
Efforts to Improve Cooperation Skills in Children Aged 4–5 Years through Group Games at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School

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Abstract

The objective of this research is clearly directed at improving the cooperation skills of children aged 4–5 years through group games at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School, Bekasi, in 2025. The research subjects consisted of 14 children. This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. The data analysis techniques used in this study were qualitative and quantitative data analyses. Qualitative data analysis was utilized to collect data through observation sheets, while quantitative data analysis was used to determine the percentage increase in children's cooperation skills following the implementation of the learning actions. The results of this study indicated a significant improvement in cooperation skills. In Cycle I, an improvement of 60.5% was achieved, which further increased to 83.7% in Cycle II. Based on these quantitative data, reinforced by qualitative findings, group games can effectively improve the cooperation skills of children aged 4-5 years at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School. The implication of this research is that through a learning process incorporating fun and interactive group games, children can become more focused and actively involved in play-based learning activities, proving the media's effectiveness in enhancing cooperation skills.

Keywords: *Cooperation skills, group games, children aged 4-5 years.*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini memiliki arah yang jelas yaitu untuk meningkatkan kemampuan kerjasama pada anak usia 4 – 5 tahun melalui permainan kelompok di PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School, Bekasi 2025 dengan subjek penelitian berjumlah 14 anak. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Analisis data kualitatif digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data melalui lembar observasi. Analisis data kuantitatif digunakan untuk mengetahui persentase peningkatan kemampuan kerjasama anak setelah tindakan pelaksanaan pembelajaran. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa adanya peningkatan kemampuan kerja sama. Pada siklus 1, diperoleh peningkatan sebesar 60,5% dan meningkat menjadi 83,7% pada siklus 2. Berdasarkan data kuantitatif tersebut, diperkuat dengan temuan data kualitatif bahwa permainan kelompok dapat meningkatkan kemampuan kerja sama anak usia 4-5 tahun di PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School. Implikasi hasil penelitian ini adalah bahwa proses pembelajaran dengan adanya permainan kelompok yang menyenangkan dan interaktif anak dapat lebih fokus dan secara aktif terlibat dalam kegiatan belajar sambil bermain sehingga media tersebut terbukti efektif meningkatkan kemampuan kerja sama.

Kata kunci: *Kemampuan kerja sama, permainan kelompok, anak usia 4-5 tahun.*

Introduction

Early childhood refers to children in the age range of 0 to 6 years. At this stage, children experience highly rapid development in physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and language aspects. This period is frequently referred to as the "golden age" because proper stimulation at this age will significantly influence the child's future growth and development. Based on the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Republic of Indonesia, 2003), early childhood encompasses children aged 0–6 years. This Law also states that early childhood education (ECE/PAUD) can be conducted through formal channels, non-formal channels, or informal channels. According to Montessori (n.d.), early childhood learners are "natural learners" with a mind like a sponge—they absorb information from their environment extremely quickly, making a stimulus-rich environment essential.

Humans are social beings who cannot live independently without the help of others. From birth, humans live in a social environment that demands interaction and cooperation. Therefore, it is crucial for every individual to possess the ability to establish good relationships with others, one of which is through a cooperative attitude. The value of cooperation does not appear out of nowhere; rather, it needs to be taught and habituated from an early age so that it becomes part of the child's character in everyday life. During early childhood, children are in an essential developmental phase encompassing physical, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects. One of the most prominent aspects during this period is social development. Children begin to learn to recognize themselves, understand others, and form relationships with peers and adults. Through this process, children need to be equipped with basic values such as mutual assistance, sharing, working in groups, and completing tasks together, which are all integral parts of a cooperative attitude.

Cooperation is defined as the attitude of willingness to work together with a group (Yusuf, 2004, p. 125), while group work refers to activities involving a small group of students organized for learning purposes, according to Cilstrap and Martin (as cited in Roestiyah, 2010, p. 45). Furthermore, cooperation is characterized as joint actions taken by different parties to achieve a common goal (Abdulsyani, n.d.). It is an effort to achieve predetermined common goals through the division of labor, functioning as a unified work entity all directed toward achieving the goal (Nawawi, n.d.). Cooperation offers numerous benefits. Sanjaya (as cited in Rusman, 2012, p. 206) emphasizes that cooperation highlights collective effort, distributes learning outcomes evenly, instills peer tutoring, promotes equitable participation, and enhances problem-solving skills. Similarly, Johnson (as cited in Abdurrahman, 2010, p. 124) states that cooperative interaction improves learning achievement, increases retention, facilitates higher-order reasoning, encourages intrinsic motivation, and enhances mutual cooperation life skills.

In early childhood, cooperation can be seen in various simple activities such as playing together, tidying up toys with friends, or participating in group activities at school. Although these activities seem simple, they are vital in forming the foundation of a child's social attitude. Aspects of cooperation include habituating children to socialize with peers in performing tasks, respecting the opinions or abilities of others, realizing that mutual assistance is enjoyable, and developing empathy (Pusat Pendidikan AUD Lembaga Penelitian UNY, 2009, p. 34). Children who are accustomed to cooperating will adapt more easily and be capable of facing challenges in their social lives. The stimulus for this development does not solely come from the teacher but also from peers, who can serve as mutual learning companions, meaning that success in learning also comes from peers (Asteria et al., 2008, p. 2). Conversely, a lack of habituation to cooperation can impact child development, causing children to grow into selfish individuals unable to work in teams. The inability of children to cooperate is still frequently encountered today, for instance, when children refuse to share toys or isolate themselves from friends.

Based on Pre-Cycle observations conducted by the researcher on children aged 4–5 years at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School on April 21, 2025, it was shown that children's cooperation skills were

low. Eight out of 14 children (60%) experienced difficulties in cooperating, specifically in sharing and interacting. This was characterized by children refusing to play with their friends, being overly selective in choosing friends, refusing to share toys, and refusing to follow game rules. This condition was caused by learning activities that were less engaging and a lack of varied media utilization. To address this issue, group games serve as one of the most effective methods for instilling the value of cooperation. Group games involve several individuals in social interaction to achieve common goals with a sense of fun and joy. According to Hurlock (n.d.), group games are essential tools for developing children's social skills, such as cooperation, leadership, and following rules. Parten (n.d.) also classifies this phase as cooperative play, where children play together with a shared goal and divide tasks. When involved in group games, they are required to interact, coordinate, and cooperate. Children learn to follow collective rules, take turns, express their ideas, listen to friends, negotiate during disagreements, and demonstrate sportsmanship.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to formulate and implement efforts to improve the cooperation skills of children aged 4–5 years through group games at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference medium for improving cooperation skills in early childhood. Practically, this study is expected to benefit teachers by providing new experiences in utilizing group games, assist schools with considerations for improving the learning process, help students foster mutual respect and care, and allow researchers to gain hands-on experience in enhancing early childhood cooperation skills.

Method

Research Subjects, Setting, and Time

The subjects of this study were children aged 4-5 years in Group A at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School during the 2024/2025 Academic Year. The population of 4-5-year-old children serving as research subjects comprised 14 individuals (8 boys and 6 girls). The specific research objective aims to ensure the obtained results are more accurate and generalizable to the entire population. The research was conducted at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School, located at Greenview Complex, Jl. Greenview Blok E No.3-4-5 RT.009/013, Jaka Setia, South Bekasi, Bekasi City. This research was conducted in the even semester of the 2024/2025 Academic Year, specifically from May to June 2025.

Research Procedure Design

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a method used to overcome problems found in classroom learning. CAR is conducted by implementing actions within teaching and learning activities simultaneously in the classroom (Arikunto, 1992). The method applied specifically adopts the Kemmis and McTaggart Model. This model includes the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting in a recurring spiral.

The research steps in this CAR are as follows:

- **Stage 1: Planning:** The researcher makes preparations encompassing all detailed action steps: determining themes, sub-themes, indicators, and learning activities, then compiling them into a Daily Lesson Plan (RPPH). This also involves preparing research instruments (observation sheets), media, and documentation tools.
- **Stage 2: Acting:** Cycle 1 action plans are executed. The researcher begins with an initial observation of the learning process, then implements the action guided by the RPPH.
- **Stage 3: Observation:** During learning, the researcher observes children's engagement, activity, and interaction. Observation is done collaboratively to note critical research points.

- **Stage 4: Reflection:** Executed at the end of each cycle, reflection determines whether the applied actions meet the researcher's expectations and identifies causes of unmet goals to formulate corrective action plans.

Data Analysis Technique

This study represents qualitative research applying action research cycles, followed by calculating the influence magnitude of the media on the dependent variable. The data analysis techniques utilized were qualitative data analysis through observation methods regarding children's activity and engagement, documentation, and portfolio/artwork results. Observations were conducted while the actions or learning were implemented. Instruments used included observation sheets for improving cooperation skills and teacher activity observation sheets from the collaborator.

Results and Discussion

Description of Research Results

The research data is presented in two forms: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data observes the percentage increase in each cycle, while qualitative data analyzes information obtained via cooperation skill observation sheets and field documentation notes. Pre-cycle research in Class A was conducted on May 12, 2025, and Cycles I and II from May 19 to May 30, 2025, involving 14 students (8 boys, 6 girls). In the student assessment reports, all child activities were checked off in provided columns with a scoring classification category consisting of: 5% - 25% for Beginning to Develop (MB), 30% - 50% for Still Developing (SB), 55% - 75% for Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and 80% - 100% for Developing Very Well (BSB).

Initial data from the observation on May 8, 2025, utilizing the ball relay group game, indicated that during the core activities, several children disturbed their peers and chatted, disrupting classroom conduciveness. Furthermore, during the ball relay, some children ignored the rules, souring the mood of others.

During Cycle I (May 19 to May 23, 2025), activities included building block mosques, obstacle courses, animal puzzles, water relays, and item transfer races. While enthusiasm was high, conflicts emerged, such as children getting upset over block distributions or refusing to collaborate on puzzles. The teacher consistently provided reinforcement regarding sharing, patience, and the beauty of working together.

During Cycle II (May 26 to May 30, 2025), improvements were highly visible due to consistent habituation. Activities included interactive storytelling, a "human train" game holding a single rope, a charades (guessing gestures) game in teams, direction-following games using a circular rope, and collaborative canvas painting in groups.

Discussion of Research Results

Pre-Cycle Discussion

Initial data acquired during observations on May 8, 2025, showed low cooperation.

Table 1. Pre-Cycle Research Results Score

No.	Name	Pre-Cycle (%)
1	AisyA	65
2	AisyH	60
3	Ath	35
4	Haz	35

5	Hms	40
6	Uma	40
7	Emb	45
8	Raf	40
9	Sha	40
10	Kha	40
11	Kan	35
12	Ima	30
13	Mis	35
14	Ahm	35

Cycle I Discussion

Reflective improvements in Cycle I included the teacher implementing attention-grabbers, preparing media earlier to maintain classroom control, being more enthusiastic to motivate students, focusing on equitable appreciation, and ensuring instructions were delivered clearly without rushing.

Table 2. Cycle I Research Results Score

No.	Name	Cycle I (%)
1	AisyA	75
2	AisyH	70
3	Ath	50
4	Haz	55
5	Hms	50
6	Uma	55
7	Emb	65
8	Raf	55
9	Sha	55
10	Kha	55
11	Kan	50
12	Ima	60
13	Mis	60
14	Ahm	55

Based on Cycle I results: 25% of the children were in the Still Developing (MB/SB) category, and 75% were Developing According to Expectations (BSH). No children had yet reached the Developing Very Well category.

Cycle II Discussion

Further action improvements in Cycle II involved utilizing visual picture media for better comprehension, calling on students systematically to maintain order, integrating interactive learning experiences, and providing ample space for students to express their feelings during reflection.

Table 3. Cycle II Research Results Score

No.	Name	Cycle II (%)
1	AisyA	90
2	AisyH	85
3	Ath	80
4	Haz	75
5	Hms	75
6	Uma	85
7	Emb	85
8	Raf	80
9	Sha	85
10	Kha	80
11	Kan	85
12	Ima	85
13	Mis	80
14	Ahm	75

Based on Cycle II results: 40% of the children were Developing According to Expectations (BSH), and 60% were Developing Very Well (BSB).

Table 4. Summary of Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Results

No.	Name	Pre-Cycle (%)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
1	AisyA	65	75	90
2	AisyH	60	70	85
3	Ath	35	50	80
4	Haz	35	55	75
5	Hms	40	50	75
6	Uma	40	55	85
7	Emb	45	65	85
8	Raf	40	55	80
9	Sha	40	55	85
10	Kha	40	55	80

11	Kan	35	50	85
12	Ima	30	60	85
13	Mis	35	60	80
14	Ahm	35	55	70

Based on the research findings, there is a clear trajectory of improvement in children's cooperation skills. The Pre-cycle demonstrated a 40% class average (Beginning to Develop), which increased in Cycle I to an average categorized as Developing According to Expectations, and further peaked in Cycle II with a 60% distribution in the Developing Very Well category. The implementation of group game methods successfully concluded in Cycle II. The calculated average increase was 60.5% in Cycle 1, escalating to 83.7% in Cycle 2.

Conclusion

The process of improving cooperation skills was carried out through group game methods following these steps: (1) Preparation: The teacher prepared equipment and materials for group games; (2) Student Preparation: The teacher introduced and explained the function of cooperation in life; (3) Material Delivery Session: Students began to understand the benefits of cooperating with others; (4) Reflection Session: The teacher reflected on the learning implementation and took corrective actions.

This study was conducted across two cycles. After completing the two cycles, Cycle I data revealed 25% of children were developing, and 75% were developing according to expectations. In Cycle II, 40% developed according to expectations, and 60% developed very well. The quantitative average escalated to 60.5% in Cycle 1 and peaked at 83.7% in Cycle 2. Based on these data, it can be concluded that children's cooperation skills significantly improved, and the research on improving cooperation skills for 4-5-year-old children through group games at PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School is deemed sufficient without requiring an additional cycle.

Based on the discussion and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) Creating interactive and creative group game activities will foster a sense of care and cooperation in children. (2) Expanding readings and references from social media or academic sources regarding diverse group games. Implementing these recommendations can assist PAUD Akhyar International Islamic School and other educational institutions in enhancing the effectiveness of group game variations in early childhood learning.

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