

Development of Collaborative Learning in Early Childhood through Gobak Sodor Game

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Abstract

Purpose: Collaborative learning in early childhood is important in nurturing a culture of cooperation and teamwork. This research endeavours to introduce children to the traditional game of gobak sodor to cultivate collaboration from an early age.

Methodology: This study employs qualitative and data collection methods encompassing interviews, observations, and documentation. This research focused on a cohort of 23 group B students, with detailed observations conducted on a subset of 6 children. Thematic analysis models were utilised for data interpretation. The research protocol includes introductory sessions, exemplification, and practical engagement in gobak sodor gameplay.

Results: The findings underscore the efficacy of gobak sodor in fostering collaborative learning among early childhood participants. Beyond enhancing physical motor skills, the game promotes collaborative aptitudes, advocating its integration into pedagogical practices.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study underscores the transformative potential of gobak sodor in nurturing early childhood collaborative learning. By engaging in this traditional game, children cultivate values of mutual cooperation, responsibility, strategic thinking, and problem-solving while fostering a sense of communal heritage preservation. Furthermore, the game instils traits of solidarity, loyalty, empathy, and sportsmanship, thereby enriching the socio-emotional development of participating children.

Introduction Section

Early childhood encompasses the pivotal developmental stage from birth to six years, during which children undergo rapid physical and psychological growth. According to Montessori, this phase is characterised by the absorbent mind, wherein children effortlessly assimilate information from their surroundings (Kurniati, 2010). Often referred to as the “golden age,” this period significantly shapes their future physical, cognitive, and intellectual attributes. Moreover, from birth to eight years, early childhood denotes an individual with distinct growth patterns across various domains, including physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, creative, linguistic, and communicative aspects. Maria Montessori delineates it as a dynamic process wherein children thrive within environments conducive to uninhibited self-expression. As espoused by Suyadi, early childhood education prioritises establishing foundational frameworks tailored to each child’s unique developmental trajectory.

Glen Dolman posits that the most rapid cerebral development occurs within the critical window from birth to seven years. Stimulating all facets of development during this formative period maximises neurological maturation, thereby optimising cognitive functioning. According to Law number 20 of 2003 regarding the national education system, the purpose of Early Childhood Education is defined as a nurturing endeavour aimed at children aged 0-6 years, facilitating their physical and spiritual growth and development in preparation for subsequent education (Depdiknas, 2003). Furthermore, Permendikbud number 37 of 2014 elucidates that early childhood education aims to stimulate and optimise various developmental facets, with teachers in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) tasked with fostering these dimensions. Among these, the social-emotional aspect assumes paramount importance, encompassing how children learn to comprehend and navigate emotions and situations in their interactions with others, guided by observation, imitation, and active engagement. Social-emotional development fosters empathy, emotional expression and comprehension, anger management, independence, adaptability, problem-solving acumen, resilience, solidarity, courtesy, and respect.

Cultivating social-emotional skills in early childhood, particularly empathy is imperative for fostering an understanding of and responsiveness to the emotions and experiences of others. Failure to adequately nurture these skills during early developmental stages may impede a child’s ability to engage and interact with peers and their environment effectively. Kartono (2006) in Marsudi (2006: 6) elucidates that one hallmark of early childhood is the primordial social

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relations stemming from a nascent egocentric disposition, characterised by an inability to discern oneself from the social milieu.

Play constitutes the quintessential realm of childhood, as it provides the stimuli necessary for the holistic development of children. As posited by Patmonodewo (2000:41), the preschool phase serves as a reflection of the future quality of a nation. Various developmental facets require nurturing during this formative period, including cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, moral, physical motor, and artistic dimensions (Suyanto, 2005: 9). Of these, the emotional aspect emerges as particularly influential in shaping children's growth surpassing even the intellectual realm (Agustian, 2000: 8).

Piaget asserts that play represents an enjoyable activity often repeated by individuals. According to Parten (as cited in Sujiono, 2012), play activities serve as a form of socialisation, affording children opportunities for exploration, creativity, emotional expression, and joyful learning within their surroundings. Distinguished by its voluntary nature and absence of external guidance, play stands apart from formal learning and work activities (Sujiono, 2012). Children typically utilise tangible, real-world objects during play, stimulating their developmental curiosity and knowledge acquisition (Ramani, Daubert, & Scalise, 2019).

MJ Langeveld (Khobir, 2009) underscores that play constitutes the primary occupation of childhood, serving as a fertile ground for learning and growth. Parents and educators need not invest in costly toys; they can leverage readily available or repurposed items. Each play activity yields unique benefits, underscoring the importance of fostering children's voluntary and joyful engagement in play. Through play, children aim to enhance their growth and development optimally, refine social skills through peer interaction, and unleash their creative potential (Sujiono, 2012).

Althof (2006), Sujiono (2012), and Nutbrown (2006) assert that play activities serve multiple purposes, including the enhancement of muscle strength and coordination through movement, the cultivation of emotional intelligence, intellectual development, and the fostering of independence and self-confidence. Play, therefore, plays a pivotal role in honing physical skills, nurturing creativity, shaping personality, and facilitating comprehensive developmental exploration of the surrounding environment.

In the backdrop of the 21st century, characterised by profound technological advancements and unprecedented societal transformations, individuals confront escalating challenges marked by uncertainty and rapid change across all spheres of life. Consequently, fostering a spirit of collaboration assumes paramount importance. The capacity to collaborate emerges as a quintessential skill requisite for navigating the complexities of the contemporary landscape. Early childhood, from birth to eight years, represents a critical developmental juncture characterised by the simultaneous maturation of physical (body) and psychological (soul) domains.

In response, educational institutions in the twenty-first century are mandated to cultivate a spectrum of competencies collectively called the 4Cs: creative thinking, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, and collaboration skills. Critical thinking skills are paramount in guiding children to navigate problem-solving scenarios effectively. For instance, children can hone their ability to discern the veracity of information amidst the deluge of data pervasive in the digital age.

Creativity, denoting the capacity to innovate beyond conventional constraints, empowers children to approach challenges from diverse perspectives, fostering open-minded problem-solving. Collaboration entails the cooperative pursuit of shared objectives, a skill imperative for future professional endeavours. Integrating collaborative activities into the learning process equips children with the ability to negotiate consensus-driven solutions within a group dynamic.

Communication proficiency, encompassing the clear, concise, and effective conveyance of ideas, constitutes another cornerstone of 21st-century skill sets. This multifaceted skill comprises linguistic fluency, contextual comprehension, and audience sensitivity, ensuring the seamless transmission of messages. Essential for students across all educational levels, including those embarking on their learning journey, the acquisition of 4C skills is imperative. Moreover, parents can contribute to skill development at home by leveraging digital media to stimulate children's learning strategies. A strong self-centred attitude predominates in children aged two or three, with collaborative tendencies still in nascent stages. However, by age three, a willingness to engage in collaborative efforts with peers begins to emerge. This inclination towards cooperation matures between six and seven (Aqobah et al., 2022: 138).

Various methods are employed to cultivate collaboration skills in early childhood, ranging from outdoor activities to traditional games. Utilising building blocks, for instance, facilitates the refinement of eye-hand coordination, fine and gross motor skills, problem-solving abilities, and imaginative faculties while fostering cooperative interactions. Traditional games, imbued with social values like cooperation and mutual respect, shape children's positive social behaviours. These games provide recreational learning experiences and instil the virtues of togetherness, cooperation, and mutual aid.

Engagement in traditional games yields manifold benefits, encompassing the development of social and emotional intelligence, nurturance of creativity, impartation of cultural values, refinement of motor skills, and enhancement of cognitive, physical, and mental well-being. Moreover, these activities foster a congenial atmosphere and acquaint children with nature. Since traditional games use readily available resources, they incur minimal costs. As a unique cultural heritage, traditional games are the cornerstone of childhood activities, ingrained in everyday life and serving as a conduit for enjoyable physical exertion.

One traditional game exemplifying cooperation is Gobak Sodor, played in groups, fostering collaborative dynamics. Defined in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), "gobak" entails a traditional game set within a rectangular field delineated by lines, each guarded by sentinels. Participants endeavouring to breach these lines risk interception by the

guards, necessitating a change in roles upon contact. “Sodor,” on the other hand, denotes the act of thrusting, typically involving the body and hands to tag opponents attempting to cross the lines. Gobak Sodor is also known by various regional names such as galah asin, galasin, or gobag.

Fundamentally, traditional games represent cultural heritage deserving of preservation and propagation. Educators are responsible for acquainting children with these heritage games, including Gobak Sodor, which epitomises cooperative gameplay. In this game, participants collaborate to outmanoeuvre opponents and traverse the lines without being tagged. Hence, Gobak Sodor is an invaluable educational tool for instilling collaborative learning in early childhood. Leveraging this traditional game as a medium, educators can cultivate teamwork, strategic thinking, and social skills among young learners, presenting a compelling avenue for alternative research in early childhood education.

Method

This research explores the nature of cooperation within early childhood games through a qualitative approach. Qualitative research methodology highlights the unique human and social phenomena that resist quantification through statistical methods. Emphasising dialogue and field observation over statistical analysis, this study will meticulously observe and document data to capture the intricacies of early childhood cooperation. Qualitative research focuses on human experiences and social interactions, yielding descriptive data through narratives from observed individuals. Sugiyono (2019) outlines that qualitative approaches necessitate direct information from primary sources, including observations, interviews, field notes, and personal accounts. Thus, this study seeks to provide an in-depth portrayal of events unfolding within the research setting.

In fostering collaborative learning among early childhood participants, this research centres on traditional games, specifically Gobak Sodor. Data collection techniques entail interviews with school principals and kindergarten teachers, complemented by student observations. Additionally, data will be gathered from Weekly Learning Implementation Plans (RPPM), Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH), and related documents. The research cohort comprises Group B students from Aisyiyah 13 Baluwarti Kindergarten. This research employs thematic analysis as a method of data analysis, facilitating the identification of recurrent patterns and themes, along with the preparation of Weekly Learning Implementation Plans (RPPM) and Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH). Additionally, the library method serves as the primary approach for data collection, wherein literature review assumes paramount significance within the research methodology.

Library research systematically explores existing library resources, obviating the need for direct data collection. The literature review component comprehensively examines scholarly sources, culminating in content analysis to extract pertinent insights. Sugiyono (2013) states that research methodology constitutes a scientific approach to data collection tailored to specific objectives and applications. Key considerations encompass scientific rigour, data acquisition, research goals, and practical utility. Preceding the review of scholarly sources, researchers must equip themselves with the necessary tools and delineate the specific scientific resources essential to the research. Efficient time management is imperative to ensure the attainment of research objectives. Subsequently, researchers engage in the meticulous reading and analysis of scientific literature to glean relevant insights pertinent to the research inquiry.

Results and Discussion

Results

The participants in this study comprised 23 Group B students and 2 class teachers from Aisyiyah 13 Baluwarti Surakarta Kindergarten. The researcher’s objective was to foster collaborative learning and child cooperation through direct observations and interviews with teachers and principals, focusing on developing collaborative learning in early childhood through the Gobak Sodor game. Teachers elucidated and demonstrated the mechanics of Gobak Sodor to students, ensuring comprehension before gameplay commenced. Gobak Sodor entails navigating a rectangular field divided into sections guarded by sentinels as a group activity necessitating mutual cooperation. Players seeking passage across the lines must avoid being tagged by the guards; failure prompts a role change. Through gameplay, students grappled with the concepts of winning and losing with sincerity, fostering collaboration evidenced by their eagerness to assume agreed-upon roles or tasks. This cooperative ethos manifested in their receptiveness to others’ perspectives and prioritisation of group objectives, thereby exemplifying the pursuit of collective success in the game.

Based on the observations of children’s participation, the implementation was notably effective, aligning with the teachers’ planning in cultivating collaborative learning and child cooperation. The process commenced with meticulous activity planning, involving identifying themes and sub-themes and developing Weekly Learning Implementation Plans (RPPM) and Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH), ensuring optimal time allocation.

During the Gobak Sodor gameplay session, the teacher facilitated the activity by providing the necessary equipment and delineating the rules of engagement. Following an explanation of the game mechanics, the teacher encouraged student

inquiry by fielding questions about Gobak Sodor. Subsequently, exemplary gameplay demonstrations were provided, supplemented by clearly elucidating the game rules.

Two students were selected to demonstrate gameplay to enhance comprehension further, elucidating the rules to their peers. This approach fostered a comprehensive understanding of Gobak Sodor's collaborative nature and underscored the importance of cooperation within the game's framework.

Based on triangulated observation and interview data regarding the development of collaborative learning through Gobak Sodor games, students exhibit enthusiasm, excitement, and joy during gameplay. The game fosters socialisation, teamwork, cooperation, and camaraderie among children, promoting inclusivity and expanding their knowledge of traditional games. Through Gobak Sodor, children engage in collaborative activities such as discussions, compromise, planning, and task allocation, thereby enhancing problem-solving skills through collective effort.

The overarching goal of Gobak Sodor is to cultivate children's collaborative skills, fostering mutual support, participation, and consensus among individuals. Researchers conduct daily evaluations through documentation and interviews with teachers upon the conclusion of each teaching and learning session. Teachers employ various assessment methods, including daily, weekly, and monthly assessments, alongside notes, anecdotes, checklists, and work samples to gauge children's progress and communicate their developmental achievements to parents. This evaluative process aims to convey improvements in children's physical development outcomes.

Discussion

Integrating collaborative learning in early childhood education can be facilitated through traditional games such as "gobak sodor." This game can instil values of cooperation, respect, impartiality in friendship selection, and responsibility among participants. However, many children may be unfamiliar when teachers introduce the game and its rules. This lack of familiarity stems from the dwindling popularity of traditional games in contemporary society, largely overshadowed by modern digital alternatives fueled by rapid technological advancements. Consequently, it is unsurprising that children fail to recognise traditional games despite their capacity to stimulate various aspects of early childhood development, including collaboration and cooperation.

Abdulsyani defines collaboration as a social process wherein individuals engage in specific activities to achieve shared goals (Sewi & Mailasari, 2020). This involves mutual assistance and comprehension of each other's actions. Typically, collaboration involves task delegation, wherein all participants complete assigned tasks to accomplish common objectives (Abdulsyani, 1994: 156). Friend and Cook describe collaboration as an interaction between two or more professionals working towards a common goal (Cook in Murawsky, 2010: 6). Woolfolk contends that collaboration embodies a philosophy guiding interpersonal relationships in both professional and educational settings, emphasising respect for diversity, power-sharing, and knowledge exchange (Woolfolk, 2009). Greenstein defines collaboration as a process of collaborative planning and execution, incorporating diverse viewpoints and active participation in discussions through contributions, attentive listening, and mutual support (Greenstein, 2012: 105-106). In a collaborative classroom environment, learners collaborate to establish shared goals, engage in collective learning experiences, undertake meaningful tasks, and iterate on initial ideas to produce various artefacts or outcomes (Greenstein, 2012: 105-106). Trilling, representing the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, highlights collaboration skills as the ability to work effectively, respect group differences, demonstrate flexibility, and compromise to achieve common objectives, acknowledging collaborative tasks as shared responsibilities and valuing individual contributions from each team member (Trilling, 2009: 55).

Conclusion

The study's findings conclude that the game of gobak sodor contributes to developing collaborative learning and cooperation in early childhood. Through this game, children can cultivate attitudes of cooperation, responsibility, strategic thinking, problem-solving, and a sense of togetherness. Participating in gobak sodor also enables children to identify and preserve traditional games as part of their cultural heritage. Moreover, it fosters a sense of solidarity, loyalty, empathy, and familiarity and instils the value of sportsmanship among children.

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