

PLAY PRETEND AS A MEDIA AND LEARNING RESOURCE TO ENHANCE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN AGED 18-60 MONTHS

Siti Indatul Laili¹, Siti Almunzidah Aririn²

¹Universitas Bina Sehat PPNI Mojokerto

²Klinik Bina Sehat PPNI Mojokerto

*Corresponding author: sitiindatul9@gmail.com

Abstract

Family is the smallest unit in society that can be a source and medium of learning for children, especially toddlers, as it is their first social environment. This research design is cross-sectional, where the researcher collects data on using play pretend by distributing questionnaires to mothers. Simultaneously, the researcher collects data on the social and emotional development of children aged 18-60 months by assessing their social and emotional development. The population in this study are all mothers who have children aged 18-60 months in Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency. The sampling technique used in this study is total sampling, where the sample is taken by making the entire population the object of research. The sample in this study are all mothers who have children aged 18-60 months in Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency. The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. This research was conducted in Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency in July 2024. Data processing was done by editing, coding, scoring, tabulating, and data analysis using cross-tabulation in Microsoft Excel. Then, the research results were interpreted with percentages. The results showed that 23 (77%) respondents who conducted play pretend positively had positive social and emotional development. Pretend play can provide an opportunity for children to explore their emotions, where children can recognize their feelings and regulate and control their emotions better. Children will also be able to realize that others have different beliefs, intentions, thoughts, and feelings.

Keywords: Play Pretend, Social and Emotional Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest unit in society, consisting of the father, mother, siblings, and other relatives. Family can be a source and medium of learning for children, especially those aged 18-60 months, as it is their first social environment. Children begin to form perceptions, both about things outside themselves and about themselves. One of the interaction processes in the family is through play. Play is one of the enjoyable activities for children. Some parents may think that when children engage in pretend play, they are only doing activities that provide fun and have no significant meaning.

According to Joan Freeman, a British psychologist, play is an activity that helps children achieve holistic development, physically, intellectually, socially, morally, and emotionally. Therefore, it can be said that through play, children begin to learn about the world around them using all their senses. During the interaction process in the family, each family member is expected to be able to give and receive solutions and thoughts from other family members.

Research by Khan and Rosa (2020) mani shows that pretend play is a form of play that contains elements of make-believe. In pretend play, the play equipment used will support the "make-believe" element. Through pretend play, children will make efforts to represent mental, metacognitive, interaction, communication, and empathy. This can be used as a means to develop psychological, social, and communication abilities (1). A preliminary study conducted in Wonoayu Timur in July 2023 found that children's play is currently influenced by the emergence

of various modern games that are individualistic, only emphasizing cognitive aspects without touching affective or emotional aspects, such as gadget use.

Pretend play or make-believe play, is a type of play that involves children pretending to be characters or engaging in non-realistic activities. When children engage in make-believe play, they are experimenting with social and emotional roles in real life. They learn about how things happen in the world and how to be someone else. Additionally, children learn empathy, cooperation, responsibility, and sharing responsibility. Through role-playing or make-believe play, children also learn how to express feelings of happiness and sadness. Other skills that can be learned include impulse control, ethics, and etiquette, as well as reducing aggression. The more complex the pretend play, the more complex the child's thinking and learning process. Parents must always support their children during the learning process so that children can become confident individuals and achieve optimal development. The purpose of this study is to prove the effectiveness of play pretend as a medium and learning resource in enhancing social and emotional development in children aged 18-60 months.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a cross-sectional design, where the researcher collects data on the utilization of pretend play by distributing questionnaires to mothers. Simultaneously, the researcher collects data on the social and emotional development of children aged 18-60 months by assessing their development (2). The population in this study consists of all mothers who have children aged 18-60 months in Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, totaling 300 children. The sampling technique used in this study is total sampling. The sample in this study consists of all mothers who have children aged 18-60 months in Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, totaling 30 children. In this study, This research instrument consists of 10 questionnaire items, divided into two categories: Social Development Category (5 items) and Emotional Development Category (5 items). Each item has a Likert scale with 4 answer options: Very Suitable (4 points), Suitable (3 points), Less Suitable (2 points), and Not Suitable (1 point). To calculate the score, the score of each item is summed up and calculated using the T-score. Then, the T-score is interpreted based on the predetermined score category, where ≥ 50 indicates a positive result and < 50 indicates a negative result, that has been validated using the Pearson Correlation test with a result of 100% validity and reliability tested using Cronbach's Alpha with a valid result. This research was conducted in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency in October 2024. The independent variable in this study is the implementation of pretend play. The dependent variable in this study is social and emotional development. Data processing was done through editing, coding, scoring, and data analysis using cross-tabulation in Microsoft Excel. Then, presenting the research results interpreted with percentages (3).

3. RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency Distribution Based on Child's Sex in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency in October 2024.

No	Sex	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Male	12	40
2	Female	18	60
Total		30	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 1, it is known that the majority of respondents, 18 (60%), are female.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution Based on Child's Age in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, October 2024.

No	Age	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Toddler	9	30
2	Pre-School	21	70
Total		30	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 2, it is known that the majority of respondents, 21 (70%), are of pre-school age.

Table 3. *Frequency Distribution Based on Nutritional Status of Children in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, October 2024.*

No	Nutritional Status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Severely Underweight	0	0
2	Underweight	1	3
3	Normal	29	97
4	Overweight	0	0
Total		30	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 4, it is known that the majority of children, 29 (97%), have a normal nutritional status.

Table 4. *Frequency Distribution Based on Mother's Education Level in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, October 2024.*

No	Mother's Education Level	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Less than Elementary School	0	0
2	Elementary School	0	0
3	Junior High School	14	47
4	Senior High School	14	47
5	College/University	2	6
Total		30	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 4, it is known that the majority of mothers, 14 (47%), have a Senior High School education level.

Table 5. *Frequency Distribution of Play Pretend with Social and Emotional Development in Wonoayu Timur, Dukuhmojo Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, October 2024*

No	Play Pretend	Social and Emotional Development		Total	
		Positive	Negative	F	%
1	Positive	23 (77%)	2 (7%)	5	84
2	Negative	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	5	16
Total		24	6	30	100

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 5, it is found that 23 (77%) of respondents who engaged in positive play pretend have positive social and emotional development. A child's social relationship begins with their interactions with parents, caregivers, other family members, others, and peers. By 18-22 months, children can already entertain their peers, share toys with others, and exhibit expressions of fear. Between 2-6 years old, children gradually learn to become social members (4).

William Fitzstephens wrote that in the 13th century, children played pretend games in the fields every Sunday afternoon. Older boys would engage in pretend battles using real weapons, while younger children would use blunted spears (5). Pretend play is a game where children imitate others or take on different roles. This type of play is highly beneficial for children, as it helps them overcome conflicts and anxiety, as stated in psychoanalytic theory (6).

Research has shown Triyanti, Saparahayuningsih dan Sumarsih, 2016 that symbolic play activities can improve students' cooperative skills in teamwork. The average score for cooperative skills was 4.435, which falls into the "good" category. Symbolic play is a form of pretend play where children use their imagination and imitate adult behaviors (7). Another study Salsabila, 2024 found that pretend play has a positive impact on children's sense of responsibility in the B group of TK Rizani Putra in Jambi Luar Kota (8).

Play pretend provides children with the opportunity to explore their emotions, recognize their feelings, and learn to regulate and control them better. For example, when children engage in role-playing, they express the emotions they feel because they are acting out their character. Pretend play that involves friends or siblings can also foster good social development in children. Children will choose roles, create a storyline together, and resolve any conflicts that may arise. In doing so, children learn to recognize that others have different beliefs, intentions, thoughts, and feelings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There were 23 (77%) respondents who engaged in positive play pretend and had positive social and emotional development.

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