

# The Influence of Roleplay Simulation on the Moral Development of Children Aged 8-9 Years Old

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## Abstract

**Background** : A lack of moral development might increase negative moral behavior. Drama, as a part of role-play, can stimulate the moral development of children aged 8-9 years.

**Objective** : The purpose of this study is to explain the effect of role-play on the moral development of children aged 8-9 years

**Method** : This research applied pre-experimental one-group pre-post test design. The population in this study was children aged 8-9 years with a total of 47 children. A sample of 15 respondents was taken using purposive sampling. The independent variable in this study is role-play stimulation, while the dependent variable is the moral development of children aged 8-9 years. Data collection was done using observation sheets, then analyzed using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test with significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Result**: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test shows that stimulation through role-play can influence the moral development of children aged 8-9 years with  $p = 0.001$ .

**Conclusion**: The results of this study conclude that role-play stimulation can improve children's moral development.

**Keywords**: role-play stimulation, children's, moral development

## Introduction

There are still many children who have low moral behavior<sup>1</sup>. Moral development in school-age children is characterized by the child's ability to understand the rules, norms and ethics that apply in society. In character building in school, the teachers' role in giving direction to the child about things that are praiseworthy and despicable is very pivotal. Instruction given to the children to interact and be tolerant with fellow friends can be given through the activity of playing in groups. Moral value is an abstract concept; in this case, the child has not been able to directly accept the abstract concept that is taught by the teacher or parents quickly. Due to this reason, parents or teachers must be clever in choosing and determining the methods used to instill moral values in children so that the moral message delivered can be understood and utilized by students for their future lives<sup>2</sup>.

The methods that can be used vary greatly, one of which is role-play. Playing is an activity where children can do and practice skills, give expression to thoughts, be creative, prepare themselves to act and behave in an adult manner. Role-playing and make-believe is one form of games that aims to instill a broader view of a new behavior in children<sup>3</sup>.

In school-aged children, the cognitive development of children reaches the stage of maturity. This period is also called the intellectual period due to the openness and desire of children to gain knowledge and experience. The cognitive development of children aged 7-11 years is a concrete operational stage. At this stage the child has the ability to understand the rules of the conversation so as to produce logical and mental operational patterns. This research observes the effect of role-play stimulation on moral development in children aged 8-9. The purpose of this study is to explain the effect of role-play on the

moral development of children aged 8-9 years<sup>4</sup>.

## Material and Method

This study is a Pre Experimental research done using One Group Pre-Post Design This study applied purposive sampling where samples were selected among the population in accordance with what is desired by researchers, thus the sample can represent the characteristics of the population that were known beforehand<sup>5</sup>. The independent variable of this research is role-play stimulation. While the dependent variable is the moral development in children aged 8-9 years<sup>6</sup>.

### Research Instrument

In this research, in supporting the role-play, researchers use drama scripts and properties such as clothes, chairs, tables, etc. The play was done based on an activity unit under the guidance of researchers and class teachers. In addition, in assessing the moral development of children, researchers use observation sheets obtained from elementary school curriculum with indicators of social behavior assessment including: honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, care, confident, and teamwork. There are 14 items observed with 4 answer choices. The answers “always” score 4, “often” 3, “sometimes” score 2, and “never” score 1. Measurement results are categorized on an ordinal scale<sup>7</sup>.

### Data Collection Procedure

The initial data collection was carried out using questionnaire sheets for 47 children aged 8-9 years with low moral development. The researchers selected the samples according to the inclusion requirements and obtained a sample of 15 children. Prior to the observations, teachers were asked to give assignments every day for 1 week. In addition, teachers also made a schedule of daily exams held 2 times a week. This is done to assess the child’s moral development in accordance with the indicators on the observation sheet. Researchers divided the 15 children into 3 groups consisting of 5 children each<sup>8</sup>. Two days before the play the researchers distributed the role according to the theme and the storyline. This was done so that each group rehearse first before playing in front of the class. Each intervention was carried out by all groups with the same

theme in turn. The theme of intervention 1 was honesty, intervention 2 was disciplined attitude, intervention 3 was themed courtesy, and intervention 4 was controlled attitude towards the environment. After the intervention was given 4 times for 2 weeks, researchers observed the children with the help of the home class teachers for 1 week. Observations were made before the school started class until after school<sup>9</sup>.

### Data Analysis

From the data was collected, the differences in behavior were analyzed before and after the intervention, the role-play stimulation, was given, wilcoxon signed rank test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test ordinal data intervention Overall statistical test was done on the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  (Windows SPSS 21 program). If the statistical test shows the value of  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  then there is a comparison between the previous data and after an intervention on moral development in children aged 8-9 years<sup>10</sup>.

### Result

This respondent characteristic data outlines the characteristics of the child which includes age, sex, status in the family, parents’ last education, and parents’ occupation. Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (12 respondents) were in the 9-year age group (80%) and there were 3 respondents in the 8-year age group (20%). Table 2 shows that most respondents were male (8 respondents, 53.33%) and 7 female children (46.67%). Table 3 shows that the characteristics of respondents based on the status of children in the family which shows that there were 3 only-child (20%), 1 firstborn (6.67%), 3 middle child (20%), and 8 youngest child (53.33%). Table 4 shows the characteristics of respondents based on parents’ last education, most revealed that the last education of respondents’ fathers were high school students (12 persons, 80%) and there were 3 persons in junior high schools (20%). Whereas for the mothers, 10 persons were in high school (66.67%) and 5 persons were in junior high school (33.33%). Table 5 shows that the respondent’s parents’ work, both the fathers and mothers. There were 13 fathers who work as private employees (86.67%) and 2 as entrepreneurs (13.33%). While 3 mothers work as private employees are 3 people (20%), 2 are self-employed (13.33%), and 10 persons are not working (66.67%). Table 6 reveals the result of the

Wilcoxon Sign Rank Test with  $p = 0.001 < \alpha$ , indicating that  $H_0$  rejected and  $H_1$  accepted, thus there was an effect of the role-play stimulation on the moral development of

children aged 8-9 years. The age of 8-9 years are the pre-conventional stage on moral development according to Kohlberg.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents by age**

Age	Total	%
8 years	3	53.33
9 year	12	46.67
Total	15 children	100

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender**

Sex	Total	%
Male	8	53.33
Female	7	46.67
Total	15 children	100

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on status in the family**

Status	Total	%
Only child	3	20
Oldest child	1	6.67
Middle child	3	20
Youngest child	8	53.33
Total	15 children	100

**Table 4. Distribution of respondents based on their parents' last education**

Parents' last education	Father		Mother	
	Total	%	Total	%
Junior high school	3	20	5	33.33
High school	12	80	10	66.67
Total	15	100	15	100

**Table 5. Distribution of respondents based on parents' work**

Parents' occupation	Father		Mother	
	Total	%	Total	%
Private employees	13	86.67	3	20
Entrepreneur	2	13.33	2	13.33
Not working	-		10	66.67
Total	15	100	15	100

**Table 6. The level of moral development of children aged 8-9 years**

No	Moral development value	
	Pre	Post
1	37	49
2	23	39
3	23	34
4	25	44
5	25	35
6	27	39
7	20	25
8	26	43
9	22	26
10	47	52
11	39	45
12	35	45
13	39	43
14	33	42
15	39	46
Mean	30.6667	40.4667
SD	8.217	7.698

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test  $p = 0.001$

## Discussion

After being intervened with the role-play stimulation, the respondents experienced a positive increase on the moral development. The respondents did not cheat during exams, obey rules in school, carry out the tasks assigned by the teacher, do not bother friends, do not litter, carry out picket duties, and were shown to perform other positive behaviors. However, a small proportion of children with poor moral development was also found. In addition, there were obstacles in the interventions, namely the crowded respondents and audience that caused the message conveyed in the play to not be fully received by children. This caused the results of the intervention to not be optimal.

Respondents who received the intervention experienced an increase in moral development. This means the role-play activity is not just a fun game but is also a method of learning for children in school. In this case, nurses play an important role as well as opportunities to further enhance the competence and creativity of nurses, especially towards child and community in providing nursing care.

Table 6 shows that a small proportion of children do not experience an increase in moral development. This was because their parents work, thus the quantity and quality of parental care for their children was reduced. In addition, the status of the youngest and only child also affects the improvement of their moral development, because the youngest child and only child tend to be selfish, stubborn, spoiled, and impatient. Analysis of the data in table 6 shows that there is an influence of play on the moral development of children aged 8-9 years. Significant results were obtained ( $p = 0.001$ ). Increased results quantitatively indicate that the moral development of children aged 8-9 years increased after being given the intervention.

Moral development is a change in reasoning, feeling, and behavior about standards regarding right and wrong<sup>1</sup>. Moral development is influenced by two factors, internal and external. Internal factors are influenced by the level of intellectual development, while external factors can be in the form of the influence from parents, peers, and society. Moral development is influenced by the atmosphere of the home, school, environment, and society<sup>11</sup>. Moral development is influenced by age, race,

social status, level of intelligence and social environment. Sex and gender also play a role in influencing moral development<sup>12</sup>.

Prior to the intervention, from the 15 respondents it was found that all of the children who had insufficient moral development were only child and last child. The second factor that causes moral development is the child's position in the family. An only child is accustomed to being the center of attention. As a result, they are often considered selfish and stubborn. Usually, these traits are a mixture of the oldest and youngest child. Similar thing applies to the youngest child, they get a lot of attention from parents so that he becomes spoiled, rebellious, careless, and impatient.

The researchers assumed that the oldest and youngest children tend to have higher negative behaviors<sup>13</sup>. In the opinion of researchers, working parents, in general, have less time for their children. Moreover, coming with the trend of working mothers in the family, spending time together with children becomes a problem that can affect the parenting method applied by the parents<sup>14</sup>.

Playing is an activity where children can do and practice skills, give expression to thoughts, be creative, prepare themselves to act and behave in an adult manner. As an activity that provides stimulation in the ability of skills, cognitive, and affective, playing is fitting for a guidance, considering that playing for children is a necessity. By playing, children will have a broader view of the world, causing them to be able to develop physical, emotional, and mental maturity, and shaping them into creative, intelligent, and innovative children<sup>15</sup>.

Role-playing is chosen to be applied in the teaching and learning process since it is believed that it might become a special attraction for students. Students are usually very enthusiastic about lessons relating to daily life in the community<sup>16</sup>. Drama and role-play are a medium for character education, because drama is the art of role playing, which might assist children's character development. By role-playing, children can have the ability to imitate without being taught or by following directions in the roles being played<sup>17</sup>.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research, it can be concluded

that the moral of children aged 8-9 years, following the role-play stimulation, had achieved a good development. This can be seen from how the children stopped cheating during exams, started implementing the rules in school, carrying out the tasks given by the teacher, not disturbing their friends, not littering, and started carrying out picket duties. With drama and role-play that are done repeatedly, children can remember the moral message permanently. Thus, the child's moral development could gradually increase in aspects of honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and caring.

**Ethical Clearance:** This research was carried out after receiving a letter of approval from the parents or guardians of students to emphasize the ethical issues, and giving informed consent sheet as a way of agreement between the researchers and the respondents before the study was conducted. The research was done based on anonymity (without name), where the confidentiality of the responden's identity is maintained. The researchers maintained the confidentiality of the respondent's identity by not publishing the respondent's name. Researchers only used name codes in the data collection sheet. The confidentiality of research results was also guaranteed, only certain data groups will be reported on the results of research.

**Source of Funding:** All of the expenses for this research are fuded by authors' money without external sponsor.

**Conflict of Interest :** There is no conflict of interest related with this paper.

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