

## THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE PLAY ON THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AT PLOSOHARJO 1 KINDERGARTEN

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** As one of the crucial aspects in child development, social-emotional development includes the ability of a child to interact with others, integrate themselves in the social environment, and understand various norms and rules applied. **Objective:** This study aims to investigate how role-playing activities affect children's social-emotional aspects. **Methodology:** This study was categorized as pre-experimental research, applying a one group pre-test post-test without control group design. The population as well as the research sample (total sampling) were 30 students of Plosoharjo 1 Kindergarten. To assess the significance of pre-intervention and post-intervention differences, paired t-test was used. **Results:** The initial stage of analysis showed normality of pretest and posttest data distribution ( $p > 0.05$ ). Following this, testing with the paired t-test resulted in a t value = -9.12 and a p value = 0.000 (not reaching 0.05), meaning that the difference between pre- and post-intervention was statistically significant. **Implications:** Given its effectiveness in improving children's social-emotional skills, the role-playing method is very potential to be further developed in BKB activities or learning in the kindergarten/early childhood environment.

**Keywords :** role-playing; social emotional development; pre-school.

### INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a golden age in the process of individual growth and development. At this stage, children show rapid progress in physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional areas. One of the natural ways that children learn and develop is through play. Play is not just an activity to pass the time, but an important learning process, where children explore the environment, express emotions, and develop social and cognitive skills [1].

Social-emotional development is one of the important aspects of child development, which relates to the child's ability to establish relationships with others, adjust to the social environment, and understand applicable norms and rules. This aspect is the foundation for the formation of children's personality and life skills in the future [2]. Children who have good

social development tend to be able to communicate effectively, show empathy, cooperate, and manage conflict in a positive way.

Early childhood (0-6 years) is a critical period for social development because at this stage children begin to learn to recognize themselves and others, develop self-confidence, and understand the concept of sharing and taking turns. Children's interactions with parents, teachers, peers and the surrounding environment greatly influence the process of forming these social skills [3].

Various studies indicate that children's social growth is largely determined by the stimulation provided early on, both through play activities, adult guidance, and daily social experiences [4]. Children who lack adequate social stimulation tend to experience barriers in interacting, withdrawing, or exhibiting aggressive behavior [5].

One strategy that has proven effective in stimulating children's social progress can be achieved through role play activities. Role play is a form of symbolic play in which children act out a certain character or situation that reflects real life. This activity provides space for children to practice communication skills, cooperation, empathy, and natural social conflict resolution [6,7].

Findings from a conversation with a teacher at Plosoharjo 1 Kindergarten show that many children still have low social skills. This can be seen during learning activities, where some children seem busy playing alone without paying attention to their surroundings. There are also children who tend to want to always be close to the teacher, as if they are reluctant to mingle with their friends. Some children only feel comfortable playing with one or two specific friends and are reluctant to interact with others, and there are still children who are reluctant to share with others.

The formulation of the problem in this study is “Does role play affect children's social development?” This study aims to (a) Identify children's social emotional development before role playing, (b) Identify children's social emotional development after role playing, and (c) Analyze the effect of role playing on children's social emotional development.

## METHODS

This study is categorized as pre-experimental research, applying a one group pre-test post-test without control group design. The population as well as the research sample (total sampling) were 30 students of Plosoharjo 1 Kindergarten. For data collection, instruments in the form of observation sheets of children's social development were used. Data analysis used the

Wilcoxon non-parametric statistical test (non-normal data) while paired t-tests were used to test differences before and after the intervention.

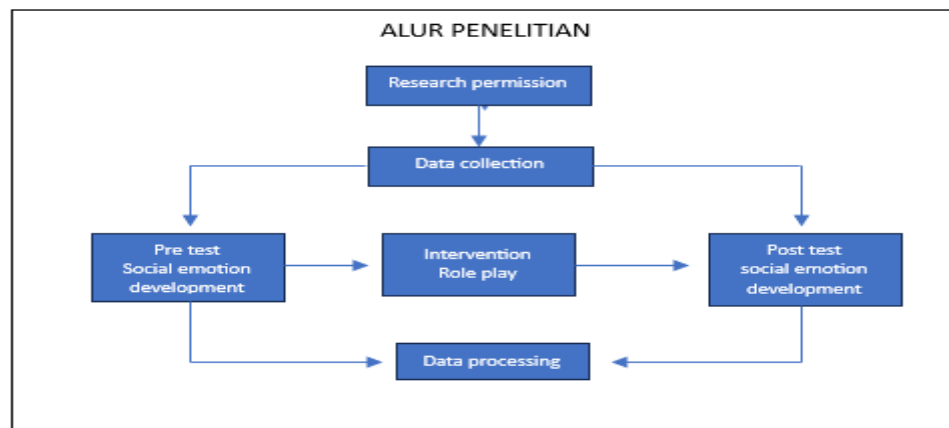


Figure 1. Research flow

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant profiles were reviewed to identify diversity by age and gender. The total number of respondents in this study reached 30 individuals.

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents by Age

Age (year)	Frequently	%
5	10	33,3
6	20	66,7
	30	100

Table 2 Characteristics of Respondents by gender

gender	Frekuensi	%
male	7	23,3
female	23	76,7
	30	100

Table 3 Table 3 Distribution of Role Play Intervention

Role Play intervention	Frequently	%
Role play	30	100
Not role play	0	0
	30	100

Table 4 Distribution Social emotion development

Social emotion development	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Frequently	%	Frequently	%
Low	15	50	2	6,7
Intermediate	12	40	21	70
High	3	10	7	23,3
	30	100	30	100

Table 5 Children's Social Development Score before and after Role Play

Tahap Pengukuran	N	rate	Standar Deviasi	Minimum	Maksimum
Pre test	30	72.3	6.4	60	85
Post test	30	81.7	5.8	70	90

Tabel 6 Normality Test Result

Tahap pengukuran	Statistic	df	Sig. ( <i>p</i> value)
Pretest	0,958	30	0.000
Post test	0,946	30	0,086

Kedua nilai  $p > 0,05$ , maka data berdistribusi normal

Table 7 Result of paired t-test

	Mean Difference	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post test – Pre test	9.4	-9.12	29	0.000

The average score of children's social development during the pretest was 72.3, while during the post test it increased to 81.7. The increase of 9.4 points indicates that the children improved their abilities in social aspects such as cooperating, communicating, sharing, resolving conflicts, and understanding their social roles in the environment. This shows that role-playing activities provide an effective stimulus in stimulating the development of children's social skills [8].

The normality test confirmed that the pretest and post test data were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ). Significant findings from the paired t-test ( $t = -9.12$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicating a significant difference before and after the treatment, confirmed that role-playing activities statistically had a major impact on the social emotional development of kindergarten-aged children.

This finding is consistent with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which explains that during the preschool period, children are in the initiative versus guilt phase. At this stage, they begin to understand social roles and show initiative through imaginative play activities [9]. Role play gives children the opportunity to express themselves, understand social rules, and develop empathy for others.

Social behavior is one of the important elements in early childhood development. In this phase, children begin to learn to collaborate through various activities, including completing tasks in groups [10].

[11] state that children aged 5-6 years show signs of social development, such as the ability to interact and cooperate with peers, show empathy, be tolerant, and understand the rules that apply. Meanwhile, Marlina (2019) suggests that the development of social attitudes in children is reflected in their desire to engage in activities with friends, feel accepted in groups, and enthusiastically play together. According to [12], fun group games are an effective means of fostering cooperation skills in children, because through these activities they learn to support each other and understand each other's roles in order to achieve common goals.

The ability to manage emotions is a crucial part of children's social and emotional development, especially when they engage in role-playing activities. This activity provides a space for children to explore and understand a variety of emotions, which in turn supports them in regulating their own feelings and establishing positive interactions with their surroundings. Role play also allows children to feel and understand the emotions of others, thus strengthening social skills that are important in everyday life [13].

The results revealed that role-playing activities have a great influence on the growth of empathy in early childhood. Through these activities, children improved in understanding other people's emotions and points of view. In addition, they also show progress in communication skills, teamwork and constructive problem-solving.

According to Vygotsky's theory, role play is a form of symbolic play that is important for the development of higher psychological functions. In play, children learn through social interaction and use their zone of proximal development [14]. Role-playing strengthens social skills, problem solving, and the ability to regulate emotions.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Role-playing activities have been shown to have a significant effect in improving kindergarten children's social development. This intervention is not only fun for children, but also effectively trains essential social-emotional skills for daily life.

This study shows that teachers and parents can design role-playing activities that fit the context of children's lives, such as playing doctor-medicine, market-market, family-family, or other professions that reflect real life [6].

This study used a one-group design without a control group, so it cannot completely eliminate the possibility of outside factors affecting the results. Future research is recommended to use an experimental design with a control group to obtain more robust results. In addition, the duration and variety of games also need to be evaluated so that maximum benefits can be obtained.

Role playing can be an effective method in improving children's social skills, which in turn can help children to adapt to their social environment. Therefore, BKB/TK/PAUD managers are advised to integrate more role-playing activities in BKB/learning activities, with special attention to providing adequate space and time for these activities.

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