

Comforting, Helping and Sharing: Their Role in the Development of Early Childhood Prosocial Behaviour in Manggarai, NTT

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Abstract. Prosocial behavior plays a crucial role in children's development, as it reflects their nature as social beings. Children with well-developed prosocial behavior possess adequate skills in communication and collaboration, both with peers and adults, enabling them to succeed in social interactions. These prosocial skills are shaped by three main constructs: comforting, sharing, and helping.

The population of this research consists of early childhood children in Manggarai Regency. Using stratified random sampling, 115 children from three PAUD institutions in Manggarai Regency were selected as research subjects. These institutions are TK Bhayangkari, Ruteng; PAUD Petra, Ruteng; and PAUD Tunas Mbero, Anam. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing 10 questions, designed to assess the contribution of the comforting, sharing, and helping aspects to children's prosocial behavior in Manggarai, NTT. The respondents' answers were analyzed using factor regression analysis using software program SPSS version 22.

The research results indicate that sharing contributes the most to children's prosocial behavior in Manggarai, with a coefficient value of $r = 0.537$. The second highest contribution comes from comforting ($r = 0.437$), followed by helping ($r = 0.332$). This study concludes that sharing behavior plays the most significant role in shaping the prosocial behavior of early childhood children in Manggarai. Based on these findings, parents, teachers, and stakeholders are encouraged to prioritize the roles of comforting, sharing, and helping in enhancing prosocial behavior in early childhood. This focus is expected to further optimize the socio-emotional development of children in Manggarai, NTT.

Keywords: early childhood, prosocial behaviour, East Nusa Tenggara

1 Introduction

Early childhood is a stage of rapid growth and development, often described as a developmental leap. This period, known as the sensitive phase, is crucial for laying the primary and essential foundation for the development of various potentials and abilities in children. Thus, parents, educators, and other significant individuals in a child's environment must ensure

the optimal development of physical, cognitive, linguistic, artistic, social-emotional, spiritual, self-concept, self-discipline, and independence.

One developmental aspect that requires significant attention from parents is the socio-emotional development of children. This domain relates to children's behavior in adapting to societal norms and their environment [1]. Social development in children emerges through maturity and learning opportunities from their environment and stimuli. These behaviors include interactions with peers, teachers, parents, and siblings, reflecting children's innate nature as social beings[2].

As social beings, early childhood must develop the capability to form positive relationships with others. A vital skill for establishing such relationships is the ability to demonstrate kindness, cooperation, and care for others, known in social psychology as prosocial behavior. Prosocial behaviors are evident in various actions in children's daily social interactions, such as sharing willingly with peers, helping friends or family members, showing empathy by comforting sad friends, adhering to rules and social norms, speaking politely, collaborating in teams, participating in group activities, and socializing with others[3].

These prosocial behaviors are essential for the healthy socio-emotional development of children. Eisenberg identified that children who lack prosocial behaviors are at a higher risk of becoming socially isolated, and experiencing loneliness and social anxiety due to difficulties in interacting with their peers[4]. They are also less likely to collaborate in teams, making them vulnerable to low self-esteem. This lack of social skills hampers their ability to adapt to groups, leading to aggressive behaviors such as hitting or shouting and challenges in resolving conflicts with peers or family members in a healthy manner.

To prevent barriers in children's social development, parents, educators, and caregivers must carefully identify the factors influencing prosocial behavior. These factors include (1) parenting and caregiving styles, (2) prosocial role models demonstrated by adults or peers, (3) the child's capacity for empathy, (4) understanding of social norms and behavioral expectations, (5) social support from family, peers, and teachers, (6) positive experiences of helping others, (7) societal values and norms, and (8) positive reinforcement for prosocial actions. These factors interact and influence one another in shaping children's social behavior[5].

Although social psychology experts have proposed well-established theories regarding factors influencing children's prosocial behavior, systematic and structured studies are needed to explore these factors in Manggarai Regency. Parents in Manggarai tend to adopt authoritarian parenting styles, often allowing children to exhibit aggression toward others. This approach hinders children's ability to manage frustration and self-control. Consequently, the dynamics of prosocial behavior among children in Manggarai differ from those in other cultures.

According to Dunfield (2014), the constructs forming prosocial behavior include comforting, sharing, and helping. Comforting behaviors in early childhood typically involve affiliative social gestures aimed at alleviating others' distress. These actions are crucial for fostering social cohesion and, in turn, enhancing physical and emotional well-being[6]. Parents can encourage comforting behaviors by fostering awareness of others' difficulties, prompting children to experience emotional discomfort that motivates them to use their sensory modalities to console others[7].

Sharing, on the other hand, involves offering something to others. Children demonstrate sharing behaviors when they possess something that can be given or used jointly with others. Sharing often occurs spontaneously due to strong motivation to benefit others, or as a response to peer pressure to fulfill requests[8].

Helping refers to actions intended to assist others in resolving problems. A child's decision to help depends on the social context, such as the nature of the need and the helper's

motivation and capability[9]. Once a child decides to help, they must evaluate how and in what way to provide assistance. Thus, helping involves a complex process influenced by various factors[10].

This study aims to further identify the role of comforting, sharing, and helping in shaping prosocial behavior among early childhood in Manggarai Regency. Identifying these factors is crucial for educators and parents to select appropriate stimuli to develop children's social skills. Additionally, understanding these factors can assist early childhood education institutions in teaching and encouraging prosocial behaviors from an early age.

Furthermore, comprehensive knowledge of prosocial behaviors among parents and educators enables children to build strong social connections with peers and adults. Children experience greater happiness, satisfaction, and social security, boosting their confidence and allowing them to utilize their potential creatively.

2 Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study is a quantitative research utilizing a field study to identify constructs shaping prosocial behavior in early childhood in Manggarai Regency. The approach employed is a correlational study to determine the contribution of comforting, sharing, and helping aspects to prosocial behavior. Regression analysis techniques are used to measure the coefficient of determination for these three aspects in relation to prosocial behavior in early childhood in Manggarai Regency.

2.2 Research Subjects

This research was conducted in Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The subjects were 115 children from three early childhood education institutions in Manggarai Regency: TK Bhayangkari Ruteng, TK Petra Ruteng, and TK Tunas Mbero Anam. The determination of research subjects was conducted using simple random sampling. The researcher randomly selected three schools in Manggarai Regency to be included as research subjects.

2.3 Research Instruments

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a research questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the *Child Prosocial Behavior Questionnaire (CPBQ)* developed by Brazzelli et al. (2017)[11]. The CPBQ consists of 10 items exploring three dimensions of prosocial behavior in children: comforting, helping, and sharing. Examples of statements in the prosocial behaviour scale include: "The child willingly shares toys with others without being asked by the teacher," and "Tries to hug a friend when they are upset or angry."

All items in the questionnaire follow a Likert scale model, presented to the respondents with five response options for each statement: never, rarely, occasionally, often, and always. All statements are positively phrased, and the scoring for each response is as follows: always = 5, often = 4, occasionally = 3, rarely = 2, and the lowest score, never = 1.

3 Results

Statistical testing using variance analysis techniques with the assistance of SPSS Version 22 revealed that the contribution of the comforting aspect to prosocial behavior was 0.437, the contribution of the sharing aspect to prosocial behavior was 0.537, and the contribution of the helping aspect to prosocial behavior was 0.332. The contribution of each aspect to children's prosocial behavior can be observed in the following analysis output:

Table 1 Results of Regression Analysis on the Contribution of Comforting, Sharing, and Helping to Prosocial Behavior

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.930E-14	.000		.000	1.000
Comforting	1.000	.000	.437	101906792.305	.000
Sharing	1.000	.000	.537	115025613.364	.000
Helping	1.000	.000	.332	79525243.362	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Prosocial

Table 1 shows that the sharing aspect has the largest contribution to the prosocial behavior of children in Manggarai, with a coefficient value of $r=0.537$. The second-largest contribution to prosocial behavior is from the comforting aspect ($r=0.437$), followed by the helping aspect as the third-largest contributor ($r=0.332$). Based on these coefficient values, the coefficient of determination for each aspect's contribution to prosocial behavior can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 The Coefficient of Determination for Comforting, Sharing, and Helping on Prosocial Behavior

Aspect	N	R	r^2	%	sig
Comforting	115	0.437	0.191	19,1	0,000
Sharing	115	0.537	0.288	28,8	0,000
Helping	115	0.332	0.110	11,0	0,000

Table 2 indicates that the coefficient of determination for the comforting aspect contributing to prosocial behavior is 0.191, or 19.1%. On the other hand, the coefficient of determination for the sharing aspect is 0.288, or 28.8%, while the helping aspect has a coefficient of determination of 0.110, or 11.0%.

4 Discussion

Present study reveals that the contribution of the comforting aspect to prosocial behavior is 0.437, the sharing aspect contributes 0.537, and the helping aspect contributes 0.332. Therefore, it can be concluded that the manifest variable of sharing has the highest contribution

to the latent variable of prosocial behavior (28.8%), higher than the contribution of the manifest variables of helping (11.0%) and comforting (19.1%).

The study findings indicate that the response scores from items in the sharing aspect have a higher contribution to the prosocial measurement instrument than the response scores from items in the helping and comforting aspects. According to Lin et al. (2022), sharing is the act of giving a resource to others at one's own cost or expense. Furthermore, Lin et al. (2022) state that sharing emerges in children at the ages of 3–4 years and is one of the key factors determining the development of prosocial skills in children[8]. Sharing behavior grows and develops alongside children's increasing interactions with others, making them more aware that the success of interpersonal relationships in social practices requires reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships among peers[12].

Referring to this perspective, sharing is closely related to the ability to empathize, as sharing, like empathy, requires children to consider the needs of others[13]. Thus, children who share must be sensitive to what their peers need, enabling them to offer their possessions to others. This aligns with Wulandari and Sutaningsih's (2018) argument that an essential factor influencing prosocial behavior is social awareness[14]. Components of social awareness include empathy, mood, a sense of responsibility toward the victim, affection for the person being helped, motivation level, and morality[10]. All these components significantly contribute to children's sharing behavior and, collectively, to their prosocial behavior.

The empirical data from the study indicate that comforting, sharing, and helping all significantly contribute to shaping children's prosocial behavior. This finding is consistent with Dunfield's (2014) research, which states that prosocial behavior comprises three components: comforting, sharing, and helping[6]. All three components require children to adopt the perspective of others and recognize when someone is experiencing a problem. Children then act with the motivation to help resolve the issue by providing various interventions based on their available resources. The ability to exhibit effective prosocial behavior occurs when children overcome the challenge of self-centeredness and choose to support and care for others in social situations[15].

5 Conclusion

Prosocial behavior plays a significant role in determining children's success in building positive social interactions with others. This occurs because children with prosocial behavior possess adequate skills in communication and collaboration with peers or adults. The critical components that determine children's prosocial behavior skills are comforting, sharing, and helping. Among these three components, sharing has the highest contribution to the prosocial behavior of children in Manggarai, while helping has the smallest contribution to the prosocial behavior of early childhood children in Manggarai Regency.

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that parents in Manggarai Regency provide appropriate stimulation to develop their children's prosocial behavior. This can be achieved by communicating with and encouraging children to practice comforting, sharing, and helping others. Children who possess these skills will experience optimal socio-emotional development, leading to greater well-being and happiness in life.

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