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Fatma Betül Şenol¹
¹Afyon Kocatepe University

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Supporting Pro-Social Development of 60-66 Month Aged Children with the Drama Method*

Fatma Betül Şenol^{1†}

¹ Afyon Kocatepe University

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reflect the effectiveness of a drama education program, identify the pro-social behaviour level of children, and determine the effects of the drama education program on the pro-social behaviours of children. In this study, experimental method with the pre-test, post-test retention control group design is adopted. General information form and a Collaboration-Cooperation-Sharing Observation Form are used as data collection tools. Under the scope of this study, a 12-week drama education program is applied. The results of the study show that there is a significant difference between pre-test/post-test and retention scores between the experiment and control group. It is seen that drama education is effective for children to gain collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour, to adopt these behaviours and to internalize them.

Key words: Pro-social behaviour, Drama, Preschool education

Introduction

Individuals can live in harmony within the society they live in by gaining social behaviours. With the help of social behaviours, individuals learn to approach other individuals in a positive way and these individuals are included in the society (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996). These positive approaches start with development of pro-social behaviour.

Pro-social behaviours are things such as collaboration, cooperation, sharing, forgiveness and consolidation to provide benefit to others without anything in return (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Knafo-Noam, 2015). Additionally, pro-social behaviour is represented as positive interpersonal behaviour. Pro-social behaviours are also known as not showing anti-social behaviour. Additionally, it can be found that an individual who shows pro-social behaviour has positive ethical development (Uzmen & Mağden, 2002). Individuals are motivated to show pro-social behaviour on their own and act by showing self-sacrifice or by taking risks (Eisenberg, Van Schyndel, & Spinrad, 2016). A child giving a piece of her playdough to her crying friend can be given as an example. In this example, a child helped her crying friends by sharing and made a sacrifice without any interest, return or reward (Bayhan & Artan, 2007).

Pro-social behaviours occur in the early period of life (approximately one, and one and a half years of age) and develop further during life (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Knafo-Noam, 2015; Hammond & Brownell, 2015). Babies around one year old ask help from adults and show certain positive behaviours (Liszkowski, 2005). When they are about three years old, they hug people, share their objects and toys when they notice sad individuals (Bandstra, Chambers, McGrath, & Moore, 2011). After four years old, children start to gain a higher level of social perspective (Paulus, 2015). At these ages, factors like efforts of other children, needs, and being a member of a group are effective on children's behaviour. Although these pro-social behaviours develop throughout life, the basis of these behaviours are formed in the pre-school period (Bayhan & Artan, 2007).

It was seen that children who gain pro-social behaviours in the pre-school period had positive gains in academic skills in the future (Caprara et al., 2000; Rhoades, Warren, Domitrovich, & Greenberg, 2011) and children showing these behaviours had a lower level of peer victimization and peer rejection (Kokko et al., 2006;

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† Corresponding Author: *Fatma Betül Şenol*, fbetululu@aku.edu.tr

Veenstra et al., 2008). Additionally, Reynold, Gast and Luscre (2014) state that children's gaining positive social behaviour is effective for psychological well-being and coping with employment and work life problems.

It is important to consider how children can gain these pro-social behaviours which have important effects on children. Children observe their surrounding and people around them starting from their infancy. Children learn how to behave and how to react by observing, imitating, and taking a role-model from the individuals around them. In this case, since children have a possibility to encounter negative examples as well as positive examples, the effects of negative examples should be minimised. Additionally, such passive observation of children will not have permanent marks on their behaviour. Therefore, these behaviours should be offered systematically under a certain plan with effective methods for children to gain these behaviours (Doescher & Sugawara, 1989; Uzmen & Mağden, 2002; Fazlıoğlu & Ercan, 2014). Effective education methods through which a majority of the desired behaviour leave a permanent mark on children are methods allow children to be at the centre of education and active during the learning process. One of these methods is drama. Edmiston (2013) emphasise that children in a drama-based education program are more successful in an academic and social sense compared to traditional education programs and drama is an effective education method.

Drama is the process where individuals review an event, thought, and subject by restructuring it with past experiences (San, 1990). Drama helps children be effective within the learning process and learn by experiencing, experience real events, and enabling self-realisation and contributes to children to be creative individuals (Kaf, 2000). Drama is a group activity and occurs as society (Heathcote, 1990). Therefore, drama activities offer an interactive work environment. Children act in an aesthetic and kind way during drama work and express themselves (Neelands, 2009; Rasmussen, 2010).

In drama, children share with each other, interact and help each other to analyse a dramatic situation. Snape et al. (2011) emphasised that drama developed behaviours like collaboration, helping, and respect among children. Children show all these behaviours without a return during the drama session. This enables development of pro-social behaviours of children and transferring these behaviours to the lives of children by using drama method. In short, drama method alone is effective for pro-social behaviour development in children. However, Elias and Arnold (2006) stated that these behaviours should be presented within a plan to support the social development of children. It was emphasised that children can internalise behaviours offered in the systematic manner and can turn into behaviour in an easier way. Therefore, it is clear that the drama sessions are more effective when these sessions are prepared with content that will develop pro-social behaviour and in a planned way.

Based on this notion, the purpose of this study is to reflect on the effectiveness of a drama education program, identify the pro-social behaviour level in children, and determine the effects of the drama education program on the pro-social behaviour of children.

Method

Model of Study

To evaluate the effectiveness level of drama education program on pro-social behaviours of children in this study, the experimental design with pre-test, post-test and retention test design was adopted. The experimental pattern compares changes on dependent variables by intervening to independent variables (Büyüköztürk, 2014). In this study, a 2x3 mixed pattern was adopted. In this pattern, there were at least two independent variables that analyse effectiveness on the dependent variable. One of these variables analyses the different operations formed from the independent groups while other one characterizes the repetitive measurements (pre-test/post-test-retention test) on the different times of participants in the study group (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011).

Study Group

The study group was determined with the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is one of the non-random sampling methods that is preferred for easy access and suitability (Berg, 2000). Accordingly, 39 children in two pre-school classes in different pre-school institutions formed the sample of this study. The experiment group consisted of 21 children while the control group consisted of 18 children. While the drama education program was applied to 21 children in the experiment group, there was no intervention to children in the control group.

Instruments

As data collection tools, the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher and the Collaboration-Cooperation-Sharing Observation Form (CCSOF) developed by Metin and Şenol (2017) were applied.

Personal Information Form:

Personal Information Form includes questions about the child's gender, date of birth, previous pre-school education status, number of siblings, age and occupation of mother and father, and information about their education.

The Collaboration-Cooperation-Sharing Observation Form (CCSOF):

CCSOF was developed by Metin and Şenol (2017) to determine the collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours of children in pre-schools with children with special needs. In this study, since there was one child with special needs in both the experiment group and control group, CCSOF was applied.

CCSOF consisted of three sub-dimensions and 22 items. These sub-dimensions were collaboration (7 items), sharing (5 items) and cooperation (10 items). This form contained separate items that determined behaviours of normal children compared to normal peers and children with special needs. Additionally, CCSOF separately evaluates how frequent children do these behaviours "on their own" or "when their teacher wanted" on the same items. Items on the observation form were scored as Always (3 points), Sometimes (2 points) and Never (1 point).

When the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of CCSOF was analysed, it was found that total reliability was 0.80 and for sub-dimensions, collaboration sub-dimension was 0.75, cooperation sub-dimension was 0.69, and sharing sub-dimension was 0.68 (Metin & Şenol, 2017).

CCSOF was only applied during play time. For application, "intermittent observation" among observation techniques was adopted. In intermittent observation, observation units are observed at certain time intervals or at sampled time intervals (Karasar, 2007). Five children were randomly selected from the classroom. After each child was observed for five minutes, second and third observations were completed starting from the first child. Each child was observed for a total of 15 minutes for 3 times and evaluated (Metin & Şenol, 2017).

Drama Education Program

This is a program aiming to develop collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours among pro-social behaviours among 60-66-month-old children. While this program was being developed, literature related with social skills, social behaviour and pro-social behaviour were reviewed. It is stated that by showing collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours in the pre-school period, children are becoming individuals who form relationship with people around them and show positive behaviours. Additionally, it can be thought that collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours are the basis for showing other pro-social behaviours. In this scope, it was decided to support collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours among pro-social behaviours with the drama method.

Drama plans were prepared to contain warm-up, impersonation and evaluation stages. The drama method was structured with various techniques. Among these techniques, improvisation and role playing were main elements of the drama and at the impersonation stage, these methods must be employed for dramatic event analysis. However, it is not easy for children who have not encountered with these techniques frequently to analyse techniques such as improvisation. Therefore, all techniques in the drama method were structured from easy to hard and presented to the children.

When selecting gain indicators, gain indicators that supported collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours during the Pre-School Curriculum (2013) were considered as a basis. Plans included interesting materials that would increase participation of children. Drama education program consisted of 12 sessions. Each session was planned to last for 40 minutes on average. Among these sessions, four was prepared for collaboration, four for cooperation and four for sharing behaviours. Although there were dominant behaviours in the plans, other behaviours were also included.

Data Collection

The pre-test was applied to a selected experiment and control group of children before the Drama Curriculum application. Later, the drama curriculum was applied only to the experiment group for 12 weeks and one session per week (approximately 40 min per session). When application was completed, the post-test was applied to the children in the experiment and the control group. Four weeks after post-test was applied to experiment group children, the retention test was applied.

Data Analysis

To determine whether the scores of the experiment and control group children showed a normal distribution for the Collaboration-Cooperation-Sharing Observation Form, the Shapiro Wilk test was applied to the pre-test, post-test, and the retention test measurements. Accordingly, the Mann Whitney U (MWU) test was applied for the values that did not show normal distribution when two independent groups were compared. For values that did not show normal distribution among the difference comparison of the two pairs in the dependent groups, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks (WSR) test and for values with normal distribution, Dependent Group t test was applied (Alpar, 2014).

Limitation of Study

This study was limited to collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviours of pro-social behaviour. The prepared drama sessions focused on these three behaviours. This study was limited with one control and experiment group. Results were limited with results obtained from CCSOF.

Results

Findings obtained from the pre-test/post-test comparison of the experiment and control group and post-test and retention test comparison of experiment group for Collaboration-Cooperation-Sharing Observation Form are presented below.

Table 1. Pre-test/post-test scores of the experiment and control group.

CCSOF	Tests	Groups	MWU				
			n	Mean	Sd.	U	p
Collaboration	Pre-test	Experiment	21	8,19	0,92	56,5	0,001
		Control	18	9,83	1,20		
	Post-test	Experiment	21	19,90	1,04	0	0,001
		Control	18	11,05	0,87		
Cooperation	Pre-test	Experiment	21	11,66	1,35	79	0,002
		Control	18	13,44	1,65		
	Post-test	Experiment	21	28,71	0,90	0	0,001
		Control	18	17,44	1,33		
Sharing	Pre-test	Experiment	21	5,76	1,04	53	0,273
		Control	18	6,00	0,90		
	Post-test	Experiment	21	14,33	0,79	0	0,001
		Control	18	7,94	0,87		
Total	Pre-test	Experiment	21	25,61	2,53	63,5	0,001
		Control	18	29,27	2,92		
	Post-test	Experiment	21	62,95	2,31	0	0,001
		Control	18	36,44	2,57		

When Table 1 was analysed, in CCSOF while collaboration ($U= 56.5$, $p<.05$), cooperation ($U= 79$, $p<.05$) pre-test scores of control group was significantly higher in sharing ($U= 53$, $p>.05$) sub-dimension, there was no significant difference between the experiment group and the control group. In CCSOF “collaboration ($U= 0$, $p<.001$), cooperation ($U= 0$, $p<.001$), sharing ($U= 0$, $p<.001$)” sub-dimensions, it was seen that the post-test score average of the experiment group was significantly higher.

Table 2. Pre-test/post-test scores of the experiment group children.

CCSOF	Test	WSR				
		n	Mean	Sd	z	P
Collaboration	Pre-test	21	8,19	0,92	4,042	0,000
	Post-test	21	19,90	1,04		
	Post-test	21	19,90	1,04	2,517	0,012
	Retention	21	20,61	0,66		
Cooperation	Pre-test	21	11,66	1,35	4,033	0,000
	Post-test	21	28,71	0,90		
	Post-test	21	28,71	0,90	3,148	0,001
	Retention	21	29,47	0,67		
Sharing	Pre-test	21	5,76	1,04	4,049	0,000
	Post-test	21	14,33	0,79		
	Post-test	21	14,33	0,79	2,714	0,007
	Retention	21	14,76	0,53		
Total	Pre-test	21	25,61	2,53	4,021	0,000
	Post-test	21	62,95	2,31		
	Post-test	21	62,95	2,31	3,441	0,001
	Retention	21	64,85	1,19		

When Table 2 was analysed, according to Wilcoxon the signed ranks test results, “collaboration ($z = 4.042$, $p<.01$), cooperation ($z = 4.033$, $p<.01$) and sharing ($z = 4.049$, $p<.01$)” sub-dimension post-test score averages of experiment group children were significantly higher than pre-test score averages. In CCSOF, for “collaboration ($z = 2.517$, $p<.01$), cooperation ($z = 3.148$, $p<.01$) and sharing ($z = 2.714$, $p<.01$)” sub-dimensions, retention test score averages of experiment group children was significantly higher than post-test score averages.

Table 3. Pre-test/post-test scores of control group children.

CCSOF	Tests	WSR				
		n	Mean	sd	Z	p
Collaboration	Pre-test	18	9,83	1,20	2,965	0,003
	Post-test	18	11,05	0,87		
Cooperation	Pre-test	18	11,83	1,38	3,743	0,001
	Post-test	18	15,38	1,33		
	Pre-test	18	6,00	0,90	3,663	0,001

Sharing	Post-test	18	7,94	0,87		
					T	p
Total	Pre-test	18	29,27	2,92	9,131	0,001
	Post-test	18	36,44	2,57		

When Table 3 was analysed, according to Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Dependent Group t-test results, “collaboration ($z = 2.965$, $p < .05$), cooperation ($z = 3.743$, $p < .05$) and sharing ($z = 3.663$, $p < .05$)” sub-dimension and total ($t = 9.131$, $p < .05$) post-test score averages of experiment group children were significantly higher than pre-test score averages.

Table 4. Pre-test/post-test score differences of experiment and control group.

CCSOF	Test	MWU				
		n	Mean	sd	U	p
Collaboration	Experiment	21	11,71	1,23	0	0,001
	Control	18	1,22	1,26		
Cooperation	Experiment	21	17,04	1,53	0	0,001
	Control	18	4,00	2,00		
Sharing	Experiment	21	8,57	1,28	0	0,001
	Control	18	1,9444	1,21		
Total	Experiment	21	37,33	3,32	0	0,001
	Control	18	7,16	3,32		

When Table 4 was analysed, according to the Mann Whitney U test result, it was determined that there was significant difference for CCSOF “Collaboration ($U = 0$, $p < .05$), Cooperation ($U = 0$, $p < .05$) and Sharing ($U = 0$, $p < .05$)” sub-dimensions and total ($U = 0$, $p < .05$) pre-test and post-test score averages of the experiment group and control group children. When rank averages were considered, children that had the education had significantly higher scores in all sub-dimensions compared to children who didn’t attend to program.

Discussion

This study aiming to support pro-social behaviours of 60-66 months old children with the drama method put forth that there was significant difference between the pre-test/post-test and the retention scores of the complete CCSOF and sub-dimensions between the experiment and control group. When the difference between the pre-test scores were analysed, it was seen that this difference was in favour of the control group. When pre-test scores of the experiment and control group were analysed, although the control group children had higher scores, differences between the averages were not high and the groups can be considered homogenous. Post-test average scores of the experiment group children from the complete scale and sub-dimensions are significantly higher than the pre-test and retention test scores. Post-test average scores of the control group children from the complete scale and sub-dimensions are significantly higher than the pre-test scores. When differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of experiments and the control group children are evaluated, there is a significant difference in favour of the experiment group.

Social skills play an important role for the social developments of children (Fung & Cheng, 2017). It is observed that children who have acquired social skills are successful and happy in their later lives. The development of social skills occurs more effectively, when children interact with each other. Therefore, in order for the development of social skills of children, appropriate methods should be used in which children interact with each

other. Among these methods, one of the most influential one is drama (Duffy, 2015; Lynch & Simpson, 2010; Onemli, Totan, & Abbasov, 2015). According to Schellenberg, Corrigan, Dys and Malti (2015), drama improves the social skills of children since it has an inherently interactive structure. Since drama is a group activity, this activity would strengthen the relationships between children and increase the frequency of positive behaviours. Additionally, drama practices allow individuals to observe social behaviors through both internal and external perspectives and to adopt them more easily (Frydman, 2016). In this study, it was seen that the frequency of showing collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour increased in the experiment group children after drama education and retention tests showed that these behaviours were permanent. Various studies support the effects of drama on children's social skills. For example, Chalmers (2007), Yeh and Li (2008) and Gullo (2005) stated that drama has an effect to help children gain social behaviours and skills such as collaboration, cooperation and sharing, and being nice. It was emphasised that the drama curriculum prepared to develop social skills of children are important for modelling and role-playing aspects (Önalın, 2006). Cömertpay (2006), emphasized that drama studies improve social sensitivity of children. As a result of the drama education program implemented by Kiyaker (2017), it was concluded that there was an increase in children's self-regulation skills and positive emotions. In addition to this research, Adıgüzel (2017) and Pyle and Bigelow (2015) emphasized that play activities have an impact on social developments of children. Ulubey (2018) also state that pre-school children's development is more effective since the drama activities are play-based. Moreover, as the conclusion of a meta-analysis study, Ulubey (2018) stated that the drama method was effective in the development of social skills of children. Based on these results, it can be said that the Drama Education Program is an effective program to develop collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour.

Gaining collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour that form the basis of positive communication with individuals around them and form the basis of social behaviours of children at early ages is extremely important. When these behaviours are formed in a systematic plan, children could learn these behaviours more easily and these behaviours become permanent (Elias & Arnold, 2006; Şahin & Karaaslan, 2006). Lawton and Burk (1995), who studied 3-5 years old children to develop behaviours such as collaboration, cooperation, sharing, waiting in line and empathy, showed that children that participated in the study showed development. According to Snape et al. (2011), drama applications increase the tendency to show these behaviours. As the conclusion of a study, in which the master's theses conducted on drama practices were examined, Can, Yaşar and Aral (2011) emphasized that drama was effective on social emotional development of children. Karapetian and O'Leary (1985) applied gamified stories to develop sharing behaviours of children and found that the sharing behaviours of children increased at the end of the study. Gültekin (2014), Güven (2006) and Uysal (2008) stated that the creative drama curriculum applied on children positively affected social and emotional development of children. As a result of a study, in which role-playing and dramatic play activities were applied to children at home and school environments, Fung and Cheng (2017) concluded that children's social competencies increased. In an experimental study conducted by Goldstain and Lerner (2018), it was concluded that dramatic play activities positively affected the social emotional development of children in the experimental group. Rubtsova and Daniels (2016) argued in their study that the communication and social skills of individuals were improved through bringing new perspectives in dramatic situations in drama. Additionally, collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour development (Sözkesen, 2015), social emotional development (Öztürk Samur, 2011), social skills, social problem-solving skills and psycho-social development (Dereli, 2014), social skills (Neslitürk, 2013) are found to be permanent based on applied curriculum. Abovementioned implementations and the retention test in these studies support the effect of the drama method on collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour as found in the current study. It is evaluated that this result emerged from the communication of children with their friends through playing various roles during drama activities, their solutions about the dramatic situations through sharing/helping and establishing positive relationships with their friends, their decisions based on cooperation for reaching the solution, and particularly, this result emerged from the fact that they acquire all these experiences by practicing and experiencing.

When the results were analysed, it could be stated that the control group children who did not participate in the drama application gained these behaviours within the natural development process and pre-school education. Results of the study found a slight development in control group children as well as the experiment group children. Accordingly, studies of Sözkesen (2015), Uzmen (2002), Kahraman (2007), Ekmişođlu (2007) and Üner (2011) showed that there were developments in collaboration, cooperation, sharing, and empathic behaviour of children who previously attended to pre-school education but did not attend to drama curriculum. Additionally, social skills (Freeman et al., 2003), social emotional development (Gültekin, 2014), collaboration, cooperation, sharing, empathy, and waiting in line behaviour of children (Lawton & Burk, 1995) are found that who did not attend to drama application developed at a low level. Goldstain and Lerner (2018) reported that there was no change in the social emotional development of the children in the control group, who did not participate in dramatic play events. It can be mentioned that the results of the abovementioned research studies

support the results obtained from the control group in this study. It is considered that this change was based on by the natural maturation process of children and pre-school education and their sharing and cooperation with the people around them.

In short, the results of the present study suggest that drama education is effective for children to gain collaboration, cooperation and sharing behaviour, to adopt these behaviours and to internalise them. It is believed that these results are important since these behaviours form the basis to gain pro-social behaviours.

Recommendations

Different education methods could be added to the drama curriculum and the applied curriculum can be extended. The observation form adopted in this study to measure positive social behaviours can be applied with measurement tools to measure the opinions of teachers and parents and enriched with data that enables a one to one application on children to turn data into a more objective form. This study could be applied on a larger sample and demographic properties obtained from experiment group could be compared.

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