

USING THE NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE TO IDENTIFY LEARNING ACTIVITIES WITH THE APPLICATION OF MALAY TRADITIONAL CHILDREN SONG IN ENHANCING CREATIVE IMAGINATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Azli bin Ariffin¹, Saedah Siraj², Abdul Talib Mohamed Hashim³, Noor Amy Afiza Mohd Yusof⁴

¹Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia

²Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

³Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia

⁴Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

* For correspondence; Tel. + (60) 15 4879 7116, Email: azli@fpm.upsi.edu.my

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study is to identify consensus by experts on appropriate activities to enhance the development of preschool children's creative imagination by using the Malay children traditional song. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' conceptions on imagination in creative development and their beliefs about the best way to promote imagination in the classroom, the nominal group technique (NGT) was used to structure each focus group meeting. The finding shows a list of activities that have been sorted according to ranking as determined by the experts. All the experts also believe that the list of activities can boost the child's creative imagination because such activity has the characteristics that suit well with children.*

Keywords: Creative imagination, Malay traditional children song, Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

1. INTRODUCTION

Creativity building among children concerns on two elements that need to be addressed, namely imagination and expression. According to Susan, the imagination of a child at an early stage is at a very high level [1]. The child must be given ample opportunity and enough space for their imagination to take place in order for them to think creatively. According to Egan, his study emphasized that imagination is a need to ensure that we think and be creative constantly in our modern society [2]. Meantime, art allows us to keep on imagining [3]. He also affirms that art:

Allows individuals to put their place in the skin of another; to experience reality and culture of others; to sit in another space; to transport themselves across time, space, an era in history, and context; and to see the world from a different point. [3]

Imaginative activities are involved in the creative process because creative ideas are generated through imaginative ability. The ability to imagine is an essential prerequisite to publish and translate creative ideas [4]. The ability to imagine is within every individual and it can be performed any time and in any situation regardless of age and background level. Nevertheless, to be a creative person, the ability to imagine is one of the most important factors of being a human. Imagination can be triggered using words to describe or illustrate certain abstract, view the conflict events or occurrences, reverse hypothetical events, and using alternative thinking to something that has been considered [5]. Critical thinking can permeate all aspects and beyond these aspects of critical thinking is the real imagination activator. Imagination is usually associated with the allegation that fantasy practices as something that does not exist. But imagination in actual is the basis for any creative activity and it is an important component in every aspect of human life.

Built imaginations are often based on material obtained from reality through one's environment and experience. Moreover, this factor is very important that influence one's imaginative ability. In addition, imagination also plays an important role in human action and development. Every human experience

is translated through imagination because it is through imagination that human can conceive something that cannot be seen, describing information obtained through stories of others and describing something that is experienced by other people. The relationship between imagination and experience are closely intertwined and constantly influence each other. Apart from experience, imagination can also be influenced by one's emotions. Each feeling and emotions require different forms of imagination. This is because each feeling and emotions that are seen and experienced will produce different imagination [6]. In one particular situation, emotions may affect imagination; nevertheless, imagination may also affect emotions. Schirmacher explains that creativity is dependent on one's environment [5]. Each creator includes those brilliant inventors who are the product of their time and environment. Studies show that a decrease in the level of a child's imagination is caused by the environment and culture of the child rather than caused by the natural process [7]. Children should be exposed to different forms of experience so that they have the opportunity to play with fantasy in order to encourage them to imagine.

Music is seen as one of the tools that contribute to the children holistic development which includes the intellectual, emotional, physical, social and aesthetic developments. This is because the musical activity is an integral part of their daily activities such as singing, moving, dancing, and playing musical instruments and the sounds that they produced on their own. Gadsden affirms that arts allow us to imagine and allows individuals to put themselves in the experience, situation and environment that transcend different time, ages and contexts in viewing the world through different perspectives [3].

According to the philosophy of contemporary music pedagogy, music concepts such as melody and rhythm are good teaching materials using the traditional music of the local culture. Zoltan Kodaly who is an educator of Hungary suggested that the use of traditional music when teaching kids in school because traditional music is considered to be the children's "musical mother tongue" [8]. Traditional music can evoke a sense of belonging to the singer and the listener to

something bigger than themselves, such as the family and society [9, 10]. As most of the traditional music is based on environmental themes such as animal sounds that surround them, it could support better children's development in general. Traditional music also allows the child to remember, absorb and react faster in a manner that is distinctive and creative in style. According to Kodaly, before one is able to understand the music of other countries, it is necessary to first understand the music of his country [8].

Thus, in the process of creating an innovative society that is viable in a challenging environment which further leads to the well-being of society and country, such vigorous effort should be carried out in a prudent and systematic manner as well as going through the appropriate process. The endeavor aims to generate individuals with innovative ability whereby characters of a creative innovator must exist among individuals and in order to nurture creative individuals, there should be the ability to imagine.

This study is mainly to identify consensus by experts on appropriate activities to enhance the development of preschool children's creative imagination through the use of the Malay children traditional song. The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Explore related activities to improve preschool children's imagination through Malay traditional children song.
2. Identify related activities to improve preschool children's imagination through Malay traditional children song based on experts opinion.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This exploratory study uses a qualitative method to provide a further understanding of the area being investigated. The use of the qualitative method is appropriate for this study because it is an attempt to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective rather than the researcher's. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' conceptions on imagination in creative development and their beliefs about the best way to promote imagination in the classroom, the nominal group technique (NGT) was used to structure each focus group meeting [11]. NGT is a strategic and effective means of harnessing social facilitation processes so that group productivity on a given task is optimized [12]. Prior to an NGT meeting, it is important to understand the informational needs to be addressed along with this procedure. Once the objectives are well understood, the focus should be given on structuring questions posed to the group because wordings and grammatical structure of the questions will affect the levels of abstraction, breadth, and depth of the elicited responses. According to Delbecq et al., [11] broadly stated or unfocused NGT questions are likely to elicit a variety of responses from respondents who have had varied experiences. Questions should be framed so that participants can generate information that sufficiently conveys their understanding of the issue under study.

3. NGT IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

The NGT has been used in educational settings to investigate a wide range of topics, including characteristics of expert associate teachers [13], homework communication strategies in remedial education [14], primary teachers' beliefs about

families' competence to contribute knowledge to their child's education [15], evaluation of one-to-one teaching in general practice [16], selecting topics for a BSN leadership course for Registered Nurses (RNs) [17] and occupational health nurses' perceptions of their education and training needs for the "new public health agenda" [18].

4. SAMPLING

The samples involved in this phase are known as homogeneity. Homogeneous samples have similarities in experience, culture, and field of work [19]. Thus, the sampling process in this phase is according to similar attributions exist in experts related to the discussion topic of this study [20]. This type of sample is applied purposely to elude domination by certain parties influenced by their greatly distinct background and knowledge factors.

Accordingly, selection of the right experts is vital to the success of this study since the outcomes are based on their opinions and viewpoints [21-22]. Dalkey & Helmer [23] defines expert as individual with knowledge in certain fields; meanwhile Adler & Ziglio [24] emphasize the selection of experts must be based on these four expertise prerequisites: i) knowledge and experience pertaining to the issues being studied; ii) capability and willingness to participate; iii) having ample and sufficient time to participate; and iv) effective communication skill.

Based on the criteria mentioned, the experts were selected as follows:

1. Experts are required to possess at least a diploma in the field of curriculum, pre-school and music education with minimum 10 years of teaching experience in the respective fields.
2. Experts must be knowledgeable on curriculum and its implementation.
3. Experts in the respective fields must be willing and interested in this study; and
4. Experts must be able to communicate and interact in the aligned contexts and settings.

Besides, the number of experts involved in this study is a crucial issue and needs to be taken seriously. Hogarth asserts how factors such as group size and panel expertise may affect the validity of the outcomes [25]. Armstrong states that the group of panel need to be between 5 to 20 people [26]. According to Pastrana et al. the ideal size of a group is normally between 6 to 12 people [27]. Boje and Murnighan, however, argue there are no significant differences in the result's effectiveness for the group with members of 3, 7 or 11 people [28]. Based on the probability formula, $n(n-1)$, n as the number of participants, the probability of communication among the participant will greatly increase along with the increase in the number of participants. For instance, if there are six (6) members in the panel group, thus the probability of communication among them is $6(6-1) = 30$. However, with the addition of four (4) members in the same group, the probability of communication will fluctuate to $10(10-1) = 90$. This situation will require the members to discuss more elements coming out from each of them and causing the members to dissipate faster. Consequently, it will turn down the individual participation and involvement as well as their motivation to carry on with the discussion. In spite of that,

the number of experts involved in the NGT session of this study is eleven (11) consisting of variable expertise related to the study. The selected number is targeted to comply with the study's requirements which is to implicate experts from the diverse type of expertise to ensure the high validity of the results. The profile of the experts is shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: NGT Experts Profile

POSITION	EXPERTISE FIELD	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
Associate Professor	Children Psychological Development	20
Associate Professor	Music Education	15
Senior Lecturer	Curriculum Development	15
Senior Lecturer	Children Early Education	10
Senior Lecturer	Children Early Education	12
Lecturer	Curriculum Development	15
Lecturer	Music Education	12
Lecturer	Curriculum Development	13
Teacher	Preschool	14
Teacher	Preschool	13
Teacher	Preschool	12

5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Nominal group technique (NGT) is a structured variation of a small-group discussion to reach consensus. NGT gathers information by asking individuals to respond to questions posed by a moderator, and later ask the participants to prioritize ideas or suggestions from all the group members. The process prevents the discussion from being dominated by a single member, encourages all group members to participate, and produces a result in a set of prioritized solutions or recommendations that represent the group's preferences.

NGT is a good method to gain group consensus, for example, when various people (program staff, stakeholders, community residents, etc.) are involved in constructing a logic model and the list of outputs for a specific component is too lengthy therefore the list has to be prioritized. In this case, the questions to be considered are: "Which of our outputs listed are the most important for easier goal achievement and easier measurement? Which of our outputs are less important that makes us difficult to achieve our goal and make it more difficult for us to measure?"

6. NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

A. Generating Ideas

The moderator presents questions or problem to the group in written form and reads the questions to the group. The moderator directs everyone to write ideas in brief phrases or

statements and asks them to work silently and independently. Each person silently generates ideas and writes them down.

B. Recording Ideas

Group members engage in a round-robin feedback session to concisely record each idea (without debate at this point). The moderator writes an idea from a group member on a flip chart that is visible to the entire group and proceeds to ask for another idea from the next group member, and the process continues. Repeat of ideas is unnecessary; however, if the group members feel that a particular idea provides different emphasis or variation, they are free to include the idea. The process is carried out until ideas of all the group members have been documented.

C. Discussing Ideas

Each recorded idea is later discussed to determine clarity and importance. For each idea, the moderator asks, "Are there any questions or comments that group members would like to make about the item?" This step provides an opportunity for members to express their understanding of the logic and the relative importance of the item. The creator of the idea need not feel obliged to clarify or explain the item; any member of the group can play that role.

D. Voting on Ideas

Individuals vote privately to prioritize the ideas. The votes are tallied to identify the ideas that are rated highest by the group as a whole. The moderator establishes what criteria are used to prioritize the ideas.

7. FINDINGS

Findings obtained from 11 experts involved throughout the NGT process. This process uses one set of seven Likert scale questionnaire that consists of a list of 16 activities sorted from the previous literature review and need analysis. Table 2 shows the list of sorted activities as follows.

TABLE 2: Proposed Activity List

PROPOSED ACTIVITY LIST
Playing the Malay traditional children song to children
Describing the Malay traditional children song being played
Having a question and answer session (Q&A) with the children about Malay traditional children song
Showing pictures related to Malay traditional children song
Showing materials related to Malay traditional children song
Making motion related to Malay traditional children song
Talking about existing experience related to Malay traditional children song
Making movement on the existing experience related to Malay traditional children song
Singing while listening to Malay traditional children song
Playing a role based on Malay traditional children song
Singing Malay traditional children song independently
Exploring environment that has to do with Malay traditional children song
Creating a scrapbook on Malay traditional children song

Forming objects (using dough / Lego/block / sand/puzzle) based on the Malay traditional children song
 Creating visual art activities (origami / collage / painting / shaping / coloring / drawing / painting / weaving / diorama etc.) based on Malay traditional children song
 Creating a play/pantomime based on Malay traditional children song

The experts need to choose their agreement level on all of the activities listed. Next, the total agreement level by the experts for each activity is calculated to determine the activity ranking that needs to be carried out first. The total approval is as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Total Of Expert's Voting And Ranking

PROPOSED ACTIVITY LIST	TOTAL	RANKING
Playing the Malay traditional children song to children	74	6
Describing the Malay traditional children song being played	72	14
Having a question and answer session (Q&A) with the children about Malay traditional children song	76	1
Showing pictures related to Malay traditional children song	74	7
Showing materials related to Malay traditional children song	75	2
Making motion related to Malay traditional children song	75	3
Talking about existing experience related to Malay traditional children song	74	8
Making movement on the existing experience related to Malay traditional children song	74	9
Singing while listening to Malay traditional children song	74	10
Playing a role based on Malay traditional children song	75	4
Singing Malay traditional children song independently	75	5
Exploring environment that has to do with Malay traditional children song	72	15
Creating a scrapbook on Malay traditional children song	71	16
Forming objects (using dough / Lego / block / sand/puzzle) based on the Malay traditional children song	74	11
Creating visual art activities (origami / collage / painting / shaping / coloring / drawing / painting / weaving / diorama etc.) based on Malay traditional children song	73	12
Creating a play/pantomime	73	13

based on Malay traditional children song

Table 3 shows a list of activities that have been sorted according to ranking as determined by the experts.

TABLE 4: List Of Activities After The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) Process

LIST OF ACTIVITIES AFTER THE NGT PROCESS

Having a question and answer session (Q&A) with the children about Malay traditional children song
 Showing materials related to Malay traditional children song
 Making motion related to Malay traditional children song
 Playing a role based on Malay traditional children song
 Singing Malay traditional children song independently
 Singing Malay traditional children song to children
 Showing pictures related to Malay traditional children song
 Talking about existing experience related to Malay traditional children song
 Making movement on the existing experience related to Malay traditional children song
 Singing while playing the percussion
 Forming objects (using dough / Lego/ block / sand/puzzle) based on the Malay traditional children song
 Creating visual art activities (origami / collage / painting / shaping / coloring / drawing / painting / weaving / diorama etc.) based on Malay traditional children song
 Creating a play/pantomime based on Malay traditional children song
 Describing the Malay traditional children song being played
 Exploring environment that has to do with Malay traditional children song
 Creating a scrapbook on Malay traditional children song

8. CONCLUSION

Application of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) in Malaysia's academic field is still uncommon, despite its proven practicality in promptly bringing together experts' ideas and opinions. This method of leveraging experts to achieve consensus among them has long been used especially in relation to brand-new and breakthrough findings. For specific study related to children creative imagination enhancing is hard to be found, NGT as one of the technique to attain experts' opinions is applied. With relevant experts in the field of the study congregated, the concurrence of idea and opinions generated during NGT session is highly valued as main information in the study.

Findings from the experts' opinions show that the application of Malay traditional children song as a tool for creative imagination enhancement for children is highly suitable. Through the songs, the experts suggested various activities. Owing to create an innovative society that could survive in a challenging environment that further lead to the well-being of society and country, effort should be carried out in a prudent and systematic manner as well as going through the appropriate process. This is because, in order to produce individuals who are able to innovate, characters of a creative

innovator must exist among individuals and to create a creative individual, there should be the ability to imagine.

It is reasonable to say that imagination development is indeed valuable for our education system and that abundance of benefits for the children can be gained if it is implemented effectively. Teachers are in a position to either enhance or inhibit children's imagination development, thus they should make an effort to promote imagination in the classroom. Other relevant authorities like the Ministry of Education, the Curriculum department and teacher training institutions also play an important role to ensure that the aim of promoting children's creativity through the power of imagination could be realized. The development of children's imagination needs to be given higher priority in the education agenda to achieve a holistic and more meaningful growth for our children.

9. REFERENCE

- [1] Susan, W. (2010). *Understanding Creativity in Early Childhood*. London: Sage.
- [2] Egan, K. (1999). *Children's minds, talking rabbits and clockwork oranges: Essays on education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- [3] Gadsden, V.L. (2008). The arts and education: Knowledge generation, pedagogy, and the discourse of learning. *Review of Research in Education*, 32, 29-61.
- [4] Azhar Abd. Hamid (2004). *Kreativiti: Konsep Teori & Praktis*: UTM. Johor D.T.
- [5] Schirrmacher, R. (2002). *Art and creative development for young children*. Albany, New York: Delmar Thomson Learning.
- [6] Ribot, T. (1906). *Essay on the creative imagination*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truber.
- [7] Torrance, E. P. (1974). *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking: Norms-technical manual*. Bensenville, IL: Scholastic Testing Service. (Originally published by Personnel Press, 1996).
- [8] Choksy, L. (1988). *The Kodály method: Comprehensive music education from infant*.
- [9] Davis, R. (2005). *Music education and cultural identity*. Educational Philosophy
- [10] Kvideland, R. (1989). Traditional ballads and traditional song. In R. Kvideland, H. K. Sehmsdorf, & E.
- [11] Delbecq, A. L., Van de Ven, A. H., & Gustafson, D. H. (1975). *Group techniques for program planning: A guide to nominal group and delphi processes*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- [12] Forsyth, D. R. (1990). *Group dynamics* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA:Brooks/Cole.
- [13] Boudreau, P (2000). L'expertise d'un enseignant associe, *McGill Journal of Education* 35(1), 53-70. [English abstract only]
- [14] Nelson, JS, Jayanthi, M, Brittain, CS, Epstein, MH & Bursuck, WD (2002). Using the Nominal Group Technique for homework communication decisions, *Remedial and Special Education*, 23(6), 379-386.
- [15] Moseman, CM (2003). Primary Teachers Beliefs about Family Competence to Influence Classroom Practices, *Early Education and Development* 14(2), 125-153.
- [16] Duggan, S & Cox, J (1999). Evaluating one-to-one teaching in general practice, *Medical Teacher* 21(1), 61-66.
- [17] Waddell, DL & Stephens, S (2000). Use of learning contracts in a RN-to-BSN leadership course, *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* 31(4), 179-184.
- [18] Bamford, M & Warder, J (2001). Occupational health nurses' perceptions of their education and training needs to meet the new public health agenda using the nominal group technique, *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 20(4), 314-25.
- [19] Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- [20] Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2010). Focus group interviewing. *Handbook of practical program evaluation. 3rd edition. San Francisco (CA): Jossey-Bass*.
- [21] Skulmoski, G. J., Hartman, F. T. & Krahn, J. (2007). The Delphi method for graduate research. *Journal of information technology education*, 6, 1.
- [22] Parente, R. J., Hiob, T. N., Silver, R. A., Jenkins, C., Poe, M. P. & Mullins, R. J. (2005). The Delphi method, impeachment and terrorism: accuracies of short-range forecasts for volatile world events. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 72(4), 401-411.
- [23] Dalkey, N. & Helmer, O. (1963). An experimental application of the Delphi method to the use of experts. *Management Science* 9:4, 58-67.
- [24] Adler, M. & Ziglio, E. (1996). *Gazing into the oracle*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: Bristol, PA.
- [25] Hogarth, R. M. (1978), "A note on aggregating opinions," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 21, 40-46.
- [26] Armstrong, J. S. (1985), *Long Range Forecasting: From Crystal Ball to Computer*, 2nd ed., New York: Wiley. (Full text at <http://hops.wharton.upenn.edu/forecast>.)
- [27] Pastrana T, Radbruch L, Nauck F et al. Outcome indicators in palliative care—how to assess quality and success. *Focus group and nominal group technique in Germany. Supportive Care in Cancer* 2010; 18: 859–868.
- [28] Boje, D. M. & J. K. Murnighan (1982), "Group confidence pressure in iterative decisions," *Management Science*, 28, 1187-1196