



Implementation of the Trader Role Play Method to Improve the Social and Emotional Abilities of Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education contributes significantly to building the foundation of children's abilities, including social-emotional skills, which are the foundation that will foster a sense of security, the ability to socialize, communicate, and share with friends. However, observations show that most children aged 5-6 years still fight over toys, hit friends, get angry easily, and like to give orders. The purpose of this study is to improve social-emotional skills through the application of the trader role-play method. This study uses the classroom action research (CAR) model from Kemmis & Mc Taggart which was implemented in two cycles on 21 children in group B Raudhatul Athfal. Data collection was carried out through observation, performance assessment, interviews and documentation, then analyzed qualitatively with triangulation of techniques and sources. The results of the study showed an increase in social-emotional skills. In the first cycle, the majority of children were in the "sufficient" category, while in the second cycle there was a significant increase with many children reaching the "good" category. The application of trader role-play with various media, teacher reflection, and active child involvement has proven successful in creating more interactive and meaningful learning. This study concludes that the implementation of the trader role-play method is an effective strategy for stimulating early childhood social-emotional skills while strengthening self-confidence, adapting to their environment, and fostering social interactions. The practical contribution of this study is the implementation of the trader role-play method, which can be adapted by early childhood education teachers in their daily learning.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a fundamental process aimed at early childhood development, personality formation, and potential optimization, integrated by providing stimulation tailored to the child's growth and developmental needs. This allows children to work collaboratively with friends, express their opinions easily in front of others, and interact easily Novia dkk, (2020). The need to interact with others begins as early as six months of age, when children are able to recognize their environment Age dkk, (2020). Play is one approach to implementing educational activities for early childhood. By using engaging strategies, methods, materials, and media, children can participate in play in a fun way. Through play, children are encouraged to explore, discover, and utilize objects around them Husnah dkk, (2019). As a learning model, role-playing is rooted in personal and social dimensions. From

the personal perspective, this model seeks to shape children's ability to discover meaning within their social environment that is beneficial to them. Therefore, through this model, children are encouraged to learn to solve personal problems they are facing with the help of a social group consisting of their friends Novia dkk, (2020). Role-playing can be used to foster creativity in children, foster courage, develop self-confidence, and develop collaborative skills Fitroh dkk, (2020).

Radliya dkk, (2017) states that emotions are essentially impulses to act based on feelings, biological and psychological states. Legally, the definition of social emotional competence is a continuous and integrated change in behavior from genetic and environmental factors, as well as individual improvements both quantitatively and qualitatively in aspects of self-awareness, sense of responsibility for oneself, and prosocial behavior. Social emotional competence is a person's ability to understand and manage emotions, and to interact with others. This ability also includes the ability to make appropriate and responsible decisions.

Elias's research in Age dkk, (2020) states that social emotional development is a process by which individuals develop the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to understand, manage, and express social and emotional aspects through relationships and problem-solving. However, observations in several early childhood education (PAUD) centers still show that many children experience difficulties managing their social emotions, such as fighting over toys, hitting friends, being easily angered, and being bossy. To address this issue, one approach considered effective in improving social emotional skills is through the application of the trader role-play method. This is in line with research by Wirahandayani dkk, (2023), which shows that the trader role-play method has been proven to improve social emotional skills through a fun learning environment.

Hartinah, (2020) study explains that role-playing as a trader can improve children's social-emotional skills. By role-playing as a trader, children strive to understand the roles of others and internalize their roles as traders. Thus, this study proves that the use of the trader role-play method contributes positively to improving children's social-emotional abilities. These findings confirm that role-playing as a trader not only supports social-emotional development but also has a positive influence on empathy, self-coidence, and interaction. Furthermore, role-playing as a trader also creates meaningful interactions between the roles of sellers and buyers, thereby strengthening their social-emotional abilities. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Zandika (2019) which found that the application of role-playing as a trader can improve children's social-emotional abilities, children learn to communicate, interact, and negotiate with each other.

Therefore, implementing the trader role-play method can function not only as a strategy for strengthening social and emotional skills but also as a medium for internalizing values and character in early childhood.

Although various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of trader role-play, empirical findings indicate that this method has not been fully implemented effectively by early childhood educators. Most teachers still tend to use lecture or repetition methods that do not connect learning to children's direct experiences, thus under-stimulating social and emotional skills. This indicates a gap between the empirically proven potential of trader role-play and sustainable classroom learning practices.

The study's specific novelty is well-framed around implementing a cycle-based reflective learning design in a designated local context (Gunungleutik Village). This approach not only resulted in improved social and emotional skills in terms of independence, interaction, and responsibility, but also demonstrated that the success of trader role-play is strongly influenced by collaborative and reflective learning designs. Thus, this study not only confirms the effectiveness of role-play but also expands the pedagogical perspective that teacher reflection and active child interaction are key factors in early childhood social and emotional skills.

Therefore, Classroom Action Research (CAR) is needed to improve social-emotional skills through the application of the trader role-play method. Through this research, teachers are expected to find a more enjoyable, meaningful, and child-centered approach that can stimulate social-emotional skills while supporting self-confidence, communication, and responsibility. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to improve children's social-emotional abilities through the implementation of the trader role-play method.

METHODS

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles. The research flow is shown in Figure 1.

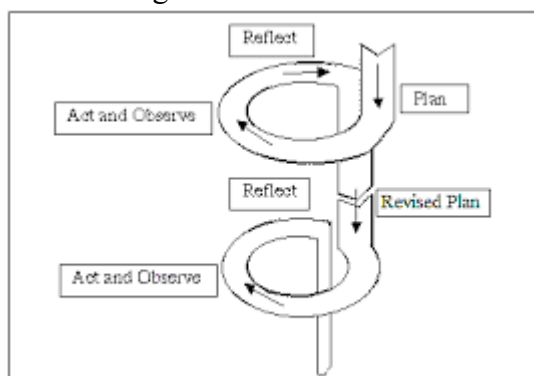


Figure 1. Action Research Model

This research took place at Raudhatul Athfal Al Munawwaroh, Gunungleutik Village, specifically group B, in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, from May 2 to May 16, 2025. The research subjects were 21 students, consisting of 11 male students and 10 female students. The presence of the researcher was participatory, namely directly involved in planning, implementation, observation, and reflection with the homeroom teacher.

The intervention included the application of role-playing methods for traders to improve children's social-emotional skills. Cycle I focused on the roles of traders and buyers with merchandise from fresh fish sellers, fishing, nugget sellers, and fish rolls. Children were involved in interactions as sellers and buyers by asking about prices, various variants, and building self-confidence. Based on reflections on the results of Cycle I, the intervention in Cycle II was developed with variations of playing as a dairy product seller, a demonstration of milking a cow, and as a cowhide cracker seller to optimize children's involvement.

Data collection was conducted through observation and documentation of child development. The research instrument included an observation sheet accompanied by a rating scale. Data analysis used a qualitative approach through reduction, presentation, and drawing

conclusions. Child development outcomes were categorized into five levels (Excellent, Good, Sufficient, Poor, and Failed). Data validity was achieved through triangulation of techniques and sources, while reliability was maintained through repeated reflection at each cycle.

RESULT

The research activities were conducted through four meetings grouped into two cycles, each consisting of two actions. This classroom action research aimed to improve children's social-emotional skills through the implementation of the trader role-play method. The researcher acted as the teacher, while the collaborator acted as an observer. Prior to the action, learning materials such as lesson plans (RPP), observation sheets, assessment rubrics, and media were prepared for implementation during the learning process according to the predetermined theme.

1.1 Pre-Action

Before conducting the classroom action research, the researcher first observed the social-emotional skills of children in Group B of Raudhatul Athfal Al Munawwaroh, Gunungleutik Village. The results of the observations during the pre-action stage are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Pre-Action Observation Results

No	Name	Observed indicator								Score	Value
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Al-Baits	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	10	31
2	Ayuni	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	9	28
3	Assifa	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	11	34
4	Dinda	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	3	15	47
5	Delia	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	16	50
6	Embam	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	2	16	50
7	Fatimah	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	19	59
8	Hanan	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	14	44
9	Hasbi	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	17	53
10	Irsyad	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	10	31
11	Jalu	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	13	41
12	Kinan	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	17	53
13	Khairan	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	13	41
14	Maulana	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	16	50
15	Nadya	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	3	16	50
16	Raffi	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	15	47
17	Revan	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	17	53
18	Rinjani	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	16	50
19	Umar	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	3	17	53
20	Zoddy	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	17	53
21	Zhea	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	16	50
Total										310	968
Average value of children										46	

The table above shows that of the 21 children who were the subjects of the study, their social-emotional skills through the role-playing activity of traders were still lacking. This is

evident in the children's achievements falling into the failing and poor categories. Therefore, the researchers conducted Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve and enhance the children's assignments, which culminated in the implementation of the Cycle.

1.2 Cycle I

Cycle I was conducted in two meetings using a trader role-play method. The researcher acted as the teacher, while the collaborator acted as an observer. The results showed an improvement in the children's social-emotional abilities, although they did not reach the expected target.

Table 2. Results of Observation of Action II Cycle I

No	Name	Observed indicator								Score	Value
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Al-Baits	1	2	4	2	2	2	1	3	17	53
2	Ayuni	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	15	47
3	Assifa	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	18	56
4	Dinda	2	3	2	2	4	2	1	4	20	63
5	Delia	1	3	3	2	4	2	2	4	21	66
6	Embam	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	4	21	66
7	Fatimah	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	19	59
8	Hanan	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	19	59
9	Hasbi	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	20	63
10	Irsyad	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	13	41
11	Jalu	1	2	4	2	3	2	1	2	17	53
12	Kinan	3	2	3	2	4	3	2	3	22	69
13	Khairan	1	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	18	56
14	Maulana	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	20	63
15	Nadya	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	4	22	69
16	Raffi	3	2	4	2	2	1	1	2	17	53
17	Revan	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	20	63
18	Rinjani	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	15	47
19	Umar	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	19	59
20	Zoddy	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	3	19	59
21	Zhea	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	19	59
Total										396	1.223
Average value of children										58	
Maximum Score										32	

To calculate the social-emotional skills of children in Group B2 of RA Al Munawwaroh, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, the following formula can be used:

$$KSE = \frac{\text{Total social-emotional skills of children}}{\text{Total maximum score}} \times 100.$$

For example, to determine the total score of a student with the initials Zoddy, the following formula can be used to determine the extent of his social-emotional skills:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Social-Emotional Skills} &= \frac{19}{32} \times 100 \\ &= 0.59 \times 100 \end{aligned}$$

$$= 59.$$

Next, to calculate the average social-emotional skills in Group B2 of RA Al Munawwaroh, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, the following formula is used:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Average} &= \frac{\text{Total social-emotional skills of all children}}{\text{Number of children}} \\ &= \frac{1,223}{21} \\ &= 58\end{aligned}$$

Based on the results of observations of children's social-emotional skills in actions I and II, with a score of 55 for Action I and 58 for Action II, the average can be calculated as follows.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Average} &= \frac{\text{Results of observation of social emotional skills for action I + action II}}{2} \\ &= \frac{55+58}{2} \\ &= \frac{113}{2} \\ &= 57\end{aligned}$$

Referring to the recapitulation of actions in cycle I, the researcher carried out reflection on things that were obstacles in achieving the research target to improve social emotional abilities through playing the role of a trader.

Table 3. Results of Cycle I Action Reflection

No	Findings	Suggestions
1	Children still experience communication difficulties during role-play.	Teachers always accompany children to prevent miscommunication between students.
2	Children's imagination in playing their roles has not yet emerged.	Teachers should provide examples that allow children to demonstrate their imagination in each role.
3	Time constraints in the learning process.	Teachers should allow more time to optimize the learning cycle.
4	Children have not yet demonstrated queuing behavior.	Teachers should first explain the market rules to children.
5	Some children dislike the goods sold at the market, resulting in minimal interaction between sellers and buyers.	Teachers should provide displays of merchandise that children enjoy to attract buyers to the market.

In general, cycle I showed an increase, but the children's social emotional abilities were not yet stable so the research process was continued to cycle II.

1.3 Cycle II

Cycle II actions were carried out with the researcher as the teacher and fellow teachers as observers. The observation results are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Results of Observation of Action II Cycle II

No	Name	Observed Indicator								Score	Value
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Al-Baits	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	28	88
2	Ayuni	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	26	81
3	Assifa	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	28	88
4	Dinda	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	28	88
5	Delia	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	26	81
6	Embam	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	29	91
7	Fatimah	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	29	91
8	Hanan	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	29	91
9	Hasbi	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	30	94
10	Irsyad	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	23	72
11	Jalu	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	26	81
12	Kinan	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	31	97
13	Khairan	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	26	81
14	Maulana	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	30	94
15	Nadya	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	30	94
16	Raffi	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	28	88
17	Revan	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	27	84
18	Rinjani	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	27	84
19	Umar	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	27	84
20	Zoddy	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	29	91
21	Zhea	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	30	94
Total										589	1.837
Average Child Score										87	

To calculate the social-emotional skills of children in Group B2 of RA Al Munawwaroh, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, the following formula is used:

$$KSE = \frac{\text{Total social-emotional skills of children}}{\text{Total number of children}} \times 100$$

$$KSE = \frac{1,837}{21} \times 100$$

$$= 87$$

For example, to determine the social-emotional skills score of Raffi, the following calculation can be made:

$$\text{Social-Emotional Skills} = \frac{28}{32} \times 100$$

$$= 0.88 \times 100$$

$$= 88$$

Next, to calculate the average social-emotional skills of children in Group B2 of RA Al Munawwaroh, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, the following formula is used:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{Total social-emotional skills}}{\text{Total number of children}}$$

$$= \frac{1,837}{21}$$

$$= 87$$

Based on the observation results of children's social-emotional skills in Actions I and II, with a score of 70 for Action I and 88 for Action II, we can Averaged as follows.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Average} &= \frac{\text{Results of observation of action I} + \text{results of observation of action II}}{2} \\ &= \frac{70+87}{2} \\ &= \frac{157}{2} \\ &= 79\end{aligned}$$

In cycle II, the researchers found that the children's social-emotional skills improved through the implementation of the trader role-play method. This was because the researchers packaged the trader role-play method in a highly engaging manner, thus increasing buyer and seller enthusiasm in the buying and selling process.

After reflecting on cycle I, cycle II also conducted reflection, but in cycle II there was a good improvement from the previous cycle. When conducting learning activities, the teacher had conducted learning in accordance with the preparations made. Learning activities were carried out in accordance with the lesson plan in the teaching module that had been made, in which the shortcomings found in cycle I had been corrected in cycle II and using the trader role play method had been effective, seen from the children who felt happy and enthusiastic during the learning process. In cycle II the researcher ended the learning because the indicators of success and completeness values had been achieved.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the trader role-play method in two cycles in Group B of Raudhatul Athfal Al Munawwaroh, Gunungleutik Village, resulted in consistent improvements in communication, self-confidence, and responsibility. This finding is in line with Tyas dkk, (2022) research which proves that macro role-playing, especially trader role-playing, can significantly improve children's self-confidence when performing in front of the class, responsibility, and social-emotional abilities through a correlation method approach. This is supported by the experimental findings of Indanah dkk, (2019) which showed a significant increase in social-emotional abilities after children received a significant increase in social-emotional abilities through trader role-playing, as evidenced by the T-test analysis ($p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, (Rusmiati, Mumung, & Nurfitri, 2020) research revealed that role-playing as a trader, where children pretend to be their desired role, significantly improves social-emotional skills. Prehatanti (2020) also confirmed the effectiveness of this method in stimulating children's empathy, understanding others, sharpening their sympathetic sensitivity, and practicing cooperation with others. Similar findings support this finding. Jamilah (2019) demonstrated that role-playing as a trader fosters respect for others, fosters responsibility, and fosters decision-making.

In line with this, recent studies have also highlighted the effectiveness of trader role-playing. (Putri, 2023) demonstrated that trader role-playing can contribute to the development of social-emotional skills in early childhood. The trader role-playing method is a fun activity for children, allowing them to freely express their feelings. However, several studies have also revealed limitations to this method. For example, research conducted by (Putri, 2023) showed

that implementing the trader role-playing method requires a significant amount of time. This suggests that sufficient time for trader role-playing activities remains a key factor in determining intervention effectiveness. This means that the success of the trader role-playing activity is determined not only by the medium but also by the provision of time during the learning process.

The practical contribution of this study lies in the trader role-playing method, which was developed through peer observation and cyclical reflection. This design suggests that preparation, familiarization, and active interaction between sellers and buyers can effectively enhance social-emotional skills. However, this study is limited by its narrow scope, involving only one class without a comparison group. Therefore, generalization of the results requires caution.

The implications of this study are that trader role-playing not only supports social-emotional skills but also fosters self-confidence and creativity in early childhood. Practically, the results of this study recommend that early childhood educators consistently integrate trader role-playing activities with engaging and relevant themes to optimize children's social-emotional skills. For further research, it is recommended to use an experimental design with a larger and more exploratory sample size to ensure this strategy has a more sustainable impact.

Overall, this study confirms that trader role-playing is a valid and effective method for improving social-emotional skills in early childhood. Interactive trader role-playing has proven to be an effective empirical and pedagogical strategy, enriching the theoretical framework of social-emotional skills through the application of the trader role-play method.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of an instructional and interactive trader role-playing method effectively improves the social-emotional skills of group B children at Raudhatul Athfal Al Munawwaroh, Gunungleutik Village, particularly in terms of communication, self-confidence, and responsibility. Scientifically, these results confirm that trader role-playing can be used as a pedagogical strategy to improve social-emotional skills. However, this study is still limited to one class without a comparison group, so generalization of the results needs to be done carefully. Further research is recommended to involve a comparison group and a wider sample and explore the variety of types of goods or trading scenarios in trader role-playing.

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