

FLYING INTO THE WORLD OF IMAGINATION: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STORYTELLING IN CIRCLE TIME TO IMPROVE PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Prosocial behavior is a voluntary action that provides benefits to others, such as showing care, empathy, and respect for personal value and dignity. The ability to behave socially is very important to have in order to prepare oneself to be accepted in the social environment. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of storytelling in circle time on prosocial behavior in kindergarten children. The method used in this study is an experimental research method which uses one group pre-test post-test. Data collection was done through observation with checklist recording techniques. The data analysis used is descriptive analysis. The subjects in this study were TUNAS BANGSA kindergarten children aged 5-6 years. The results of this study are that the storytelling method at circle time is effective in increasing prosocial behavior in children.

Keywords: Storytelling, circle time, prosocial behavior

Abstrak

Prosocial merupakan tindakan sukarela yang memberikan manfaat kepada orang lain, seperti seperti menunjukkan perhatian, empati, serta menghargai nilai dan martabat diri. Kemampuan berperilaku sosial sangat penting untuk dimiliki guna menyiapkan diri agar dapat diterima di lingkungan sosial. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui efektifitas storytelling di circle time terhadap perilaku prososial pada anak TK. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah metode penelitian eksperimen yang mana menggunakan one group pre-test post-test. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dengan teknik pencatatan checklist. Analisis data yang digunakan yaitu analisis deskriptif. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah anak TK TUNAS BANGSA yang berumur 5-6 tahun. Hasil penelitian ini adalah metode storytelling di circle time efektif dalam meningkatkan perilaku prososial pada anak.

Kata kunci: Storytelling, circle time, perilaku prososial

INTRODUCTION

The high number of preschool children exhibiting aggressive behavior has overwhelmed teachers. As reported by 302 teachers from 72 different kindergartens in Sleman Regency, 91% of them said that aggressive behavior is still common among young children. This aggressive behavior can be verbal, physical, psychological, or involve the possession of

objects. Verbal aggressive behavior such as laughing at/teasing friends occurred in 83.44% of cases, saying bad words to friends in 32.45% of cases, and silencing friends in 13.25% of cases. In the context of property ownership, 35.1% of children forcibly took their friends' belongings, 15.56% damaged their friends' belongings, and 55.3% hid their friends' belongings. There were also frequent instances of physical aggression, such as pulling a friend's hair roughly (28.4%), hitting a friend (74.17%), biting a friend's body part (21.2%), and kicking a friend's body part (74.17%). Finally, there is psychological aggression, such as not allowing a friend to play together (65.23%) and not allowing a friend to sit near them (48.34%) (Restuwati & Kumara, 2014). Aggressive behavior in children is caused by low prosocial behavior in these children. This can be proven through research conducted on one of the homeroom teachers at Kindergarten X, who said that some students in the kindergarten still have low prosocial behavior, such as being reluctant to play with certain friends, not wanting to do tasks together, fighting over toys and food, not caring about friends who are in trouble, and being selective about friends (Febrianto, 2021).

Prosocial behavior itself is a positive action in human behavior due to their existence as social beings who are always dependent on other humans (Febrianto, 2021). Prosocial behavior is positive behavior that is voluntary in helping individuals or groups in need (Mussen & Eisenberg, 1989). One child to another who shows caring and attention to others is called prosocial (Beaty, 2013). Prosocial behavior is an activity that is done freely with the aim of benefiting others (Papalia et al., 2010).

There are several ways to increase prosocial behavior in preschool children, one of which is storytelling during circle time. Storytelling is the art of telling a story that involves actions to express the story (Sandelowski, 1994). Storytelling comes from the English words "story," which means a tale, and "telling," which means to narrate. Circle time is a way of telling stories by gathering children and having them sit in a circle. Therefore, storytelling is the delivery/telling of a story or fairy tale (Anggarani, 2021).

Previous research has stated that storytelling has an effect on increasing the prosocial behavior of children at Al-Fajar Kindergarten in Pekanbaru, such as cooperating, helping each other, acting and speaking honestly, and sharing (Febrianto, 2021). In addition, a study entitled *Storytelling Using Wayang Kancil to Enhance The Understanding of Prosocial Behavior for Preschool* also states that fairy tales that use wayang as a medium have an influence on advancing prosocial behavior in preschool children (Winarsih & Martani, 2018). The results of a study conducted at PAUD MATAHARI in Cimahi City on the storytelling method for prosocial behavior stated that there is indeed an influence of the storytelling strategy on the prosocial behavior of children in the early childhood education center (Aisah, 2012). The storytelling method has the benefit of teaching good moral values to children (Noor, 2011).

From the above supporting studies, it can be concluded that telling stories to preschool children has an effect on increasing their prosocial behavior. Therefore, applying the storytelling method to children in kindergarten can help them to behave prosocially towards their friends or even people in their environment. This study is expected to reduce

aggressive behavior in preschool children and instill values of caring and togetherness in them.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with an experimental method. A one-group pretest-posttest design was used in this study, which allowed researchers to determine the effectiveness of storytelling interventions during circle time in improving prosocial behavior and to identify changes in behavior before and after the intervention. Data collection was conducted using observation techniques with a prosocial behavior measurement tool developed by the researchers.

The measurement tools used included descriptions of aspects of prosocial behavior such as sharing, cooperation, helping, acting honestly, and giving. The data obtained was then analyzed using descriptive statistical data analysis techniques. Descriptive statistical data analysis techniques were used to determine the characteristics of the data obtained and to see an overview of the changes in prosocial behavior as a whole in the group of children. In this report, we used the purposive sampling method with the criteria of subjects being 5-6 year old children from Tunas Bangsa Kindergarten. We evaluated data from 15 subjects, with only 6 subjects selected based on consistent attendance from meetings 1 to 5.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted on 15 children using the *one group pretest-posttest* method. From the 15 children, 6 were selected using *purposive sampling*. Observations were conducted twice, during the *pretest* and *posttest*.

Pre-test

The results of the *pre-test* conducted on 6 subjects showed that 2 of them already had the aspect of sharing, while the other 4 did not. This was proven by the fact that subjects FK and KK were able to express their happiness in front of the class when receiving gifts, express their sadness in front of the class when the gifts were taken back, and clap their hands to show their happiness when other friends successfully expressed their feelings in front of the class. Meanwhile, subjects MH, AA, SA, and S were not yet able to express their happiness in front of the class when receiving gifts and express their sadness in front of the class when the gifts were taken back. However, subjects MH, AA, SA, and S were able to clap their hands to show their happiness when their friends successfully expressed their feelings in front of the class.

In the second aspect, cooperation, none of the subjects possessed this skill. This was proven by subjects MH, AA, SA, S, FK, and KK, who were actually able to cooperate in the word puzzle game and cooperate in completing the word game but were not yet able to cooperate in tidying up the toys that had been used. Furthermore, for the third aspect, helping, none of the subjects possessed this skill. This is evidenced by subjects MH, AA, SA, S, FK, and KK, who were unable to help the researcher when asked for help and to help their friends who were having difficulties. Subjects MH, AA, S, and SA were unable

to help their friends in arranging toys or books, while subjects KK and FK were able to help their friends in arranging toys or books.

Furthermore, in terms of acting honestly, subjects MH, AA, S, and KK have fulfilled the aspect of acting honestly. This is evidenced by the fact that subjects MH, AA, S, and KK were able to answer honestly when asked who saw their friend's puzzle while working, answered honestly when asked who did not see their friend's puzzle while working, and answered honestly when asked who finished the puzzle first. Meanwhile, subjects FK and SA did not meet the aspect of acting honestly. This is evidenced by the fact that subjects FK and SA were unable to answer honestly when asked who saw their friend's puzzle while working, when asked who did not see their friend's puzzle while working, and when asked who finished the puzzle first. In the last aspect, namely generosity, none of the subjects possessed this aspect. This was proven by the fact that all subjects were unable to share food with the researcher who asked for it, share food with their friends, and share food with other researchers who were also there.

Post-test

The results of the *post-test* conducted on 6 subjects showed that 5 of them already had the aspect of sharing, while the other 1 did not yet have the aspect of sharing. This was evidenced by subjects S, KK, AA, FK, and MH being able to express their happiness in front of the class when receiving gifts, express their sadness in front of the class when the gifts were taken back, and clap their hands to show their happiness when other friends successfully expressed their feelings in front of the class.

Meanwhile, subject SA was not yet able to express their happiness in front of the class when receiving a gift or express their sadness in front of the class when the gift was taken back. However, all subjects MH, AA, SA, KK, S, and FK were able to clap their hands to show their happiness when their friends successfully expressed their feelings in front of the class. In the second aspect, namely cooperation, all subjects already possessed this skill. This is proven by the fact that subjects MH, AA, SA, S, FK, and KK were able to cooperate in a word puzzle game, cooperate in completing a word game, and cooperate in tidying up the toys that had been used.

Furthermore, for the third aspect, namely helping, all subjects did not yet fully possess this aspect, as evidenced by the fact that all subjects were able to help their friends organize books and toys. Subjects S, MH, KK, and FK were not yet able to help the researcher when asked for help, while subjects SA and AA were able to help when the researcher asked for help. Subjects FK, S, MH, SA, and AA were not yet able to help their friends who had difficulty carrying many books and toys, while KK was able to do so.

Furthermore, in terms of acting honestly, subjects AA, MH, S, and KK have fully mastered this aspect, as evidenced by their ability to answer honestly when asked who did not see their friend's puzzle while working, answer honestly when asked who saw their friend's puzzle while working, and answer honestly when asked who finished the puzzle first. Meanwhile, subjects SA and FK did not yet possess the aspect of acting

honestly, as evidenced by the subjects' inability to answer honestly when asked who did not see their friend's puzzle while working, answer honestly when asked who saw their friend's puzzle while working, and answer honestly when asked who finished the puzzle first. In the last aspect, namely charity, all subjects fully possessed this aspect, as evidenced by the fact that all subjects were able to share food with the researcher who asked for it, share wafers with their friends, and share food with other researchers who were there. Judging from the post-test that has been conducted, this proves that there was an improvement in children's behavior immediately after the story was told using the storytelling method.

DISCUSSION

The post-test results conducted after the storytelling intervention in circle time activities showed a significant increase in the prosocial behavior of preschool children. These findings indicate that narrative-based learning strategies delivered in an interactive and reflective atmosphere can provide optimal social-emotional development stimuli. The behavioral changes identified were not only situational but also indicated a deeper internalization of values. In the pretest stage, children showed hesitation and shyness when asked to express their happiness or sadness in front of the class. This condition reflects low self-confidence and limited emotional expression abilities. In terms of development, preschool-aged children are indeed at the initiative versus guilt stage as described by Erik Erikson, where environmental support greatly determines children's courage in expressing themselves. When the environment does not fully provide a safe space to speak, children tend to withdraw and exhibit passive behavior.

In addition, in the early stages of the study, children were also reluctant to work together with their friends to complete puzzles. This behavior shows that cooperative and collaborative skills in the context of educational games have not yet developed. These results are in line with Febrianto's (2021) research, which states that preschool-aged children often still show egocentric tendencies and lack the skills to complete tasks in groups. Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through Jean Piaget's perspective, which states that children aged 4–6 years are in the preoperational stage, where their mindset is still self-centered (egocentrism), so their ability to take the perspective of others has not yet developed optimally.

The pretest findings also showed that children did not yet display a helpful attitude towards their peers or when asked for help by the researcher. This low level of empathy and prosocial response is consistent with Zainab's (2012) research, which found that preschool children still need systematic stimulation to develop social sensitivity to the needs of others. Within the framework of Albert Bandura's social learning theory, prosocial behavior does not emerge automatically but is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement from the social environment. When children do not obtain consistent behavioral models or are not given the opportunity to practice them, prosocial tendencies do not develop significantly.

Another aspect identified in the pretest was the children's inability to speak honestly when asked questions by the researcher. Dishonesty at the preschool age is often not a form of

moral manipulation, but rather a manifestation of immature cognitive development in distinguishing between reality and imagination. However, it is still important to instill the value of honesty from an early age as a foundation for character building. In addition, children also did not yet show charitable behavior or sharing with friends in need. These findings reinforce the results of Zainab's (2012) research that the tendency to share in preschool children requires habituation and explicit learning through meaningful social experiences.

After the storytelling intervention in circle time was implemented, changes in children's prosocial behavior were clearly visible. Children became more confident in expressing their feelings in front of the class. This courage indicates an increase in emotional regulation and a sense of security in their social environment. Circle time activities, as explained by Masitoh and Djoehaeni (2005), provide a participatory space that encourages children to express their opinions and experiences openly. In a circle setting, sitting in parallel positions creates an egalitarian atmosphere, so that children feel valued and accepted.

In addition to increased courage to speak, children also showed better cooperation skills in completing group tasks. This change indicates that storytelling with collaborative messages can form positive mental representations about the importance of cooperation. Neuropsychologically, stories rich in moral values facilitate the activation of empathy through the process of identification with the characters in the story. Children learn to understand the consequences of actions through concrete and contextual narrative plots.

Helping behavior also increased significantly. Children began to spontaneously help friends who were experiencing difficulties and responded more responsively to requests for help. This reinforces Bandura's social learning theory that modeling through stories is effective in shaping new behaviors. When characters in stories are depicted as receiving positive consequences for their prosocial behavior, children are encouraged to imitate that behavior. Thus, storytelling serves as a means of internalizing values through the mechanism of observational learning.

Honesty also improved. Children were better able to give answers openly without excessive fear. This change indicates an increase in self-confidence as well as an understanding that honesty is a value that is appreciated in the classroom environment. Noor (2011) asserts that storytelling is an effective method for instilling moral values because stories provide concrete examples of the ethical consequences of an action. Through the conflicts and resolutions in stories, children understand the difference between right and wrong behavior in a contextual manner.

Charitable and sharing behaviors also increased after the intervention. Children began to be willing to give some of their belongings or food to friends in need. Psychosocially, this development reflects the emergence of empathy and a more mature ability to take perspective. According to Eisenberg and Mussen (1989), prosocial behavior in children develops through a combination of cognitive maturity, emotional regulation, and structured social experiences. Storytelling provides symbolic experiences that enrich children's moral imagination, facilitating the process of generalization to everyday life.

The success of this intervention can also be explained through Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. In Vygotsky's perspective, children's cognitive and social development occurs through social interaction in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Storytelling in circle time creates dialogic interaction between teachers and children, enabling the gradual scaffolding of prosocial values.

When teachers facilitate reflective discussions after the story, children receive guidance to understand the moral meaning and relate it to their personal experiences. Stories designed based on all aspects of prosociality sharing, helping, cooperating, telling the truth, and giving serve as comprehensive stimuli. The integration of values in a single narrative makes it easier for children to see the interrelationships between moral behaviors. Children not only understand one value separately, but also view prosociality as a system of interrelated behaviors. Implementation in daily life shows that internalization has gone beyond the stage of momentary imitation. Methodologically, these findings reinforce the effectiveness of the thematic-integrative learning approach in early childhood education. Storytelling combined with circle time presents learning that is not only cognitive but also affective and social. The learning environment becomes a social laboratory that allows children to practice values directly. Thus, the increase in post-test scores is not merely a statistical indicator but a reflection of real behavioral change.

Overall, this study confirms that storytelling in circle time is an effective pedagogical strategy for improving the prosocial behavior of preschool children. Through structured narratives, moral modeling, dialogic interactions, and shared reflection, children experience a comprehensive process of value internalization. These results have practical implications for early childhood educators to systematically integrate narrative methods into character development curricula.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of storytelling in circle time on prosocial behavior in 5-6 year old kindergarten children. The results show that storytelling during circle time is effective in improving prosocial behavior in children. We observed these results from the pre-test that we administered and compared with the post-test in the last session of the study. The post-test was administered after the intervention. In detail, the post-test showed an increase in prosocial behavior in children, especially in the aspects of sharing, cooperation, and charity.

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