Enhancing Social-Emotional Development in Kindergarten: A Study on the Impact of Group A Project Methods

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Keywords:	Children's social-emotional development is a process through which they
Social-emotional;	learn to adapt and understand situations and emotions in their interactions
Project Method;	with others, by listening, observing, and imitating what they see. Early
Early childhood.	childhood social-emotional skills contribute to positive social development,
<u>/</u>	fostering empathy, sympathy, and a mutual need for one another. This study
	aims to investigate: 1) an overview of the social-emotional abilities of children
	in Group A at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten, and 2) the effect
	of the project method on children in Group A at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten.
	The study examines the influence of social-emotional abilities among Group A
	early childhood students at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor,
	located in Pacet District, Mojokerto Regency. This research adopts a pre-
	experimental design, utilizing a one-group pretest-posttest approach with
	nonprobability sampling conducted through purposive sampling. Data
	collection techniques include observation, administration of pretest-posttest
	items, and documentation. Data analysis employs paired sample t-tests with
	the assistance of SPSS application version 26 for Windows. The results reveal
	a significant influence of the project method on social-emotional abilities at
	Kindergarten Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Pacet. This is evidenced by the
	increase in the average social-emotional abilities of children from 30.16 to 46.92
	following the treatment. Hypothesis testing further confirms this influence,
	with a sig. value <0.05.
	Abstrak
Kata kunci:	Perkembangan sosial emosional anak merupakan suatu proses dimana mereka belajar
Sosial-emosional;	beradaptasi dan memahami situasi dan emosi dalam interaksinya dengan orang lain,
Metode Proyek;	dengan cara mendengarkan, mengamati, dan meniru apa yang dilihatnya.
Anak usia dini.	Keterampilan sosial-emosional anak usia dini berkontribusi terhadap perkembangan
	sosial yang positif, menumbuhkan empati, simpati, dan saling membutuhkan satu
Article history:	sama lain. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: 1) gambaran kemampuan
Received: 11-02-2024	sosial emosional anak kelompok A di TK Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor, dan 2)
	pengaruh metode proyek terhadap anak kelompok A di TK Dharma Wanita
Revised 13-03-2024	
	Kembangbelor. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kemampuan
	sosial emosional pada siswa PAUD kelompok A di TK Dharma Wanita Kembangbelon
	sosial emosional pada siswa PAUD kelompok A di TK Dharma Wanita Kembangbelon yang terletak di Kecamatan Pacet Kabupaten Mojokerto. Penelitian ini menggunakan
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Revised 13-03-2024 Accepted 20-03-2024	sosial emosional pada siswa PAUD kelompok A di TK Dharma Wanita Kembangbelon yang terletak di Kecamatan Pacet Kabupaten Mojokerto. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pra-eksperimental, menggunakan pendekatan one-group pretest-posttesi dengan nonprobability sampling yang dilakukan melalui purposive sampling. Teknik
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INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten, more commonly known as preschool education, marks a unique and pivotal period in a child's life (Sianturi, 2021). During this phase, children embark on the journey of emotional processing and adaptation to environments beyond the confines of their homes and families (Budiarti & Adar, 2023). They begin to develop selfawareness and grasp the various social norms prevalent in their surroundings. While they endeavor to adapt and engage with their environment, they simultaneously strive to assert their identities (Satriawati et al., 2023). Consequently, kindergarten serves as a formal early childhood education institution, facilitating socialization among children (Al-Shanawani, 2019). This aligns with the core objective of kindergarten education, which aims to stimulate each child's potential, prepare them for subsequent levels of education, and foster socialization.

Kindergarten education plays a crucial role in the development of children's personalities and readiness for further education. Through educational stimulation, children are guided to explore and harness their full potential in a nurturing environment (Armistead et al., 2002). The primary function of kindergarten is to introduce children to a spectrum of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in an enjoyable manner (Tatminingsih, 2019). It is within this setting that we witness the unfolding of children's social and emotional abilities as they interact in diverse environments beyond the familiarity of their homes. By observing these developments, we gain insight into their social and emotional progress, which, in turn, enables us to cultivate their social skills for the school environment and beyond (Yulianengsih, 2023).

Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation Number 146 of 2014 regarding the 2013 Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, as stipulated in Article 1, defines Early Childhood Education, abbreviated as PAUD, as an educational endeavor provided to children from birth to 6 years of age. This endeavor is carried out through the provision of educational stimulation aimed at fostering physical and spiritual growth and development, thus preparing children for further education (Kemendikbud, 2010).

Children who embark on their educational journey, particularly in PAUD, engage with their environment, interact with peers, and communicate with adults. Within this social milieu, children acquire behavioral skills, develop socialization abilities, and learn to adapt to their surroundings. They also learn collaborative skills, working together in various activities (Aghnaita & Murniati, 2023; Khamim, 2021). Through these social interactions, children accumulate experiences that contribute to their knowledge-building process. This perspective is aligned with Vygotsky's theory, which posits that children construct their knowledge through social interactions and learning experiences with adults (E. Suryani & Purwanti, 2019).

Children's social-emotional abilities play a crucial role as a pillar of multiple intelligences, essential for navigating the social landscape. It is imperative to cultivate these abilities from an early age to facilitate effective socialization in their environment. The development of children's social and emotional faculties represents a significant advancement in their understanding of themselves and their surroundings. Social development entails acquiring the skills necessary to conform to societal expectations (Asyari, 2020; Bahri, 2022; Lesnida et al., 2022). The process of becoming adept at socializing involves several distinct yet interconnected stages. Hence, a child's activities significantly contribute to skill development even before the introduction of specific methodologies such as the project method (Suryani, 2019).

Social-emotional development entails behavioral changes accompanied by deepseated emotions. It encompasses alterations in behavior exhibited by young children during interactions with others. Consequently, social development signifies an enhancement in an individual's ability to engage with others. Furthermore, children's emotional development involves their capacity to process and articulate feelings through various forms of expression, be it verbal or non-verbal (Asmawati, 2023; Haq & Roesminingsih, 2024). Through these expressions, individuals communicate their emotional states, enabling others to comprehend their circumstances. Hence, the intertwined nature of children's social-emotional development underscores the intricate dynamics between individuals and society.

It is believed that children with well-developed social-emotional skills are better equipped to thrive in a learning environment and foster a conducive atmosphere, thereby fostering enthusiasm and motivation for learning. Hence, social-emotional development is deemed essential for every child to cultivate harmonious relationships with teachers and peers in the classroom, ultimately facilitating the achievement of learning objectives. Emotional development encompasses changes in an individual's interpersonal relationships, emotions, and personality. Consequently, as children develop, they undergo social and emotional transformations in their interactions with others, whether peers or parents, corresponding to their maturity levels.

Early childhood social-emotional development entails children's ability to navigate positive emotions during social interactions. Such processes are particularly vital in collaborative or group learning environments, where children must regulate their emotions to foster an optimal learning climate (Adimsyah et al., 2023). Conversely, children who exhibit poor social-emotional behaviors in learning activities, such as rejecting others' opinions, frequently interrupting conversations, or struggling to manage their impulses, hinder the learning process. Therefore, the researcher intends to implement the project method in schools to facilitate the enhancement of children's social-emotional skills, enhancing their communication with the environment and adaptability to diverse settings (Bazhenov et al., 2015).

The project method facilitates children's exploration and research of their surroundings, offering not only enjoyable experiences but also a deeper understanding of object properties or benefits. This approach aligns well with the characteristics of early childhood education. According to Katz, the project method involves children delving into a particular topic of interest either individually or collaboratively. Additionally, Moeslichatoen describes the project method as exposing children to real-life problems that necessitate group solutions. Considering its potential to foster creativity and positive character traits, such as curiosity, creativity, responsibility, and social competence, the project method proves to be an effective educational tool.

The decision to employ the project method stems from its capacity to enhance children's socialization, communication, and emotional expression through group collaboration. Moreover, it serves as a means to acclimate children to social interactions, teamwork, and communication, acknowledging the diverse characteristics among children, which influence their socialization patterns.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, quantitative methods were employed utilizing a pre-experimental design, specifically the one-group pretest-posttest design (initial test-single group test). Arikunto (2019) defines the one-group pretest-posttest design as a research approach involving an initial test (pretest) conducted before administering treatment, followed by a final test (posttest) after the treatment has been administered.

In this design, observations are conducted twice: before and after the experiment. The test administered before the experiment (O1) serves as the pretest, followed by the application of treatment (X), and then the posttest (O2) administered after the experiment. The disparity between O1 and O2, denoted as O1-O2, is presumed to represent the impact of the experiment (Arikunto, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

According to Hurlock, social-emotional development entails the cultivation of behaviors that align with societal norms. It is a gradual process through which children engage with social cues, particularly those derived from group interactions, to learn socialization and appropriate behavior. Meanwhile, Salovey and John (Mayer et al., 2012), outline various components of social-emotional development, including empathy, expression and comprehension of emotions, anger management, independence, adaptability, conflict resolution skills, perseverance, solidarity, politeness, and respect.

Elizabeth (Hurlock, 1949, 1950) classifies early childhood social behavior patterns into the following categories:

- 1. Imitation: Children mimic the attitudes and behaviors of individuals they admire to align themselves with the group. They are capable of emulating behaviors demonstrated by teachers in line with the learning theme.
- 2. Competition: Children exhibit a desire to outperform others, often noticeable around the age of four. They engage in friendly competition with peers to achieve various goals, such as excelling in school activities.
- 3. Collaboration: From the age of three onward, children begin to engage in group play and activities, with opportunities for collaborative efforts increasing in frequency and duration over time.

Enhancing Social-Emotional Development in Kindergarten: A Study on the Impact of Group A Project Methods

- 4. Sympathy: Understanding and acknowledging the feelings of others typically begins to emerge before the age of three, with increased social interaction accelerating the development of sympathy.
- 5. Empathy: In addition to understanding others' feelings, empathy involves the ability to imagine oneself in another's situation.
- 6. Social support: Towards the end of early childhood, support from peers becomes increasingly significant, often outweighing adult approval.
- 7. Sharing: Children recognize sharing possessions as a means to gain social approval, such as lending pencils or sharing food with friends to strengthen bonds and express friendship.
- 8. Friendly behavior: Children exhibit affection towards teachers and peers through friendly gestures, including joking, laughter, hugs, and holding hands. They interact with teachers in a manner akin to their interactions with parents, displaying curiosity and seeking guidance.

Meanwhile, the project method serves as a means of experiential learning by presenting children with real-world problems to solve collaboratively, rooted in the constructivist learning theory of Jean Piaget. In this learning approach, the child is actively engaged in the learning process. The project method entails achieving learning outcomes through specific actions aligned with objectives, particularly focusing on children mastering a task through a series of behaviors aimed at attaining goals (Pardini et al., 2022).

In the implementation of activities using a project-based approach, educators assume the role of facilitators and consultants rather than traditional teachers. Their responsibility lies in guiding children's progress through supervision and monitoring, carefully observing their actions during project work. Educators use these observations to discern children's needs and assess their readiness, both individually and in groups, to assimilate new knowledge and skills (Gunarti et al., 2010).

The objective of the project method extends beyond merely seeking correct answers to questions posed by educators; it aims to delve deeper into a topic for comprehensive understanding. Moreover, the project approach encompasses four key aspects: knowledge, skills, disposition, and emotions (L. Suryani, 2008).

The following is an explanation of each aspect: 1) Knowledge: During the preschool period, knowledge encompasses a variety of ideas, concepts, schemas, information, fairy tales, legends, songs, and other materials relevant to children's cognitive abilities. B) Skills: Skills refer to actions with distinct characteristics that are easily observable and measurable, such as cutting, drawing, counting a set of objects, and engaging in gross motor and fine motor activities. C) Disposition: Dispositions are habitual responses ingrained in the mind or character, dictating how children react to experiences across various situations. These include traits such as diligence, generosity, curiosity, or problem-solving abilities. D) Feelings: Feelings encompass subjective and

emotional states unique to individuals, such as a sense of belonging, self-confidence, self-esteem, contentment, or anxiety (Winda, 2008).

Moeslichatoen outlined the benefits of applying the project method for early childhood as follows: 1) Developing a healthy and realistic personality characterized by independence, self-confidence, and adaptability. This includes supporting oneself, fostering interpersonal relationships based on reciprocity, and embracing reality. 2) Utilizing the project method to address problems within the context of children's daily lives. 3) Emphasizing the transfer of responsibility from the researcher to the child, thereby fostering cooperation and social interaction among project participants. Through this, children learn to effectively and harmoniously complete their assigned tasks, assuming individual responsibility for their contributions. 4) Providing children with the opportunity to cultivate a strong work ethic characterized by diligence, thoroughness, completeness, and timeliness in task execution. 5) Allowing exploration of children's abilities, interests, and needs through the project method. 6) Offering children the freedom to engage physically and intellectually in responsible work, enabling them to apply mastered methods without the constraint of remaining seated quietly.

Project Method Steps

Activities using the project method are carried out in three stages, namely (1) preparation/start, (2) implementation of project learning, and (3) drawing conclusions.

Preparation/beginning: In the initial phase of an activity using the project method, educators encourage children to share various personal experiences and compile them into a topic to review their knowledge about that subject. During this phase, children are prompted to recall experiences related to the topic, which can be achieved through storytelling, role-playing, description, or writing. These introductory activities enable educators to identify individual children's primary interests, helping to establish a foundational understanding for all participants involved in the project.

Implementation of project activities (project in progress): Project activities unfold in two phases: a school trip and a return to the classroom. The primary objective in the initial phase is to gather new information through direct experiences and active participation in the project. Children acquire information from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include field trips to real environments and events, such as observing historical buildings, witnessing machine operations, or observing production processes, which may involve direct interviews with individuals involved. Meanwhile, secondary sources encompass information obtained from books, documentary films, brochures, pamphlets, and other documentation related to the project.

Drawing conclusions (concluding): The final step in a project involves drawing conclusions and reviewing what the child has learned. The outcomes of their efforts in this phase are showcased to visitors, which may include parents or friends from other schools who are invited to observe. For children aged 3-4 years, this concluding phase

Enhancing Social-Emotional Development in Kindergarten: A Study on the Impact of Group A Project Methods

often involves engaging in dramatic play related to their projects. For example, if they have constructed a hospital or park, they may enact roles that correspond to characters within those settings (Winda, 2008).

In the three steps of project implementation outlined above, several key considerations should be taken into account. Notably, there are five main components of the project method: (1) discussion, (2) fieldwork or work visits, (3) presentations, (4) investigations, and (5) displays. These components serve as the foundational framework for the learning process, facilitating children's understanding of their objectives and guiding their thinking accordingly (Winda, 2008).

Pembahasan

A general overview of children's social-emotional abilities through the Group A project method at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten Kembangbelor Pacet Mojokerto is provided based on achievement indicators according to Mrs. Aisah, the Group A class teacher. Instead of emphasizing group work, the method focuses on individual achievements. However, significant changes were observed in the children before and after the treatment. The achievements noted in students after the treatment are as follows:

Self-awareness: At Dharma Wanita Kindergarten, self-awareness is notably developed among children, enabling them to apply it to themselves and their surroundings. Implementation of the project method has led to substantial changes in students.

Responsibility: Children demonstrate a heightened sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, facilitated by tasks assigned by their teacher. The project method encourages children to take responsibility for their tasks, contributing to their overall development. Hence, the method has proven successful for the children at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten (Asher, 1969).

Social behavior: The methods employed effectively aid children in developing their social skills, enabling them to interact adeptly with teachers, classmates, and their environment. Despite unfamiliar surroundings, children exhibit proficient socialization skills.

Self-awareness: At Dharma Wanita Kindergarten, children demonstrate a commendable level of self-awareness appropriate for their age, as they exhibit the ability to apply it to themselves and their surroundings. Significant changes have been observed in students following the implementation of the project method.

Responsibility: Children manifest a strong sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, fostered by tasks assigned by their teachers. The project method effectively nurtures children's responsibility, empowering them to independently develop this trait. Consequently, the method has proven highly successful for the children at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten.

Social behavior: The methods employed effectively aid children in developing robust social skills, facilitating adept socialization with teachers, classmates, and their environment. Despite the unfamiliarity of their surroundings, children demonstrate proficient social interaction skills (Syahbudin et al., 2022).

The enhancement of social-emotional skills in children at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten aligns with the success criteria typically set at 5% or 0.05 in studies. If the obtained significance value exceeds this threshold, indicating no discernible difference or effect, a confidence level of 95% is established (Sugiono, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from this research align with the formulated objectives and problems. Based on the results of the data analysis conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn: Children's social-emotional abilities showed significant improvement after receiving treatment in the form of the project method. Descriptive analysis indicates that with the project method, children exhibit enhanced social-emotional skills, enabling them to socialize effectively and adapt to their environment. There is a notable correlation between the project method and the social-emotional abilities of children at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten. This is evidenced by the increase in children's average ability from 30.61 to 46.92 following the treatment. Additionally, hypothesis testing confirms this relationship with a significance value of <0.05.

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, the following insights can be derived: 1) Theoretical implications suggest that this research reinforces existing theories by demonstrating the influence of the project method on the social-emotional abilities of young children in Group A at Dharma Wanita Kembangbelor Kindergarten. 2) Practical implications highlight the importance of educators paying attention to the methods and resources utilized to enhance children's social-emotional abilities. This research illustrates that by implementing suitable methods and providing engaging materials, teachers can effectively motivate and engage children in learning activities at school..

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Enhancing Social-Emotional Development in Kindergarten: A Study on the Impact of Group A Project Methods

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