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**Published Date:** 12/31/2018

**Page:**255-268

**Vol 6 No 12 2018**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.Vol6.Iss12.1275>

# **Developing Non-Fiction Book on Animal Characteristics to Stimulate Cognitive Development of Early Childhood**

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## **Abstract**

*Early childhood cognitive development can be performed by developing the listening skill which begins with capturing information and knowledge. This research is intended to develop a non-fiction book about animal characteristics that can stimulate early childhood cognitive development. The development model used was Dick & Carey model that has been modified into seven steps. The data collection instruments used were questionnaires of experts, peer responses as well as observations and interviews on children. The data was analyzed by using Likert and Rating Scale. Research data was obtained from material experts, product design experts, peers responses and experiments on children. The results of the research indicate that non-fiction books about animal characteristics are included in criteria that are very feasible to be used to stimulate early childhood cognitive development.*

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## **Introduction**

Early childhood includes the range from newborn until they age of 6 years old. At this age, children's character and personality building are determined (Sujiono, 2009:7). Early childhood age period is the best moment to educate children since children from age 0 to 6 years old, have more rapid and fundamental growth and development in their early years of life. Montessori (in Hainstock, 1999:10-11) stated that this period is a sensitive period and children are particularly receptive to the stimulus from their environment during this period. Early childhood are sensitive in receiving various efforts to develop all of their potential (Saputra and Rudyanto, 2005:2). Children are ready to perform various activities in order to understand and master their environment and they are receptive to various stimulus and education efforts from the environment, both intentionally and unintentionally. So, it can be said that this period is the golden age. The quality of children development in the future is determined by stimulus obtained early on, because 80% of brain growth occurs at that time.

According to Walujo (2017: 1), the nature of early childhood education is education that aims to facilitate children growth and development as a whole, covering all aspects of children personality. Early childhood is a period to lay first foundation in developing the development aspects. Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 on Early Childhood Education Standards, there is a

standard of children development achievement consisting of 6 development aspects including religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and art. Cognitive development is closely related to the quality of human life. The scopes of cognitive development are attention, memory, creativity, language as well as reasoning, namely the process of finding out facts. Children are interested in various things in their environment, such as people, plants, and animals. When a child asks and seeks for answer to the question, the child will think and reason. Yusuf (2005: 10) stated that the thinking and reasoning skills are called the cognitive skill. Regarding the importance of cognitive development, children need to be stimulated so that their brain will always develop along with the emergence of curiosity. In stimulating for developing cognitive aspects, support from their family and school is required. According to the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory, family and school environments are part of micro-system environment that determines children development, in which family has a greater influence in determining children cognitive development. This supports previous findings which stated that both family and school environments are the key determinants of early childhood cognitive development (Andrade et al., 2005; Camargo – Figuera, 2014). The importance of family environment's influence on children cognitive development was also proved by the results of research by Latifah, et al. (2016) which stated that children cognitive development can be improved by parents through establishing closeness or safe relationship during parenting. In addition to family and school environment's influence, understanding of the development methods related to this matter is also required.

In the previous research, to stimulate early childhood cognitive development, developing various models of games and fiction book in form of fairy tales were performed. Research analyzing on non-fiction book use to stimulate early childhood cognitive development has not much conducted yet. In accordance with Curriculum of Early Childhood Education of 2013 applying scientific approach, so researchers need to develop non-fiction book that can stimulate early childhood cognitive development.

This research aimsto develop a non-fiction book about animal characteristics having specific product specifications which are interesting and can be owned by parents or teachers to be used as a guide book to gain knowledge in teaching about "animal". For parents, this book can be used as an instrument to establish closeness with their children by reading it for them. By listening to stories in the form of fact about animal characteristics, children will try to understand the meaning of the sentences, then they will be motivated to know more about animal characteristics that they do not know before. Children will actively ask questions and consequently their thinking and reasoning skills will be stimulated and developed.

## **Research Methods**

This research was a development research applying Research and Development (R & D) approach by Dick and Carey to generate a product which feasibility has been tested and creates impact to early childhood cognitive development. The product generated was a non-fiction book about animal characteristics. In this development, researchers used seven steps of development that has been modified from Dick and Carey Model: (1) Objectives identification. (2) Needs Analysis. (3) Initial behavior identification. (4) Performance objectives formulation. (5) Initial product development. (6) Validation. (7) Teaching development.

The impact of book utilization on early childhood cognitive development were analyzed using data collection instruments in the form of interview, observation, and questionnaire sheets. Interview and observation sheets were used to seek information and obtain data about the impact of non-fiction book about animal characteristics’ utilization on children cognitive development in the form of behavioral response. Questionnaire sheets were used to obtain data from peers’ responses to the non-fiction book about animal characteristics’ utilization on early childhood cognitive development, as well as to obtain feasibility data from the validation results of two experts, namely material/content expert validator and book design expert validator. The data was analyzed using Likert and Rating Scale. The overall product feasibility level was analyzed by percentage technique and the results were converted by using assessment criteria adapted from Akbar and Sriwiyana (2011: 147).

The population in this research was 5 – 6 years old children of B Group at Al Ikhlas Islamic Kindergarten TenggilisMejoyo Surabaya, which served as a place to conduct learning activities. Personal experiment was conducted on 3 children with above-average intelligence. Group experiment was conducted on 8 children with above-average intelligence. Field experiment was conducted on 15 children with above-average intelligence.

**Table 1. Feasibility Research Instrument of Non-fiction Book about Animal Characteristics**

Aspects	Indicators	Description
Quality of learning material	Conformity with learning program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformity with curriculum</li> <li>• Conformity with indicators</li> <li>• Conformity with learning objectives</li> <li>• Conformity with expected competence</li> <li>• Conformity with theme</li> <li>• Breadth of scope</li> <li>• Coherence</li> </ul>
	Conformity with children development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformity with achievement level of children development</li> <li>• Conformity with children characteristics</li> <li>• Stimulating children cognitive development</li> <li>• Material presented is logical and easy to be understood</li> <li>• Suitability between material logo and image</li> </ul>

Quality of Simplicity design of non-fiction textbook about animal characteristics		Associated with the use of letters, words, and images that are suitable with children characteristics
	Integration	Associated with connections among sections so that its overall look is integrated, in terms of words and images
	Emphasis	Associated with emphasizing that can strengthen the children attention
	Balance	Associated with symmetrical and asymmetric composition
	Shape	Associated with activities of designing textbook that do not violate the determined rules
	Color	Associated with the important role of color that may affect children interest
	Quality	Associated with overall attraction of the book

Feasibility measurement of the non-fiction book obtained from validation results of material experts, design experts, and peers' responses were measured using Likert scale with the following provisions:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

**Table 2. Observation Instruments Of The Impact Of Non-Fiction Book About Animal Characteristics On Early Childhood Cognitive Development**

Variable	Sub-Variable	Indicators
Cognitive Development	1. Learning and Solving Problem	1. Showing exploratory and investigating activities (always curious). 2. Solving simple problems in daily life in a flexible way. 3. Applying knowledge or experience in new context.

		4. Showing creative attitude in solving problems (extraordinary ideas)
2. Thinking Logically		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognizing differences based on size</li> <li>2. Showing initiative in selecting a game theme</li> <li>3. Able to plan activities to be performed</li> <li>4. Recognizing cause and effect</li> <li>5. Able to classify animals based on breeding method, ecosystem, food, etc.</li> <li>6. Able to classify animals into groups of similar animal</li> <li>7. Able to sort animals by size from the smallest to the largest or vice versa</li> </ol>
3. Thinking Symbolically		1. Able to present various animals in the form of pictures and writing

The utilization of non-fiction book about animal characteristics was implemented in various activities according to the instrument to see its impact on stimulation of children cognitive development.

**Table 3. Assessment Instruments Of The Impact Of Non-Fiction Book About Animal Characteristics On Early Childhood Cognitive Development**

Indicators	Activities	Description	Score
1. Showing exploratory and investigating activities	1. Always curious about animal characteristics (asking actively)	The child had no desire to know the animal characteristics	1
		The child had a little curiosity on animal characteristics	2
		The child had curiosity on animal characteristics	3
		The child had curiosity on animal characteristics and asked actively	4
2. Solving simple problems in daily live	2. Explaining the characteristics of their pet	The child had no desire to explain the characteristics of his/her pet	1
		The child could explain the characteristics of his/her pet with complete assistance	2

		The child could explain the characteristics of his/her pet with little assistance	3
		The child could explain the characteristics of his/her pet independently	4
3.Applying knowledge or experience in new context.	3. Applying the knowledge in determining good and bad deeds (reading comprehension)	The child had not been able to determine good and bad deeds	1
		The child had not been able to determine good and bad deeds even with guidance	2
		The child had not been able to determine good and bad deeds even with a little guidance	3
		The child could determine good and bad deeds independently	4
4.Showing creative attitude in solving problems	4.Conveying opinion that is different from friends'	The child had no desire to convey different opinion	1
		The child tried to be active in conveying opinion that was different even with complete guidance	2
		The child tried to be active in conveying opinion that was different even with little guidance	3
		The child was very active conveying opinion that was different	4
5.Introducing differences based on size	5.Comparing large animal to small animal	The child had not been able to compare animal size even with guidance	1
		The child had not been able to compare animal size with guidance	2
		The child had not been able to compare animal size with little guidance	3
		The child could compare animal size independently	4

6.Showing initiative in selecting game theme	6.Pretending to be an animal	The child had no idea in pretending to be an animal	1
		The child know how to pretend to be an animal but he/she was not actively involved in the game	2
		The child know how to pretend to be animal but he/she was involved a little in the game	3
		The child know how to pretend to be an animal and he/she was very active as well as dominating the game	4
7.Able to plan activities to be performed	7.Sequencing the steps in animal feeding (enthusiastic in performing instructions)	The child had not been able to sequence the steps of animal feeding even with complete guidance	1
		The child had not been able to sequence the steps of animal feeding with complete guidance	2
		The child had not been able to sequence the steps of animal feeding with little guidance	3
		The child could sequence the steps of animal feeding independently	4
8.Recognizing cause and effect	8.Mentioning the cause and effect of several animalcharacter istics they know	The child had not been able to mention cause and effect of several animalcharacteristicseven with guidance	1
		The child had not been able to mention cause and effect of several animalcharacteristics with complete guidance	2
		The child could mention cause and effect of several animalcharacteristics with little guidance	3



		The child could mention cause and effect of several animal characteristics independently	4
9. Able to classify animal based on the way it moves	9. Categorizing flying animal	The child had not been able to categorize flying animal even with complete guidance	1
		The child could categorize flying animal with complete guidance	2
		The child could categorize flying animal with little guidance	3
		The child could categorize flying animal independently	4
10. Able to classify animal into groups of similar animal	10. Classifying animal that are mammals	The child had not been able to categorize animal that are mammals even with complete guidance	1
		The child could categorize animal that are mammals even with complete guidance	2
		The child had not been able to categorize animal that are mammals with little guidance	3
		The child could categorize animal that are mammals independently	4
11. Able to sort animal based on their size	11. Sorting animal from the smallest to the largest or vice versa	The child had not been able to sort animal size even with complete guidance	1
		The child could sort animal size even with complete guidance	2
		The child could sort animal size with little guidance	3
		The child could sort animal size independently	4
12. Able to present various animal in the form of	12. Explaining animal names as well as their characteristics	The child had not been able to explain animal names as well as their characteristic even with guidance	1

pictures and writing	according to their ability (telling what had been known)	The child could explain animals names as well as their characteristics with little guidance	2
		The child could explain animals names as well as their characteristics independently	3
		The child could explain animals names as well as their characteristics with no guidance and correctly	4

Activities assessment to observe the influence of the non-fiction book about animal characteristics on cognitive development stimulation was measured by using rating scale (Sugiono, 2015:171) as follows:

- 4 points : if the child is able to perform it properly beyond the expected skill (BSB)
- 3 points : if the child is able to perform it properly without assistance (BSB)
- 2 points : If the child is able to perform it with assistance (MB)
- 1 point: if the child is not able to perform it even with assistance (BB)

## Research Results

The product generated is in the form of non-fiction book development about animal characteristics which has the following specifications: 1) the book is a hardcover book, so it is not easily damaged, 2) it contains various animal characteristics classified as mammals, insects, and reptiles, 3) it has a colorful design and attractive images, 4) pages are printed using 190 grams art paper sized A3 plus, 5) sentences for the children part are in the form of rhyme 6) at the bottom of the page, there is a more detailed note for parents or teachers, 7) it consists of 90 pages.

The feasibility test of non-fiction book about animal characteristics was performed by material experts, design experts, and peers analysis. The data analysis used Likert Scale.

Overall, measurement of feasibility and influence of a non-fiction book about animal characteristics on early childhood cognitive development stimulation was measured using modified formula from Akbar & Sriwiyana (2011).

The feasibility level of non-fiction book about animal characteristics on the stimulation of early childhood cognitive development is converted using criteria as listed in table 4.

**Table 4. Feasibility Criteria Of Non-Fiction Book About Animal Characteristics**

Criteria	Level of Validity / Feasibility
86% - 100%	Very feasible (can be used without revision)
70% - 85%	Fairly feasible (can be used with revisions)
60% - 69%	Infeasible (cannot be used)
0% - 59%	Very infeasible

(source: adapted from Akbar & Sriwiyana, 2011: 147)

**Table 5. Feasibility Validation Results Of Non-Fiction Book About Animalcharacteristics To Stimulate Early Childhood Cognitive Development**

Assessment Aspects	Material Experts	Design Experts	Peers	Average	Criteria
Conformity with learning program	89.8%	90.0%	94.0%	91.3%	Very feasible
Conformity with children development	94.2%	86.7%	88.6%	89.8%	Very feasible
Design	92.0%	96.0%	90.0%	92.7%	Very feasible
Average	92.0%	90.9%	90.8%	91.3%	Very feasible

From the validation of material experts, product design experts, and peers’ responses on non-fiction book about animalcharacteristics, results obtained are as follows: 1) the material is suitable with the intended learning program objectives, 2) the language and sentences used are suitable with children’s development so they can be understood easily, 3) the entire pictures, colors, shapes and book design are very interesting. Therefore, it can be concluded that this non-fiction book about animalcharacteristics is very feasible to be used to stimulate early childhood cognitive development.

Experiment onthe impact of non-fiction book about animal characteristics on stimulation of cognitive development was conducted by performing various activities that can stimulate early childhood cognitive development in accordance with the standard of children development achievement level contained in the Ministerial Regulation of National Education No. 137 of 2014.In one day, in accordance with the determined learning hours, children were asked to perform activities according to the determined indicators in the daily lesson plan which cover six development aspects, namely development of religious and moral, social emotional, language, motor, art and cognitive. All activities performed are the implementation of non-fiction book about animalcharacteristics to stimulate early childhood cognitive development.

**Table 6. Experiment Results Of The Impact Of Non-Fiction Book About Animalcharacteristics On Stimulation Of Early Childhood Cognitive Development**

Indicators	Average				Criteria
	Individual experiment results	Group experiment results	Field experiment results	per indicator	
1	83.3%	84.4%	86.7%	84.8%	Fairly feasible

2	83.3%	81.3%	88.3%	84.3%	Fairly feasible
3	100%	100%	100%	100%	Very feasible
4	83.3%	84.4%	86.7%	84.8%	Fairly feasible
5	100%	100%	100%	100%	Very feasible
6	91.7%	84.4%	86.7%	87.6%	Very feasible
7	100%	93.8%	98.3%	97.4%	Very feasible
8	100%	84.4%	86.7%	90.4%	Very feasible
9	100%	100%	100%	100%	Very feasible
10	100%	100%	98.3%	99.4%	Very feasible
11	100%	100%	98.3%	99.4%	Very feasible
12	91.7%	84.4%	86.7%	87.6%	Very feasible
Average	94.4%	91.4%	93.0%		
Total Average				92.9%	Very feasible

From the individual, group, and field experiments, the results show that every activity performed is very feasible and affecting children cognitive development.

**Table 7. Analysis Results From The Validation Of Experts, Peers' Responses, Individual, Group, And Field Experiments**

Assessment	Result	Feasibility Level
Material Experts	92.0%	Very feasible
Product Design Experts	90.9%	Very feasible
Peers	90.8%	Very feasible
Personal experiment	94.4%	Very feasible
Group experiment	91.4%	Very feasible
Field experiment	93.0%	Very feasible
Average		92.1%
Very feasible		

From the overall analysis results, the average value obtained is 92.1%. If it is converted to the feasibility level criteria, then the non-fiction book about animal characteristics is at very feasible level to be used. It indicates that the overall non-fiction book about animal characteristics is very feasible to be used to stimulate early childhood cognitive development.

## Discussion

In previous studies, it was proven that children's verbal intelligence will be stimulated by listening to stories. Roointan and Mousavi (2014) stated that listening to stories will affect children's verbal intelligence including increment of vocabulary, information, calculation, and understanding. Verbal intelligence is in the form of children's ability in language. Children obtain a lot of words' meaning from the language used in their daily conversation. It may facilitate their mental growth process. According to Fauziddin (2014), listening to stories has a lot of advantages for children. In addition to stimulate verbal intelligent, the moral values contained in stories will be easily received rather than those in advices.

If the research results above proved that listening to stories can stimulate verbal intelligence, this time the researchers will prove that listening to stories can stimulate early childhood cognitive development. From the research results beginning with developing a non-fiction book about animal characteristics then implementing it in the learning activities, the result obtained proves that a non-fiction book about animal characteristics can stimulate early childhood cognitive development. The information contained in this book explains the characteristic of various animals as well as its cause and effect in detail and based on facts. Children are very interested in listening to it because what they are listening to match with what they ever known before. From the little they have been known, consequently the more and more they want to know. Reasoning and thinking skill will evolve along with great curiosity. By listening to information from the non-fiction book about animal characteristics, children will have perception on the matters they want to know, they may draw conclusion based on the obtained information. This occurs frequently, especially on children who have pet at home. With so much information obtained, the children can think logically, understand how to classify animals by the types, mention the causalities of some animal characteristics and apply their knowledge in their life. Children learn to experiment, explore, and investigate the surrounding environment, so that children are able to build a knowledge. In accordance with Jean Piaget's constructivism learning theory, knowledge will be actively constructed by children through perception and direct experience with their environment so that children will think realistically. Therefore, it can be said that by listening to stories, cognitive process occurs in children's brain. This is confirmed by several experts that one of the ways in developing early childhood cognitive is by improving their listening skill starting with capturing information. FathulMujib and NailurRahmawati (2012:128) stated that children who have a good listening skill will understand the meaning as well as make a reason of a matter. According to Ellis et.al. (1997) reading comprehension is a cognitive work involving a complex set of process that includes concept processing in the working memories, drawing conclusion, as well as schematizing the essence of a passage. The more detailed explanation was stated by Mayer. According to Mayer (1989), reading comprehension process requires the involvement of a lot of cognitive works, namely: (1) selecting information based on the needs, (2) establishing relationships between ideas, (3) establishing relationship between the information contained in a passage and the existing information. In Bloom's Taxonomy, it is said that in reading comprehension there is a cognitive work that gathers the explicit and implicit information from the text. In capturing explicit information, cognitive work occurs in the form of knowledge that consists of (1) process of voices and sentences identification, (2) remember and recall memories of the main thoughts, comparisons, causalities, certain characteristics and patterns. In addition, the cognitive work also occurs in the form of understanding, namely process of translating ideas

or information consisting of classifying, concluding, and combining ideas. In capturing implicit information, cognitive work takes part in the form of: (1) application, it is a process of drawing conclusion, (2) analysis, it is a process of predicting consequences, (3) synthesis, it is a process of interpreting language and responses, (4) evaluation, it is a process of making a judgment about the truth (Flood and Salus, 1984). The opinions of several experts above confirm the research results that listening to stories can stimulate children cognitive development, especially early childhood. The more specific the story they are listening to, the more detailed their knowledge of the matters in the story. Therefore, it can be said that the use of non-fiction book about animal characteristics is appropriate in stimulating early childhood cognitive development.

## **Conclusion and Implication**

The development of non-fiction book about animal characteristics which is the development of book with certain product specifications has been tested its feasibility in stimulating early childhood cognitive development. This book tells various interesting animal characteristics to be listened to. Children will be motivated to ask and know more about animal characteristics. By listening to non-fiction stories about animal characteristics, cognitive process will occur in children's brain, a process of understanding various animal characteristics involving various cognitive works, such as selecting information that is suitable with the conversation theme. In this case, the theme is animal characteristics. Children try to establish relation between one information and another, as well as connect information contained in the story with the knowledge they have before. Children become more sensitive and always curious about the existing matters in the environment. When children listen to non-fiction stories or stories in the form of factual information more often, their reasoning and thinking skills will improve. Thus, more non-fiction books with certain specifications to be told to children especially early childhood are required, so that children are accustomed to think logically in understanding information to stimulate their cognitive development. Non-fiction books with certain specifications can be developed as needed. The advancement of science and technology facilitates us in creating the source of knowledge as a source of learning, especially for early childhood.

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