

## Improving Early Childhood Social Skills Through the Gobak Sodor Game at TK IT Al Fathaniyah Aceh Tenggara

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve early childhood social skills through the Gobak Sodor game. The method used is Classroom Action Research (CAR) with observation and interview techniques. The research was conducted at TK IT Al Fathaniyah, Aceh Tenggara, with 15 children aged 4-5 years as the subjects. The research process took place from May 5 to June 6, 2024. In the pre-cycle stage, only 13.3% of the children showed good social skills. Subsequently, two action cycles were carried out. In cycle I, although social skills improved to 46.7%, the success target was not yet achieved. Improvements were made in cycle II by adding small rewards as motivation, resulting in 80% of the children achieving significant social development. The research results show that the Gobak Sodor game is effective in enhancing early childhood social skills. The consistent improvement from the pre-cycle to cycle II proves that this traditional game can be an attractive and effective learning medium. This game not only helps children interact and cooperate but also increases their motivation and enthusiasm in the learning process. Therefore, the use of the Gobak Sodor game as a learning tool can be recommended to support the social development of early childhood in formal education settings.

### INTRODUCTION

The success of early childhood education has a significant impact on children's social skills. Considering the importance of social skills in early childhood, educators are expected to be able to develop these skills according to their stages of social development. Social development is a process of learning and behavior related to an individual's ability to live as part of a group. Differences in social development are caused by individual variations in genetics, cultural background, health status, and caregiving experiences, resulting in each child developing at a different pace (Astuti, 2013). In this developmental process, individuals are expected to understand others by developing the ability to describe, recognize their thoughts, feelings, and desires, and see from other people's perspectives without losing their identity. This involves changes in an individual's relationships with others, emotional changes, and personality development. Children's social skills include the ability to

understand others through interaction with people around them, including interactions with adults (Talango, 2020).

A person's social skills are reflected when interacting with others appropriately and quickly, creating a comfortable atmosphere for those around them (Kusuma Purwa & Abdullah, 2021). A lack of social skills can lead to various problems such as difficult behavior in school, delinquent behavior, lack of attention, peer rejection, emotional difficulties, bullying behavior, difficulties in building friendships, aggressiveness, interpersonal relationship problems, concentration difficulties, social isolation, and so on. Therefore, guidance in developing children's social skills is essential (Fauziah et al., 2020).

Enhancing social skills in early childhood is very important because their social behavior affects daily activities. By having good social skills, children can interact smoothly in their social environment (A. R. T. Dewi et al., 2020). Social skills are also related to children's cognitive development because the results of children's interactions in their social environment affect their development. One way to improve children's social skills is through playing games like gobak sodor (Aqobah et al., 2020). Research (N. A. Dewi et al., 2021) shows that not all children can interact and communicate well when they start developing social lives and interacting with peers. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve children's social skills.

Social skills are an individual's ability to socially adjust to their environment according to applicable rules and norms in society (Juniarti, 2021). According to David and Johnson in the book (Agusniatih & Monepa, 2019), social skills involve knowledge of human behavior and interpersonal interactions, the ability to understand other people's feelings, the motivations behind their words and actions, and the ability to communicate effectively and build cooperative and effective relationships. (Kurniati, 2016) explains that social skills are children's skills to build interpersonal relationships in various environments and social groups. Gresham and Elliot, as quoted in (Aqobah et al., 2020), define social skills as how a person behaves effectively in interactions with others.

Social skills are the ability to maintain relationships by building networks based on the ability to find common ground and strengthen positive relationships. Lynch and Simpson, as quoted in (Juniarti, 2021) explain that social skills involve actions to encourage positive interactions between individuals and their environment. Matson and Ollendick in (Desi et al., 2022) emphasize that a person's competence in adjusting to their environment, including avoiding mistakes in physical and verbal communication, is also part of social skills. From these various definitions, it can be concluded that social skills are an individual's ability to live together with others, including aspects of communication, interaction, and adjusting to the environment.

Various factors play a role in influencing children's interaction abilities, such as parenting styles, social environments, peer relationships, and uncontrolled gadget use. Parents play an important role in teaching children to understand their environment, encouraging them to play with peers, and limiting gadget use so that children's social interaction skills can develop better in the future (Batinah et al., 2022).

Technological advancements bring their own challenges where the value of traditional games like gobak sodor is often overlooked. Parents tend to prefer giving gadgets instead of finding more beneficial activities for today's children (Nurhasanah & Indrajit, 2021). Children also tend to prefer playing gadgets provided by parents rather than exploring the environment directly. As a result, they may become less sensitive to their surroundings and engage in passive activities that only involve interaction with gadget screens (Maola & Lestari, 2021). This creates a gap between more interactive traditional play and technological advancements that risk causing social isolation.

Cultural changes and rapid technological development require us to formulate effective strategies to enhance early childhood social skills. Traditional games like gobak sodor play an important role in this. In addition to helping develop children's gross and fine motor skills, these games also contribute to their social skills development (Desi et al., 2022). Through movement and body coordination exercises, children can learn to manage and control their body movements better. Additionally, in the context of learning, gobak sodor can help children interact with peers and others around them, as well as build teamwork skills in completing joint tasks (Syamsurrijal, 2020). By involving children in this game, it is hoped that their physical and social potential can be enhanced holistically.

In the gobak sodor game, players are divided into two opposing groups. Each group has its own tasks: one as attackers trying to touch or mark the opponent's fortress, and the other as defenders protecting their fortress from being touched by the opponent. When a player successfully touches an opponent, the touched opponent is considered out of the game. However, out members can return to play if an untouchable member of their team manages to touch the opponent. This game not only relies on agility and strategy but also develops teamwork and children's social skills in interacting with their group (Febyarum & Ichsan, 2023a).

The traditional game gobak sodor has several advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include low cost because it only requires simple equipment like broken tiles, bricks, or chalk. Additionally, gobak sodor benefits the development of children's gross motor skills through physical activities like running and jumping. This game also plays a crucial role in enhancing children's social intelligence through interaction and teamwork (Hayati & Hibana, 2021). However, the disadvantage is that it requires a large area, which may be difficult to access for institutions with limited space, necessitating an appropriate outdoor location for implementation.

The traditional game gobak sodor not only provides fun but also has significant social benefits for children. Through this game, children can learn to socialize well, work together in teams, and develop leadership qualities. This research aims to investigate the benefits of traditional games, especially gobak sodor, and measure its impact on children's social skills at TK IT Al Fathaniyah Aceh Tenggara.

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers at TK IT Al Fathaniyah Aceh Tenggara, the traditional game gobak sodor is applied in physical education subjects. In this context, the game not only teaches physical skills but also incorporates cultural values such as teaching the importance of apologizing as part of harmonious life in Indonesia's diverse

society. Additionally, education at the kindergarten aims to instill awareness that children are future practitioners and investments that need to be comprehensively prepared in both emotional and social skills development.

This study will explore how the traditional game gobak sodor can improve early childhood social skills in the learning context. The focus of this research is to uncover the positive impacts of gobak sodor on early childhood social skills development. The primary focus is to understand how traditional games can be effectively integrated into early childhood education to strengthen their social aspects comprehensively.

Previous research conducted by (Desi et al., 2022) titled "Developing Social Emotional Skills of Children Through Traditional Gobak Sodor Games in Early Childhood 5-6 Years at TK Pelangi" shows that the gobak sodor game is effective in enhancing social-emotional skills and children's abilities to understand their social environment. This is in line with the research (Wirdaningsih 2020) on "Improving Children's Social Skills Through Traditional Gobak Sodor Games" which proves that traditional games help develop children's social skills in kindergarten, showing improvement in children's interactions and cooperation during play.

In another study by (Febyarum & Ichsan, 2023a) titled "The Use of Traditional Gobak Sodor Game to Foster Cooperative Attitudes in Early Childhood," it concludes that the gobak sodor game plays an important role in developing cooperative character in early childhood. In this game, children understand the importance of working together as a team to achieve a common goal. This study aligns with the objectives of this research, which also examines the improvement of cooperation among children. However, this study also focuses on the development of children's ability to interact with the opposing team, enhancing effective communication, and considering the emotional aspects of children during play.

As concluded in the study conducted by (Delvia et al., 2022) titled "The Effects of Hide-and-Seek Games on the Development of Social Skills," hide-and-see activities have a significant impact of 59.1% on the social development of early childhood, while 40.9% is influenced by other factors. Although different in the choice of traditional games, this study is comparable to your current research using the traditional gobak sodor game to enhance early childhood social skills.

In this study, we aim to investigate in depth the impact of the gobak sodor game on the development of early childhood social skills. Practically, this research is expected to provide useful guidelines for educators and parents in effectively implementing this game in children's education. Theoretically, we hope this study can be a valuable contribution to the literature on early childhood social development and encourage further research in this field to support a deeper understanding of the importance of traditional games in child development.

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the role of the gobak sodor game in stimulating and strengthening early childhood social skills. The focus is to provide a deeper understanding of how traditional games like gobak sodor can influence children's social development in the context of preschool education. The hope is that the findings from this

study can provide a strong empirical basis for designing more effective learning strategies to enhance early childhood social skills.

## METHODS

This study utilizes the classroom action research (CAR) method, chosen because it aligns with the specific objectives to be achieved. This technique uses observation and interviews as the main tools. The steps in CAR include problem identification, analysis, formulation of action hypotheses, planning and monitoring of actions, implementation, data processing, interpretation, and reporting of results (Wijaya, 2020). The focus is on improving the social skills of early childhood through the Gobak Sodor game, in line with the CAR approach, which emphasizes the development of educational practices. The study was conducted at TK IT Al Fathaniyah, Aceh Tenggara, from May 5, 2024, to June 6, 2024. The subjects were 15 children in class A, aged 4-5 years, consisting of 9 boys and 6 girls. This classroom action research refers to the monitoring and evaluation of learning activities together (Machali, 2022).

The research data was collected individually, using observation instruments developed based on grids used in previous studies (Harniasih, 2023). The test grids are as follows:

**Table 1.** Early Childhood Social Ability Instrumens

No	Aspect	Indicator	Assessment
1	Communication	a. The child communicates well in class or while playing. b. The child listens and communicates orally well.	1) BB: Not Yet Developed (if scored 1 on the indicator) 2) MB: Beginning to Develop (if scored 2 on the indicator)
2	Interaction	a. The child interacts well in class or while playing. b. The child cooperates with teammates to complete the game.	3) BSH: Developing as Expected (if scored 3 on the indicator) 4) BSB: Developing Very Well (if scored 4 on the indicator)
3	Adapting to Environment	a. The child cooperates with teammates to complete the game. b. The child throws trash in the bin.	

Data analysis in this study is conducted to determine the success or failure of an action taken in this research. This can be seen from the percentage of the success rate that will be obtained. The formula used is as follows:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100 \%$$

Explanation:

p : Percentage of achievement

f : Number of children who achieve mastery

n : Total number of children

The success indicator in this study is if, individually, all indicators are at least "Developing as Expected" (BSH), and if, classically, the percentage meets 75%, then the learning is considered successful.

## RESULT

### Pre-Cycle

Before implementing the Gobak Sodor game, the researcher conducted an initial observation of children's social skills using several indicators, including the ability to communicate, listen, interact, cooperate, tidy up toys, and dispose of trash. The observation results showed that only 2 out of 15 children (13.3%) successfully met these indicators. From these findings, it can be concluded that the social skills of children at TK Al Fathaniyah are still below target, with only a small percentage achieving a learning mastery of 75%. This is due to the lack of engaging learning media, which leads to boredom among children during class activities. As an improvement step, the researcher will introduce the Gobak Sodor game to enhance their social skills.

### Cycle I

In Cycle I, two meetings were held, starting from the planning stage. The researcher prepared the RPPH for the learning process to be implemented. Additionally, observation sheets were prepared to evaluate the development of children's social skills. The chosen learning media was the Gobak Sodor game. The second stage was the implementation, starting with an introduction and explanation of the day's material. The focus was on understanding children's social development through the traditional Gobak Sodor game. In the "Gobak Sodor" game, the steps taken by the players are as follows: (1) Representatives from each group run from their base and try to touch the opponent's base; (2) The remaining group members defend their base to prevent being touched or caught by the opponents; (3) If a running group member touches an opponent, the touched one is out; (4) The remaining members continue to play, guarding their base from the opponent's attacks; (5) If an out opponent is touched again by an untouched teammate, they can rejoin the game; (6) When successfully taking over the opponent's base, the player must say "Base 1" as a sign of victory in the game (Erwanda & Sutapa, 2023). The third stage was observation, where the researcher observed the children's social skills. The observation results showed that 7 children successfully demonstrated development, reaching a percentage of 46.7%. Although there was an improvement from the pre-cycle to Cycle I, the achievement did not yet meet the expected success indicators. The fourth stage was reflection, where the researcher evaluated Cycle I to identify shortcomings and plan improvements for Cycle II. The

reflection results indicated several issues, including a lack of cooperation among children while playing Gobak Sodor and a lack of enthusiasm from some children. To address these issues, the researcher will give instructions to the children to cooperate more and provide additional motivation, such as snacks, to increase the children's enthusiasm for playing Gobak Sodor in Cycle II.

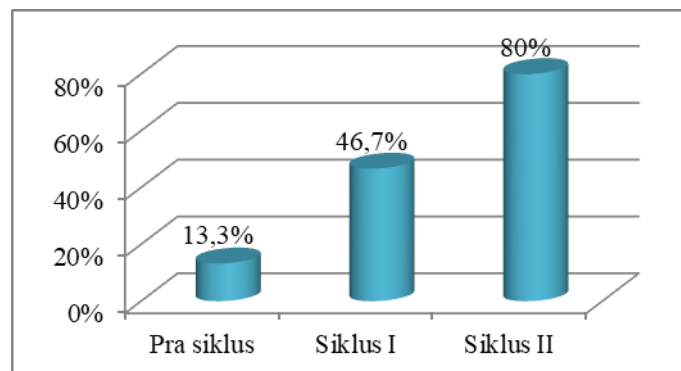
**Cycle II**

In Cycle II, the planning stage continued from Cycle I, with improvements to the learning strategy to enhance children's social skills. The second stage was implementation, similar to Cycle I but with the addition of motivational snacks for children who successfully won the Gobak Sodor game. The third stage was observation, which showed that 12 children successfully made progress, reaching a percentage of 80%. This result met the classical success indicator of 75%. Therefore, the research was concluded after achieving the set objectives.

Based on the observations, there was a significant increase in children's social skills through the use of the Gobak Sodor game. In the pre-cycle stage, only 2 out of 15 children (13.3%) successfully showed progress. In Cycle I, the number of children showing progress increased to 7 children (46.7%). In Cycle II, the number of children showing progress reached 12 children (80%). This indicates a consistent increase from cycle to cycle in measuring children's social skills through the Gobak Sodor game. The observation results from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II can be seen in the table and graph below:

**Table 2.** Recapitulation of children's social skills results

Assessment	Children Mastered	%
Pre-Cycle	2	13,3%
Cycle I	7	46,7%
Cycle II	12	80%



**Figure 1.** Recapitulation of children's social skills results

## DISCUSSION

As outlined in this study, the Gobak Sodor game has proven effective in enhancing children's social skills. The observed changes in children during this study are consistent with Erikson's theory of development, which states that children progress in response to their educational environment (Harniasih, 2023). This indicates that the success of teachers in implementing learning activities contributes to the improvement of children's social skills. This study is also supported by previous research, such as that conducted by (Desi et al., 2022) which showed significant improvement in the socio-emotional skills of early childhood after applying the Gobak Sodor game at TK Pelangi. Similarly, research by (Juniarti, 2021) and (Febyarum & Ichsan, 2023a) also affirmed that the traditional Gobak Sodor game can enhance social competence and cooperation attitudes in early childhood. These findings provide evidence that the use of the Gobak Sodor game is not only a recreational activity but also an effective strategy in early childhood education to strengthen their social skills.

Research conducted by (Delvia et al., 2022) on "The Influence of Hide and Seek Game in Building Social Skills" shows that hide and seek activities have a significant impact on children's social development, where 59.1% of the impact comes from direct interaction within the game. Meanwhile, 40.9% of other factors outside the game also influence children's social development. A study by (Sudarto, 2018) titled "Improving Social Skills Through the Gobak Sodor Game" showed positive results. This study was conducted at TK Panca Setya in Sintang Regency and found that the Gobak Sodor game was effective in enhancing children's social skills. The results showed a significant increase from the pre-action stage, where out of 21 children, 3 children (14.28%) were categorized as very good. After the first cycle, the children's social skills increased, with 10 children (47.61%) falling into the good category. The conclusion from various studies confirms that the Gobak Sodor game is not only an entertaining activity but also an effective tool to help improve children's social skills and address some developmental challenges in early childhood.

In the context of using the traditional Gobak Sodor game, children are encouraged to work together and design strategies together (Durrotunnisa & Nur, 2020). This game also plays a role in enhancing students' social closeness and improving their social attitudes (Panahan et al., 2023). In the "Gobak Sodor" game, there are steps that encourage team collaboration and communication to achieve common goals. With the teacher's guidance as a facilitator, it is hoped that early childhood children can develop their cooperation skills effectively (Febyarum & Ichsan, 2023). The experience gained from this game teaches important values such as mutual respect and teamwork, which can be internalized and applied in children's daily lives.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers can use the Gobak Sodor game as a tool to help students develop their social skills. Through this game, children can practice various skills needed to participate, such as communication skills, teamwork, and understanding the applicable rules. The social skills learned from this game are crucial for early childhood development because they help children

achieve life goals and influence their ability to complete various developmental tasks. Thus, the Gobak Sodor game can serve as an effective tool in supporting personal development and helping children realize their full potential towards balanced adulthood.

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