

Needs Analysis for Development of Learning Module in Shaping Children's Social-Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Malaysia which aims to enhance children's social-emotional intelligence in terms of children's ability to experience, control and express emotions, as well as to form close and safe interpersonal relationships with people around them. Social-emotional intelligence among students will affect other types of learning as well as the readiness of preschool students before entering the real school environment. Learning that can improve students' social-emotional intelligence will make children more active and attract students to participate in classroom activities. This study is conducted to identify whether preschool teachers understand about social-emotional learning as well as the need to provide learning modules in assisting teachers to carry out learning activities that can foster children's social-emotional intelligence. Needs analysis was conducted to develop related learning modules through quantitative methods using questionnaire instruments distributed to 30 preschool teachers around the Klang Valley from different preschools. The instrument contained three constructs to be evaluated, namely the level of teacher understanding, level of social-emotional learning implementation and also level of need for social-emotional learning modules in preschool. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively to acquire the mean values and standard deviations for the scores obtained for each construct. The results of the study found that the level of teachers' understanding was high, level of implementation was moderately high and level of need for learning module was high. This study is significant to provide preliminary information on the need to construct learning modules for nurturing children's social-emotional intelligence. This study can be improved in the future by involving more respondents to obtain more accurate data on needs analysis.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, Social-Emotional, Early Childhood.

Introduction

Social-emotional learning has been studied over the past 20 years but it is now increasingly attracting researchers, parents, teachers and policy makers to integrate social-emotional learning into a more formal teaching structure (Martha, 2017). This is because social-

emotional is the key to more important life outcomes such as success in school and future career as good emotions can cultivate positive behavioral and social thinking (Jones and Doolittle, 2017). The National Association for the Education of Young Children, which is an accreditation of kindergartens in the United States, emphasizes the importance of children's social-emotional development in the learning curriculum and assessment of children's development. Several organizations such as the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social and Emotional Interventions (TACSEI) have been established to provide the country with resources related to the social-emotional learning to children.

In Malaysia, the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK) 2017 was introduced to produce balanced and innovative human. This curriculum has outlined six pillars in its curriculum framework, namely communication, spirituality, attitudes and values, humanity, personal skills, physical and aesthetic development, as well as science and technology. It also emphasizes on the core of self-skills towards social-emotional development of children in understanding their own emotions as well as the emotions of other individuals.

Social-emotional intelligence is the ability of children to experience, control and express emotions, as well as form close and secure interpersonal relationships with people around them. Children will explore the environment as well as learn about it in the context of family, community and culture (Goh, Yeo and Rohaya, 2019). Social-emotional education is a process where children and adults can understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy to others, create and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, CASEL).

Effective social-emotional not only provides optimal development to the personal and interpersonal domains but even more widely in the academic domain (Pam and John, 2018). Emotional intelligence is related to recognizing individuals, understanding own and others' emotions, problem-solving processes and behavioral formation. This is supported by the Goleman's theory in Suzyliana (2016) which also emphasizes that the emotional intelligence of the individual can be enhanced by understanding own emotions and others. As a result, it will provide mental and emotional balance which in turn will produce a superior individual.

Literature Review

In Children are often associated with joyous experiences. However, not all children had pleasant experiences while attending preschool learning sessions. The teaching and learning process at the preschool level will be more positive if children are able to express emotions in proper way (Zaharah, 2016). Children will also be more receptive and interested in learning if the learning methods are not bland and involve more movement (Mahzan and Chee, 2017). CASEL (2019) stated that there was an increase in academic achievement from the meta-analysis obtained from 213 studies in 2011 involving more than 270,000 students who followed social-emotional-based learning programs. An increase of 11% was indicated in their academic achievement.

Changes in the way of learning in 21st century demand current generation to equip themselves with emotional intelligence to control feelings in a more challenging learning process (Mohd, 2017). Lorita and Rohaty (2017) also stated that current learning in preschool provides meaningful, effective and enjoyable learning experience. Such experiences will produce students who are skilled, confident, positive-minded and ready to move on to a more formal school environment. Most studies have been conducted on children's social-emotional

intelligence and its relationship with students' readiness to face the major challenges in learning. Goh et al. (2019) developed an instrument to detect social-emotional intelligence and mental health problems among children which may affect their academic achievement and readiness to school.

CASEL (2019) found that there was a decrease in the dropout rate, behavior problems in school and classroom, drug use, teen pregnancy, mental health problems and criminal behavior after implementing social-emotional learning for two decades. Pam and John (2018) examined the effectiveness of programs related to social-emotional intelligence in preschool. It was found that those programs were able to improve social skills among children and reduce the influence of antisocial, problem triggers and violent behavior by children. Emotional intelligence reflects human behavior and the way they conduct their lives (Teng and Norzaini, 2017). The failure of an individual in the academic field stems from a defect in emotional development (Lorita and Rohaty, 2017).

Social-emotional learning can improve understanding of teaching through desired behavior and can also prevent unwanted behavior patterns (Pinar, 2019). In his study on the construction of programs to assist social-emotional development in preschool found that the programs were effective in dealing with negative behaviors which also affected the children learning in preschool. Pinar (2019) introduced five suitable programs for preschool learning to shape and evaluate positive behaviors, emphasizing on social-emotional learning in the United States. However, Goh et al. (2019) argued that there is still lack of instruments to assess the social-emotional intelligence of children in Malaysia and it makes it difficult for educators to assess emotional intelligence and prevent negative behavior among children.

Therefore, an understanding of the importance of social-emotional intelligence needs to be highlighted to educational practitioners so that more studies, instruments and modules on the assessment of social-emotional intelligence on preschool children can be developed.

Problem Statement

Transition phase from preschool to the first year of formal learning in Standard 1 greatly affects social-emotional and behavior of children (Pirskanen et al., 2019). Each year, the teachers have to deal with the unreadiness of student to Standard 1 which is exhibited through various manners and emotional disorders (Lorita and Rohaty, 2017). Students who start their learning in a new place will feel anxious and less confident with the new environment, including school, class, friends, teachers and most importantly new academic approach (Saturia et al., 2014). Problems related to student readiness are stemmed from emotional changes that cause a sense of tension, as well as physical and mental uncertainty (Zanariah and Kamarul, 2017).

Emotional intelligence needs to be inculcated and nurtured in students at an early school age to gain balance in other developments such as cognitive, physical and language (Lorita and Rohaty, 2017). Children will be considered as ready only if their social-emotional, cognitive, motor and physical developments are at high levels (Saturia et al., 2014). This is because the development of positive emotions such as fun, happiness and laughter will reduce the emotional tension experienced by children (Zaleha, 2017). Zuhaila (2015) in her study found that happy and fun learning can create attitude changes so that the preschool students are always ready for learning.

The use of learning modules as one of the teaching aids can help teachers in delivering social-emotional learning. The construction of learning through play modules has been implemented by several researchers to facilitate learning (Loy, 2017). However, related

studies are still scarce in emphasizing the importance of implementing learning through play methods in the developmental aspects of children's learning (Zakiah and Kamis, 2017), especially social-emotional aspects. Games carried out in learning are only considered effective if the teacher succeeds in planning and it depends on the creativity of the teacher to produce an effective game for the students (Nazrin and Ku Suhaila, 2017). Previous studies conducted by researchers have focused on the development of learning through play modules in the teaching of cognitive and language subjects (Aliza and Zamri, 2015; Zakiah et al., 2017; Eda and Suziyani, 2017; Lilis, 2018).

Therefore, this study examines the extent of teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and its implementation to children in preschool. This study also aims to identify the need to build learning modules in shaping the social-emotional intelligence of children, especially children at the preschool level aged between four to six years.

Research Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted using survey methods to obtain information from preschool teachers on the problems and needs of module construction. This preliminary study is a needs analysis conducted to seek problems and actions that can be taken in solving problems (Nur, 2017). In her study, it was also stated that the needs analysis is one of the main process in designing module development in the survey phase. Needs analysis is conducted to solve problems in a more specific environment.

In this study, 30 preschool teachers consisting of new teachers and experienced teachers were involved. Respondents were randomly selected from preschool teachers around the Klang Valley and each respondent represented a preschool. The selection of respondents was performed to obtain clear information and view of social-emotional learning from different preschools. Research instruments were distributed to these teachers using the Google form application as it is easier, faster and more economical.

The instrument used was questionnaire adopted from the assessment made by Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2019). The distributed questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section included the demographics of the respondents in terms of duration of teaching experience and education level of the respondents in preschool. This information is important to provide an initial impression of the teacher's expertise (Norshafinaz and Faridah, 2018). The second part of the questionnaire comprised eight questions to reflect the teachers' opinions on social and emotional learning and evaluate the level of teachers' understanding on the importance of social-emotional teaching among children regardless of status and rank differences. The third part contained six questions on the implementation of social-emotional learning in the respondent preschool. Subsequently, the fourth part accumulated the views of the respondents on the needs of learning modules construction to improve the existing teaching methods.

This questionnaire was based on a five-point scale, namely (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) uncertain, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. Each item in the questionnaire section was evaluated in terms of frequency and percentage for each point. The mean score level for each section or construct was measured to assess its level of need based on low level (0.00 to 2.00), medium low level (2.01 to 3.00), medium high level (3.01 to 4.00) and high mean score level (4.01 to 5.00) (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). From the assessment of the mean score level, the level of need for an action can be identified in solving the problems that have been raised.

The selected questions were first reviewed by an expert in psychology field to determine the validity of the face and contents. Some of the views and opinions given were used to improve the content of the questionnaire. In addition, Pearson correlation test was conducted on each item, which obtained a correlation value exceeding 0.35 for each item. It can be considered as high validity value (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The questionnaire was then evaluated using Cronbach's alpha to test its reliability. The study instrument is acceptable when the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeds 0.70 (Nur, 2017). Verification with Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) found that the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this instrument was 0.834.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows that 40% of the respondents were novice teachers in preschools with only less than three years of experience. The second highest percentage (30%) was recorded by teachers having more than 10 years of experience. The data also showed that most respondents have first degree in early childhood education represented by 36.7%, and followed by master's degree and certificate. However, there were 26.7% of preschool teachers who did not receive any formal education on early childhood education. Data obtained for demographic of respondents are summarized in Table.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of Respondents

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teaching experience	Less than 3 years	12	40
	Less than 5 years	4	13.3
	More than 5 years	5	16.7
	More than 10 years	9	30
Education level	Certificate	4	13.3
	Diploma	3	10
	First degree	11	36.7
	Master's degree	4	13.3
	No formal education	8	26.7

Understanding of Social-Emotional Learning

The data obtained from the respondents are depicted in Table 2. The level of teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning was at high level with a mean of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.59. Thus, it can be inferred that the respondents understood and agreed with the needs for social-emotional learning of children in preschool. These learning needs will have an impact on the behavior, emotions, as well as involvement of children with the activities carried out in preschool (Pam and John, 2018). This finding is in line with the statement for all items in this construct, of which more than 80% of respondents had agreed and strongly agreed on the importance of social-emotional learning. There were also 13.3% of teachers who were not certain that the need for social-emotional learning was embedded in the preschool curriculum. Only 6.7% of the respondents were not sure that this social-emotional learning could form positive behaviors among preschool children.

Based on the findings obtained, the respondents understood the impact and needs of social-emotional learning on children. This is in line with a study conducted by Maguire et al. (2016) who found that children are not able to provide good cooperation in the classroom

during learning sessions as they are not able to manage emotions well. The level of teachers' understanding is important for social-emotional learning application to children. In addition to facilitating the delivery of teaching, mastery of knowledge by the teachers can motivate them which in turn can also increase the motivation of students (Kalaiselvi et al., 2015).

Teachers are aware and understand that children's negative behaviors are due to their low social-emotional intelligence. These children are unable to give duly cooperation and follow the instructions given, thus disrupting their relationships with peers. Teachers who understand the needs for social-emotional learning of school children will be able to see and recognize children's behavior more clearly and further understand the needs of the children under their care.

Table 2.

Levels of Understanding for Social-emotional Learning

Item	Frequency and Percentage				
	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers understand that social and emotional learning is important for preschool children	-	-	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	24 (80%)
Social and emotional learning are embedded in the preschool curriculum	-	-	4 (13.3%)	8 (26.7%)	18 (60%)
Social and emotional learning is necessary for all children regardless of background	-	-	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	22 (73.3%)
Programs that emphasize social and emotional learning can reduce the absence of children from school	-	-	2 (6.7%)	10 (33.3%)	18 (60%)
Programs that emphasize social and emotional learning can attract children to participate in activities	-	-	2 (6.7%)	9 (30%)	19 (63.3%)
Programs that emphasize social and emotional learning can help children behave positively	-	-	1 (3.3%)	6 (20%)	23 (76.7%)
Programs that emphasize social and emotional learning can improve children's learning performance	-	-	1 (3.3%)	10 (33.3%)	19 (63.3%)
Children with good social and emotional skills will be better prepared for the real world	-	-	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	22 (73.3%)

Implementation of Social-emotional Learning in Preschool

Table 3 presents the data related to the level of implementation of social-emotional learning conducted in preschool. It was revealed that the implementation level was at moderately high level with a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 0.898. This proved insufficient implementation of social-emotional learning in preschool and should be further improved (Goh et al., 2019). About 63.3% of teachers disagreed with the opinion that children were not interested in participating in activities in their preschools, while 26.9% of respondents agreed. Children at the age of 4 to 6 years were also found still crying when sent to kindergarten by 20%. Preschool children showed good association among peers, which was represented by 93.3%, probably due to the emphasis on social-emotional learning by preschool teachers of 83.4%. Other statements are tabulated in Table 3.

The learning conducted in preschool includes all activities presented to children formally or informally (Rosmah and Mariani, 2014). Social-emotional learning in preschool is practiced in the daily activities of the children and can be seen through the involvement and

interaction of children with peers during the activities. Preschool activities should be meaningful and fun to increase children's interest as a whole (Zakiah and Mohamad, 2017).

The role of teachers in implementing social-emotional learning to preschool children is very important. If the teachers understand the needs of their students, they will also know how social-emotional learning can be applied to the children. Although the implementation of this social-emotional learning was at a moderately high level, there were also teachers who were unsure about their roles and responsibilities. This may be because they were among the novice teachers who have less experienced and need help and guidance to apply social-emotional learning in other cognitive learning.

Table 3.

Levels of Implementation of Social-emotional Learning

Item	Frequency and Percentage				
	1	2	3	4	5
Are children in your kindergarten always feel uninterested to participate in activities in the kindergarten	10 (33.3%)	9 (30%)	3 (10%)	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)
Are children often cry when they are sent to kindergarten	6 (20%)	10 (33.3%)	8 (26.7%)	6 (20%)	-
Are children in your kindergarten get along well with their peers	-	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	18 (60%)	10 (33.3%)
Learning that emphasizes on social and emotional of children is often conducted in your kindergarten	-	-	5 (16.7%)	14 (46.7%)	11 (36.7%)
Are all teachers in your kindergarten emphasized to apply social and emotional learning in the classroom	-	1 (3.3%)	6 (20%)	11 (26.7%)	12 (40%)
Is the learning environment in your kindergarten fun	-	-	4 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	10 (33.3%)

Improvements in Social-emotional Learning

Table 4 shows that the levels of needs and improvements in social-emotional learning were at high level with mean of 4.19 and standard deviation of 0.82. Based on the data, it can be seen that teachers in preschool were in dire need of support and improvement in learning activities, especially in helping children's social-emotional development. This is supported by 90% of respondents who agreed that teachers need to be assisted to implement social and emotional learning in the classroom. A total of 53.3% of respondents strongly agreed that the provision of modules that emphasize social and emotional learning is needed as a guideline for teachers. Other information related to the need's improvement for social-emotional learning is shown in Table 4.

Based on the results obtained, the need for social-emotional learning is in line with the study of Aliza and Zamri (2015), stating that teachers need help and guidance such as construction and development of instructional programs so that teachers can deliver lessons that comply with student standards. The development of appropriate modules is also very helpful in teaching sessions for preschool children.

Table 4.

Needs and Improvement

Item	Frequency and Percentage				
	1	2	3	4	5
Social-emotional learning is sufficient in preschool activity programs	1 (3.3%)	10 (23.3%)	7 (23.3%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)
Do programs that emphasize social and emotional learning need to be added to preschool activities?	-	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	10 (33.3%)	16 (53.3%)
Do teachers need help to implement social and emotional learning in the classroom?	-	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	8 (26.7%)	19 (63.3%)
Assessment of social and emotional development should be made on preschool children	-	-	1 (3.3%)	12 (40%)	17 (56.7%)
The provision of modules that emphasize social and emotional learning is needed as a guideline for teachers	-	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	11 (36.7%)	16 (53.3%)

Conclusion

Teachers are key person to foster and nurture children's social-emotional development. Teachers who understand their role are more likely to delve into the needs of children in managing their own emotions and form positive behaviors in socializing with a peer as well as in classroom activities. The results of this needs analysis showed that preschool teachers were clear and understood the importance of social-emotional learning and its impact on children's development. However, teachers demonstrated a moderate skill in implementing social-emotional learning in the classroom. Furthermore, the result also showed that teachers are lack training, input and guidelines in implementing social-emotional learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is recommended to provide teachers with a teaching module specifically focus on social-emotional learning based on these findings. Development of module is the most effective approach to overcome the issue of a lack of skills and training among the teachers. This module can be used as guidelines in planning and conducting the activities related to social-emotional learning in the classroom.

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