

TEACHER'S ATTEMPT AND ROLE IN IMPROVING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at observing the methods and media used by teachers to improve prosocial behavior in kindergarten students of age 4-6. This study used a non-experimental quantitative design with a survey method. A preliminary study was conducted through a survey to support the development of learning media products, in which the sample consisted of 19 kindergarten teachers in MUBA Regency, Palembang. The result showed that 8 teachers used a storytelling method to improve students' prosocial behavior, 5 used a games method, 4 used discussion and 2 used parenting activity. In addition, the author also found that 8 teachers chose to use drawing media such as storybooks as the learning media in enhancing students' prosocial behavior, while 6 teachers used games and toys for children playing together such as play-mom sets or balls , 3 teachers used educational media such as puzzles or blocks and the other 2 used video. Based on this survey, drawing media and storytelling methods had the same status; meaning that teachers were mainly using storytelling methods and drawing media to improve prosocial behavior in early childhood.

Keywords: Prosocial Behavior, Early Childhood, Storytelling, Learning Media

Introduction

Prosocial behavior is an aspect of behavior consciously performed by someone to help someone else. There are various forms of prosocial behavior. Development of children's prosocial behavior is associated with the children's morality itself. This is because optimizing prosocial behavior in early childhood is vital for social development and pre-school age is an ideal time to optimize prosocial behavior. The same conclusion was also reached by Takahashi, et al., (2015) who stated that pre-school age is the most important period for children's development to obtain social skills in preparation for their upcoming school presence. Aspects of prosocial behavior that should be developed during childhood are empathy, cooperation, sharing, and mutual assistance.

Every child has potential that can be developed by adults around him/her, where the child is given proper stimulations that are learning while playing, supported by suitable media and strategy to optimize development. Syukria & Siregar, (2018) stated that childhood is the period when careful attention should be paid, since during this period children are imitating what or whoever they see, listen to, and feel. It means that early childhood is an excellent time for children to develop. Therefore, parents and teachers must give careful guidance and respond to children's behavior in a wise and responsible manner. According to the observational results, it was found that there are still children who are shy and do not want to make friends, namely those who are still accompanied by their parents, grandmothers or nannies.

Prosocial behavior in children can be enhanced by various methods, such as direct modeling, and implication via image. A study conducted by Halle, et al., (2016) entitled "Teaching Social Skill to Students with Autism: A Video Modeling Social Stories Approach" found that modeling via social stories in video may be effective in teaching prosocial behavior to children. The result can be seen from behavior generalization exhibited by children from time to time. Moreover, a study conducted by Santos et al., (2012) also found that stories and books can be used to build character in meaningful discussion and social skill development such as cooperation and sharing. Based on the above-mentioned studies, it can be concluded that storytelling or video-recorded stories may be useful in optimizing prosocial behavior in children. Therefore, the present survey aimed to obtain a general image of learning media or methods used by schoolteachers to improve student's prosocial behavior.

Theoretical Review

Prosocial Behavior

Man is a social creature. Social development is needed by those in early childhood in order to learn about and understand their environment. In social development, children are expected to behave according to the requirements of the society in which they live. According to Kurniati, (2016) social behavior itself consists of positive aspects (prosocial) including imitating, competing, cooperating, empathy, sympathy, social support, sharing and familiar behavior; and negative aspects (anti-social) including negativism, egocentricity, aggression, harming, judgemental and prejudicial behavior. Kostelnik, et al., (2012) stated that children grow and bloom in society by respecting kindness, help, and cooperation that tend to internalize values and behavior patterns depending on the places where they live.

Every aspect of behavior is goal-oriented. It means that in general an aspect of behavior arises motivated by the willingness to achieve something, although the specific purpose and goal is not always realized. Prosocial behavior itself becomes one of the development aspects of social skills, in which social skill is defined as a form of relational behavior between individuals formed through various experiences from social interaction (Hapidin, 2015). Social skill is also needed by children to initiate positive interactions with other people (Novita, 2010). Furthermore, Gresham & Elliot's (in Little, Swangler, & Akin-Little, 2017) revealed that social skill is defined as socially acceptable behavior that enables someone to interact with someone else with the existence of a positive reciprocal relationship and help them to avoid a negative response. Based on this definition, it can be stated that social skill is a form of behavior needed in building a relationship between individuals in the presence of a positive reciprocal relationship.

Positive social behavior is often seen in the context of quantifying to what extent a child's social skill develops. This was the topic of a study conducted by Broekhuizen, et al., (2016) where the authors used positive social behavior (prosocial) to quantify the social skills of kindergarten students. According to Rowley, et al.(2014) prosocial behavior is seen as the representation of important positive elements from social change strategy where helping and cooperating with other people become the form of efforts opposing antisocial behavior. Iqbal, (2013) defined prosocial behavior as a voluntary aspect of behavior which helps someone unconditionally and generously. Bashori, (2017) stated that prosocial behavior is performed voluntarily to benefit other people by helping them to alleviate their physical or psychological burdens.

Ulutas & Aksoy, (2009) also argued that sharing, cooperation, comforting and helping someone all refer to voluntary prosocial behavior toward other people. According to the above definitions, prosocial behavior is a voluntary act performed by someone to help and benefit other people, such as helping, sharing, comforting and cooperating. Carlo & Randall (in Rodrigues et al., 2017) asserted that there are six dimensions associated with someone's tendency in behaving prosocially, namely: 1) altruism or the tendency to voluntarily help other people consistently; 2) anonymous prosocial behavior or helping behavior performed not wishing to be known by others; 3) compliant prosocial behavior or helping behavior emerges due to responding to the verbal or nonverbal request; 4) dire prosocial behavior or helping behavior arising only in a crisis or emergency condition; 5) emotional prosocial behavior or the behavior of emotionally helping someone; 6) public

prosocial behavior, or social behavior performed in front of others and wishing for reward. Based on the above dimensions, it can be said that someone's prosocial behavior emerges according to the various reasons or conditions faced.

One's prosocial behavior can be affected by several factors, internally or externally. Malti, et al., (2009) stated that children's inclination to be prosocial is affected by several factors, such as age, sympathy, ability to think for others and moral motivation. Furthermore, Kostelnik et al., (2012) stated that children's prosocial behavior is influenced by several factors, such as 1) biological factor including age, gender, and temperament; 2) social cognitive factor or how children may understand others' emotions; 3) language factor, such as competence in communicating and speaking; 4) social factor, including children's experience with their environment; and 5) cultural factor or how cultural differences may affect children's prosocial behavior. In summary, children's prosocial behavior can be affected by several factors, namely age, gender, sympathy, social or cultural experiences.

The Role of Parents and Teachers in Optimizing Children's Prosocial Behavior

From early childhood, children are obliged to actively participate in a complex world. For years, pre-school students have been directed to develop their independence and cooperation. Thus, when children become more verbal and able to think through others' viewpoints, then they can be more capable of interaction with their peers. Children grow and bloom from the smallest environment called family, so the role of parents is important in the process of shaping behavior from early childhood. It was also stated by Ölçer & Aytar, (2014) that parents have a reciprocal relationship with children that may affect their social skills, such as self-regulation, cooperation, and positive agreement.

Several methods can be used by parents to augment children's prosocial behavior, as stated by Panepinto, (2018) parents can do various things to help children nurture their prosocial behavior. These are: 1) provision of clear rules and expectations regarding behavior; 2) saying what a child meant (talking conformable to expression); 3) observing and labeling when children are engaged in prosocial behavior (giving proper guidance whether it is positive or negative); 4) modeling; 5) responsive and empathy treatment; 6) respecting nature; 7) reading books on friendship and relationships; 8) giving tasks (providing opportunities for children to learn social behavior), and 9) avoiding pro-violence and anti-social behavior program and content.

Development and learning result from biological and environmental maturing interactions that cover the physical and social worlds where children live. Therefore, prosocial behavior is essential for children's welfare. Teachers also have roles and responsibilities for providing an opportunity for children to develop their social skills at schools. Therefore, strategies are necessary to build children's prosocial behavior at schools. Kostelnik et al., (2012) revealed that there are various strategies useful to teach prosocial behavior to children of any age, namely: discussing the value of prosocial behavior and giving examples of how children may act accordingly, telling stories portraying prosocial principles, demonstrating prosocial behavior using small figures, hand puppets, dolls, sketches, television, or a direct model, redisplaying prosocial actions previously observed, playing roles where children alternatively play as the helper and those who need help, playing games that promote cooperation and others' awareness, and creating chances for children to help or cooperate in a real-life situation.

Methods

A non-experimental quantitative design was used as the survey method. The survey was conducted by giving questionnaires distributed online and to kindergarten teachers directly. The reason why the authors used a survey was to observe teachers' methods and means in improving children's prosocial behavior at schools. The survey was conducted by collecting information from a group of representative respondents deemed as a population generally portraying certain issues (Sudaryo, et al., 2019). The survey site was in Musi Banyuasin Regency, where we recruited 19 Kindergarten teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires given to teachers.

The questionnaires were completed by teachers, reflecting the actual situation at their schools. The questionnaire asked: 1) the learning method frequently used by teachers to improve children's prosocial behavior; 2) learning media used to optimize children's prosocial behavior development; 3) factors affecting teachers' decision in choosing the learning method and media. Respondents answered these questions using a five-point Likert's scale (1=never, 2=seldom, 3=occasionally, 4=often, 5=always).

Result and Discussion

It became apparent that storytelling and picture media were the methods most used. Eight teachers employed storytelling and picture media methods to create children's prosocial behavior. It is seen in the percentage graphics in Figures 1 and 2.

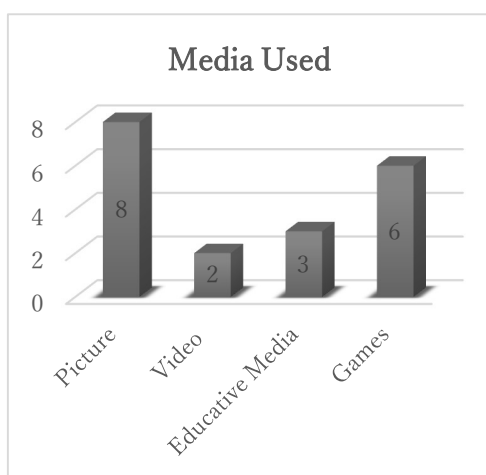


Figure 1. Description of Learning Media Usage

The above figure shows that picture media had the highest score, with 8 teachers using pictures as the learning media to improve children's prosocial behavior. This was followed by 6 teachers who chose to use games, and 3 teachers who chose educational media. Educational media here is media other than pictures such as puzzles, blocks, and hand puppets. The remaining 2 teachers used video as the learning media in improving children's prosocial behavior. The item "picture" here was in the form of photographs, storybooks, comics, and cartoons, showing that teachers used picture media in representing messages or information symbolically concerning prosocial behavior. Through pictures, teachers can provide simple explanations to children on prosocial behavior, which were performed by teachers through storytelling to children. Through such activities, teachers may be able to create a more enjoyable learning environment. This is in line with the statement of Omenge & Priscah, (2016) that learning may help teachers in delivering information to children and make learning more enjoyable. It was also found that in addition to pictures, teachers often

used games and toys for children playing together such as play-mom sets or balls as learning media in improving children's prosocial behavior.

Playing in groups makes interaction among children more active and communicative, either through interaction between children and teachers or with peers. While playing, teachers also chose an appropriate learning method for children to optimize learning at schools. One such method is storytelling. Through storytelling in the classroom, teachers can deliver an implicit message to children in a more enjoyable and simple way (Nurgiyantoro, 2013). From our survey, it was shown that the storytelling method was the most preferable and most often used method by teachers to improve children's prosocial behavior. The details are shown in Figure 2.

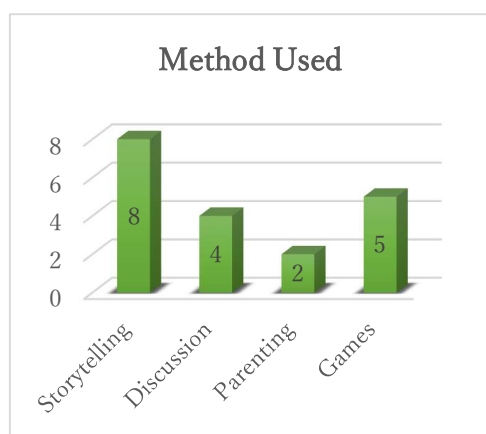


Figure 2. Description of Learning Method Usage

The graphic shows that 8 teachers use storytelling as the major learning method to improve children's prosocial behavior. While 5 teachers used games, 4 used discussion and 2 used parenting activity as the method to improve prosocial behavior. Kostelnik et al., (2012) state that several strategies can be used to teach prosocial behavior to children, one of which is by storytelling that describes prosocial behavior. During storytelling activities, teachers usually use pictures as symbolic representations to represent a series of messages that cannot be conveyed by words alone. This is in correlation with what was found by researchers, that most teachers use picture media and storytelling activities in learning. Effendy et al., (2013) state that storytelling with pictures can be a powerful medium for delivering messages where activities that make children interested can help children understand learning through the stories' content, even though the child has not read them, as well as where the concepts of

behavior that cannot be explained by words alone can be explained by the teacher through the illustrations in the pictures.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the general image obtained by the authors of this study is that teachers often use picture media such as storybooks, comics, cartoons, posters and others in learning, and storytelling to improve children's prosocial behavior. In addition, the authors also found that there are certain factors affecting teachers' decisions in choosing pictures as the learning media; First, the time limitation for teachers to produce the learning media has made pictures the preferred alternative, due to its easy access; Second, learning media using pictures is more efficient and colorful, thus it attracts children's attention; Third, the picture used can be adjusted with various learning themes at schools.

Conclusion

Prosocial behavior is vital for children's welfare. Children must learn how to act appropriately, for their own benefit and for other people. Prosocial skill development starts from early childhood, in which the early years represent the ideal time for children to improve their prosocial skills. In addition, parents can help to optimize their children's prosocial behavior by bonding and by giving strict directions for the modeled behavior, either positive or negative. Teachers as the facilitator at schools can facilitate children's prosocial behavior development by providing opportunities to play positively, modeling, guidance, optimum space, and designing a suitable curriculum to place positive behavior foundation for children. In particular, picture media such as storybooks can be introduced as the initial literature media used to transfer good values or as the medium of modeling positive behavior through symbolic representation delivered via a series of colorful pictures according to the children's interests.

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