Abstract:

Children's self-awareness at Anugrah Kindergarten has not developed properly, there are 3 child subjects in this study. The expression board game applied in this study is social play and playing with objects based on an explanation of the expression board game. This study aims to analyze the development of self-awareness in terms of the use of expression board games for group B children at Anugrah Kindergarten. The method used is a qualitative method with a case study approach. The techniques and data collection used in this study are observation techniques directly observing children's behavior during the learning process, interviews with principals and teachers regarding the subjects in the study, and documentation when children do learning related to social behavior indicators. The data analysis technique uses research instruments applied by researchers, namely observation sheets and anecdotal records. The results showed that self-awareness can be developed through expression board game activities in children aged 5-6 at Anugrah Kindergarten, Parepare City.

Keywords: Self-awareness; Expression Board Game; Early Childhood.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a period of rapid growth for children aged 0 to 6 years old. According to research, about 40 percent of human development occurs during this phase, making early childhood a crucial period in each individual's life (Talango, 2020). Childhood is not only a once-in-a-lifetime period, but also the most appropriate time to stimulate a child's personal development. Knowledge about childhood development is important for adults, especially parents and educators so that they can prepare the right educational stimulus, effective approaches, strategies, methods, plans, media, or play tools needed to help children develop optimally according to their needs at each age (Rusmiati et al., 2019).

Piaget's theory of early childhood development states that young children go through a series of different stages of cognitive development, and each stage has unique characteristics that
affect how they understand the world around them (Kartika & Darmayanti, 2023). The stages of cognitive development include sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. In the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years), children learn through physical interaction with their environment, while in the preoperational stage (2-7 years), they begin to use symbols and language to understand basic concepts (Rohmah et al., 2022). Vygotsky (Marsh et al., 2005) emphasized the importance of social interaction in the development of children's cognition. According to this theory of proximal development, children learn and develop through interactions with adults and their competent peers. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the distance between what children can do on their own and what they can achieve with the support of others. By providing appropriate support, adults can help children reach their full potential in learning.

According to Bronfenbrenner (Zur’ain Harun et al., 2022) ecological theory highlights that children's development is influenced by a combination of interacting environmental contexts, ranging from family and school (microsystems) to broader policy and culture (macrosystems). Bronfenbrenner (Janaris et al., 2024) states that to optimize a child's development, there needs to be a positive synergy between these various systems, so the children can develop in a holistic supportive environment.

An important aspect to consider in the child's development is social-emotional skills. This aspect includes the child's ability to express and manage emotions, both positive and negative, as well as the ability to interact and adapt to the surrounding environment (Suteja & Yusriah, 2017). Children's social-emotional abilities are shown through learning activities, how children interact with others, and their ability to control their emotions (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). This is important to help children overcome various challenges they may face in the future. Aspects of social and emotional development in early childhood involve children's ability to express and manage their emotions as a whole, both positive and negative (IlSa & Nurhafizah, 2020). Social-emotional development is a learning process undertaken by children to identify and understand the environment, surroundings, and emotions that arise when interacting with people around them. Around the child's environment, these emotions are obtained through hearing, the child's ability to observe, and the desire to imitate what the baby sees (Rianti et al., 2022).

Social-emotional development in early childhood has a strong correlation with academic success in the future. Amalia (Suteja & Yusriah, 2017) discovered that children who have good social-emotional skills tend to adapt more easily to the school environment and have higher academic performance. Social skills also play a role in forming positive relationships with peers and teachers, which is an important factor in creating a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, Raver (Parten, 1933) highlighted that children who have good social-emotional skills are more capable of dealing with stress and pressure. This ability helps them cope with the conflict, manage frustration, and maintain positive mental well-being. Children who are skilled in social-emotional aspects are more likely to develop empathy and pro-social attitudes, which are beneficial to their moral development.

Therefore, parents and educators need to give special attention on early childhood social-emotional development. By understanding and implementing effective strategies, such as providing emotional support, creating a secure and positive environment, and providing
opportunities to interact with others, they can help children develop the skills necessary for success in life. This support not only provides short-term benefits but also forms a strong foundation for a child's long-term well-being and success. Research shows that children's social-emotional development can be encouraged through the education provided at school, by paying attention to the relevant curriculum, using appropriate methods, and creating a conducive learning environment (Anzani & Insan, 2020). Indicators of social-emotional development include self-awareness, responsibility for themselves and others, and prosocial behavior. Children with high self-awareness can control emotions, adapt to others, and show prosocial behavior such as playing with friends, sharing, and respecting the rights and opinions of others (Nisa et al., 2024). However, low self-awareness in children is often caused by parents who prioritize academic achievement over the development of self-awareness. People generally assume that children's success in life is determined by academic achievement so the social-emotional aspects are often neglected (Annisa & Djamas, 2021). In fact, children who have high academic achievement are not necessarily successful in social and professional life.

An effective learning process to stimulate children's development, especially in the social-emotional aspect, requires teachers who are competent in developing the potential of each individual. Every educator must understand that each child has different skills and abilities. The right approach in learning is to use the play method, which can sharpen and develop children's intelligence. Through play, children can learn to interact, cooperate, share, and tolerate (Safruddin et al., 2022).

The play method is considered very important in early childhood education. The play method allows children to learn through fun activities, which can develop their social and emotional skills. Some types of games that can be used for learning stimulation in early childhood include social games, games with objects, and role-play (Astuti et al., 2013). Woodhouse (2019) explained that play has a crucial role in early childhood cognitive and social development. This research shows that through play, children can develop greater problem-solving skills, creativity, and communication skills. In addition, the play also helps children understand social roles and societal norms, which is crucial in their character-building. Parten further emphasizes that different types of play can provide specific benefits. Social play, for example, allows children to learn to interact with peers, share and cooperate. Meanwhile, playing with objects can help children develop fine and gross motor skills as well as logical thinking skills. Roleplay, on the other hand, can stimulate children's imagination and help them understand different roles and responsibilities in real life (Stevens, 2015). Moreover, Ilsa & Nurhafizah (2020) pointed out that play can also reduce stress levels in early childhood. Children who engage in structured play activities tend to have lower levels of anxiety and are more able to cope with stressful situations. This is important for children's emotional well-being, which will ultimately affect their ability to learn and interact with their surroundings.

This research will use expression board games as a tool to stimulate socio-emotional development in early childhood. This expression board game is designed by researchers using styrofoam corks on which various expressions are attached. The child will play by throwing the dice, and the number obtained will be matched with the expression on the expression board (Hewi,
This study aims to develop early childhood self-awareness through expression board games. By introducing various types of expressions at an early age, it is hoped that children can understand themselves and recognize and understand the emotions felt by themselves and others (Immadubilad et al., 2023). This research is based on various studies that highlight the importance of social-emotional development in early childhood. Previous studies have shown that social-emotional development can be enhanced through purpose-designed play methods. The expression board game is an innovation that has not been widely explored in the existing literature. This research will fill the gap by developing and testing the effectiveness of expression board games in stimulating early childhood social-emotional development.

Although plenty of research has highlighted the importance of social-emotional development in early childhood, only a few studies explore the use of expression board games as a tool for stimulation. This research will explore and test the effectiveness of expression board games in developing young children’s self-awareness and social-emotional skills. The research will also look at how this media can be integrated into the early childhood education curriculum and provide practical recommendations for educators and parents. This research emphasizes the importance of social-emotional development in early childhood and offers expression board games as an innovative method to stimulate this aspect. By referring to recent literature, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of early childhood education by using media that has not been widely used. The ultimate goal is to develop children’s self-awareness, improve their ability to manage emotions and prepare them to interact and adapt to their surrounding social environment.

This research is crucial as it provides new insights into how play methods can be used effectively to support early childhood social-emotional development. By developing media expression board games, this research not only offers practical tools that can be used by educators and parents, but also enriches the academic literature with new findings that can be used as a reference for developing curriculum and learning methods in the future. The implementation of expression board games in early childhood education requires a planful and systematic approach. Teachers and parents need to be trained to use the method effectively (Charlesworth, 1998). In addition, the integration of these games into the school curriculum should be done by considering the needs and characteristics of each child. The practical implications of this research are expected to help children develop strong social-emotional skills, which will form an important basis for their future success, both in their personal and professional life.

With a solid background, literature review, problem-solving plan and clear objectives, this research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the field of early childhood education. With a focus on developing self-awareness and social-emotional skills through expression board games, this research offers practical and innovative solutions that can be implemented in various educational settings. Through an approach that is based on child development theory and play methods, this research is expected to have a positive impact on early childhood development and support them to become competent and confident individuals in facing future challenges.
METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The case study approach was chosen to deeply investigate children's self-awareness in the context of socialising through play with peers. This method allows researchers to comprehensively explore the dimensions of children's social values and describe how expression board games can increase children's self-awareness potential (Waruwu, 2023). The population in this study were early childhood children at Anugrah Kindergarten, Parepare City. The sample consisted of three children aged 5-6 years, namely AK, AS, and RF. The sample selection was done purposively, taking into account relevant characteristics for this study, such as socializing ability and activeness in play activities.

Data collection in this study was conducted through three main techniques, which are: observation, interview, and documentation (Yusuf, 2006). Researchers made direct observations of children's attitudes and behavior during the learning process. Observations were made at three stages of the activity, i.e. the initial activity, the core activity, and the final activity. The researcher recorded children's interaction with their peers and their responses to the expression board game. Interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers to gather information about the learning methods that were used. The interviews aimed to understand the learning context and get the perspectives of those who are directly involved in the children's education process. Documentation was conducted to collect supporting evidence during the research process. Documents collected include observation notes, interview transcripts, and photos or videos documenting children's activities during play. This documentation was used to strengthen the data obtained from observations and interviews.

After the data is collected, the next step is data analysis. Data analysis was carried out through several stages, including: data reduction, data presentation, and the conclusion drawing. The data that has been collected is classified and simplified without losing the essence of the information that was obtained. Irrelevant data was deleted, while relevant data was categorized according to the research theme. The data that has been reduced is then presented in the form of descriptive narratives that describe the phenomenon. The presentation of this data included detailed descriptions of the children's interactions during play, their responses to the expression board game, as well as the views of the principal and teachers. Based on the data that has been presented, the researcher draws conclusions about the effectiveness of expression board games in developing children's self-awareness. This conclusion is supported by evidence found during the observation, interview, and documentation process.

The presence of researchers in the field is very important to ensure the validity of the data. Researchers play an active role in the observation and interview process and interact directly with the research subjects. The research subjects in this study were three children aged 5-6 years, namely AK, AS, and RF, who were involved in playing activities using expression board games. The informants involved in this research were the principal and teachers at Anugrah Kindergarten. They provided important information regarding the learning methods used as well as their views on children's social-emotional development. Information from these informants was essential to understand the learning context and provide a more comprehensive perspective on the research subjects.

This research was conducted at Anugrah Kindergarten located in Parepare City. The study lasted for three months, from January to March 2024. During this period, researchers conducted intensive observations, interviews, and documentation to collect the necessary data. The validity of the research results was guaranteed through data triangulation, by comparing data obtained from various sources and data collection techniques. In addition, researchers also conducted member
checking by asking for feedback from principals and teachers regarding research findings. This validity check was conducted to ensure that the research results were accurate and accountable. The research methods used in this study enabled the researcher to investigate deeply into early childhood self-awareness in the context of socializing through play. The chosen case study approach provides a comprehensive insight into how expression board games can be used as a tool to develop children's self-awareness potential. With diverse data collection techniques and systematic analyses, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of early childhood education. (Moha, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To identify and develop children’s self-awareness in group B at Anugrah Kindergarten Parepare City through the use of expression board games. The research subjects consisted of three children, which are AK, AS, and RF, who showed various levels of self-awareness abilities. AK showed inhibition in social and emotional aspects. He had difficulty building relationships with his peers and easily felt uncomfortable in new environments. This indicates limitations in his self-awareness regarding his ability to socialize and adapt. AS didn't have a good understanding of his feelings. He is easily carried away by his emotions and has not been able to control them healthily. This shows limitations in his self-awareness regarding emotion management. RF didn't have a sense of security in interacting with others. He is easily influenced by others and has not been able to distinguish which people are good and which are not. This shows limitations in his self-awareness related to the ability to socialize safely. The three children studied in this study showed limitations in various aspects of self-awareness. The three children studied in this study showed limitations in various aspects of self-awareness. AK has difficulty with socialising, AS has difficulty with emotion management, and RF has not yet gained a sense of security in interacting with others. Appropriate intervention, such as expression board games, can help them develop self-awareness and improve their quality of life.

Intervention through expression board games begins with observation, interviews with group B teachers, and examination of daily assessment documents. Based on the initial observation, it was found that the three children had low self-awareness. The expression board game was applied in a fun session and actively involved the children. Children learn to recognize and express emotions through emoji pictures and photos of real expressions and understand the rules of the game. The intervention through expression board games showed positive results in improving children's self-awareness. Positive changes were seen in all three children studied: AK, who previously had difficulty socialising, is now able to interact with his friends confidently. He no longer feels anxious and confused when in a new environment, such as when playing trains with his friends. This shows improvement in his ability to socialize and adapt. AS, who previously had difficulties in understanding and managing his emotions, is now able to recognize a wide range of emotions and express them in appropriate ways. He no longer throws tantrums when he feels angry or frustrated and can communicate about his feelings more calmly. This shows improvement in her ability to manage emotions. RF, who had not previously shown caution towards strangers, is now more wary and trusting of others. He is also able to develop trust in adults in an appropriate way, such as teachers and parents. This shows improvement in his ability to socialize safely.

Overall, the intervention through expression board games proved effective in increasing children's self-awareness. The game provides a fun and rewarding learning experience for children to develop an understanding of themselves and how to interact with others. This method is recommended to be utilized in schools and early childhood education institutions to help children develop self-awareness and important social skills. After the game session, additional activities
were conducted in the form of sharing about types of emotions and relaxation techniques to help children release negative emotions such as anger. The relaxation techniques used included deep breathing exercises to help children stay calm.

The findings showed that the board game significantly improved children's self-awareness in several aspects, including the ability to socialize, recognise and express emotions, and increase caution towards strangers. Based on direct observation to observe children's behavior and attitudes during expression board games, interviews with teachers to obtain in-depth information on children's social-emotional development, and documentation, it was found that expression board games were effective in developing children's self-awareness. Children who previously showed low self-awareness, after participating in this game, showed significant improvement. For example, AK who initially had difficulty with socializing, after the intervention is now capable of interacting with his friends and adjusting to new situations. AS who previously could not recognize and express emotions, after playing is showing improvement in emotion management. RF also showed improvement in the ability to develop trust in adults in appropriate way.

The results of this study are consistent with previous theories and findings stating that interactive games and activities can improve children's social-emotional development. For example, research by Gemilang & Ningrum (2023) showed that emotion recognition activities through play can improve children's ability to recognize emotions. This research reinforces the view that immediate and interactive experiences are essential in developing children's self-awareness and social-emotional skills. Horin et al., (2020) found that games designed to develop social-emotional skills, such as expression boards, can help children better understand and manage their emotions. This research showed that children who engaged in interactive play showed significant improvements in empathy, self-regulation, and the ability to build positive relationships with peers. Another study by Woodhouse (2019) confirmed that a structured play approach can provide opportunities for children to explore a range of emotions in a safe and supportive environment. This research showed that children who participate in play activities that focus on social-emotional development tend to have better abilities in identifying, understanding, and managing their emotions. In addition, Rodhwa Nisa et al., (2021) stated that interventions that use play to improve children's self-awareness and social-emotional skills can provide long-term benefits. This study found that children who participated in a play-based program showed improvements in self-confidence, communication ability, and social skills, all of which are important for later academic and social success. Therefore, the findings from these observations, interviews, and documentation confirm that expression board games are not only effective in increasing children's self-awareness, but also support their overall social-emotional development. Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to continue to utilise interactive games and activities as a tool to support children's growth and development in various aspects of life.

Furthermore, recent research by Nurhasanah et al., (2021) also confirmed that game-based learning methods can improve children's social and emotional skills. They found that games specifically designed to introduce and manage emotions can help children develop a better understanding of their own and others' emotions. The findings support the importance of a child-centered approach in early childhood education, which emphasizes direct experience and social interaction as key factors in social-emotional development. This research proposes that expression board games can be considered an effective approach to developing young children's self-awareness. It can be the basis for modification of existing theories on children's social-emotional development. For example, the theory on the importance of direct experience in learning can be expanded to include the use of expressive play as an effective tool.
The research also shows that a fun and interactive approach to learning can produce better results in the development of self-awareness than conventional methods. Thus, this study supports the development of a curriculum that focuses more on the use of interactive games and activities to develop children's social-emotional skills. The findings of this study are in line with a recent study by Christie, (2019), who found that a play-based learning approach significantly improved preschoolers' social and emotional skills. They concluded that through play, children not only learn to recognize and manage their emotions, but also develop empathy and other social skills essential for healthy social interactions. In addition, research by Fleer & Kamaralli (2017) showed that the use of expressive play in educational settings can reduce anxiety levels and increase children's self-confidence. Their research found that children who engaged in games involving emotional expression showed significant improvements in their ability to manage stress and negative emotions.

In the light of these findings, this study not only supports existing theory, but also expands the understanding of how expression board games can be used as a tool to develop children's self-awareness and social-emotional skills. The findings support the modification of social emotional development theories to include the importance of expressive play as an effective method in early childhood education. The expression board game was found to be effective in developing children's self-awareness at Anugrah Kindergarten, Parepare City. The findings were obtained through qualitative methods that included observation, interviews and documentation. Interpretation of the data showed that children experienced improvements in their ability to socialize, to recognize and express emotions, and to be cautious of unfamiliar people. The results of this study are consistent with theory and previous findings on the importance of interactive games and activities in children's social-emotional development, and support the development of new approaches in early childhood education. The findings are also in line with recent research that emphasises the importance of play-based learning approaches in developing children's social and emotional skills.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of the study showed that the game was effective in improving children's social-emotional skills. Specifically, AK showed improvement in sociability and self-adjustment, AS was able to recognize and express emotions better, and RF showed improvement in caution toward strangers. These results were obtained through observation, interview and documentation methods which show that a game-based learning approach can produce significant results in the development of children's social-emotional skills. The research discussion relates these findings to existing theories and recent research. This research supports the theory that direct and interactive experiences are essential in children's social-emotional development.

Recommendations for future researchers are to continue exploring the use of expressive play in various early childhood education contexts. Further research could explore different types of games and other interactive methods to develop different aspects of social-emotional skills. In addition, the research could be expanded to include a larger and more diverse population of children to understand the effectiveness of these games across different educational settings. Thus, this study not only provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of expression board games in developing children's self-awareness but also encourages the modification of social-emotional development theories and proposes new learning approaches that focus more on direct experience and social interaction.
REFERENCES


