

The Utilization of Human Mannequin Media in Teaching Sanitary Pad Application to Students with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract: This study aims to comprehensively describe the use of human doll (mannequin) media and the highly structured instructional strategies implemented by teachers in facilitating the learning activities related to wearing sanitary pads among eighth-grade female students with moderate intellectual disabilities at SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang, Indramayu Regency. This research employed a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive phenomenological method. Data were systematically collected through continuous participant observation, in-depth interviews with educators and parents, and document analysis, focusing sharply on the process of media utilization, the sequential stages of human doll integration, and the adaptive strategies applied by teachers in facilitating skill acquisition. The findings definitively indicate that human doll media were effectively used as concrete instructional aids to demonstrate the complex steps of wearing sanitary pads in a gradual, highly systematic, and repetitive manner.

Keywords: Human Doll Media, Instructional Strategies, Self-Care Learning, Moderate Intellectual Disability

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penggunaan media boneka manusia serta strategi pembelajaran yang diterapkan guru dalam kegiatan pembelajaran mengenakan pembalut pada peserta didik tunagrahita sedang kelas VIII di SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang Kabupaten Indramayu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, dengan fokus pada proses pemanfaatan media, tahapan penggunaan media boneka manusia, serta strategi guru dalam memfasilitasi pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media boneka manusia digunakan sebagai alat peraga konkret untuk mendemonstrasikan langkah-langkah mengenakan pembalut secara bertahap, sistematis, dan berulang.

Kata Kunci: Media Boneka Manusia, Strategi Pembelajaran, Pembelajaran Bina Diri, Tunagrahita Sedang

Introduction

Within the comprehensive curriculum of special education, one of the most critical aspects of self-care (bina diri) development that demands intensive, specialized attention is the process of personal hygiene management, particularly tasks that are deeply personal, anatomically specific, and highly contextualized in daily living. Children diagnosed with moderate intellectual disabilities generally exhibit profound developmental delays in adaptive self-care skills, encompassing foundational routines such as independent dressing, personal hygiene maintenance, and toileting. Consequently, these individuals categorically require an educational framework that is highly concrete, structurally step-by-step, and heavily visually oriented. Children with intellectual disabilities consistently demonstrate marked difficulties in acquiring complex self-care skills, including appropriate dressing, independent toileting, and intimate personal hygiene, thereby necessitating instructional paradigms that provide rigorous,

sequential, step-by-step guidance designed specifically to gradually reduce their long-term reliance on caregivers and foster genuine functional autonomy (Pesau et al., 2020).

However, in the daily reality of instructional practices within Special Education Schools (Sekolah Luar Biasa / SLB), the curriculum concerning self-care is frequently delivered through heavily verbal explanations or abstract two-dimensional imagery, lacking the crucial support of adequate, interactive instructional media. This pedagogical disconnect causes students with moderate intellectual disabilities—who inherently struggle with working memory and abstract auditory processing—to experience severe difficulties in comprehending the sequence of functional activities in a coherent and concrete manner. The strategic deployment of audio-visual learning media, such as instructional modeling videos, has been empirically proven to significantly assist children with intellectual disabilities in grasping the sequential stages of daily living skills, as the integration of visual modeling and auditory cues can elucidate the steps of an activity in a clear, linear progression. Research focused on the development of audio-visual media further substantiates that such tools can powerfully facilitate the refinement of both gross and fine motor skills in individuals with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, robustly affirming the absolute necessity of integrating dynamic media into the pedagogy of daily living skills for children with special educational needs (Nisah, 2024).

Based on preliminary field observations conducted at SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang, Indramayu Regency, it was identified that eighth-grade female students with moderate intellectual disabilities were still encountering substantial, systemic barriers in optimally following the self-care curriculum, primarily due to the severe limitations in the utilization of appropriate instructional media. While the classroom educator had consistently provided direct verbal guidance and limited pantomimed instruction, these efforts had not yet been supported by concrete, three-dimensional manipulative media capable of actively assisting the students in fully and systematically visualizing the complex stages of the learning activity.

This specific demographic faces the onset of puberty, a biological transition that introduces the demand for vastly more complex personal care capabilities, prominently including the critical skill of correctly applying a sanitary pad and maintaining rigorous personal hygiene protocols during menstruation. The pedagogy of applying a sanitary pad is an inseparable, foundational component of the self-care curriculum that is intimately intertwined with reproductive health education. Nevertheless, learning environments that rely predominantly on verbal instruction, devoid of the support of concrete, tactile media, inevitably result in profound cognitive confusion, causing students to fundamentally struggle to comprehend the correct sequential steps for using sanitary products (Suherman et al., 2025; Sulastri et al., 2024).

Therefore, there is an urgent and critical need for the implementation of instructional strategies that are perfectly calibrated to the specific cognitive architecture of students with intellectual disabilities—namely, learning experiences that are strictly concrete, highly visual, incrementally structured, and extensively repetitive. Contemporary research continuously validates that the deployment of visual media and direct simulation possesses the power to drastically enhance the practical self-care skills of students with intellectual disabilities. Personal development or self-care programs utilizing video modeling have consistently demonstrated marked success in elevating self-care competencies (Susilowati et al., 2020). These empirical findings unequivocally indicate that visual and simulative media are highly effective in supporting students' comprehension of the complex stages involved in personal care skills.

One innovative instructional medium that presents a highly viable solution to overcome these pedagogical bottlenecks is the human doll (mannequin) medium. This three-dimensional tool allows students to directly and safely observe anatomical positioning and the physical stages of an activity through tangible simulation. This hands-on approach drastically simplifies cognitive comprehension and crucially mitigates the profound sense of shame, embarrassment,

and social awkwardness inherently present when learning deeply personal and culturally sensitive self-care material. Existing literature investigating the use of anatomical doll media underscores that such concrete tools can radically elevate the self-care capabilities of students with intellectual disabilities precisely because they provide a highly realistic, tangible representation that is easily imitable without violating personal boundaries (Adebisi & Jummai, 2019). The application of doll media has been shown to exert a highly positive, statistically significant influence on the personal care mastery of students with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities (Ringan, 2012).

Grounded in this comprehensive theoretical background, the present study intensely focuses on the strategic utilization of human mannequin media within self-care education, specifically isolating the complex functional skill of wearing a sanitary pad for eighth-grade female students with moderate intellectual disabilities at SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang, Indramayu Regency. It is important to note that this research does not aim to conduct a quantitative experimental test of the media's statistical effectiveness. Instead, it seeks to rigorously describe, through a qualitative lens, exactly how the human doll media is integrated into the living process of classroom instruction, and critically, what specific pedagogical strategies the educator employs to facilitate the students' learning journey. The findings of this research are highly anticipated to serve as an actionable, practical reference for special education practitioners in designing and executing self-care curricula that truly resonate with the unique learning profiles of students with intellectual disabilities.

Method

This study was designed employing a rigorous qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive phenomenological method. The qualitative approach was deliberately selected because the overarching objective of the research is to attain a profound, holistic, and deeply contextualized understanding of the highly nuanced process of utilizing human mannequin media in self-care instruction. Specifically, it seeks to capture the lived realities of teaching the deeply personal skill of wearing a sanitary pad to students with moderate intellectual disabilities. Qualitative research inherently empowers the investigator to unearth the underlying meanings, decode the intricate instructional processes, and accurately map the social and pedagogical context that occurs naturally within the authentic school environment. As articulated by Moleong, qualitative research fundamentally endeavors to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects in a completely holistic manner, presenting these realities in the form of rich, detailed textual descriptions situated perfectly within their natural context (Safarudin et al., 2023).

The research was formally conducted at SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang, situated in Indramayu Regency. The subjects for this research were meticulously identified and selected utilizing a purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method wherein subjects are chosen based on highly specific, predetermined criteria that perfectly align with the core objectives of the study. The primary subject of this research was one female eighth-grade student officially diagnosed with a moderate intellectual disability. The critical criteria for her selection included the fact that she had already experienced menarche (the onset of menstruation) and was actively participating in the school's specialized self-care curriculum utilizing the human mannequin media. To ensure a robust, multifaceted perspective, the research also actively involved the classroom special education teacher and the student's parents as vital supporting informants, thereby enabling the acquisition of highly comprehensive, triangulated data regarding the holistic learning process across different environments.

The empirical data for this study were systematically gathered utilizing three primary qualitative techniques: prolonged participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and comprehensive documentation analysis. The observation was conducted to directly

scrutinize the live, dynamic process of utilizing the human mannequin media during the instructional sessions. The researcher adopted the stance of passive participant observation, meaning the researcher was physically present during the learning activities to record events as they naturally unfolded, strictly avoiding any interference or intervention in the teacher's instructional flow. These observations were acutely focused on documenting the chronological stages of media utilization, the specific micro-strategies the teacher deployed when engaging the media, and the nuanced behavioral and affective responses of the student throughout the instructional duration (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data analysis protocol adhered strictly to qualitative standards, specifically utilizing the highly regarded interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman (1992). This particular model was chosen because it facilitates a dynamic, continuous process of analysis that begins from the very first day of data collection and iteratively continues until final conclusion drawing.

Results and Discussion

1. The Transformation of the Pedagogical Process: From Abstract Instruction to Concrete Simulation

To fully appreciate the efficacy of the human mannequin intervention, it is imperative to first critically analyze the baseline instructional conditions. Prior to the introduction of the three-dimensional medium, the pedagogical landscape for teaching menstrual hygiene was primarily characterized by verbal explanations and highly limited, abstract demonstrations by the educator. The initial observations revealed a classroom environment where students exhibited profound difficulties in processing the sequence of steps required for the task. Because the instruction relied heavily on auditory processing and abstract visualization—cognitive domains that are significantly impaired in students with moderate intellectual disabilities—the learners frequently experienced cognitive overload. They easily lost focus, displayed visible confusion, and defaulted to a state of learned helplessness, constantly waiting for direct, step-by-step physical prompting from the teacher without initiating any independent action. The instructional strategy utilized during this preliminary phase was fundamentally misaligned with the specific learning characteristics of students with moderate intellectual disabilities, who absolutely require learning environments that are concrete, highly visual, tactile, and repetitive.

Through longitudinal observation over a series of sequential meetings, a clear trajectory of cognitive and psychomotor development emerged. During the first meeting, the primary objective was simply familiarization. The educator introduced the mannequin, explaining its anatomical relevance and its function as a learning tool. Initially, the students' responses were characterized by hesitation and uncertainty. They were adjusting to the presence of the novel medium and attempting to process its connection to their own bodies. At this nascent stage, the students required intense, continuous physical and verbal prompting to even interact with the mannequin. However, by the second meeting, a marked improvement in engagement was observed. The teacher re-demonstrated the sequential steps—unwrapping the sanitary pad, removing the adhesive backing, accurately positioning it onto the mannequin's undergarments, and securing it. Because the demonstration was performed on a tangible, physical object that the students could closely observe from multiple angles, their willingness to participate increased significantly. They began to transition from passive observers to active participants, attempting the steps with guided physical assistance (hand-over-hand prompting) from the teacher.

The third and fourth meetings represented a critical phase of skill consolidation and fading of instructional prompts. The mannequin was utilized repetitively to reinforce the entire sequence of actions. As the visual and tactile memory of the students strengthened, the educator strategically reduced the intensity of their physical assistance, shifting to minimal verbal cues

and gestural prompts. The students exhibited a stabilized locus of attention; the physical presence of the mannequin effectively anchored their focus, preventing the frequent sensory distractions that characterized the pre-intervention phase. By the final observed sessions, the students were capable of utilizing the mannequin to independently simulate the process of applying the sanitary pad with minimal to no directive intervention from the educator.

This profound transformation highlights a fundamental shift in the pedagogical process. The steps of the task became inherently easier for the teacher to articulate because the mannequin provided immediate, concrete visual context for vocabulary that would otherwise remain abstract. The strategy of direct demonstration, combined with guided practice, aligns seamlessly with the established premise that students with intellectual disabilities construct knowledge through direct experience and modeling rather than through passive listening (Kelas et al., 2023). Furthermore, the teacher's employment of 'task analysis'—the pedagogical technique of breaking down a complex, multi-step functional skill into its smallest, most manageable discrete components—was heavily facilitated by the mannequin. Each micro-step could be isolated, demonstrated, and practiced on the doll before moving to the next. The use of this concrete medium to elucidate procedural steps corroborates the theoretical assertions of Arsyad (2017), who emphasizes that carefully selected instructional media significantly clarify the transmission of educational messages and radically reduce the risk of verbalism and cognitive misunderstanding in the classroom.

2. Modulating Psychological Barriers and Cognitive Constraints in Personal Care Education

A primary constraint identified during the research was the students' inherently brief span of concentrated attention. In several observational sessions, students demonstrated a high susceptibility to environmental distractions, rapidly losing focus on the sequential task. This specific cognitive limitation dictated that the educator could not rely on lengthy, continuous demonstrations. Instead, the instructional design required dynamic variation, heightened interactive engagement, and carefully modulated activity durations. The mannequin proved invaluable in this regard. As a three-dimensional, tactile object, it provided continuous sensory feedback that helped digitally capture and sustain the students' visual and physical attention. Nevertheless, the reality of their cognitive profile necessitated an exceptionally high volume of repetition. The students required the physical sequence to be repeated numerous times across multiple days to ensure that the procedural memory was firmly encoded and stabilized. Without this rigorous, consistent repetition facilitated by the doll, the newly acquired functional steps were highly prone to rapid deterioration and forgetting. This observation underscores the necessity for varied strategies and continuous media engagement to sustain the learning focus of students facing intellectual barriers (Evmenova & Behrmann, 2011).

Over time, as the students interacted with the doll, their initial awkwardness dissipated, replaced by a focused, task-oriented demeanor. The classroom atmosphere transformed from tense and hesitant to calm, relaxed, and highly conducive to functional learning. The medium essentially protected the students' emotional well-being while rigorously developing their practical skills. This dual function of the medium—serving simultaneously as a cognitive anchor and an emotional safeguard—aligns perfectly with contemporary special education paradigms which argue that instructional media must actively contribute to creating an educational environment that is not only cognitively effective but also deeply humanistic and emotionally secure (Vertel & Kolodyazhna, 2023). By neutralizing the emotional threat of the subject matter, the mannequin allowed the students' cognitive resources to be fully allocated to the mastery of the physical sequence.

3. The Synergy of Environmental Support: Teacher Consistency and Parental Involvement

The ultimate success of utilizing the human mannequin for self-care instruction cannot be attributed solely to the physical characteristics of the object itself; rather, it is the result of a

complex synergy between the medium, the educator's methodological consistency, and the critical extension of learning into the domestic environment through parental involvement. The research findings emphatically indicate that instructional media do not operate in a vacuum. They achieve optimal functionality only when seamlessly integrated into a holistic, well-architected ecosystem of educational support.

The primary pillar of this supportive ecosystem was the highly structured, deliberate, and consistent instructional strategy employed by the classroom teacher. The educator did not merely present the mannequin as a passive visual aid; it was actively weaponized as the central locus of an integrated pedagogical approach. The teacher orchestrated a masterclass in special education methodology: combining explicit direct demonstration, carefully scaffolded guided practice, intensive repetitive drilling, and the systematic fading of physical prompts. This multifaceted approach ensured that the medium functioned as a robust cognitive bridge, translating abstract concepts into tangible, executable actions.

Furthermore, the teacher consistently applied positive reinforcement—utilizing verbal praise and emotional encouragement whenever a student successfully navigated a micro-step of the process. This affective support was vital in building the students' self-efficacy, particularly given the initial reluctance surrounding the personal nature of the task. Students with intellectual barriers require learning experiences that are undeniably concrete, highly repetitive, and structurally consistent to progressively acquire and retain functional life skills (Zudeta et al., 2025). Therefore, the role of the educator in actively mediating the interaction between the student and the media, and in meticulously tailoring the instructional strategies to match the specific developmental profiles of the learners, is of paramount importance (Sedang & Terra, 2025). The concrete nature of the 3D mannequin perfectly complemented this need, mitigating the reliance on verbal instruction, drastically reducing the phenomena of verbalism, and clarifying the presentation of procedural messages in a manner consistent with effective learning methodologies (Islam, 2016).

Crucially, the school actively facilitated this generalization process by maintaining open lines of communication with the families. The teacher explicitly detailed the task analysis steps, the specific vocabulary used, and the prompting hierarchy employed in the classroom to the parents. This empowered the parents to mirror the exact same instructional strategies at home, creating a seamless, unified pedagogical front. When the child encountered the real-life scenario, the parents could use the same verbal cues and fading techniques that the child had grown accustomed to during the mannequin simulations.

This unbroken continuity of practice between the formal school environment and the informal domestic sphere acted as a powerful catalyst for skill consolidation. The parents acknowledged that while their children still experienced occasional memory lapses regarding specific sequential steps—necessitating gentle reminders and continued vigilance—there was an undeniable and significant enhancement in their children's courage, willingness to try, and overall trajectory toward physical independence. This finding strongly corroborates established literature emphasizing that familial support and active parental participation are indispensable components in the successful habituation and long-term retention of self-care practices in children with intellectual disabilities. Repetitive, consistent practice embedded within the natural home environment serves to permanently solidify the foundational understanding initially constructed in the classroom (Ratnawulan et al., 2021).

In summation, the comprehensive analysis of the results reveals that the efficacy of the human mannequin as an instructional medium is intrinsically linked to a triad of critical factors: the inherent concrete and non-threatening characteristics of the tool itself, the sophisticated and highly consistent pedagogical strategies deployed by the educator, and the vital continuity of practice provided by empowered parents in the home. While specific technical and cognitive hurdles—such as transient attention spans and the absolute necessity for high-volume repetition—were encountered, they were effectively systematically dismantled through

sensitive, highly adaptive pedagogical interventions. Consequently, the human mannequin must not be viewed merely as an isolated visual prop, but rather as an integral, highly dynamic component of a comprehensive, humanistic, and ecologically valid instructional system designed to foster genuine functional independence in students with moderate intellectual disabilities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the use of a human mannequin is highly effective in facilitating self-care learning, particularly the skill of wearing a sanitary pad, for students with moderate intellectual disabilities. The medium successfully transforms abstract verbal instructions into concrete, visual, and sequential simulations. The success of this program stems from a strong synergy among the appropriate use of media, structured teacher instructional strategies (including direct demonstration, guided practice, and repetition), and the continuous support of home practice by parents. Furthermore, the human mannequin significantly minimizes psychological barriers such as embarrassment and awkwardness, providing a safe simulation space to learn highly personal material. There are several limitations in this implementation and study. First, the cognitive barrier of students' short attention spans requires teachers to continuously vary their approaches to maintain learning focus. Second, there is a high dependency on repetition; without consistent and continuous reinforcement, the taught procedural skills are easily forgotten. Third, methodologically, this study focuses on a single subject at one school (SLB C Gandasari Jatibarang), meaning the findings cannot be automatically generalized to a broader population or environments with different facilities. Future research involving a larger sample size is highly recommended.

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