECE Kits Participant in Practical Course Learning

Figure 2 show, 42% of students strongly agree that ECE kits make it easier to carry out practical courses. This shows that the types of materials and media chosen as ECE kits are indeed by their daily duties as kindergarten teachers. All undergraduate study program students of Universitas Terbuka, dispersed throughout diverse Indonesia, use this ECE kit. The pupils exhibit a variety of traits, including variations in their motivation, learning styles, and degree of comprehension of the material being studied. These variations affect the learning process and result in varying student comments. Aside from that, advancements in research that are connected to early childhood education promote reviewing and revising current instructional materials.

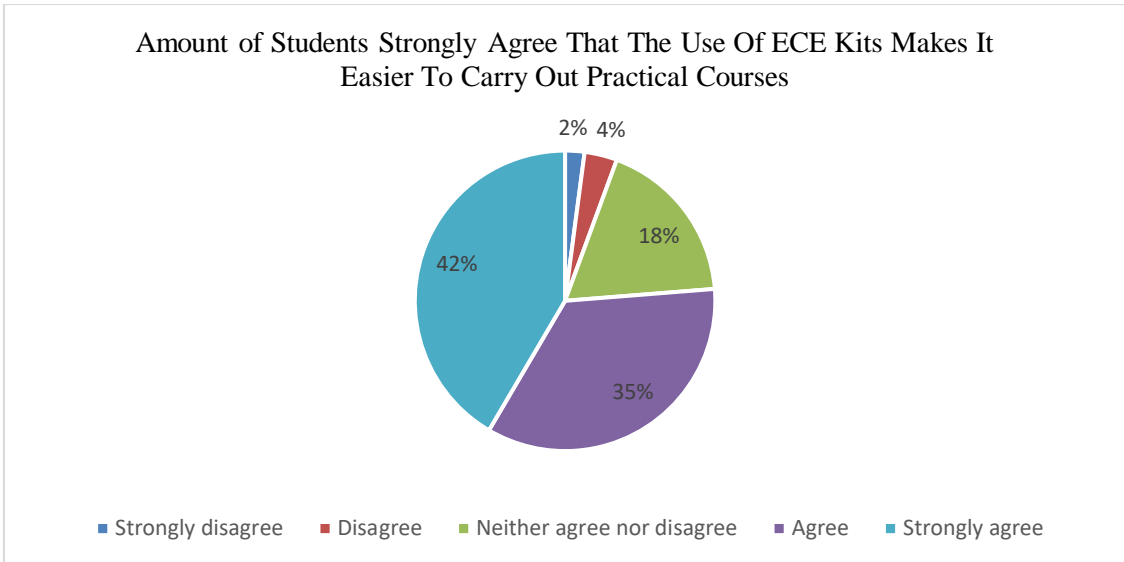


Figure 2. The Result of Participant Strongly Agree that ECE Kits Make Study Easier

A questionnaire reflects students' use of ECE devices in classroom teaching practices. Three hundred fifteen students (34.6%) did not agree that their lessons would still run smoothly if they did not use ECE devices when teaching. The use of ECE devices as APE in student teaching practice classes is felt to impact learning outcomes. Most students who use ECE devices (52.4%) strongly agree that students in their class will more easily understand learning themes if they use ECE devices. Also, 60.1% of students strongly agreed that using ECE devices made students more enthusiastic (see Figure 3).

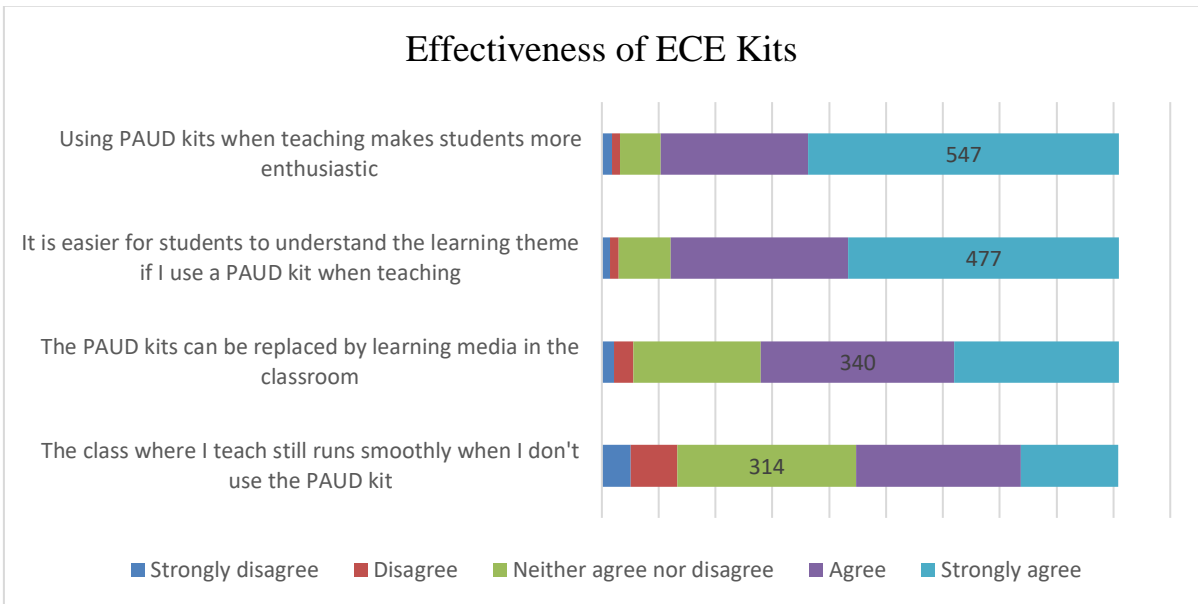


Figure 3. Effectiveness of ECE Kits

Initial observations of ECE kits have been carried out by several parties, starting from students' acceptance of the devices and their efficacy from both tutor and student perspectives. Even though the method of distributing ECE Kits is quite good, 30% of teachers and children still need ECE Kits. In terms of effectiveness, the instructor stated that the ECE Kits were still quite relevant to what is taught in ECE classes today, but

several educational game tools could be improved. Research has shown the adoption of ECE Kits in 2023 from the perspective of students as users of ECE kits, based on the problems that have been given. What is shown in Figure 4 are the ECE kits that have been used by ECE teacher students.

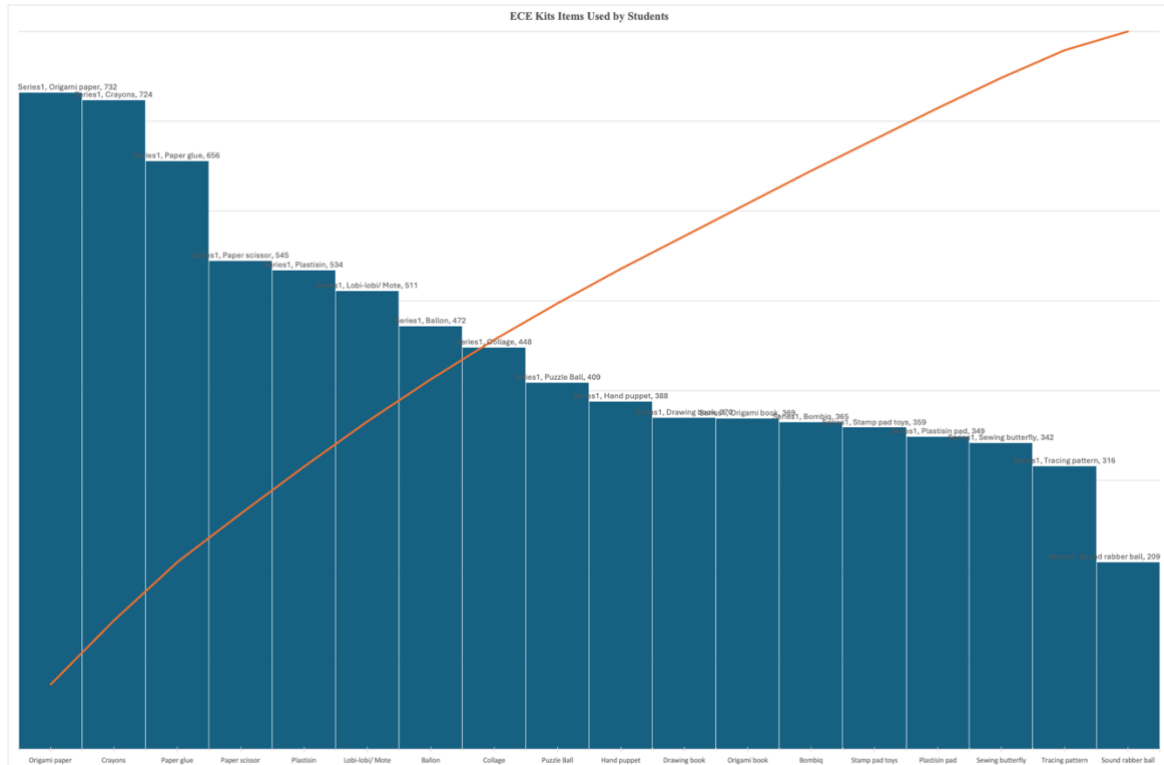


Figure 4. ECE Kits Items Used by Students

3.2 Discussion

The lack of students using ECE kits when taking tutorials indicates that these ECE kits are inappropriate for use (Doliente et al., 2023). They still depend a lot on direction and instructions from tutors. Unfortunately, ECE-UT tutors do not direct students enough about using the ECE kit to complete tutorial assignments. This may have happened because the tutor had not received technical guidance regarding using the ECE kit. Instructions for using the ECE kit are only in the UT catalog, while tutors still need to get the catalog in printed versions even though they can access it online. The policy of being able to access the online catalog is carried out to ensure the freshness of various academic policies for each study program through curriculum reviews and government regulations (Vitásková, 2019), including in the ECE-UT study program. Efforts that the ECE-UT study program has made include reminding tutors about using this ECE kit during refresher events, which are held at the beginning of each semester (Sari et al., 2019). This aligns with (Kulsum, 2021; Nurkanti et al., 2018), who state that using learning media can make learning material more transparent, engaging, interactive, and efficient and improve learning outcomes. Learning media can also change the teacher's role positively and more usefully (Helgetun & Decuypere, 2023).

Based on Figure 3, ECE kits are helpful for students to carry out teaching practices in their classrooms. Appropriate learning media helps students learn (Permatahati & Wangid, 2019; Wafi & Safri, 2023). However, as many as 340 students (37.3%) agreed that ECE devices could be replaced with learning media in the class where they taught. Because in most ECE institutions, educational teaching aids (ETA) are available for daily learning (Pakhomova et al., 2020). ETA in the classroom can complement the ECE equipment that students bring (Beale, 2020; Hartwig & Dunlosky, 2017). Adequate ETA will enliven the learning atmosphere in the classroom, and its use will also be adjusted to meet the learning objectives (Dwi, 2021; Hasanah, 2019).

Meanwhile, more than half of students stated that they became more enthusiastic about learning by using the ECE kit, unlike several studies that state that the use of learning media can increase learning motivation (Rosalianisa et al., 2023; Urfiyati, 2020). Students' motivation to participate in learning can be seen from the children's enthusiasm for participating in learning. The following are items in ECE devices that are often used in implementing classroom learning.

4 CONCLUSION

The ECE Kit has been widely implemented since 2009 and helps ECE-UT students complete practical courses. The use of ECE devices can enliven the learning atmosphere in the classroom where students practice teaching. Students in teaching classes are motivated and enthusiastic about participating in learning with the APE in the ECE package. Future studies regarding ECE kits could explore the relationship or impact of their use on learning achievement in practical courses.

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